

## Turks and Caicos Reef Fund launched

Written by Richard Green/richard@fptci.com  
Thursday, 17 February 2011 11:34 -

---



Two dedicated divers and part-time Turks and Caicos Islands residents have formed the Turks and Caicos Reef Fund to raise money to compliment and supplement government efforts to help preserve the country's pristine coral reefs.

Through the sale of wrist bands and dive tags, plus donations, the TCI non-profit foundation has begun to accept grant applications from individuals, groups and organizations for projects that will enhance the marine environment of the TCI.

"I have been coming to the Turks and Caicos since 1993, and I have been impressed by the conservation efforts already in place here with the National Marine Parks system, but rapid development on the islands is placing tremendous pressure on the marine environment," said Don Stark, co-founder of the TCRF. "As one of the consistently highly rated dive destinations, snorkelers and scuba divers have a vested interest in seeing the reefs and related marine environments."

The fund has chosen as its first project, in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Coastal Resources, the refurbishing or replacement of the snorkel trail markers on the reef in front of the Coral Gardens Resort, which is called the Bight Reef or the White House Reef.

"The snorkel trail is an attraction that is well known and heavily utilized by visitors to the islands, but hurricanes, storms and algae growth have taken their toll over the past several years," the fund says. "Our goal will be to replace the markers and Reef Ball support stands and to regularly visit the site to perform cleaning and maintenance of both the markers, Reef Ball stands and marker buoys for the benefit and enjoyment of all visitors."

## Turks and Caicos Reef Fund launched

Written by Richard Green/richard@fptci.com  
Thursday, 17 February 2011 11:34 -

---

More than 10 years ago, the British Foreign Office and more than 30 local businesses and individuals paid for the snorkel trail markers at Bight Reef and Smith's Reef, and their names appear on the tiles. Marsha Pardee and Gudrun Gaudian were the project leaders, and artists Pamela Leach and Barbara Young designed and created the tile markers.

In 2008, Pardee and Leach paid to have the tiles at Smith's Reef refurbished partially through Mer Angel, the company they named after the main character in their book "Twas a Sight Before Christmas," which puts an undersea twist on the famous Christmas story.

But the Bight Reef hasn't had funding for the same treatment until now. Long-time visitors and part-time residents Stark and co-founder David Stone created the TCRF to help with projects just like this one.

Stark says the fund intends to spend at least 85 percent of the money raised on projects selected by its board. The rest will pay for purchasing dive tags, wrist bands and other support materials.

"Our goal is to pump as much of the money raised back into the programs and projects we undertake," Stark told the *fp*. "Neither David nor I (nor will our board) receive any compensation, and we have both made substantial donations to the organization already by underwriting the initial start-up costs and initial inventory costs for the dive tags and wristbands. All our finances will be made public at least annually."

Stark is an underwater videographer, producer, director and editor who founded ScubaVision Productions. A diver since 1988, he is also a PADI certified Open Water Scuba Instructor.

Stone has been a professional nature photographer whose work has been featured many magazines, including Audubon Field Guides and National Geographic Filmstrips. His most recent photography can be seen in The Lionfish Cookbook published by REEF in December.

For more information on the Turks and Caicos Reef Fund, visit [www.tcreef.org](http://www.tcreef.org) or [www.tcreef.tc](http://www.tcreef.tc)

## **Turks and Caicos Reef Fund launched**

Written by Richard Green/richard@fptci.com  
Thursday, 17 February 2011 11:34 -

---

### **Where to get TCRF wrist bands & dive tags**

Get TCRF wrist bands (\$5) and dive tags (\$10) from these businesses on Providenciales and other islands.

- Beaches Turks and Caicos
- Big Blue Unlimited
- Blue Water Divers (Grand Turk)
- Caicos Adventures
- Caribbean Cruisin'
- Dive Provo
- Flamingo Divers
- Green Bean
- Nautique Sports
- Provo Turtle Divers
- Salt Cay Divers (Salt Cay)
- Snuba Turks and Caicos
- T's T's and Things
- Unicorn Book Store