

Coral Reef National Monument Ownership Confirmed



The General Accounting Office issued an opinion on November 15th confirming federal ownership of the submerged lands within the VI Coral Reef National Monument and the Buck Island Reef National Monument. The VI territorial government had challenged the federal government's ownership

of these submerged lands and hence their authority to proclaim them national monuments. Delegate Donna M. Christensen requested the GAO's opinion back in March 2001 and the NPS was essentially blocked from managing the Monument while the opinion was pending.

The Friends have been a staunch supporter of the establishment of the Monument and we ardently hope that now that the legal challenges have been lifted, that the NPS expeditiously publish and implement the regulations for managing the Coral Reef National Monument and make this vital marine reserve a reality.

Project Plan for 2002/2003

Each fall, the Superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park submits a prioritized list of needs to the Friends' Board of Directors. Given limitation of federal funding for the Park – it typically meets only 70% of the Park's budgetary needs – Friends' support is often the only way critical natural resource protection, cultural preservation and environmental education activities can take place.



The Friends' Board carefully considers the projects in the Park's Support Request. Those projects that are approved, along with Friends-initiated projects that the Board chooses to undertake, constitute our annual project plan. This year we have committed to another ambitious and challenging project plan that will contribute to making Virgin Islands National Park a model of natural resource protection and cultural preservation. This plan, projected to cost more than \$400,000 includes the following projects:

Natural Resource Protection

Resource Protection Moorings (\$185,000): install storm refuge moorings in Hurricane Hole for about 100 boats and moorings for hard-nose fishermen and divers, all within the VI Coral Reef National Monument.

SCA Trail Crew (\$25,000): again sponsor a crew of budding conservationists from the Student Conservation Association to repair and upgrade priority trails within the Park.

Ghost Trap Removal (\$15,000): financial incentives for local fishermen and others to remove illegal and/or abandoned fish traps. These traps wastefully catch fish that are not harvested and cause unnecessary damage to reefs and seabed ecosystems.

Exotic Vegetation Control (\$8,600): support research and control efforts regarding invasive and exotic vegetation within the Park.

Adopt a Trail / Beach (\$1,000): promotes community participation in the Park by organizing civic, religious and business groups to adopt beaches and trails for periodic cleanups.

Cultural Preservation

Hassel Island Restoration (\$10,000): continuing effort to restore the Creque Marine Railway area to allow the site to be safely visited while promoting community involvement in the further restoration of Hassel Island.

Annaberg Cultural Presentations (\$33,100): continuing support of the cultural presentation program at Annaberg Plantation in addition to establishing a volunteer docent program at the site.

Historic Structures Vegetation Removal (\$12,800): stabilize and enhance viewing by removing the damaging vegetation that has engulfed many of the Park's historic structures.

Archeological Artifact Preservation (\$20,000): assists with the preservation of the thousands of artifacts uncovered in the archeological digs by supporting material purchases, location costs of interns and organizing volunteers.

Folklife Festival (\$10,000): continuing Friends support of the premier cultural festival on St. John held during Black History Month (February).

Cultural Theatre Presentation (\$9,800): support a weekly theatrical presentation (January – April) by Carabana Ensemble Theater Company entitled "Queen Mary" (a monodrama celebrating the life and times of Mary Thomas, former slave and labor leader from St. Croix).

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<p>Mark Your Calendars!</p>	<p>FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 12, 2003 <i>(See Tidings Notes, page 2 for details)</i></p>
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• TIDINGS NOTES •

Friends Annual Meeting

The Friends' 2003 Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday 12th beginning at 2pm at the T'ree Lizards Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay. We are honored that our keynote speaker will be Fran Mainella, Director of the National Park Service. Director Mainella is the 16th Director of the NPS and its first woman director. VINP Superintendent John King will present the annual "State of the Park" address, and Friends' President, Joe Kessler, will report on Friends' activities for the last year and plans for the future. We will also elect two new members of the Board of Directors. Light snacks and beverages will be provided. Please mark your calendar and make every effort to attend this important meeting.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Are you looking for a fulfilling and fun experience in which you can learn more about the natural and cultural history of the Virgin Islands? Please consider volunteering for the Friends. Here are some of the many projects in the Park that need your help:

- **Beach/Trail Clean-ups** – Join a team of volunteers for a day of fun on the beach or a hiking trail!
- **Friends Interpreter** – Become Friends representative by presenting information about projects and events happening within the Park.
- **Office Assistant** – Assist in the Friends office at Mongoose Junction.
- **Front Desk Assistant** – Work in the Visitor Center by answering questions about St. John's culture and natural history, selling books and gifts, greeting guests and answering phones.
- **Guide/Docent** – Lead regularly scheduled or special request programs (training will be provided) for the following: Annaberg Living History Demonstrations, Reef Bay Hike, Snorkel Trip at Trunk Bay, Seashore Walk, Campground Evening Program, Special Events.
- **Kiosk Attendant** – Open and close the Kiosk at Trunk Bay while providing general and Park-specific information to visitors.
- **Historic Ruins** – Remove harmful growths of vegetation from 6 historical sites while learning about the cultural history of St. John.
- **Artifact Preservation** – Assist in recording information on artifacts excavated from Cinnamon Bay.

Whatever your specialty or interest, we can find a place for you. To volunteer, please call Emily at 340/779-4940 or email eburton@friendsvinp.org

Friends' Mission:

The Friends of Virgin Islands National Park is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of Virgin Islands National Park and promotes the responsible enjoyment of this unique national treasure.

News From VINP



By John King
Superintendent VINP

Hello Friends! "High Season" is rapidly approaching so the park is preparing for the flurry of visitors and the hub-hub of activity that accompanies this time of year. Many exciting things are on the horizon that we look forward to. Let me share just a few tidbits with you.

We are kicking off our "Rent-A-Ranger" program on January 1. This is a program where we are providing specialized interpretive programs and tours to our commercial partners on a cost reimbursable basis. This will be a great opportunity for us to supplement our Interpretive Ranger staff, expand our interpretive offerings, and touch a much larger segment of our visitor community with a park or conservation-related message. Some of the programs we've booked so far are additional guided hikes for the Westin Resort and the Caneel Bay Resort guests, a Ranger-led snorkel excursion, and an around-the-island tour.

We will complete our Vessel Management Plan within the next few months. The development of this document is the culmination of a planning process that started over 2 years ago. This will represent the first time in the 45-year history of this park that we will have a comprehensive blueprint on how marine activities will be managed.

We have been selected as only the second park within the National Park System to participate in the Business Plan Implementation Initiative. As you may recall, we developed a Business Plan for the park in the summer of 2001 with the assistance of consultants provided through the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). We will now be host to two NPCA management consultants for the next several months who will assist us in implementing the financial and marketing strategies outlined in our Business Plan

We will begin the General Management Plan process this year. This will result in a new GMP for the park and the initial GMP for the Coral Reef National Monument. These plans will serve as a guide to how these park units will be managed for the next 15-20 years. What a wonderful opportunity we have to shape the future for these grand parks.

This will now doubt be a busy and we hope productive and successful year for the park. Our task is made much easier with Friends and supporters like you. Thanks for everything! Hope to see you out in the park.

Memberships can now be renewed on-line by going directly to our website at:

http://www.friendsvinp.org/new_stuff/joindirect.htm



If you would like to receive the Friends' newsletter in the future via email, please drop us a line:

newsletter@friendsvinp.org



Seminars

St. John offers an enticing world of natural wonders and cultural traditions awaiting exploration. Whatever your interest – St. John History, Botany, Afro-Caribbean Drumming or tropical fish – Friends of Virgin Islands National Park helps you discover and learn about St. John by providing field seminars. This year, try your hand at pit firing pottery, nature photography or any one of our countless offerings. Experts in all these disciplines volunteer their time to Friends of Virgin Islands National Park as a fundraising effort. Seminars range in price from \$25–\$70 and last from two to six hours. All proceeds are a donation to the Friends. Call 779-4940 to sign up, space is limited.

January Seminars

- Jan. 11, Sat.** – *Hawksnest Beach Botany Walk* with Eleanor Gibney
- Jan. 15, Wed.** – *English Creole: A History of the Spoken Word on St. John* with Elroy Sprauve
- Jan. 18, Sat.** – *A Community In Transition, East End, St. John* with Bernie Kemp and Guy Benjamin
- Jan. 22, Wed.** – *Tropical Photography Workshop* with Steve Simonsen
- Jan. 25, Sat.** – *Leinster Bay; A Piece of Ireland in the Danish West Indies* with historian, David Knight
- Jan. 29, Wed.** – *Creating the National Park: A Look at 1930–1950* with PhD candidate, Crystal Fortwangler

February Seminars

- Feb. 1, Sat.** – *Pirates of the Virgin Islands* aboard 42-ft. gaff-rigged ketch, *Breath*
- Feb. 5, Wed.** – *Crafting Spirits from Wood* with local artist, Jay Robinson
- Feb. 8, Sat.** – *Bird Watching* with local Audubon Society President and Park Ranger, Laurel Brannick
- Feb. 15, Sat.** – *Tropical Photography Workshop* with Steve Simonsen
- Feb. 16, Sun.** – *Marine Biology Sailing Trip* aboard *Adventurer* with Park biologist, Jeff Miller
- Feb. 19, Wed.** – *History of the Annaberg Sugar Factory* with historian, David Knight
- Feb. 26, Wed.** – *Traditional Seed-Beading* with Park Ranger, Deanna Somerville

March Seminars

- Mar. 1, Sat.** – *Wonders of Archaeology* with Park archaeologist, Ken Wild
- Mar. 2, Sun.** – *Stars and Their Stories* with astro-mythologist, Kelly Hunter
- Mar. 8, Sat.** – *Traditional West Indian Cooking* with Park Ranger, Denise Georges

- Mar. 12, Wed.** – *Afro-Caribbean Drumming Workshop* with drum master, Eddie Bruce
- Mar. 15, Sat.** – *Coastal Ecology Boat Trip* with Rafe Boulon, Chief of Resource Management for the Park
- Mar. 17, Mon.** – *Taino Pottery Pit Firing Workshop* with & **21, Fri.** Gail Van de Bogurt and archaeologist, Ken Wild
- Mar. 22, Sat.** – *St. John Architecture* with Glen Speer
- Mar. 26, Sat.** – *Bats! Bats! Everywhere!* with Park biologist, Jim Peterson
- Mar. 29, Sat.** – *Ocean Conservancy trip* onboard catamaran, *Allura*

April Seminars

- Apr. 5, Sat.** – *Marine Life Enthusiast's Trip* with Kathy Packo
- Apr. 9, Wed.** – *History of Moravian Churches on St. John* with Janet Burton
- Apr. 12, Sat.** – *Solar Energy and Recycled Art (glassblowing!)* at Maho Bay
- Apr. 16, Wed.** – *St. John Architecture* with local resident, Glen Speer
- Apr. 19, Sat.** – *Bats! Bats! Everywhere!* with Park biologist, Jim Peterson
- Apr. 23, Wed.** – *Wonders of Archaeology* with Park archaeologist, Ken Wild
- Apr. 27, Wed.** – *Snorkel Identification Adventure* with Lucy Portlock

Planned Giving and the Friends

In all honesty, not many of us like to think ahead about our final days or our final words. In fact, half of all Americans pass on without a written estate plan. Yet this is an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy that speaks to what we are about and what we hope for those we leave behind.

To better understand what you, our members, thought about planned giving and the Friends, we recently conducted a small survey to seek your input. We felt deeply honored by those who said that they have already mentioned the Friends in their wills and we were greatly encouraged by those who requested suggested language to include the Friends in their wills or information on other planned giving instruments.

Planned giving provides the tools for each of us to make a meaningful final statement about what we love, cherish and hold dear. Whether honoring a loved one or a favorite charity, our planned gifts provide support that continues long after the reading of a last will and testament. It truly is the gift that keeps on giving.

Below are some of the most common planned giving arrangements. This information is general in nature and we strongly suggest that you consult the appropriate estate planning professionals to draw up and estate plan that is specific to your interests and needs.

- **Wills and Bequests** are the most common planned gifts. These enable you to direct the distribution of your assets, provide for your heirs in a manner you choose, possibly eliminate or reduce certain taxes or other costs, and designate a portion of your assets as a gift to your favorite charity.

- **Charitable Remainder Trusts and Charitable Lead Trusts** are popular planned gifts that can be to complement or as an alternative to an outright bequest. They offer significant tax advantages and ensure important benefits to the Friends.

If Virgin Islands National Park and St. John has been important in your life and you would like to ensure its protection and preservation for future generations, please consider a planned gift to the Friends. This will truly be a gift that keeps on giving. For more information, please contact Joe Kessler (jkessler@friendsvinp.org).

Project Plan for 2002/2003 (Continued from page 1)

Environmental Education

Eco-Camps (\$20,000): again sponsor summer camps for Virgin Islands youth, allowing them to spend three days at VIERS learning about marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Parks-as-Classrooms (\$5,000): logistic support for the Park's efforts to promote using the Park as an open-air classroom for high school science students.

School park-study grants (\$5,000): small grants to assist teachers in St. John schools to creatively incorporate the Park in the class studies.

Recycling Contest (\$5,000): prizes for the winning classes in the Park's annual recycling contest.

Scholarship Fund (\$7,000): continuing to provide scholarships and summer employment for two Virgin Islanders in their junior or senior year of university studies related to natural resource management.

Environmental Education & Construction (\$1,000): seminars for property owners planning to build homes, developers and contractors on environmentally responsible design and construction practices.

Members wishing more information, or wishing to become involved with any of these projects are welcome to come by the office or call. We invite members who are particularly interested in one of these projects to consider being a special sponsor of the project. Please contact Kim for more information.

President's Message



By Joe Kessler

We have once again embarked on a very challenging and ambitious program plan to support Virgin Islands National Park. As described on the front page, our Board of Directors has approved more than \$400,000 worth of new and continued projects for this year. We are delighted to be able to continue

supporting the Annaberg Cultural Presentations, Cultural Theater Productions, SCA Trail Crews, Folklife Festival, and Eco-Camps, which have become important regular components of our program. We are also very excited about the new projects that will: facilitate using the Park as a living classroom for schoolchildren; preserve thousands of archeological artifacts; stabilize historic structures in the Park by removing the vegetation that threatens them; and, install moorings that

will allow continuation of traditional uses of the VI Coral Reef National Monument's waters, while respecting the regulations of this marine reserve.

We have this ambitious plan, but we can only be successful with your help and support. You can help and get involved by being a volunteer and a number of volunteer opportunities are listed in this newsletter – it's fun, and you will be doing something important. You have been very generous in the past and your continued financial support is essential if we are going to achieve what we have challenged ourselves to do. I recently sent you a letter asking for a special contribution to support this year's projects. I would like to thank all of you who have already responded – your contributions are very much appreciated. If my letter is still in your in-tray, I hope that it will soon receive your favorable and generous consideration.

I thank you for your support. It heartens and encourages our quest to help make Virgin Islands National Park a model of natural resource protection and cultural preservation.



P.O. Box 811
St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands 00831
Phone: 340-779-4940 • Fax: 340-693-9973
www.friendsvinp.org

