

Waitt Institute legal team visits Montserrat, Barbuda

Wednesday, 13 May 2015

Washington, DC (Waitt Institute)

A new framework for sustainable ocean management is in the works in the Caribbean, thanks to a collaboration between the governments of Barbuda, Montserrat, and the Waitt Institute. The Waitt Institute's legal staff from the [Environmental Law Institute](#) (ELI) traveled to the islands last week to craft the next steps of the groundbreaking [Blue Halo Initiative](#).

On Montserrat, ELI lawyers Dr. Kathryn Mengerink and Read Porter, met with Director of Agriculture Melissa O'Garro; Chief Fisheries Officer Alwyn Ponteem; Attorney General Keith Friday; Governor's Office Communication Liaison, Richard Aspin, and members from the Policy and Planning Department, Montserrat National Trust, Physical Planning Unit, and Environment Department.

"I think we should train the community, especially the fishermen," explained Roy Morris, of the Barbuda Fisheries staff. "Fishermen feel that we are targeting them, but it is for their benefit that the rules have been passed."

On Montserrat, the lawyers met with government officials and community members on both islands to discuss the legal framework for ocean management, and lead a legal workshop on Barbuda.

"It was clear from the legal training with enforcement officials that they are committed to working with the fishing community and others to make implementation a success." Porter added, "We are impressed by the engagement of all those who attended."

Together, the group crafted its vision for a policy framework that will support [Blue Halo Montserrat](#). In turn, that blueprint will be part of a report released later this year that the government will be able to use to craft a sustainable ocean management plan for the island.

"It is critical to the success of the Blue Halo Initiative not just to put laws on the books, but to implement them and achieve compliance," said Mengerink. "It was clear from the legal training with enforcement officials that they are committed to working with the fishing community and others to make implementation a success."

The attorneys then went to Barbuda for a full day of legal training for enforcement officials working to implement the Barbuda Council's [new coastal regulations passed in August 2014](#).

"Enforcement authorities asked for additional training on the specifics of the new fishing and coastal zoning regulations, and we were happy to meet this request in short order," said Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, executive director of the Waitt Institute. "A deep understanding the laws is, of course, critical to fair and effective enforcement thereby to reaping the benefits of healthier fisheries and coral reefs."

Staff from Barbuda Fisheries, the Codrington National Lagoon Park, and the Barbuda Police requested the training following [last month's enforcement training workshop on Barbuda](#); it was sponsored by the Waitt Institute.

Additional information and resources:

Twitter: [@waittinstitute](https://twitter.com/waittinstitute)

Instagram: [@waittinstitute](https://www.instagram.com/waittinstitute)

Facebook: facebook.com/waittinstitute

YouTube: youtube.com/waittinstitute

Dropbox folder with press photos: bit.ly/WI-PressReleasePhotos

For more information or to set up interviews, contact:

Stephanie Roach, Program Manager, Waitt Institute

+1 202 609 8919 | sroach@waittinstitute.org

Waitt Institute: The [Waitt Institute](https://waittinstitute.org) endeavors to ensure ecologically, economically, and culturally sustainable use of ocean resources. The Institute partners with governments committed to developing and implementing comprehensive, science-based, community-driven solutions for sustainable ocean management. Our goal is to benefit coastal communities while restoring fish populations and habitats. Our approach is to engage stakeholders, provide the tools needed to design locally appropriate policies, facilitate the policymaking process, and build capacity for effective implementation and long-term success.