



Friends Tidings

SPRING 2001 Vol 8 No 2

Friends upgraded donor and member database gives us better control over our mailing process. If you are still receiving a hardcopy of Tidings in the mail and would prefer to be advised by email when the latest newsletter is posted on the web, please email newsletter@friendsvinp.org and we will mark your record accordingly.

This will save postage dollars and volunteer hours which can be applied more productively toward our programs.

Tidings Notes

2000 Success Stories

- This year was our most successful field seminar series ever! Our invaluable instructors donated their time and knowledge to educate over 250 participants.
- Over the past year, we have documented a 62% increase in the number of donors to the Friends of the Park.
- Presently, we are over 2,100 current members strong.

St. John CD For Sale

Listen to the Sounds of St. John wherever you are! Check out the Artecology CD titled *Caribbean Reverie* for sale at the Friends online [boutique](#) featuring your favorite tree frogs, tropical rainforest and the waves of the ocean. Artecology donates 20% of proceeds to the Friends.

Our "Best Shot" At Conservation

Each year the superintendent submits a support request list to the Friends Board of Directors. The Board evaluates the requests and within the context of our mission determines for which projects we will seek funds.

Your membership donation provides our strong foundation, additional contributions allow us to fund crucial conservation projects, defend the park against threats and advocate before congress.

Our projects are about preserving natural resources; and they are about people. We educate students and visitors, keep Afro-Caribbean culture alive, and engage the community in planning for the future.

Through the Friends our members offer their "best shot" at preserving this park we love. The more we share our message the better chance we have at holding back the threats.

Your investment will make a difference in these projects encompassing kids, culture and science:

EDUCATION

- Eco-Camps for Virgin Islands Students **\$20,000** VI public schools cannot provide the natural science education that students deserve. Eco-camps allow 8 to 14-year-olds to spend three days surrounded by National Park hiking, snorkeling and learning about the eco-system.
- Inspirational/Educational Video **\$25,000** A 10-minute video about the Park will ignite the hearts of viewers to the beauty of our islands and the Park's fragile resources. The video will be shown to cruise ship passengers, visitor center guests and others enroute to the Park.
- DVD Production on Conserving Reefs **\$21,000** Schools, gathering places and heavily visited areas will soon be showing our informative production on the current state of the coral reefs in the Virgin Islands.

CULTURE

- Cultural Demonstrations **\$47,000** Annaberg Plantation is the premier cultural destination in the Park. Our support assures that local artisans provide demonstrations to enhance the visitor experience.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

- Long Range Plans **\$48,000** See related article below.
- Waste Reduction/Recycling Program **\$10,000** This program will identify simple ways to reduce recyclable waste, provide facilities, educational materials and begin to institutionalize a strong recycling ethic.
- Student Trail-Clearing Crews **\$35,000** Currently only four of the 22 miles of popular hiking trails in the Park are regularly maintained. Young environmentalists from the Student Conservation Association will come to St. John to assist the Park in improving hiking trails.



SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- Air Quality and Coral Health **\$8,000** - Scientific evidence shows that chemical contaminants in dust carried from Africa deteriorate the health of coral reefs. This project will test air quality on St. John to identify and quantify the contaminants transported via African dust to the Caribbean.

Planning for the Park's Future

The Virgin Islands National Park is challenged by a dual mission to protect the scenic, natural and cultural resources for which the park was established and to provide a quality and enjoyable experience for visitors. To complicate the challenge, the park's popularity is growing, with visitor counts for 2000 exceeding 1.1 million persons. In addition, marine resources within the park are not as healthy as expected given 45 years of national park protection. Similarly, the island's cultural resources are rapidly deteriorating. In response to these challenges and opportunities and to proactively address the future, the Park is engaging in a number of planning efforts thanks to support from the Friends.

The Commercial Services Plan defines how commercial activities occurring within the park will be managed. The plan has undergone public review and is expected to be finalized in the next few weeks. In particular, the plan establishes limitations on new commercial use permits and capacities for commercial tour groups at the Park's most popular sites in an effort to manage increasing visitation.

A Vessel Management Plan will be released shortly for final public review. This plan will address where anchoring is permitted, fees for mooring and anchoring within park waters, mooring maintenance, beach access, boating facilities and services such as pumpout facilities, and speed and noise regulations.



According to Park Planner Jim Owens, "both the Commercial Services and Vessel Management Plans have involved extensive public outreach, so that there should be no surprises; all of the issues have been brought out in an ongoing dialog with all of the parties affected by the plans."

Soon, the park's 1997 Land Protection Plan will be updated. This plan will identify and prioritize what private land in-holdings need to be in public ownership to ensure the integrity of the park.

The park is considering establishing Hassel Island in Charlotte Amalie Harbor on St. Thomas as a "relief valve" for increasing visitation to St. John. Planning will begin this fall to define appropriate types of visitor facilities and how they can best be financed and managed.

A concessionaire assists a visitor at Trunk Bay

In addition to the planning efforts supported by the Friends, several other efforts are anticipated. The Park has requested funding to update its 1983 General Management Plan, and to create a General Management Plan for the new Coral Reef National monument. A Scenic Viewshed Plan will inventory the park's scenic resources and develop management tools to provide long-term protection for the most outstanding viewsheds. Finally, the Park has been working on a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan to determine the types and quantities of interpretive services to be provided, and define interpretive themes and visitor experience goals.

A Gateway Planning Council has also recently been established, including members of various local groups, to advise and assist the Park Service and the Territory in cooperatively planning for improvements to Cruz Bay as a "gateway community" to the National Park.

VINP requests public involvement in all of these efforts. For information on the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan, contact Paul Thomas at 340/776-6201x252. For information on the other planning projects, contact Jim Owens at 340/776-6201x247.

Wolf Trap Presents Virgin Islands National Park

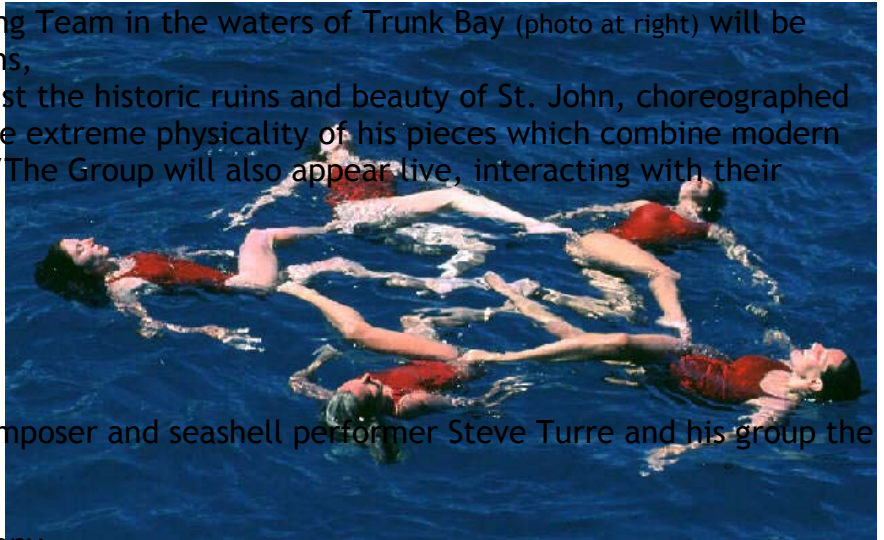
This year the Virgin Islands National Park will be the focus of the Face of America™ performance at Wolf Trap, our National Park for the Performing Arts. Premiering Saturday, September 8, 2001, Face of America™ is a performance series designed to recognize and explore the role of our National Parks in preserving America's rich natural and cultural resources. Each year a different park is celebrated.

In April a film crew came to St. John to capture several special performances:

- The U.S. Olympic Synchronized Swimming Team in the waters of Trunk Bay (photo at right) will be displayed on high definition large screens,
- An original dance piece performed amidst the historic ruins and beauty of St. John, choreographed by Donald Byrd. Byrd is renowned for the extreme physicality of his pieces which combine modern dance and classical ballet. Donald Byrd/The Group will also appear live, interacting with their onscreen images.

In addition, several other acts will be a part of this artistic celebration in a multimedia presentation on stage at Wolf Trap.

- World-famous African-American jazz composer and seashell performer Steve Turre and his group the Sanctified Shells
- Alice McGill, storyteller
- EVIDENCE, a contemporary dance company



For information about sponsoring this event, or to purchase tickets, visit the website at www.wolftrap.org, or contact Trudy Toliver at the Friends (340)779-4940.

A Chapter Closes

The Friends recently closed another chapter. In March we said good-bye to our first executive director, John Garrison. As John prepared to leave, it became a time of reflection on where we have been and where we are headed.



John began in 1995 as the first paid employee for the Friends. He set high goals and far exceeded them in his 6 years with the organization. Under his leadership, John increased annual fundraising from foundations and generous individuals from \$50,000 in 1995 to a high of \$2,400,000 in 1998. Additionally, he helped raise \$1,250,000 in federal funds for land acquisition. When John began, we had fewer than 200 members - today we have over 2,000.

John recently relocated to Florida with his wife, Ginger. He is working for the Trust for Public Land, the only national nonprofit working exclusively to protect land for human enjoyment and well-being.

In six wonderful years, John not only gave Friends his talent and experience, but also his passion for this Park and the island of St. John. Good luck John - you will be missed, but will always remain a Friend.

Loyalty Means Everything!

We are proud to appreciate our many loyal donors. These businesses, families and individuals have contributed annually for at least four consecutive years. Thank you for your dedication!

David & Toni Walker
Fred Stanback
Rudy & Irene Patton
Sue Sawyer
Maho Bay Camps
The Lime Inn
Donald & Betty Lentnek
Christie O'Neil
John & Ginger Garrison

Sylvia Weaver
Miles & Susan Stair
Tall Ship Trading
Glen & Radha Speer
Anna Lawson
Joy & Andy Stillman
Supply Resources
Susan & Mal Preston
Sis Frank

Mary Kay Stoehr
Peter & Ann Nowak
Mike & Ruth Blumenfeld
American Paradise Real Estate
Joan & Ed Bermingham
Mongoose Junction Merchants
William & Kathleen Gormley
Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc.
Hyland & Beth Johns
Mongoose Junction Tenants

Holiday Homes
Susan Hughson
Chris & Elsa Angel
Cruise Ship Excursions
Barbara & Ken Dahlberg
Roger & Erna Killion
Warren & Judith Radtke
Kent & Paula Savel
Berrie & Marguerite Rich
Sue and Hank Fredrickson

ECO-CAMPS

Fun Environmental Learning
Ages 8-14 ~ Three days ~ July & August

Sponsored by the Friends & Disney Cruise Line

At VIERS on St. John

Call 340-776-6721
\$30 refundable registration fee