

# Friends Tidings

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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](mailto: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.

## New Projects

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## Tidings Notes

### Holiday Greetings

From all of us here on St. John to all of you - *all over the world* - we wish you a happy, healthy and safe holiday season.

### Save the Date

The Friends' **Annual Meeting** is fast approaching. Join us **Sunday, January 27 at 2:00** at T'ree Lizards Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay. Hear from former National Park Service Director Robert Stanton. Superintendent King will provide a *State of the Park* address and our Joe Kessler will update you on Friends' activities.

### Welcome - Janet Burton

The Friends is delighted to welcome Janet Burton as Administrative Assistant. After 29 years with the VI School District, Janet now works part time at the Friends and is writing a biography about notable St. Johnians.

### Strategic Planning

A two-day workshop kicks off our Board of Director's strategic planning process. With input from stakeholders, the Board will address key issues facing the Friends and will work to plot future goals.



Board members Andy Stillman, Irene Patton and John Fuller discuss the Friends' strategic plan.

## Future Friends' Projects

The Friends Board of Directors approved an ambitious program plan for 2002 at their October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Focused in four functional areas, our projects intend to protect natural and cultural resources, educate youth and adults and conduct scientific research.

### Resource Protection

- *Hurricane Hole Moorings*: install approximately 100 storm moorings in Hurricane Hole to protect the ecosystem while providing safe anchorage.
- *Resource Access Moorings*: install six moorings for fishermen and two dive moorings in the Coral Reef National Monument.
- *Trail Crews*: the return of a successful project from last year, a crew from the Student Conservation Association will expand their work in trail repair and maintenance.
- *Resource Management Interns*: provide support for interns to assist park staff in the areas of archeology and resource management.
- *Adopt a Trail or Beach*: involve schools, community groups and businesses in a volunteer beach and trail clean-up and light maintenance program.
- *Maho Bay Road*: improve Maho Bay road drainage to reduce runoff.
- *Long Range Plans*: support professional planning work for management of Park resources.

### Cultural Preservation

- *Annaberg Cultural Demonstrations*: continue support of cultural demonstrations by providing materials and honorariums to the culture bearers/presenters.
- *Hassel Island Restoration*: clean-up and open to visitors the Creque Marine Railway area of Hassel Island.
- *Carabana Ensemble Presentations*: support sixteen presentations of "*Toussaint*", an original play, performed at Cinnamon Bay.

### Environmental Education

- *Interactive Computer Kiosk*: produce a touchscreen interactive educational program for a kiosk at the Park's Visitor Center.
- *Park Video*: produce an 8-minute inspirational video about the Park designed for potential visitors.
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*Coral Reef Educational Program:* schools and gathering places will have equipment and information to educate about the state of Virgin Islands coral reef ecosystems.

- *Scholarship Fund:* provide 1-2 scholarships annually to St. Johnians studying at UVI in a natural resource protection or management-related field.
- *Eco-camps:* a popular project from last year – sponsor four Eco-camps for Virgin Island youth.
- *Developer/builder Environmental Education:* offer seminars for developers, builders and owners who wish to increase their awareness of environmental issues.

### Scientific Research

- *African Dust Research:* continue research on the impact of African dust on the Park's reefs and ecosystems.

The total estimated cost of these projects is \$485,000. This is a challenging plan, but one the Friends is prepared to meet with your help and support.



*The touchscreen computer kiosk helps visitors understand issues facing our marine habitats.*

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## Park Deals with Feral Animals

This fall, Superintendent King announced the adoption of an environmental assessment and plan to reduce the populations of three non-native species: cats, rats and mongooses. After public comment and revision of the plans, the three-phased actions will begin in early 2002.

Non-native or feral animals are those that have been introduced by humans and have established breeding populations on the island. Feral animals disrupt the complex native ecology, jeopardize endangered and native plants and animals, and degrade natural habitats.

The purpose of the Park's program is to reduce and sustain lower populations of the non-native animals. Due to the permeability of Park boundaries and private

residences within and adjacent to the Park, permanent eradication of the animals is impossible.

"By reducing the populations inside the Park, adverse impacts to visitors, residents and natural and cultural resources would decrease," says Ralf Boulon, Chief of Resource Management.

Three phases of action will reduce and then sustain lower populations of cats, rats and mongoose. Phase I identifies food/trash and habitat sites, inspects buildings and landscaping for animal access, educates concessionaires and employees, develops and implements plans to address issues identified.

Phase II implements quick population reduction by trapping and poisoning. For cats, the Park will use humane methods of trapping and coordinate with local animal welfare groups for adoption and sterilization. Sites targeted for quick reduction are Hawksnest, Trunk, Cinnamon and Francis Bays.

Finally, ongoing monitoring of food/trash and habitat sites as well as population counts will keep the reduced populations in check and the impact of non-native animals to a minimum.

This and future plans to reduce larger mammal populations in the Park mirror programs throughout the world and are in concert with National Park Service mandates. Visitors will experience a Park actively protecting the native wildlife and habitats for which it was founded to preserve for future generations.



*Feral cats tug at our heart strings but they also hunt native lizards and birds even when they are not hungry.*

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## New Exhibits at Park's Visitor Center

Grand Opening and Dedication of Virgin Islands National Park's Visitor Center exhibits will be Thursday, January 17 at 11:00 am. Mark your calendar!

New exhibits include two Friends-sponsored activities — an interactive computer program about marine habitats and their causes of decline and an 8-minute inspirational video about the Park. The video will also be shown on cruise ships and other tourist sites.

Stop by the Park's Visitor Center to see a fascinating display of sights, sounds and souls of our Park. A giant relief map or "diorama" shows St. John's topography and describes points of interest around the island.

A progressive display takes you from the depths of the ocean floor through coral reefs and shoreline, to the land and people of the pre-Columbian, post-Columbian and subsistence eras. Join the adventure!



*Stop by the Park's Visitor Center to view all-new natural and cultural exhibits about the Park.*

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## Archeology Relies on Students and Volunteers

Volunteers and university student interns are the backbone of the Park's archeology program. "We would not be able to get so much of this work accomplished without those students," says Ken Wild, the Park's archeologist. "And we need students to help supervise volunteers and educate people who visit the site. It's great experience for them," he adds.

As we have for many years, the Friends will raise funds to provide a small stipend for interns at the archeology sites and for some natural resource protection projects. These opportunities are ideal for young people. Students get to practice working in their field while interacting with the public and learning to supervise volunteer workers.

Interns usually come to live on St. John for one to four months. Volunteers may join the program for a few hours or for several weeks.

Currently, the need for interns is great due to the volume of artifacts to be archived. Specific activities of this year's interns include:

- Sorting and analyzing artifacts,
- Reconstructing vessels,
- Cataloging artifacts,

- Inputting data and developing database programs,
- Archiving historic documents, maps and photographs, and
- Educating the public - site tours, campground lectures and classroom programs.

The willing labor of students and volunteers allows the Park to ensure proper stewardship of the artifacts while keeping the program open to the public for their education and participation.

If you would like to host or help us fund student interns please call the Friends at 340-779-4940.



*Student interns conduct archeology work and educate visitors at the site.*

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## Field Seminars for 2002 — Better Than Ever!

Add to your fun on St. John by signing up for one of our field seminars. Choose from a variety of interesting topics then join the adventure.

New this season is a photography class led by Steve Simonsen. We'll also offer seminars on the history, architecture and people of St. John, led by local experts. Explore the Annaberg sugar factory complex with historian David Knight, or join Ken Wild as he leads you through the discovery of a prehistoric temple at Cinnamon Bay.

And as always, our biologist-led day sailing and snorkeling trips will be offered. Or join a bird watching expedition or botany hike. You could even learn to cook a local dish using traditional methods.

Get out and learn about St. John. You'll appreciate its cultural and natural wonders. Most seminars last two to four hours and range in price from \$25 to \$60. Visit our website at [www.friendsvinp.org](http://www.friendsvinp.org) to get details on seminar topics, dates and times. Sign up by phone at 340-779-4940.

**New for Members Only** - Our popular seminars fill up quickly. So, this year we will hold space until one week in advance of each seminar for members only. But it's still a good idea to call early to get your favorite seminar.

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## *Volunteers Needed*

Are you fascinated by the history and pre-history of St. John? Consider volunteering at one of the Park's archeology sites or as a guide at Annaberg Plantation. Contact us at (340) 779-4940 or [info@friendsvinp.org](mailto:info@friendsvinp.org) for more information.

### **Success Comes Only with *Your* Support**

The Friends has embarked on an ambitious and challenging plan to complete seventeen projects in and for the Park this year. We are committed to this plan and believe that we can meet this challenge.

However, we can only be successful with your help and your support.

We urgently need your generous donations: both cash contributions and your valuable volunteer time.

Please give – together we can make a difference in our Park.



Contact us by calling (340) 779-4940 or email us at [info@friendsvinp.org](mailto:info@friendsvinp.org)

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And don't forget our online boutique.



*Some of the items you can buy online which support Friends' programs*