

VIEUX FORT, Saint Lucia (22nd August 2019) – Saint Lucia’s Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa has experienced a reduction of Sargassum as much as 85% on its mile-long beach with the installation of a containment boom. The influx of Sargassum which has increased significantly since 2015 effecting beaches from the United States to the Caribbean and Mexico, and its more frequent arrival on the resort’s beach made the three-week process to set up the boom system, another crucial step in the effort to combat this natural phenomenon. This 4,400-foot boom system, floating 300 to 500 feet offshore, protects the length of the resort’s mile-long beach from this macro-alga carried in by the ocean’s currents.

With analysis by institutions including the University of South Florida College of Marine Science predicting a “new normal” for the increased Sargassum influx, finding a long-term, viable solution to protect the beach and marine resources became a priority for the management of Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa. The success of this venture is being closely monitored by the local government as a viable solution that could mean deployment in other areas around the island.

“Our unit of measure of success in reducing the Sargassum is truckloads. We have had to deploy teams using heavy equipment to clear the beach when these seaweed mats made landfall,” says Mark Adams, president of Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa. “The collected Sargassum had to be dried and the sand reclaimed for our beach, the remainder is used by us for fertilizer and made available to local farmers. And now, just one month in, our beach is unspoiled, the heavy equipment is no longer necessary, and our staff are simply raking the beach as we had done before the onset of this unpredictable phenomenon.”

“Our guests appreciate all the past efforts we have made to clean up the Sargassum as quickly as possible and now our repeat guest in particular have already given us positive feedback about the difference the boom system has already made,” said Zachary Frangos, General Manager of Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa. “While you can’t expect to control Mother Nature, we are very pleased that this effort on behalf of our guests and safeguarding our beautiful island home has produced the desired results.”

At Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa it is not only important to clean the beach to meet guest expectations for water sports and activities but to protect the local environment and clear the resort's stretch of sand that is the nesting ground for three species of endangered sea turtles from March to November. The turtles are unimpeded by the boom system as they swim to and from the beach.