



Join Arawak Expeditions on a Friends' Adventure

As an exclusive benefit to the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park, Arawak Expeditions is offering a five-day kayak expedition around St. John. From October 6–10, Arawak will lead a small group of 10–12 kayakers and two guides on a “St. John Adventure.” The tour will depart from Cruz Bay and completely circumnavigate the island. The itinerary, of course, will include St. John’s popular north shore. However, kayakers will also experience the quieter sides of St. John and explore secluded beaches and coves. Planned overnight stops are at Cinnamon Bay Campground, Maho Bay Camps, Vie’s East End Campground and V.I.E.R.S. at Lameshur Bay. The price for the five day trip is \$995, and all proceeds will benefit the Friends. Included are four nights lodging, all meals, five days of kayaking and special sessions with Park experts.

Arawak Expeditions was founded by Arthur Jones in 1993. Arthur moved to St. John in 1990 to lead kayak tours, fell in love with the island, and decided to call St. John home. He met his wife, Beth here in 1995 and together they run this small business. In addition to half and full-day kayak tours of St. John’s National Park, they also offer five-day kayak expeditions in the BVI, guided mountain bike tours on St. John, and seven day “St. John Adventure Week” packages. Their mission is to provide safe, enjoyable expeditions while having the least impact possible on the natural environment. This benefit is their way of “paying back” to the community and the environment for all that they have received. Below is the planned itinerary for this trip.

Day 1: We meet at 8:00am at Low Key Watersports in Cruz Bay. After a brief introductory meeting, we’ll spend some time teaching you the fundamentals of how to kayak, then pack the kayaks and go! Our first stop will be Henley Cay before continuing on to Cinnamon Bay

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Farewell to John King

The Friends is extremely sad to see Superintendent John King leave. After only 2-1/2 years as VINP Superintendent, John is transferring to Big Bend National Park in Texas. John was arguably one of the best superintendents VINP has ever had and he has certainly raised the bar in what we will expect from future superintendents.

In his short tenure John assembled an excellent team of division chiefs and led remarkable improvements in the moral and team spirit of all VINP staff. Most importantly, John demonstrated courageous leadership and a commitment to resolving many of the thorny, long-standing issues facing the Park. He did this in a professional, responsible and highly communicative manner. While obviously not everyone agrees with the stances taken by the Park, John painstakingly tried to find equitable solutions, always gave everyone ample opportunities to discuss the issues and was willing to compromise – except where it threatened the Park’s natural or cultural resources.

In addition, John is a keen advocate of partnership and fostered an excellent working relationship with the Friends. He certainly appreciated that the Park and the Friends were both most successful when working in concert. It was a pleasure working with John and we wish him well in his new assignment.

Mark Woods returned to VINP as interim Superintendent, while the NPS identifies a new superintendent. Some Friends members will remember Mark, who was here as Deputy Superintendent in 1996. He will stay until July, when (hopefully) a permanent replacement will have been named.

Monument Now In Operation

Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument is finally in operation. On May 5th implementation of the Monument’s interim regulations went into effect governing the management of the Monument as a marine protected area. President Clinton proclaimed the Monument on January 17, 2001, but its implementation was held up first by the Territorial Government’s legal challenge as to the ownership of the submerged lands and subsequent bureaucratic foot-dragging by the Department of the Interior.

The Friends has been staunch advocates for the creation of the Monument and we are very pleased that it is finally in operation – albeit nearly two years after its establishment. The Friends is funding mooring projects that will allow continuing traditional uses of the Monument’s waters while respecting the no-anchoring provisions of the proclamation. In the next month, or so, we will be installing overnight and day-use moorings in Hurricane Hole and moorings for blue runner fishing in Monument waters south of St. John.

• TIDINGS NOTES •

Carabana Wows Cinnamon Bay Once Again!

The Friends is proud to have been, once again, associated with the Carabana Ensemble Theater productions at the Cinnamon Bay Amphitheater this past winter. This year's production, entitled "Queen Mary", was the story of the Caribbean woman and former slave who led the St. Croix Labor Revolt of 1878. The play is set in the Frederiksted market, and Queen Mary comes to life on the 150th anniversary of the revolt, also known colloquially as "The Fire Burn". Written and directed by Clarence Cuthbertson, the play highlighted the talents of Carla Sewer, who portrayed the Crucian heroine. The 12 performances were informative, educational, enjoyable and professional productions. The audiences were enthusiastic and each performance was before a full house. It was most definitely a "smashing success!"

Welcome Jackie Dix!

Please join us in welcoming the newest addition to our staff, Jackie Dix, the Friends' new administrative assistant.



Jackie Dix

Originally from Wisconsin, Jackie moved to St. John last March. She comes to the Friends with a degree from University of Wisconsin-La Crosse with Business Administration and International Business. Although this is her first time in the Caribbean, Jackie has wasted no time fitting in: she enjoys sailing, snorkeling, and beach volleyball.

She is also enjoying the opportunity to learn and work with a non-profit organization and do what she can to support Virgin Island National Park. Jackie can best help you with matters related to membership, license plates and Friends Boutique items.

News From VINP

By John King
Superintendent VINP



Hello Friends,

I bid you all good TIDINGS in this, my final column for the Friends' newsletter. As many of you know, I have accepted the Superintendent position at Big Bend National Park in Texas and will have left the beautiful Virgin Islands by the time you read this.

My two years at Virgin Islands National Park has been a magical and memorable experience, one that my wife Martha and I will forever cherish. Our time has been made even more special because of the great partnership that exists between the Park and the Friends.

Virgin Islands National Park is blessed indeed to have Friends like you. Your interest in, support of, commitment to, and love for this Park makes our job so much easier. Thanks for all you do.

Even though another "high season" has passed, the Park is still filled with visitors who are enjoying the warm, crystal-clear water, white sandy beaches, and spectacular scenery. Each year it seems that the season gets a little longer.

Good things are on the horizon for the Park. Let me share just a few of the plans we have for the month ahead: The long-awaited redevelopment of the Hawksnest beach facilities will start in June. We'll see the new picnic pavilions, restrooms, changing rooms, sidewalks, picnic tables and grills when the four-month long project is concluded. The project is being funded (\$400,000+) through fees collected at Trunk Bay and at Annaberg. Additionally, a \$2.6 million rehab of the North Shore Road will begin this summer. Our new mooring fee collection program will also commence in June, with the companion Bay Host program to start shortly thereafter. The activation of our newest unit, Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument took effect in May. We're most excited, after a prolonged two year legal struggle, to begin to carry out our management responsibilities in the new Monument. A process to develop a new General Management Plan for both the Park and the Monument will also begin this summer. This will provide management direction for these two Park units that will span the next 15-20 years. What a great opportunity that is!

And, once again this summer we will serve as host to a variety of program providing conservation-related work/learning opportunities for young people — specifically the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), an AmeriCorps crew, and a Student Conservation Association (SCA) trail crew. These are but a few of the many exciting things that lie ahead for the Park.

Thanks to each of you for being such an important part of making good things happen. We appreciate you!

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

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.

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Campground. At Cinnamon, VI National Park archaeologist Ken Wild will give us a presentation of the archaeological dig going on at Cinnamon Bay.

Day 2: This is our easy day. We'll paddle to Francis Bay where a National Park ranger will lead us on a bird-watching hike around the salt pond. Next, we'll paddle a short distance to Maho Bay with plenty of time to relax on the beach or go for an afternoon snorkel.

Day 3: This will be our longest day of paddling. We'll paddle our way upwind to Brown Bay and continue up the north shore of St. John, and around the East End to Vie's Campground at Hansen Bay.



Heading out!

the ruins of the sugar factory, then continue on to Ditliff Point. We'll finish in Cruz Bay, around 4 pm, say our goodbyes then head to our respective accommodations.

Book early as space is limited. No previous kayaking experience is necessary, but guests are expected to be in good physical condition.

For more information, please call Kim Lyons at the Friends — 779-4940.

Day 4: From Vie's Campground, we'll kayak around Ram's Head to Salt Pond Bay continuing on to Lameshur Bay, where we will stay at VIERS.

Day 5: On our last day, we'll have a relatively easy, downwind paddle back to Cruz Bay. Along the way, we'll stop at Reef Bay, where we will visit

Friends Sponsors Playground Improvements



Revitalized playground

improve the playground, particularly the toddlers' section. Karen did the lion's share of the work raising nearly \$25,000, purchasing the equipment and organizing the volunteers to assemble and install the equipment. New toddler swings, rocking animals, a playhouse and two climbing structures were installed by volunteers at the end of March. The playground also now has a sand surface and is bordered by gravel, making it look great!

To complete the playground, the long-awaited drinking fountain was also installed. Purchased with funds raised by Ranger Laurel Brannick Trager at Earth Day activities a few years ago, the new fountain was installed by the Park's Maintenance Division.

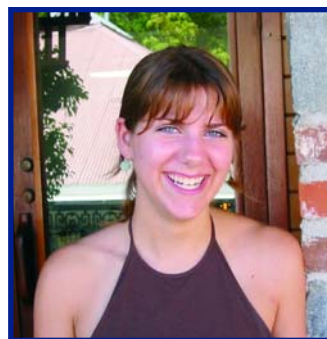
This project was a great example of community participation and Park collaboration. Huge thanks to the many volunteers who gave up their weekend to install the playground equipment, and to the 50 individuals and businesses that made financial or in-kind contributions. Special thanks to: The Prosser/ICC Foundation, Trust Asset Management, St. John Hardware, Mongoose Restaurant, Scott Sports, Caribbean Villas, St. John Accommodations Council, Michael Weinman, Majestic Construction, Eleanor Gibney, St. John Action Committee, and the St. John Rotary.

Be sure to come by and check out the new playground. Better yet, bring your kids, grandkids, nieces and/or nephews and let them enjoy the new facilities.

Creating Conservation Leaders One Student at a Time

Once again, the Friends has offered two terrific opportunities to assist students through college and their future careers. This year, two students from the University of the Virgin Islands were selected for our John H. King Scholarship Fund and one student from the University of Massachusetts was chosen to be our summer intern.

The Friends Scholarship Fund, recently named in tribute of John King, Virgin Islands National Park's departing Superintendent, offers \$1,000 per academic year, plus the opportunity to work on an SCA Summer Trail crew in the Virgin Islands National Park. Leia LaPlace, second-time scholarship recipient, is native to St. Croix and studies Marine Biology and Business Management at UVI. Sean Richardson, born on St. Thomas, is a Biology major



Beth Jackendoff

interested in natural resource management and protection.

The Friend's Summer Intern Program offers the experience of working with an environmental non-profit organization, not to mention living on St. John for 8-10 weeks. Beth Jackendoff, environmental studies major, has been selected to assist our staff with project management and general office duties this summer. Beth has worked for AmeriCorps NCCC maintaining trails in Big Bend National Park, and was also a caseworker for several hundred people affected by the September 11th attacks. The Friends extend a warm welcome to Beth!

Looking Towards the Future of Friends' Field Seminars

The Friends has concluded our best ever seminar series! This year we raised almost \$10,000 for environmental education, resource protection and cultural preservation programs and more than 250 people had enjoyable and educational experiences.

If you were one of the participants in this year's seminars, you may have enjoyed strolling Hawksnest beach with local botanist Eleanor Gibney; or, discovered interesting facts about English Creole of St. John with educator Elroy Sprauve. We also had our popular Marine Biology seminar aboard the *Adventurer*, learning all about coral reefs and other marine life with NPS ranger Jeff Miller. Tropical Photography with Steve Simonsen, Afro-Caribbean Drumming with Master Drummer Eddie Bruce, and the history of the Moravian Church with Janet Burton are just a few examples of the Friends' Field seminars that are designed to intrigue and educate everyone about the wonders of our beautiful island.

With the recent seminar program still fresh in our minds and as we begin planning for the 2004 series, we would like to ask for your input on how to make this program even better – not only for us, but for you as well. If you have any suggestions for changes or additions to the timing/scheduling, subject matter, instructors or cost of the seminars, we'd be open to your recommendations.

The Friends would be interested to know what you would like to see offered through our seminar series. Does learning about St. John's native flora or fauna intrigue you? Or are you more of a cultural history enthusiast? What ever your interest, we would like to satisfy it. Please feel free to contact us at seminars@friendsvinp.org or call (340) 779-4940. We appreciate the feedback.

President's Message *By Joe Kessler*



We have been very busy since the last newsletter and a lot has happened in this short time.

You read inside about the Coral Reef National Monument finally being initiated. We have been strong advocates for this Monument, believing that it is essential for healthy marine life and important for Virgin Islands fisheries. I would like to

thank those of you who supported our letter writing campaign on the Monument – you made a difference!

The biggest news is the departure of John King. He will be sorely missed as he is a consummate professional, a pleasure to work with and is firmly committed to partnerships such as with the Friends. In recognition of John's excellent contributions as VINP Superintendent, the Board of Directors decided to name our scholarship fund after him. This scholarship fund promotes the study at the university level by young Virgin Islanders in fields related to natural resource management. If you would like to pay tribute to John's service to

VI National Park, I invite to you to donate to the John King Scholarship Fund.

We are obviously concerned about the choice of a new superintendent. This is a critical time for the Park and we believe that the incoming superintendent should: **Be a visionary** with strong planning skills to lead the upcoming GMP planning process; **Have strong community relations and communication skills** to be able to be effective in dealing with the complex community relations issues facing the Park; **Be a courageous leader** and be willing to stay the course with initiatives currently underway and move on to other pending issues in a sensitive, creative, but resolute manner; and obviously, **Be committed to partnership**. NPS Director Mainella has assured us that the Friends will be involved, to the extent possible, in the selection process and I will do my best to ensure that we get a new superintendent of the standard we have come to expect.

Thank you once again for your continuing support. It is you, Friends members, that give us strength by your numbers and sustenance by your contributions – both financial and in volunteer time. Please continue to keep VI National Park as one of your philanthropic priorities – the Park needs you!

Friends of 
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NATIONAL PARK**

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