



THE LITTLE ANGELS Pre-school at Kingstown Park celebrated Hats off to Reading with a march, which took place Tuesday, February 18. The enthusiastic pre-schoolers, along with principal Monica Little, teacher Shelly John and some parents, marched through the neighbourhood, while singing the lyrics "Hats off to reading, reading is fun."

Watershed management project initiated for Cumberland Forest Reserve

THE NATIONAL PARKS, Rivers and Beaches Authority, with support from the Forestry Department, have embarked on an Integrated Watershed Management Planning and Forest Reserve Protection Project in the Central Mountain Range Conservation Corridor of the country.

The aim of the project is to develop an integrated watershed management plan for the Cumberland Forest Reserve.

It is being funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and is being executed through the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute.

Through the implementation of this project, emphasis will be placed on a number of components, including mapping and zoning of the watershed by forest types and habitat; development of a rapid biodiversity inventory; the development of a wildlife conservation strategy, with emphasis on the key biodiversity assets; a plan to grow

trees to improve forest management and ecosystem service functions; and the development of a corporate agreement between watershed stakeholders.

Some of the other components include recommendations and interventions specific to upper watershed soil and water conservation and recommendations regarding key livelihood activities based on the use of watershed resources to promote sustainability and conservation of watershed resources.

The project includes a significant public awareness campaign that will seek to sensitize the public on the value of biodiversity and forest conservation.

It was also noted that included as part of the project would be the execution of two knowledge, attitude and practice surveys and the development of a public awareness strategy.

This part of the project is expected to be implemented over a 10-month period.

The project is expected to bring together key stakeholders, who all have an interest in the watershed and in the area of management, protection and use of the watershed.

It is expected that the outcome of the integrated watershed management project will be an established inter-agency agreement, which will govern the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders

that utilize the Cumberland watershed.

The outcomes of the project will also serve as a useful model for other watersheds and protected areas throughout the country.

National Land Bank Programme being revitalized – Caesar

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Caesar stated that anyone interested in benefiting from the programme can collect a form from their extension officer or extension office.

"These forms will be filled out in the same way that the forms for the credit facility were completed and they will be returned to the extension officer who would pass these forms on to the (Farmer Support) Company," the Minister explained.

Furthermore, he stated that the Ministry hopes to

ensure that all the other factors of production are in place.

Another initiative under the six million dollar farmer support programme is to make more lands available for cultivation.

Through the Farmers Support Company, a series of consultations is expected to be held with farmers, in an effort to bring more acreage in St Vincent and the Grenadines under production.

Caesar made the announcement that the National Land Bank Programme was being revitalized.

"This definitely will complete the process where we will make the capital or monies available for farmers to farm," Caesar said.

The Minister said he expected there would be an increase in the demand for land as new farmers attempt to enter the agricultural sector.

"The availability of land is such that it is one of those factors for production that is not increased at the possible rate that labour can increase or even capital can increase. There are many acres of land in St Vincent and the Grenadines which are not

currently being farmed," he said.

Caesar also noted that public servants, who are also farmers, will be able to access these funds.

"I know that the question has been raised as to whether or not persons who are employees of the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, whether or not they can access these loans. The answer is yes," he said.

The Minister stated that the Farmer Support Company will be a "veritable one stop shop" for farmers, as it relates to issues of labour and the availability of land. (BK)

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