

Hi and Welcome to the Wright Center 2005 Hydrosphere workshop team,

I am very excited to have you all participating in the Caribbean this year. To get started there are a couple of items you need to cover-

1. Please make sure that your plane to George Town, Bahamas (GGT) on Great Exuma Island will arrive as close to noon on June 26th as possible, \pm a few hours. If you will be arriving on early, and are staying on the island in a hotel, please plan on meeting us at the airport around noon. From there we will all travel together to the docks and the awaiting water taxi which will take up to Lee Stocking Island. We will be taken back to George Town on the morning of the 30th in time for afternoon flights. Please do not schedule a return flight earlier than noon on the 30th. I recommend using Orbitz.com to search for flights.

2. The land and water taxis from the airport to Lee Stocking Island are prearranged for by the Perry Institute staff. Basically, we all need to travel to the Caribbean Marine Research Center on Lee Stocking island together. You are responsible for that charge (to and from LSI to the airport). If we have 20 people (which I expect) - the water taxi portion will cost you \$40 round trip.

3. You need to bring a certificate stating that your personal medical insurance covers you while you are in the Caribbean. You **MUST** have this paperwork to get on LSI.

4. You need to order yourself a DAN membership. DAN is the international divers organization and the membership for \$29 covers any emergency medical evacuation while in the water. DAN also offers a basic and premium medical insurance coverage for the length of your trip for \$35 or \$70. If your personal medical insurance covers bites, stings, etc emergencies while in the water you do not have to get the additional DAN medical insurance just the DAN membership. Please order your membership from <http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/insurance/purchase.asp>. You must have a DAN membership to get on LSI. The folks at the Caribbean Marine Research Center mention that the extra money for the DAN medical insurance has saved some people a lot of problems when they found out that their personal medical insurance did not cover certain emergencies. My own personal medical insurance also requires that I "jump through a bunch of hoops" to get reimbursed for accidents out of the US. For those of you that adventure in Europe you know that climbers, hikers, skiers buy Mountain evacuation insurance and medical insurance. Otherwise if you get hurt in the Alps you have to pay out of pocket for all rescue evacs/treatment.

5. Almost everything you need to know about the Perry Institute and LSI can be found on their website at <http://www.perryinstitute.org/> this includes that you need a valid passport or birth certificate when you go through customs, we will be staying in dorm style bunk rooms on LSI, a clothing to bring list, medical facilities, communications with the mainland, temperature, meals- if you need special meals you need to communicate that with me asap please, smoking and drug and alcohol policy.

6. We will all be in and out of the water every day including snorkeling but we will not be ordering any dive equipment.

7. This will not be a super physically strenuous trip (all is relative) but you must in fit condition. Anyone with a serious medical condition should not attend. There are a number of waivers you will be asked to sign before participating. There are no pharmacies - nothing on the island but research and no way to get medication that you might need. The staff there can handle basic first-aid but will not dispense drugs.

Please check with your doctor before participating if you have any questions about your health and being in the hot Caribbean conditions. Please let me know if there is something we should be aware of. As Kurt Vonnegut said, ""trust me on the sunscreen".

8. You must book and pay for your own plane travel to and from the airport. I have booked myself a flight from Maine directly to George Town. There are a number of flights from Ft Lauderdale or Miami if they are convenient connections for you. I will be there early to have time to set things up. You might want to consider flight cancellation insurance though I anticipate no problems on the workshop end, if you get sick or have a loved one get sick or some other unforeseen personal concern and need to stay at home, you might loose out on the cost of your flight depending on your airline.

9. At the last two workshops we have had participants come early and or leave late to give themselves a bit of a holiday and enjoy the new surroundings. Your hotel, car rental etc are at your expense but it may be worth it to enjoy an extra day. There is a National Marine Park in south Florida and great diving in the Keys.

10. I tried to get a group rate for the plane ride from Ft Lauderdale to George Town but it did not work - sorry.

11. To get out of the Bahamas you need to pay a \$15 customs fee (or possibly wash an equivalent amount of dishes?). I know it seems that costs are adding up but this workshop comes out to be almost the exact same price it was for me to get to the Montana workshop three years ago.

12. You must fill out the attached Visitor information form and return to me by May 1. Also, I would appreciate an e-mail copy of your flight schedule by May 1. Just in case your flight is delayed, and we are standing on the docks in Exuma without you, we will know what flight you are on and its scheduled arrival.

13. There will be a new reading list posted for this workshop, compiled in part by a group working on science literacy. Before you get to the workshop you must read two things for us. The first is *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig. It will not tell you anything about oceanography and climate change directly but it outlines the most important parts of systems analysis including global climate change. It is not light reading if you start peeling away the multiple layers of the book, especially if you have not read this book since the 60s and 70s. The other is from a series of discussion course offered by the Northwest Institute. It will be the basis for a discussion at the workshop. Both will be on line soon.

14. The workshop schedule, goals, etc will be listed on the web site soon. Get ready for some basic inorganic chemistry and colorful fish.

I apologize that this seems like a lot of stuff but I am hoping to answer as many of your questions up front - but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the workshop. I will be sending out at least one more e-letter before the workshop. Currently the total costs for teacher travel from Boston are almost the exact same it was for the Montana workshop three years ago.

Thanks again and I really look forward to working with you this summer and beyond.

Zach