

Welcome
to Friends
Tidings!

Welcome to *Friends Tidings*, the quarterly newsletter of the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park. While this newsletter is normally reserved for Friends members, this edition (and future winter editions) is being shared with the entire St. John community to increase understanding of the Friends and of VI National Park. Friends members will note that this edition is twice as big as usual, since there is so much going on and being planned. We hope that all readers enjoy- this edition and find it informative and useful. We also hope that non-members reading *Friends Tidings* will consider joining us in our quest to make Virgin Islands National Park a model of natural resource protection and cultural preservation while promoting the responsible enjoyment of this unique national treasure. Membership information is enclosed.

Friends Adopts New Strategic Plan

Three years ago, the Friends Board of Directors decided that the organization had grown to the point that year-by-year planning was no longer effective, and in response developed its first three-year plan. The board has recently developed and approved its next three-year strategic plan, which went into effect October 1st.

While the focus and thrust of the new plan is similar to the previous one, there were three small, but we believe, significant, changes:

- The formal inclusion of VI Coral Reef National Monument as a national park unit of interest to the Friends and worthy of our support. Hence, when we speak of the "Park" it is generally meant to include VI National Park and Coral Reef National Monument;
- Much greater emphasis on the resources (both natural and cultural) of the Park, rather than the Park itself;
- More emphasis on our advocacy responsibilities, both on behalf of the resources of the Park, and on behalf of the users of the Park.

Over the next three years, these four strategic directions will guide the Friends:

1. **The Friends will be able to consistently and confidently meet challenging fundraising targets and be in a position to consider large capital campaigns.** To achieve this, we seek to increase fundraising and membership by at least 10% per year.
2. **The Friends' role, purpose and approaches will be widely understood in the community.** To achieve this, we will work at increasing the general public's understanding of the projects, activities and positions of the Friends.
3. **Volunteer opportunities and Board and Advisory Council participation will be greatly increased.** To achieve this, we will expand opportunities for volunteer involvement in VINP and Friends projects and activities, and strengthen the Board and Advisory Council.
4. **The Friends will be recognized as an advocate for the users of VINP as well as an influential voice on issues related to the Park.** To achieve this, we will become a more effective advocate for the resources and users of VINP.

This strategic plan is meant to be a living document that is used by both the board to make policy and resource allocation decisions, and, by management to guide operations. This was the case with the first plan, and it is fully expected that this new plan will be used in the same manner.

We invite you to review the strategic plan. You can either view or retrieve it from our website at www.friendsvinp.org/strategic_plan.pdf, or contact the office for a hard copy. In either case, we welcome your comments.

Estate Maho Bay Update

Friends' members learned about the threat to Maho Bay in our last newsletter. Any members who provided us with their email address received additional information and were asked to express their concerns to the Director of National Park Service. To date, more than 2500 people have sought out additional information from our website and at least 500 people have sent emails, letters or faxes to the Director.

The most recent developments that we are aware of is a letter from the NPS to Mr. Simons informing him that the NPS does not have the authority to unilaterally grant permission for his plans to construct a dock in Maho Bay, relocate the road, or drain the wetlands. The NPS went on to suggest that Mr. Simons should proceed with his plans to purchase the land, and that the NPS and Mr. Simons could come to agreement on which parts of the land would be developed. They also provided suggestions on restrictive covenants that would provide environmental protection and minimize the visual impact of the development. Mr. Simons would be able to pursue permits for his plans regarding the dock, road and wetland once he purchased the property, but they are complicated and time-consuming public processes.

While this does not go as far as we would have liked, the Friends believes that this is a positive step in protecting the unique environment of Maho Bay and preserving unimpeded access to this spectacular beach, especially in light of the reality that some development is inevitable in the Maho Bay Valley. We continue to monitor the negotiations and work towards the protection of Maho Bay.

For more information, or to find out what you can do, please visit our website.

• TIDINGS NOTES •

St. John a Cleaner Place Thanks to V.I. Annual Coastal Cleanup

Thank you to everyone who helped make V.I. Annual Coastal Cleanup such a success! The St. John community displayed tremendous effort during this event, collectively removing 120 30-gallon bags of debris from over 6 miles of our island's beaches and coastal shores. A total of fifteen beaches were cleaned, of those, eleven were adopted through the Adopt-A-Beach/Trail Program.

V.I. Annual Coastal Cleanup Weeks have come to a close, but effort to reduce the amount of litter on St. John should not subside. You can still demonstrate your support of this important event by picking up debris when you come across it and by joining the Friends' Adopt-A-Beach/ Trail Program and adopting a beach/trail of your own. For more information on how you can help keep St. John clean, please contact Kristen at 779-4940.

Friends 2006 Annual Meeting

Please join us for the Friends 2006 Annual Meeting. We are honored to have Mr. David Rockefeller Jr. as this year's keynote speaker. David Rockefeller Jr. is the nephew of the late Laurence S. Rockefeller and a noted environmentalist. Also on the program are V.I. National Park's Superintendent, Art Fredrick to give the "State of the Park" address and Friends President, Joe Kessler, presenting the Friends Annual Report.

The meeting is scheduled for Sun., Jan. 22nd, 2006 from 2:00-4:00 at the T'ree Lizard Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay. Light snacks and beverages will be provided, and there will be a shuttle service from the National Park Maintenance Compound near Mongoose Junction. Please call to confirm your attendance, (340) 779-4940.

Be a Friend by Lending a Hand!

Help the Park and the Friends preserve St. John's natural and cultural resources by becoming a volunteer today! Through hands-on work, you'll learn new skills, meet interesting people, and gain a better understanding and appreciation for the Park and our community. Each year, Friends' volunteers contribute thousands of hours to the Park. Interested in getting involved? Here are some ways in which you can help:

Annaberg Docent: During St. John's busy season, visitors inundate the Annaberg Plantation Ruins, a truly unique site rich in historical and cultural significance. It is during this time of year, namely December through May, when volunteers are needed to answer questions and provide tours of the ruins upon request, Monday through Saturday from 10:00AM-2:00PM. Learn more about Annaberg's fascinating history and become a volunteer docent.

Trunk Bay Kiosk: As a Trunk Bay Kiosk Volunteer, you will greet visitors, sell Friends of the Park and National Park merchandise, and hand out informational brochures. The kiosk needs to be staffed Mon. through Fri. during the high season months of December through May.

Naturalist Docent: If you like being outdoors and have an area of special interest and knowledge (i.e. birds, plants, butterflies, marine sciences) you can help the Park offer new interpretive opportunities for visitors, by becoming a volunteer guide on the natural history and ecology of St. John.

REEF Fish Counts: Like to snorkel? Assist Park staff by identifying and recording fish populations and diversity in National Park waters using a REEF fish identification kit. Archaeology Data Recording: Assist Park archaeologist Ken Wild and archaeology interns take photos and record information of important historical artifacts at the National Park archaeology laboratory.

Front Desk Assistant: Welcome guests to the National Park Visitor Center by answering questions about St. John's culture and natural history, selling books and gifts, and answering phones.

Friend's Office Assistant: In the Friends office we have a number of administrative tasks, events, and programs that require assistance throughout the year. We have a full time staff of three, so a helping hand is always welcome!

From the Superintendent

Greetings Friends of Virgin Islands Park!



2006 will underscore the 50th year that Virgin Islands National Park (VINP) has been in existence. Accordingly, VINP staff and Friends of V. I. National Park (the Friends) will have a series of events throughout the year to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Park. The inaugural event will take place on December 31, 2005 with a New Year's Eve Gala. Our final event will be in

December 2006 with the dedication and unveiling of an Interpretive Garden. The garden will be located at the entrance to the Visitor Center and will highlight the role of philanthropy in the establishment of VINP and the recognition of those individuals who have made key contributions to the park since 1956.

Today, VINP has become one of the most popular parks in the National Park system. However, this was not always the case. In 1957, the first year that the park collected visitation data, approximately 11,000 visitors entered the Park. Today, that number has grown to nearly a million visitors per year. It was a Park that truly grew out of a humble and unassuming beginning. Many doubted the value of having a park located on a small island a great distance from the US mainland. Of course, we can clearly see the lack of vision of those individuals, for VINP has become one of the true gems within the NPS. Moreover, the Park has become a huge economic engine for the Territory generating over \$100 million annually in revenue. Thus, VINP has become a tremendous asset to the St. John community, as well as, the Virgin Island Territory.

In 2006, we will also be involved with several major projects. The second phase of the General Management Plan (GMP) will be launched this winter. There will be a series of public meetings at which the GMP Planning Team will present to the public alternatives for management zones and the types of activities that will be permitted within each zone. The zones were created as a result of the comments that we received from the public last year. They are identified as the Visitor Contact and Operation Zone, Recreation Zone, Nature and Heritage Zone, Resource Protection Zone and Backcountry Experience Zone. We encourage you to attend these public meetings.

The Maho Bay Pavilion will be rehabilitated in 2006. This project consists of the construction of a new restroom facility, additional parking and of course a new pavilion. It will be similar to the Hawksnest Pavilion, but on a smaller scale. We will continue with the rehabilitation of Northshore Road, a project that has been underway for several months. This is a \$2.8 million project and the initial phase is scheduled to be completed by the end of November 2005. This phase includes the expansion of Cruz Bay Overlook, improving/expansion of Hawksnest parking area, realignment at Penn Point and drainage improvements at Kings Hill. Next year, we will also place special emphasis on Hassel Island. This is a significant cultural resource that has a rich maritime, military, commercial, and natural history. Our primary focus will be on the removal of vegetation from around the ruins, and the control/ eradication of invasive plant species from the island.

To conclude, we are again encouraging Friends' members and the community to join us in our efforts to provide stewardship over the precious natural, cultural and scenic resources of VINP. We are also extending an invitation to everyone to take part in the various events that will be held during 2006, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Virgin Islands National Park.

Art Frederick, VINP Superintendent

Friends 2006 Field Seminars

Interested in learning more about St. John's natural and historical wonders from the experts? Would you like to have a marine biology lesson while sailing, explore privately owned plantation ruins, or learn to make coconut oil or a traditional West Indian dish? Now you can! The Friends of the Park offers a variety of educational seminars every year to increase public awareness and enjoyment of the Park!

Experts in these disciplines volunteer their time to Friends of Virgin Islands National Park as a fundraising effort. Field seminars range in price from \$20-\$75 for members, \$25-\$85 for non-members and last from two to six hours. All proceeds are a donation to the Friends. Call 779-4940 to pre-register, space is limited.

JANUARY	
Jan. 14, Sat.	– Turtle Adventure Sail – Sail the <i>Castaway Girl</i> to Buck Island, St. Thomas with Park Ranger and turtle specialist, Sheri Caseau.
Jan. 18, Wed.	– History of St. John Creole – Join Linguistic expert Mr. Elroy Sprauve as he explains the interesting patterns, expressions, and history of the language spoken on St. John.
Jan. 21, Sat.	– Native Plant Hike – Hike with Dr. Gary Ray, botanist and plant ecologist, on the Cinnamon Bay Trail and learn about St. John's rich and fascinating communities of native plants.
Jan. 22, Sun.	– Explore Susannaberg Ruins – Tour the ruins at the privately owned Susannaberg Estate with historian and St. John Historical Society President David Knight, and get a glimpse of what the Estate was like in the Danish Colonial Period from 1717 to 1917.
Jan. 25, Wed.	– Afro-Caribbean Drumming – Join master drummer Eddie Bruce and learn basic entertainment and ritual drumming techniques of West African and Afro-Caribbean cultures.
Jan. 28, Sat.	– Archaeology Boat Trip (North Shore) – Set a course through prehistory with Park archaeologist Ken Wild while visiting the north side of St. John by boat.
Jan. 29, Sun.	– Marine Bio Sailing Trip I – Sail aboard the classic gaff-rigged ketch, <i>Breath</i> , and explore the marine treasures on the east end of St. John with marine biologist Rob Waara.
FEBRUARY	
Feb. 4, Sat.	– Submarine Exploration – Explore the depths from within Atlantis submarine while enjoying a presentation by Dr. Rich Nemeth on the ecology of the coral reef system.
Feb. 8, Wed.	– Botanical Hike – Local botanist Eleanor Gibney will lead you on a botany hike along a hidden road from L'Esperance to Sieben. Explore less traveled terrain, learning about St. John's native plants and see St. John's only Baobab tree.
Feb. 12, Sun.	– Coral World Boat Trip – Join Park Ranger and shark specialist Carrie Stengal aboard <i>Limnos V</i> , and spend your day exploring Coral World on St. Thomas and snorkeling nearby cays.
Feb. 18, Sat.	– Archaeology Boat Trip (South Shore) – Set a course through prehistory with Park Archaeologist Ken Wild while visiting the south side of St. John.
Feb. 22, Wed.	– Caneel Bay, 50 Years – Chuck Pishko, member of St. John Historical Society, looks back at the early history of the Caneel Bay Estate in honor of the resort's 50th year.
Feb. 25, Sat.	– Stars and Their Stories – Relax, lie back and let astrologer and mythologist Kelly Hunter guide you through the constellations of the night sky.

MARCH	
Mar. 4, Sat.	– Marine Biology Sailing Trip II – Snorkel the underwater treasures of St. John's reefs with a NPS Marine Biologist aboard the catamaran <i>Calypso</i> .
Mar. 8, Wed.	– Salt Pond Ecology – Hike Salt Pond Trail with Park Ranger Deanna Sommerville and learn about salt pond ecology and traditional methods of salt collection.
Mar. 11 Sat.	– Elk Horn Investigation – Snorkel coral reefs along the North Shore with USGS marine ecologist Caroline Rogers and learn why Elkhorn corals are being considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act.
Mar. 15, Wed.	– Full Moon Hike – Hike to the top of Ram Head and explore the southernmost point of St. John with Park Ranger Don Near. Learn about the fascinating natural and cultural history that exists there.
Mar. 18, Sat.	– Kayak the Mangroves of Hurricane Hole – Kayak with Arawak Expeditions through the Coral Reef Nat'l. Monument, stopping to snorkel in mangroves & seagrass beds.
Mar. 22, Wed.	– St. John Architecture I – Architect Michael Milne will take you through some of the island's home sites to explain their structures and significance.
Mar. 25, Sat.	– Coastal Ecology – Circumnavigate St. John with VINP's Chief of Resource Management Rafe Boulon, and learn about the mangroves, seagrass beds, and coral reefs that fringe our island's coastlines.
APRIL	
Apr. 1, Sat.	– Video Workshop – Learn to make professional quality videos with renowned photographer/videographer Steve Simonsen, as you visit a variety of scenic locations on St. John. Learn helpful tips and techniques to master video in tropical settings.
Apr. 2, Sun.	– Traditional West Indian Cuisine – With the help of Ms. Joyce Sprauve you will learn how to prepare some traditional West Indian dishes, such as roti, pate, and johnny cake.
Apr. 5, Wed.	– Beach Cat Adventure Sail – Enjoy a wet and thrilling ride aboard a Hobie Getaway, as you sail to Congo and Lovango Cays and discover the history and ecology of the area from nature guide Han Winogrand.
Apr. 8, Sat.	– A Glimpse into St. John's Past – Travel to back time with Guy Benjamin as he shares memories of his youth in the early 1900s when only a couple hundred homes existed on St. John, and donkeys were still the mode of transport.
Apr. 15, Sat.	– Bio/Geological Shoreline Walk – Join USGS career geologist, Ruth Deike and marine naturalist, Lucy Portlock and learn about the geology and biology of St. John as you explore the shoreline of Little Caneel Bay.
Apr. 26, Wed.	– Learn to Make Genuine Coconut Oil – Park Ranger Deanna Sommerville will lead you through the process of making coconut oil – from the tree, to the nut, to the oil.
Apr. 29, Sat.	– St. John Architecture II – Architect Rob Crane will take you through some of the island's homes to explain their structures and significance.

• Please tear out this page and save it to use as a reminder •

A Behind the Scenes Look at V.I. NPS Staff



Lisa Burridge, Human Resource Specialist and Acting Administrative Director

For many individuals familiar with V.I. National Park, mention of National Park Service (NPS) staff will bring to mind familiar images of a Park Ranger in uniform passing through town, an Interpretation Ranger staffing the front desk at the Visitors Center, or a Protection Ranger patrolling Park waters. NPS staff we are less familiar with are busy at work behind the scenes at the Park Headquarters or tucked away at the Maintenance Compound. Numerous employees in the Administration and Maintenance Departments carry out important jobs that help the V.I. National Park function as a whole.

Upstairs from the National Park Visitor's Center are the offices of the Superintendent and the Park's administrative staff. Behind one of these many office doors, you will find Lisa Burridge, the Park's Human Resource Specialist and the Acting Administrative Director. Ms. Burridge's responsibilities as Human Resource Specialist include employee training and benefits, and job performance reviews. She is also responsible for maintaining staffing levels and recruiting new employees. As the Acting Administrative Director Ms. Burridge oversees Park contracting, the Budget and Purchasing Departments, and Information Technology Department.

Working under Ms. Burridge in the Budget and Purchasing Department is Budget Analyst Janice Williams. As the Budget Analyst, Ms. Williams is in charge of tracking all the monies within the Park, such as O.N.P.S. (the Park's base funds), fee demo and concession funds, and donations. She ensures funds are spent in accordance with budget guidelines and that the Park's budget is balanced at the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Williams enjoys her job and feels "It is interesting, especially when I get to go on trainings and meet a lot of new people."

Computer Specialist Mr. Vernon Lake is responsible for technology within the Park, providing technical services and support to all divisions. He makes sure certain services, such as phone and Internet, are available to Park employees and that equipment is running properly. He also updates Park security programs to ensure the V.I. National Park is

Federally compliant. Mr. Lake affectionately refers to his position as the "technological gofer."

Down the street from the Visitors Center, at the Maintenance Compound, is the Facility Manager and Head of Maintenance, Mr. Lucious Simms. Mr. Simms oversees maintenance operations and staff with the help of his assistants, one of whom has worked in the Maintenance Department for 32 years. The other assistant to the Facility Manager is Monique Rogers-Clarke, who's main role is Housing Manager. Ms. Rogers-Clarke collects rent for and oversees maintenance of over 22 Park staff houses. She serves as the link between Maintenance and other divisions within the Park. If anything needs to be fixed, Ms. Rogers-Clarke is the one who is notified.

One Park employee who is often spotted at the Visitor's Center, but hales from the Maintenance Department, is Frank Smith, better known as Frankie. Frankie's main responsibility is to maintain the grounds of the Visitor's Center, along with other sites such as Lind Point, the NPS Biosphere, Hawksnest, and Trunk Bay. Just like other road and trail maintenance employees, Frankie can be called upon to remove trash, cut grass, and clear vegetation from locations in the Park requiring attention. Other important employees in the Maintenance Department working to service divisions within the Park and visitors to the Park include wastewater and drinking water engineers and operators, plumbers, electricians, and vehicle and vessel mechanics. It is due to the efforts of these employees and many others busy behind the scenes, that the Virgin Islands National Park is able to function successfully, and we thank them for their hard work in maintaining this national treasure.



Living Art, the spectacular photographic essay of St. John, is the perfect gift from, or to, those who love St. John and VI National Park. This 200-pg. coffee table book (now with improved readability), by renowned St. John photographer Steve Simonsen, celebrates the natural beauty of St. John in 182 stunning photographs.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of all books benefits the VI National Park and helps to preserve the same natural beauty the book celebrates. Please call, come by the Friends office, or visit our website for ordering information.

Give the gift of *Living Art* this holiday season.

Join the Friends or Renew Your Membership Today!

Fill out the form below and return it to: Friends of V.I. National Park, P.O. Box 811, St. John, VI 00831
Or join on-line at: http://www.friendsvinp.org/new_stuff/joindirect.htm

New Member

Renewed Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (h) _____ (w) _____ Email: _____

Donation Amount: _____ Check Enclosed

Credit Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Thank You!

The Friends was successful this year because of the generous support of many people, businesses and organizations whose donations, both in cash and in kind, contributed to helping protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Virgin Islands National Park and promote the responsible enjoyment of this unique national treasure.

Recognition of donors would not be complete without first thanking Rosalie Stahl and Donald Sussman, whose visionary donations in the past fundamentally changed the Friends and our support of the Park. The impact of their contributions continues to be felt every day.

The Friends has more than 3,000 members, and your contributions, whether its annual dues, donations to special appeals, participating in our events, sponsoring individual projects or purchasing Friends' merchandise all help to enable us to support the Park. We are profoundly thankful for your support and are humbled by your generosity. We are especially grateful to the following individuals and organizations for their support this past fiscal year:

Donors of \$10,000 or more:

Rob Blakeney
Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund
Leon & Lisa Gorman
Maho Bay Camps
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Prosser-ICC Foundation
Andy & Joy Stillman

Donors of \$5,000 – \$9,999:

Arawak Expeditions
Caneel Bay Resort
Disney Cruise Lines
Hawaiian Tropic
Barbara & Randy Hervey
R&I Patton Goldsmiths
Tropico Management

Donors of \$2,500 – \$4,999:

Joan Bermingham
kaze design
East West Catering
Mongoose Junction
Roosa Family Foundation
Glen & Radha Speer
St. John Insurance Agency
Miles & Susan Stair
Theodore Tunick & Company
VI Council of the Arts

Donors of \$1,000 – \$2,499:

Alfredo's Landscaping
American Paradise Real Estate
Chris & Elsa Angel
Craig & Maria Arnold
Pat & Hal Brown
Michael & Charlene Burgamy
Caravan Gallery
Carlos Castell Alvarez
Cruise Ship Excursions
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The Westin Resort
The West Indian Company
Weldon & Ellie Wasson

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St. John Dive Adventures
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VIERS

Donors of \$250 – \$499:

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Steve Black
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Toni Lacer
Jerome & Elizabeth Levy
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Richard & Jerrilyn Marston
Rhonda & David McCay
Edward & Sharon Metz
David Neelon
Bob Nellis
Steve & Fran O'Day
Woody Owens
Peter Parsil
David & Donna Prevo

Red Hook Family Practice
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Pat Rissler
Amy Rossman
Ski Rowland
Leonard Scott
Joan Sparling
Lowell & Wilma Steusloff
Hedy Szabo
Robert Thomas
Dave Vorhes & Linda Chase
Michael & Lori Weinman
West Indies Corporation
Doug & Leslie White
Jeanne Brennan Wiebracht
Terry Witham & Evelyn Webber

Please let us know if we inadvertently omitted your name or placed you in the incorrect group.

(But, please note that the above includes donations made between October 2004 and September 2005) Thanks!

The Park's Archaeology Program Uses New Techniques to Preserve the Past



Susanna busy at work in the Archeology Lab.

By Susanna Pershern

My name is Susanna Pershern and I am an archeological intern for Virgin Islands National Park (the Park), that has had the privilege of being around a little longer than most. I would like to personally thank Friends' members for their support and share some insight into the current accomplishments of the Park's Archaeology Program. Although the Park is a priceless cultural asset with hundreds of ruins, shipwrecks, and prehistoric sites, many are endangered of being lost, because unfortunately the Park has no funds for cultural resources within its budget. Thankfully, generous, informed, and interested members of the Friends have made donations and purchased zemi pendants and archaeology t-shirts making it financially possible for the VI National Park to carry-out and continue an Archaeology and Cultural Resource Program.

So what have you made happen? For starters we had 60 interns work with us this past year, contributing numerous hours and specialty skills, such as knowledge of maritime archaeology, post emancipation studies, GIS, or mapping ruins into 3-D computer models. While most interns volunteer for a month or two, I have returned annually to assist Ken Wild and provide some consistency to the intern program. This means that I've learned and can teach others the basic fundamentals required to get the job done such as artifact analysis, excavation techniques, cataloging practices, collection preservation, site assessment, documentation, mapping, and proper techniques of removing vegetation from ruins. I also have experience working with proton procession magnetometers, GPS, laser transits, and a host of other necessary computer software programs.

Overall, our job is aimed at preserving, protecting and obtaining a greater understanding of these magnificent resources before many are lost for the next generation. Making resource information accessible to the public is also a primary goal, as is managing the Parks' resource collection, which is required by Washington and is actually one of our most time consuming tasks. With these goals in mind, Ken and I sought out to find a way to archive the past for all to see. As a professional photographer, I jumped at the opportunity to learn about archeological photography and photo-conservation. Our efforts soon turned to the park's superb collection of historic photographs, which have documented St John's history, technology, science, culture and people since the creation of the Virgin Islands National Park in 1956.

Since October 2004, we've been working to catalogue, digitize and upload hundreds of images in order to address any park or community-wide need for accessing and using these images. Presently, a small percentage of these images are available online at the National Park

Service's Digital Library. You may access these images at <http://npsfocus.nps.gov/>. Search "Virgin Islands" to see recent images of Cinnamon Bay, Annaberg or Hassel Island, in addition to historic images such as the first NPS Visitor Center. Thanks to all of you, as Friends' members and supporters, we are able to continue this and many other projects to preserve St. John's cultural and historical past.

Affinity Partners Make a Difference

The Friends Affinity Partners are an important group of local merchants and service providers that give back to the Park by providing Friends' members with great deals and discounts on goods and services, and we want to thank them for continuing to show their appreciation and support for Virgin Islands National Park.

Friends is a membership organization, and we are continually cultivating new members and creating strategies to thank our current members for their continued support.

Participating Partners offer discounts or special deals on goods or services exclusively to Friends' members.

We encourage other businesses to consider joining this outstanding group of community partners as we work together to protect and preserve VI National Park

Affinity Partners

- Awesome Powerboat Rentals**, on St. Thomas – offers a discount on powerboat rentals.
- s/v Alcyone** – offers a discount on day sails.
- Bolongo Bay Beach Club** – offers a discount on hotel rooms, and day sail to St. John.
- Bougainvillea Shops** at Mongoose Junction and The Westin Resort – discount on apparel.
- Canvas Factory** – donation on sale of small, embroidered tote bag.
- Ceremonies St. John** – free wedding cake with use of services.
- Coral World** – offers substantial admission discount.
- Freebird Creations** – offers merchandise discount, and donation on sale of certain items.
- Great Expectations** – discount on lodging when booked directly with owners.
- Hillcrest Guest House** – offers a discount on lodging.
- Island Fancy** – offers retail discount.
- Kallaloo & Terra Hawk Villas** – offers discount on lodging.
- Long Distance** – discount on day sail when booked directly with owners.
- Low Key Water Sports** – requests donation on behalf of Friends.
- Maho Bay Camps** – offers discount on lodging.
- R & I Patton Goldsmithing** – donates proceeds of zemi sales.
- Sail Safaris** – discount on day sail when booked directly with owner.
- 6-Pac Scuba** – will request and match donations made to Friends through business.
- St. John Weddings** – offers discount on marriage ceremonies and vow renewal services.
- Thunderhawk Trail Guides** – offers discount on guided eco hikes.
- Wayward Sailor** – discount on day sail when booked directly with owner.

See our website at www.friends.org/affinity_partner.htm for more details about individual offerings from our partners.

Please visit these merchants and service providers and tell them you're a Friend; but remember, in order to receive these fabulous discounts, you must show your current Friends membership card.

Want to join other outstanding community businesses by joining the Affinity Partners Program? Contact Karen Brady at the Friends office. No matter what your goods or service, we can create a unique offering that will suite your business.

Projects for 2006

We define our organization by the projects and programs we support, and with that in mind our Board of Directors recently approved an ambitious and challenging program plan for 2006. The plan is projected to cost about \$400,000. Many of these projects have grown to be closely identified with Friends support, some have been carried over from last year and, of course, there are new projects as well.

Each fall, the Superintendent submits a prioritized list of Park needs to the Friends' Board of Directors. Given the limitations 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 program plan. This year's plan includes the following projects:

Natural Resource Protection

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

Boating Outreach (\$9,700): Develop and distribute instructional materials to instruct boat operators, particularly of small powerboats and bareboats, where and how to anchor in park and monument waters.

Elkhorn Coral and White Pox Research (\$21,000): Support two research projects studying white pox disease and its impact on coral health.

REEF Fish Counts (\$1,000): Participate in a national program that mobilizes and trains volunteer snorkelers to identify and document fish diversity and populations in marine areas.

Research Workshop (\$34,000): Bring together researchers and scientists that have worked in VINP to develop a compendium of research and plan future research objectives.

Resource Protection Moorings (\$100,000): This is the third and final phase of this project and will install storm refuge moorings in Hurricane Hole for about 50 boats.

SCA Trail Crew (\$30,000): Again sponsor a crew of budding conservationists from the Student Conservation Association to repair and upgrade priority trails within the Park. This year's project will build on our experience of fielding a crew of young Virgin Islanders.

Cultural Preservation

Annaberg Cultural Presentations (\$17,000): Continue to support the cultural presentation program at Annaberg Plantation and maintain a volunteer docent program at the site.

Archeological Artifact Preservation (\$30,000): Assist in the preservation of the thousands of artifacts uncovered in the archeological digs by supporting material purchases, stipends and location costs of interns, and organizing volunteers.

Cultural Theatre Presentation (\$10,000): Support weekly theater presentation from January to April at Cinnamon Bay Amphitheater of "Distant Voices", an original play conveying accounts of Caribbean slaves' experiences.

Folklife Festival (\$14,000): Continuing support of the premier cul-

tural festival on St. John held during Black History Month (February). This year is the 15th anniversary of the Folklife Festival on St. John.

Hassel Island Restoration (\$8,000): 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.

Museum Exhibits for Cinnamon Bay (\$40,000): Support for the development of museum quality exhibit space within the archeological research setting at Cinnamon Bay Greathouse/warehouse, and showcase the history of St. John through a chronological time line using objects in the park's collection and through graphic illustration.

Historic Structures Preservation through Computer Graphics (\$15,000): Support of the ongoing effort to develop 3-D computer models of the Park's historic structures.

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 Living Classrooms (\$8,000): Provide small grants to assist teachers at St. John schools to creatively incorporate the Park in class studies, and support transportation costs to facilitate classes to participate in VINP programs such as: visits to historical sites, the archeology digs, Reef Bay hike and Annaberg.

Philanthropy and VI National Park (\$10,000): Develop and construct an outdoor interpretive display about philanthropy and national parks, using VI National Park as the case study.

Scholarship Fund (\$2,000): Provide scholarships and summer internships for two Virgin Islanders in their junior or senior year of university studies related to natural resource management.

Members interested in more information, or interested in becoming 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 Karen for more information.



New! *Motorcycle License Plates—*

Looking for a great gift for the holidays? Buy someone special a gift certificate for Friends of the Park Trunk Bay license plates. Give their car/motorcycle some character and support your Park. Gift certificates are available for personalized vehicle plates—\$105, serial numbered vehicle plates—\$55, or our new motorcycle serial plates—\$25!

To order personalized vehicle plates call the Friends or pick up an order form at Connections or the DMV. Allow 4–6 weeks for delivery. Serial plates are available at the Friends office in Mongoose Junction and at Caribbean Auto Mart on St. Croix.

Just in Time for the Holidays!

Call Ali for more information at **779-4940**

Upcoming Friends Events!

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the upcoming Friend's events:

New Year's Eve Gala!

Ring in the New Year with Friends of Virgin Islands National Park on December 31, 2005 at a special party to kick-off a year-long celebration of VI National Park's 50th anniversary. Jim & Debbie Hayes will host us in their beautiful home, Isla Vista high above Cruz Bay. Julie Van Pelt of East West Catering has prepared a special menu for this event, and the French champagne has been ordered. If you would like more information or to reserve tickets, please contact us at (340) 779-4940. Space is limited, so don't wait to contact us.

2006 Beach-to-Beach Power Swim

It's not too early to start your training for the 3rd annual Friends Beach-to-Beach Power Swim. Mark your calendars for May 28, 2006

and plan to join us for this challenging open water swim in the pristine and protected waters of VI National Park.

Check Out the New Seminar Schedule

Membership has its benefits! Check out the new seminar schedule and sign-up early to reserve your spot... don't forget, members also receive a discounted price on seminars.

Seminars begin in January and run through mid April.

Call the Friends (340) 779-4940, or visit our website for more information on these events.

President's Message *By Joe Kessler*



We just completed, and are about to start another, very active and exciting year for the Friends of the Park as we strive to help make VI National Park a model of resource protection and cultural preservation. You've read inside about this year's accomplishments and next year's plans; you've also read about the new strategic plan that will guide us in the coming years.

The most significant change in our strategic plan is to have greater focus on the resources of the Park -rather than the Park itself - and to increase our role as advocates for both these

resources and for their responsible enjoyment. It is this increased advocacy role that has driven the campaign to protect Maho Bay from significant environmental damage and diminished visitor access.

There was an excellent response to our call to actions: more than 2500 people visited our website for more information; and, more than 500 Friends and other concerned individuals sent a fax, card, letter or email expressing their concerns about the developments at Maho Bay. Our message was heard and NPS officials were impressed by the quantity and passion of the appeals to protect Maho Bay.

The most recent developments, the NPS informing Mr. Simons that the discussions concerning the road, dock and wetlands are off the table since they do not have the authority to unilaterally grant permission, is indeed good news. However, we remain concerned that the NPS continues to be open to Simons' condition that the NPS and TPL cede their shares of the land to him in return for a conservation easement. We believe that only through ownership can the NPS preserve even a part of Estate Maho Bay in perpetuity. As good as everyone's intentions may be, when talking about "preservation in perpetuity" we are more concerned about who might own Estate Maho Bay in 20, 50 or 100 years. Conservation easements are at this point just too fragile to withstand this test.

To learn more about the Maho Bay issue, or to find out what you can do to help, please visit our website at www.friendsvinp.org/maho_action.htm

All that the Friends is able to accomplish is only made possible through your support and assistance by donating your valuable time as volunteers, weighing in on important issues such as Maho Bay and, of course, providing generous financial contributions. Thank you very much for your continued and generous support. I trust that even in these difficult times with increasing demands on your generosity, VI National Park will remain one of your philanthropic priorities. Together we will make a difference.



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