



## Insider's Look at Grand Canyon

### Webisode #51 – UNESCO World Heritage Site Fellowship Exchange Program Transcript

**Ranger Patrick Gamman:** Welcome to this week's webisode of Insider's Look at Grand Canyon. Hi, I'm your host, Ranger Patrick Gamman, and my guest has come from the other side of the world to join us today. A site manager from the Seychelles Islands Marc Jean-Baptiste. Marc, welcome to the show.

**Site Manager Marc Jean- Baptiste:** Glad to be here.

**Patrick:** So, Marc could you tell our listeners, where are the Seychelles Islands?

**Marc:** The Seychelles Islands is situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean, 1600 kilometers off the coast of Africa.

**Patrick:** So, you are a site manager for some UNESCO sites in your country. A site manager for us would be a park superintendent, so you have to take care of two parks. What are the names of those parks and could tell our listeners about those places.

**Marc:** Well, the two parks that I having been working on is; #1) ALDABRA, which is an atoll. (It) lies 420 kilometers (off of) the Northwest coast of Madagascar and it is the biggest raised coral atoll in the world. #2) the second park which I am working at actually (right now) is Valle'e de Mai. It is situated in the second largest island of the Seychelles archipelago, which is called Praslin, and the site is called Valle'e de Mai.

**Patrick:** So, of those two sites, the first one that you mentioned, you had told me about a creature there, the giant land tortoise. You told me a really neat fact. How many giant land tortoises in your country and how many people?

**Marc:** A very interesting question. Aldabra giant tortoise population appears to be over 100,000, where by the human population of the Seychelles Islands is only 85,000.

**Patrick:** That is wonderful, that is awesome. And the other park, what are some of the creatures that you find in Valle'e de Mai?

**Marc:** Valle'e de Mai in itself is an evergreen palm forest on Praslin. It hosts a lot of endangered, endemic, endangered, and venerable plant and animal species. Those of the interesting animal species found in Valle'e de Mai (are) the chameleon, and the endangered species of the Seychelles black parrot. And we have a lot of interesting green geckos and brown geckos also, endemic to the island in itself and also associated to the palm forest which creates a nice biodiversity.

**Patrick:** So, as site manager you're here on exchange. What are you doing at the Grand Canyon?

**Marc:** My presence here in the Grand Canyon is to shadow all the various departments. The priority is to learn how to better manage visitors in the wilderness. In other words, conducting environmental education among visitors who use and visit parks on a daily basis.

**Patrick:** So, what has it been like working with the rangers here at Grand Canyon?

**Marc:** Wow, working with the rangers at the Grand Canyon has been very fantastic and awesome! I've been having great fun. Like shadowing, for example, rangers going out on camp, spending the night in the tent, going out with rangers conducting search and rescue for hikers who are having difficulties, shadowing people dealing with safety measures. More interestingly shadowing rangers, as well as participating in ranger activities in "interpretation". Mostly for school kids activities, mainly for families and parents who are visiting the canyon now.

**Patrick:** So, of all these things that you have learned from these rangers and you know you're sharing ideas with us and we're sharing ideas with you what are some of the things you will be bringing back to the parks in the Seychelles?

**Marc:** My dream to bring back to the park in the Seychelles is the way that you, people here, manage your visitors in the park. And this includes the proper way of doing environmental education among park users back in my country.

**Patrick:** Is there anything you would like to share about your experience, coming all the way around the world, spending time at Grand Canyon?

**Marc:** What I would like to share here is, being my first time at the biggest park I have ever visited in my life it has been so wonderful. And when I think of going out from a very tiny island, an archipelago

comprising of 115 islands, where I used to go island hopping or going in very small parks... and sort of welcoming 60-65,000 visitors per year. Coming to the Grand Canyon, a park of the world, seeing between ....over 4 million visitors in a year and I say; "Wow! How are you people being able to do this and how do you manage these people?" But sitting, and learning, and practicing whatever you do I can see that this is a really big challenge there is nothing impossible in this world to make people understand how valuable and how precious our fragile ecosystem is that we need to maintain and keep for future generations!

**Patrick:** Marc, it has been great having you on the show and here at the park. We hope you have enjoyed your time at Grand Canyon and learned a lot of things. Have a safe trip back to your home.

**Marc:** Thank you very much. It has been great pleasure also for me to be with you sharing the incredible American hospitality. Once again, thank you very much!

**Patrick:** We'll catch you folks next time on, Insider's Look at Grand Canyon.

