



## PRESS RELEASE

### UNESCO St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve ESD Summer Programme a Success

On August 17<sup>th</sup> and August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the UNESCO St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve (SMBR) program facilitated two "pollutrek" field trips comprising students of the Vacation Station Summer Camp. The purpose of the field trips was two-fold; for campers to learn more of the terrestrial and marine zones of the SMBR as well as to expose them to issues of pollution in accordance to their **Education for Sustainable Development Programme**. The specific sites visited were Keys Beach and the historic Cayon River. Keys Beach is home to the nesting leatherback sea turtles and other marine birds. The Cayon River is a key place of interest within the UNESCO St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve. It was one of the boundaries that divided the island between the French and English in colonial times. Unfortunately, today the Cayon River is one of the main sites in the UNESCO St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve that is heavily polluted. Pollutants include household appliances, styrofoam containers, plastic bottles, bottle caps etc. The children of the Vacation Station Camp engaged in a beach cleanup of Keys and learned of the effects of pollution in the ghauts and rivers. A total of thirty-five (35) student-campers took part in the exercise. The students were guided by Ms. Sara Ramirez of the St. Kitts Sea Turtle Monitoring Network and by MAB Committee Member Caesar, explained the environmental, cultural, historical and socio-economic significance of the Cayon River, within the UNESCO St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve.

Present, were representatives from the Department of Environment and Camp Organizer, Ms Jaqueline Flemming who lauded the exercise, funded by the UNESCO National Commission, as excellent for giving the students the exposure of issues of pollution and preservation of biodiversity in the community.

Ms. Markysa O'Loughlin, UNESCO SMBR Committee PRO explained that the field trip is part of an ongoing educational awareness campaign to engage youth in understanding the issues of pollution in the St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve as well as to actively engage, not only the St. Mary's communities, but communities in St. Kitts and Nevis. She stated, "We will continue our mandate of using the UNESCO St. Mary's Biosphere Reserve as a tool for Education for

Sustainable Development” She explained that this programme will continue for the 2017-2018 school semester with the Cayon Primary and Cayon High School students.

For more information: [www.sknbiosphere.org](http://www.sknbiosphere.org), [www.facebook.com/sknbiosphere](http://www.facebook.com/sknbiosphere) Instagram – @sknbiosphere, Twitter - @sknbiosphere.