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ROLES: Undergraduate Student
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DISCIPLINES: Geomatics Engineering (Hydrography, Surveying; GIS)

KEYWORDS: Hydrography, Surveying, GIS



RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Climate change is the change in the average weather over an extensive time period. One result of Climate change can be a rise in sea levels that can be caused from the melting of the ice caps and/or thermal expansion of seas and oceans due to rising temperatures. Sea level rise due to climate change has been predicted by many entities including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) among others. At risk are many coastal communities worldwide, and to know the danger posed by predicted sea level rise to these communities is to arm them with information that can contribute to the development of appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Grande Riviere, located in the North of Trinidad, is a coastal community where the local economy depends mainly on tourism and agriculture. Environmentally and economically, the annual nesting of the leatherback turtles and presence of the native Pawi provide attractions for tourists that add to the income of the community. Any significant rise in sea level could have adverse impacts on the community's social and economic wellbeing.

Rachel, as part of the ICURA project entitled Managing Adaptation to Environmental Change in Coastal Communities: Canada and the Caribbean and in fulfilment of her academic obligation to produce a senior research report, used GIS and surveying techniques to create land use map of Grande Riviere and determined (by way of predicted sea level rise scenarios) what land uses may be affected. Her work was supervised by Drs. Michael Sutherland and David Neale.

BIOGRAPHY:

Rachel is a 22 year old undergraduate student at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, Department of Geomatics Engineering and Land Management. In June 2010 she will complete her B.Sc. in Geomatics Engineering. She intends to pursue a M.Sc. in Environmental Engineering. She has had vacation employment at the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries and as well at the Penal/ Debe Regional Corporation in Trinidad and Tobago.

Rachel reports her involvement with the ICURA Project entitled Managing Adaptation to Environmental Change in Coastal Communities: Canada and the Caribbean as follows: *"The field work, though tedious and challenging at times was very interesting for me. I was delighted to experience the culture of the community and the beauty possessed by the north coast. The burden of the data collection was lessened by cooperative team members. The importance of team effort has once again proven to be the foundation of a project. The research and investigation of the project brought much enlightenment and sleepless nights. I appreciated the experience gained from this endeavour. It will surely remain with me for a lifetime. This knowledge will be applied in the working environment and is a stepping stone to further development when I become a part of the industry and its projects. I truly understand the intensity of such a project and the challenges that may arise. This study comprised of a background of several aspects of my study area including coastal zone management which I find interest in. I was able to develop my skills using mapping software such as ArcGIS 9.3 which I thoroughly enjoyed. This project has expanded my research skills and broadened my knowledge. In doing research for this project, I stumbled on several papers of interest and future opportunities. I have achieved much experience, growth and development on completion of my study."*