

## LUCELEC Club in Reforestation Effort

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St Lucia Electricity Services Limited (LUCELEC) was one of the companies which joined Governor-General Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy in a national drive to restore our forests following the devastation of Hurricane Tomas in 2010.

Along with financial assistance, staff volunteered to plant trees alongside storm ravaged river banks and slopes. It was an experience that struck a chord with the LUCELEC Sports Club, an organization of and for LUCELEC staff which functions to provide social and cultural activities for the company's hundreds of employees.

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On Sunday January 26, 2013 the LUCELEC Sports Club led more than thirty LUCELEC employees and volunteers in an excursion to plant close to 60 trees. Club President Antonius Haynes says while the activity had been planned for some time, they were motivated to act following the 2013 Christmas Eve Trough that claimed lives, damaged property and the forest.

“During the trough a lot of trees were washed away prompting us to speed up the date of our activity, liaise with the Forestry Department and replant some. It was a very enjoyable and satisfying experience. In fact, we've already had requests from staff to do a few more tree planting excursions,” says Mr Haynes.

Forest Officer Vincent Ernest who accompanied the group says the volunteer effort by the LUCELEC Sports Club is of national service. Along with providing technical assistance to the group, the Forestry Department also selected the area to be replanted. Mr Ernest says the affected bank needs a lot of attention due to deforestation resulting from bad farming practices and the Christmas Eve trough.

He also underscored the importance of the activity to safeguard the country from the effects of natural disasters.

“We must protect river banks in all areas especially in light of recent weather patterns including the 2013 Christmas Eve trough. Much of the damage in areas like Bexon and Anse-la-Raye was caused by deforestation and lack of river bank protection,” he says.

The tree planting effort took place at Marquis Estate in Babonneau.

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