

**Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia Branch
International Training Program
2011 Dominican Republic: North Coast**

Jan 9, 2012

Purpose:

The goal of the Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia Branch is to train residents and workers in the Dominican Republic in water rescue and first-aid. This is an ongoing program to reduce the incidents of drowning and risk associated with water related activities for both visiting Canadian tourists and native Dominicans.

This was the Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia Branch's fourth visit to the Dominican Republic in the last three years.



Overview:

Two Nova Scotia First Aid and National Lifeguard Instructors, Paul D'Eon and Mark Nearing left on November 24, 2011 and returned to Canada on December 12, 2011. The total number of days available for conducting training was 15 (4 days spent on travel).

Training was conducted in four separate courses at three locations as follows:

1. Monumento Natural Saltos, Damajagua.



Two courses were offered for tour guides for who worked at “27 Waterfalls”, a popular tourist attraction about 40 minutes north of Puerto Plata. Two courses of two days each were held. The focus of these courses was Standard First Aid and water rescue/removals. Tour guides at this site take tourists on trips ranging from two to six hours up a series of waterfalls. The focus of the water training was recognition and rescue of drowning non-swimmers and extrication from the waterfall area to access emergency medical care.

The courses had 21 and 23 students in each course. All were male tour guides aged from approximately 18 to 50 years old. A Spanish-English translator was provided through by Christine Russell, an American Peace Corps Volunteer.

2. Estero Hondo, located about two hours north east of Puerto Plata.



A three-day course was held for twenty-one members of the Dominican Republic Civil Defense Force. The course was a two day Standard First Aid course and the final day focused on water rescue at an oceanfront environment. The course was held at three different locations over the three-days. The first two days had no water environment and only Standard First Aid was offered. The third day was held at a popular tourist site, Paradise Island, an oceanfront with some significant lateral currents and high surf.

Only seven members of this group had enough swimming skills to work in this water environment. The remainder were trained in back-up and secondary rescue roles. No translation services were provided. A few of the Civil Defense members had limited English and offered translation on a limited basis.

3. Playa Dorada Resort Complex, Puerto Plata.

A three-day course was held for thirty-one persons. This group had tourist police, volunteer ambulance workers, diving instructors, civil defence volunteers, tour guides, resort staff and Red Cross volunteers. A Standard First Aid Course and oceanfront water rescue training was offered over the three days. Several of the resort staff and Red Cross workers had fairly good English and offered translation services. The Tourist Association liaison, Manual Finke also provided translation for some of the course.



Results:

A total of 96 individuals were trained. Candidates came from a variety background, skill level and experience. Due to this variance, training courses and timelines were adjusted as needed. Individuals that were able to swim reasonably well received water rescue training and those that were not strong swimmers were instructed in providing assistance in shallow water and on-shore first aid care. All learned Standard First Aid skills.

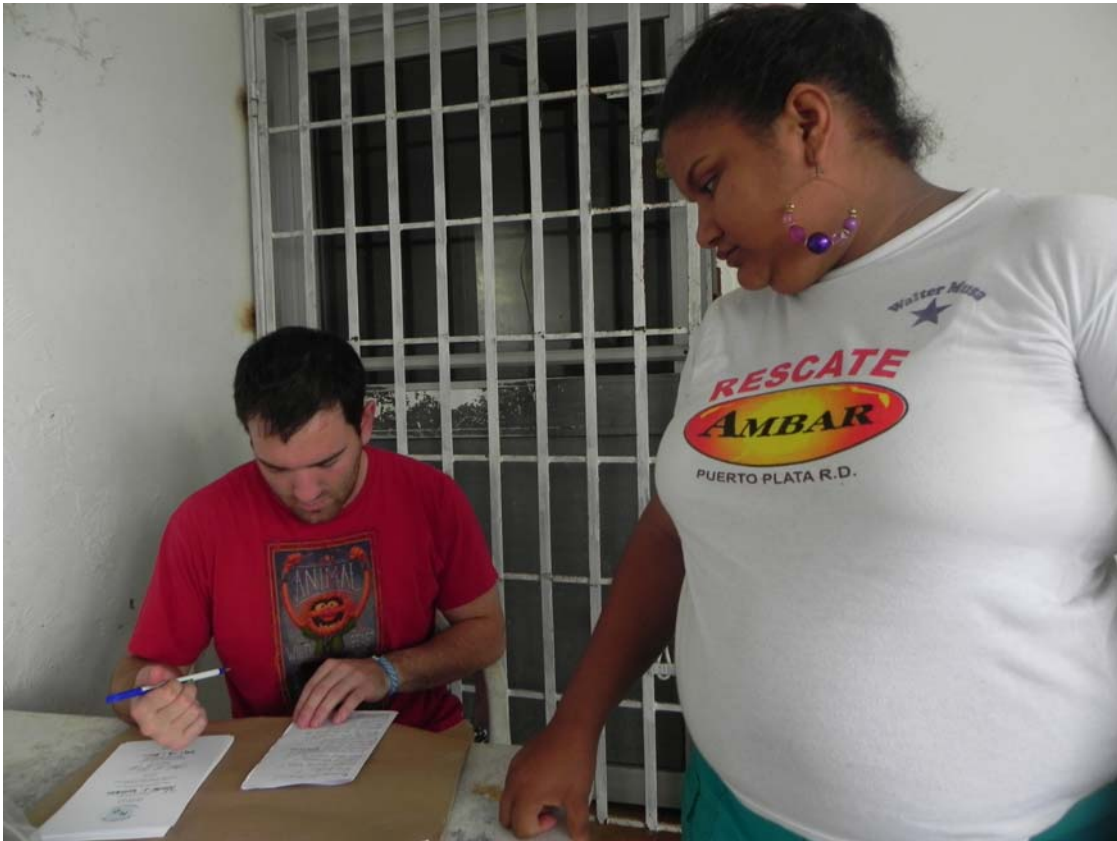
Individuals were identified as potential candidates for additional training at a higher level. Individuals that were previously trained to act as training facilitators did not attend any of the courses.

Travel and accommodations were arranged on a very short notice. This made it very difficult to know where to be and how long to expect to be there. It also made it very difficult to communicate our whereabouts to the Lifesaving Society or family back home in Canada.

The class locations were also arranged on very short notice. The size of the classes were not confirmed or communicated until the day the courses began. Due to these unknowns it was very difficult to plan the courses out.

Equipment that was used in past courses was made available for all the courses that were taught. This proved to be very helpful in teaching these courses.





Recognition:

In closing, the trip achieved the goal of ninety-six new candidates now in-place in the Dominican Republic. The Lifesaving Society Nova Scotia Branch would like to recognize:

1. Tim Hall, Canadian Consulate for all of his help with logistics during the course of the trip.
2. Manual Finke, Puerto Plata Tourist Association for arranging our accommodations at the Playa Dorada Resorts and providing translation services.
3. Christina Russell American Peace Corps for providing translation at Damajagua.
4. Anne Goffaux from WestJet for providing transportation to the Dominican Republic.
5. Nova Scotia Lifeguard Service for technical support and donated rescue cans.

6. Hani Quan, for provided valuable financial assistance on each of the training trips undertaken by the Lifesaving Society.
7. Barcelo, Blue Bay and Gran Ventana Resorts in Playa Dorado for provision of accommodations in Puerto Plata.
8. Nicolas Cloutier and Jolaine Morin from the Canadian Consulate in Santo Domingo.

