



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, The Bahamas possesses substantial natural forest resources, comprising pine forests, coppice hardwoods and mangrove forests, with approximately 80% of forest resources on Crown Lands and the remaining 20% on private lands;

AND WHEREAS, the Forestry Act, 2010, which facilitated the establishment of the Forestry Unit that presently falls under the Ministry of the Environment and Housing, was enacted to develop the forest resources of The Bahamas to their maximum potential, through the training of competent forest officers and by application of sound, scientific forest management principles and concepts that promote sustained yield;

AND WHEREAS, in 2012, the Forestry Unit received funding from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for a two-year Technical Cooperation Programme forestry project titled, "Forestry Management Pilot and Training in Abaco", a joint partnership training programme which is designed to train Bahamians in numerous important forestry management techniques that will ensure that the pine forests of The Bahamas are properly managed to produce the high yield quality products on a sustainable basis;

AND WHEREAS, in addition to working with notable sustainable forestry partners such as the Department of Environmental Health Services, the Bahamas Environment Science and Technology Commission, and Friends of the Environment, the Forestry Unit has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bahamas National Trust, which authorizes park wardens to serve as forest officers and assist in the protection and sustainable management of forests in Abaco and Andros;


AND WHEREAS, on an international level, the Forestry Unit is also engaged in a Global Environment Facility Full-sized Project Related to the Land Degradation Focal Area Strategy entitled: Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco and Andros), whose targeted key deliverables under the project include enhancing Sustainable Land and Forest Management (SLM) with the integration of Biodiversity into land use planning, increasing public awareness of the importance and benefits of the sustainable management of land, forest and mangrove biodiversity, and ecosystems services, improving management effectiveness of existing and new forest reserves, strengthening the sustainable management of forestry and coastal areas for people who are dependent on those resources for their livelihood and promoting institutional strengthening initiatives within the Department of Physical Planning and the enhancement of the maps of the Bahamas National Geographic Information Systems Centre;

AND WHEREAS, annually since 1971, when the 23rd General Assembly of the European Confederation of Agriculture agreed to its observance, World Forestry Day has been celebrated as a means of increasing public awareness among communities about the values, significance and contributions of forests to all life forms, with particular focus on the integral role that they play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change;

AND WHEREAS, in selecting March 21st as the date on which to observe World Forestry Day, a number of factors were considered, inclusive of the fact that it was both the autumnal equinox in the Southern Hemisphere and the vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere;

NOW, THEREFORE, I Perry G. Christie, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, do hereby proclaim the period 16th – 21st March, 2015 as "FORESTRY AWARENESS WEEK" and **Saturday, 21st March, 2015** as "**WORLD FORESTRY DAY/INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FORESTS IN THE BAHAMAS**".

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto
set my Hand and Seal this 17 day
of February, 2015



PERRY G. CHRISTIE
PRIME MINISTER