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TCRF REPLACES DECADES OLD BOUNDARY BUOY LINE AROUND THE BIGHT REEF IN FRONT OF CORAL GARDENS RESORT

16 June 2015, Providenciales, TCI – The Turks & Caicos Reef Fund (TCRF) with a great deal of assistance from a great group of volunteers, has replaced the badly damaged, decades old boundary buoy line around the snorkel reef in front of Coral Gardens Resort. The ring of buoys is intended to help keep snorkelers off the shallow reef areas in order to protect the reef from damage. Over the years, the ring of buoys has been buffeted by storms, had lines broken and repaired and was no longer protecting some sections of the reef.

“This was a project we started several years ago when we worked with a team of volunteers to restore the underwater snorkel trail markers,” said Don Stark, Chairman of the TCRF. “We knew the boundary buoy line needed replacing, so we put a plan in action to secure the funding to purchase the necessary supplies to complete the project.”

The project entailed installing six new sea floor anchors to reposition the buoy ring over areas where coral growth had moved beyond the original boundaries of the boundary buoys. Then the old boundary buoy line had to be removed and hauled away while a new buoy line was prepared on the beach. Once the buoys were firmly attached to the new line, a team of divers, snorkelers and shore hands slowly fed the line out so it could be attached to the sea floor anchors. “We invested approximately \$20,000 into this effort,” said Mr. Stark, “all of which came from donations, memberships and the sale of our retail merchandise. We would like to encourage all the business and visitors who enjoy the benefits of

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this reef to help support this effort by becoming a member of the TCRF or making a donation to our nonprofit organization.”

Although coral looks like rock, it’s actually a living being consisting of thousands of small animals living in limestone homes. Corals are very sensitive to damage from being kicked by fins, touched by human hands, as well as from natural causes such as pollution, storms, and nutrient runoff from landscaping. The Bight Reef in front of Coral Gardens Resort is one of the most popular snorkeling destinations for tourists visiting Provo and, therefore, requires protection from potential visitor damage.

“We want to thank the volunteers who came out for two days to help with the installation,” said Mr. Stark. “We also want to thank Somewhere Café and Lounge, Provo Turtle Divers, and Merangel Ecological Services for their assistance and support. Without the help of these individuals and businesses, we could not have been successful in this effort.”

About TCRF

Founded in 2010, the Turks & Caicos Reef Fund is an all volunteer-run organization that provides funding for education, research and conservation programs to individuals, organizations and agencies that help to preserve and protect the environment of the Turks & Caicos Islands. Our goal is to have at least 85% of all funds raised through voluntary contributions from divers and snorkelers visiting the Turks & Caicos Islands directed to the Fund’s programs.

Anyone wishing to donate or assist the TCRF in any way can contact them through their website, www.TCReef.org. Scuba divers visiting the islands are encouraged to make a \$10 donation through the purchase of a dive tag that can be attached to their dive gear to show their support. Snorkelers visiting the islands can show their support through the \$5 purchase of a pink or blue silicone wristband. A complete list of outlets for TCRF merchandise can be found on the organization’s website.

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