

Tidings

Preserve. Protect. Educate.

THIRD YEAR OF THE FRIENDS OF THE PARK STORE



Karl Pytlik poses in the store with the Best Cultural Products of V.I. award.

The Friends of the Park Store has seen another good year and continues to grow. We were happy to have been voted as the store with the Best Cultural Products this year by the Daily News readers. We continue to have more local artists and craftspeople bringing their island-made goods to us, ensuring that our store remains one of the most unique shops on St John.

All of St. John has been buzzing about the addition of our new pets in the store! We have two juvenile lionfish on display in an aquarium, which are being used to educate the public about their habits and for identification purposes. These invasive fish were caught in our nearby waters and are currently one of the largest threats to our reefs, wreaking havoc on fish populations across the Caribbean. To find out more about these voracious predators and to pick up a lionfish marker, please make it a point to come into the store.

We also enjoyed a fantastic “Evening in the Courtyard”. All the shops and restaurants of Mongoose Junction put on a great party to start off the season. Many of them had special discounts, offered complimentary food and drinks, and raffle prizes. The Friends Store was lucky to have local photographer Steve Simonsen join us in the store! Not only was Steve showing off his new calendar but he also brought his excellent footage of the Leatherback turtles of St. Croix, which we were thrilled to play for all who came in that night.

The store is in full swing for our upcoming season! We are very excited to have our volunteers back, bringing their energy and love of the V.I. National Park with them. If you would like to volunteer in the store, please contact Karl Pytlik at the store at (340)779-8700 or email karl@friendsvinp.org 🌿



what's inside!

- Tidings Notes
- Message from the Superintendent
- 2011 Seminar Series Schedule
- Accessible Trails Update
- Donor Appreciation
- Annual Summary
- Projects for 2011
- Coming Events
- President's Message



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.

Please remember to reuse and recycle whenever possible.

Tidings Notes

Friends' 2011 Annual Meeting

Please join us for the Friends 2011 Annual Meeting. We are honored that Neil Mulholland, president of the National Park Foundation, will be this year's keynote speaker. Also on the program are V.I. National Park superintendent Mark Hardgrove, who will give the State of the Park address, and Friends president Joe Kessler, who will present the Friends Annual Report.

The annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 16, 2011 from 2:00–4:00 p.m. at the T'ree Lizards Restaurant at Cinnamon Bay Campground. Light snacks and beverages will be provided, and there will be a shuttle service from the National Park maintenance parking lot near Mongoose Junction. Please call to for more information: (340) 779-4940.

Coastweeks leave St. John Cleaner

2010 Coastweeks ended October 31st, leaving St. John's coastal shores and trails cleaner, and the participants with a greater respect for the island. As always, Friends are proud to support V.I. Coastweeks on St. John; but we are even prouder of everyone who participated in this year's cleanup. Over 150 volunteers pitched in and removed well over 2000 pounds of debris from almost every one of our island's beaches and also some trails. Friends would like to thank all of those who participated in cleaning our coastal shores and trails, especially those who adopted beaches/trails and helped organize the cleanups: Cid Hamling, Coral Bay Yacht Club, Elaine Estern, Estate Concordia Preserve, Fraser Drummond, Friends of VINP volunteers, Giffit Hill School, Guy Benjamin School, Holiday Homes, Julius E. Sprauve School, Miles and Susan Stair, Ranger Laurel Brannick, the Rood Family, St. John Brewers, St. John Land Sharks, St. John Yacht Club, and St. John Rotary.

We would also like to acknowledge our local sponsors who made it possible for our volunteer shirts to be printed. A special thank you goes out to: First Bank, Just Beach, Lana Vento Charitable Trust, Maho Bay Campgrounds, R.A.V.I. of St. John, V.I. Ecotours, and V.I. Waste Management.

Just remember it's never too late to celebrate V.I. Coastweeks; to find out how you can help, contact Audrey Penn.

Join a Volunteer Work Crew

Join Jeff Chabot and his dedicated volunteer team to help maintain park trails and ruins, remove debris from beaches and coastlines, and assist with general maintenance projects in V.I. National Park. Work projects vary weekly and volunteers of all skill levels are welcome. If you are interested in helping out, simply show up any Tuesday or Thursday (November through April) at the National Park maintenance parking lot at 8:00 am. Be sure to bring sufficient water and a snack, wear brush appropriate attire and bring gloves if you have them. 🌿



Mark Hardgrove

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

BY MARK HARDGROVE

National Parks could not exist without the dedicated support of our professional staff, partners, and Friends groups such as yours! As we approach another new year I want to take this opportunity to thank

the Board of Directors, President, and wonderful staff of the Friends for last year's accomplishments. Working together, your Friends group has approved 21 NPS Proposals for this coming year. These projects are important to your National Park, as they do not fall into traditional funding sources. These include funding the accessible trail survey, archeological research and volunteer support, improving the NPS lionfish response capability, publication of Hassel Island research, Spanish-British Archives Research and Document Recovery Project, Annaberg Cultural History Demonstrations, Cultural Programming at Cinnamon Bay Campground, 20th Anniversary of the Annaberg Folk-life Festival, Park Rangers in training camp, trail and vista clearing projects and many more.

I want to welcome Mike Anderson and his wife Gail to the VI. Mike joined our Management Team as the park's Deputy Superintendent. Mike transferred here from the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta, where he served as Regional Chief Ranger for Visitor Protection, Visitor Services, and Risk Management. Mike also served as the Chief Ranger at Assateague Island Natl. Seashore and the District Ranger at Cape Hatteras Natl. Seashore. Mike started his NPS career in the VI as a Park Guide and then moved up to the position of South District Ranger, living out at Lameshur in the early 1980's. Gail served as one of the park's lifeguards at Trunk Bay! Mike and Gail have always remembered their time here in the Virgin Islands as one of the most precious times of their lives. It is obvious to all who meet and work with Mike and Gail that they bring experience, passion, and a sincere desire to continue with the programs we have worked so hard to build together. Mike has had many great experiences here in the past and looks forward to even more as he gets a chance to meet and work with each of you in the near future.

Happy Holidays from your National Park Service! 🌿





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340.779.8700 www.friendsvinp.org store@friendsvinp.org

2010–2011 SEMINAR SERIES

DECEMBER
LIONFISH 101 • December 18, Saturday • 9:00am – 1:00pm <i>Meet:</i> NPS Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Towel, snorkel gear, swimsuit, and lunch; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$65 Mem / \$75 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 23
CARIBBEAN CREOLE • December 20, Monday • 10:00am – 12:00pm <i>Meet:</i> School of the Arts; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
NATIVE ARTS & CRAFTS I & II Dec. 22, Wednesday • Feb. 15, Tuesday • 12:30pm – 2:30pm <i>Meet:</i> School of the Arts; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
ECO SPA • December 28, Tuesday • 2:00pm – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Salt Pond parking lot; <i>Bring:</i> Old swimsuit, towel, water, and snack; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 20
JANUARY
REEF ECOSYSTEM EXPLORATION • January 5, Wednesday • 9:00am – 3:30pm <i>Meet:</i> National Park Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Lunch, sunscreen, and snorkel gear; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$85 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 32
KAYAK THE MANGROVES OF HURRICANE HOLE I January 8, Saturday • 10:00am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Skinny Legs Restaurant; <i>Bring:</i> Snorkel gear, water, towel, and sunscreen; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$65 Mem / \$75 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 12
PASTELS WORKSHOP I & II • Jan. 9, Sun. • Feb. 20, Sun. • 10:00am – 1:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Caneel Bay parking lot; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$65 Mem / \$75 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 5
MEDICINAL HERBS I & II • Jan. 12, Wed. • March 22, Tues. • 12:30pm – 2:30pm <i>Meet:</i> School of the Arts; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$35 Mem / \$45 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
BEACH CAT ADVENTURE SAIL • January 15, Saturday • 10:00am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Cruz Bay Ferry Dock; <i>Bring:</i> Snorkel gear, sunscreen, hat, water, and lunch; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$80 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 7
FULL MOON HIKE • January 19, Wednesday • 6:00pm – 8:30pm <i>Meet:</i> Salt Pond parking lot; <i>Bring:</i> Hiking shoes, flashlight, snack, and water; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 20
PETROGLYPH HUNT • January 21, Friday • 9:00am – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> National Park Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook, water, and lunch; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$45 Mem / \$55 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
KAYAK CANEEL BAY I & II • Jan. 22, Sat. • March 18, Fri. • 10:00am – 1:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Caneel Bay parking lot; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$85 Mem / \$90 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 15
BOTANICAL AND HISTORIC HIKE • January 23, Sunday • 9:00am – 2:30pm <i>Meet:</i> Park at entrance of L'Esperance Trail; <i>Bring:</i> Sunscreen, hat, lunch, water, & hiking shoes; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$35 Mem / \$45 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
PARK CRITTER CRAWL • January 26, Wednesday • 10:00am – 2:00pm <i>Meet:</i> National Park Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook, water, & lunch; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$45 Mem / \$55 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
SEA TURTLE SAIL I & II • Jan. 28, Fri. • 1pm – 4:30pm • Apr. 8, Fri. • 12:30pm – 4pm <i>Meet:</i> Charlotte Amalie waterfront, St. Thomas; <i>Bring:</i> Sunscreen, hat, snack, snorkel gear, & swimsuit; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$65 Mem / \$75 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
NATIVE PLANT & BIRD HIKE • January 29, Saturday • 9:00am – 1:00pm <i>Meet:</i> VIERS Camp; <i>Bring:</i> Sunscreen, hat, plenty of water, lunch, and binoculars; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$35 Mem / \$45 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
STORIES OF THE WINTER SKY • January 30, Sunday • 7:30pm – 9:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Annaberg Plantation Ruins; <i>Bring:</i> Blanket, flashlight, pillow, & binoculars; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$35 Mem / \$45 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 35
FEBRUARY
BATIK CLASS • February 7, Monday • 1:00pm – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Maho Bay Camps Art Center; <i>Wear:</i> Close-toed shoes & an apron or old clothing; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$65 Mem / \$75 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 6
CINNAMON BAY HISTORIC TOUR • February 9, Wednesday • 9:00am – 12:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Cinnamon Bay Arch Lab; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$30 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25

Please visit www.friendsvinp.org/seminars or pick up a brochure for full details. Call 340-779-4940 for bookings.

KAYAK THE MANGROVES OF HURRICANE HOLE II • Feb. 12, Sat. • noon – 4:45pm <i>Meet:</i> Skinny Legs Restaurant; <i>Bring:</i> Snack, water, snorkel gear, sunscreen, and towel; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$65 Mem / \$75 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 12
MARINE BIOLOGY BOAT TRIP • February 13, Sunday • 9:00am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Natl. Park Visitor Ctr. Dock; <i>Bring:</i> Snorkel gear, lunch, water, towel, & sunscreen; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$85 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
COASTAL ECOLOGY • February 19, Saturday • 9:30am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> National Park Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Lunch, water, sunscreen, and snorkel gear; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$85 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 23
BIRDS OF THE PARK • February 23, Wednesday • 9:00am – 1:00pm <i>Meet:</i> National Park Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Binoculars, water, and a notebook; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$55 Mem / \$65 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 20
HASSEL ISLAND TOUR I & II • Feb. 26, Sat. • March 12, Sat. • 10:00am – 2:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Frenchtown, St. Thomas; <i>Bring:</i> Swimsuit, towel, sunscreen, dry bag, & hiking shoes; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$85 Mem / \$90 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 12
A GLIMPSE INTO ST. JOHN'S PAST • February 28, Monday • 9:30am – 11:30am <i>Meet:</i> Est. Concordia Pavilion; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$30 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
MARCH
TREASURES OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS • March 2, Wednesday • 1:00pm – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Charlotte Amalie Waterfront at R&J Latte's; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$50 Mem / \$60 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 14
UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY OF PROJECT TEKTITE II March 5, Saturday • 11:30am – 4:00pm; <i>Meet:</i> VIERS Camp; <i>Bring:</i> Underwater camera, snorkel gear, sunscreen, notepad, & water bottle; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$45 Mem / \$50 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
PEPPER SAUCE MAKING • March 7, Monday • 2:00pm – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Bethany Moravian Church parking lot; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 10
FISH IDENTIFICATION SAIL • March 9, Wednesday • 10:00am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Margarita Phil's Restaurant; <i>Bring:</i> Snorkel gear, lunch, water, towel, & sunscreen; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$85 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
TROPICAL GARDEN TOUR I & II • Mar. 19, Sat. • Apr. 2, Sat. • 10:00am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Friends of the Park Store to carpool; <i>Bring:</i> Lunch, water, hat and notebook; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$30 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 20
ARCHEOLOGY BOAT TRIP • March 23, Wednesday • 10:00am – 3:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Natl. Park Visitor Ctr. Dock; <i>Bring:</i> Snorkel gear, lunch, water, towel, & sunscreen; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$85 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 30
TROPICAL LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY • March 26, Saturday • 8:00am – 12:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Friends of the Park Store to carpool; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$45 Mem / \$50 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 20
APRIL
SNORKELING ADVENTURE IN THE MANGROVES • Apr. 3, Sun. • 9:30am – 3pm <i>Meet:</i> National Park Visitor Center; <i>Bring:</i> Snorkel gear, towel, sunscreen, and snack; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$75 Mem / \$85 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 23
VINP ARCHIVE TOUR • April 7, Thursday • 10:00am – 12:30pm <i>Meet:</i> Friends of the Park Store; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$25 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 25
SPIRIT DOLL WORKSHOP • April 14, Thursday • 9:00am – 12:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Skinny Legs Restaurant; <i>Bring:</i> Ideas or found items and a snack; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$85 Mem / \$95 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 5
TAINO POTTERY MAKING • April 16, Saturday • 1:00pm – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Maho Bay Camps Art Center; <i>Wear:</i> Close-toed shoes and an apron or old clothing; <i>Fee:</i> \$55 Mem / \$65 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 8 (4 min.)
TROPICAL GARDENING • April 17, Sunday • 9:00am – 12:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Friends of the Park Store to carpool; <i>Bring:</i> Hat, sturdy shoes, ideas, experiences & lunch; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$30 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 15
BUILD GREEN • April 23, Saturday • 10:00am – 4:00pm <i>Meet:</i> Friends of the Park Store to carpool; <i>Bring:</i> Notebook, building plans, and ideas; <i>Seminar Fee:</i> \$30 Mem / \$35 Non Mem • <i>Max Group:</i> 50

ACCESSIBLE TRAILS UPDATE



Cinnamon accessible trail under construction.

Virgin Islands National Park is committed, despite the park's rugged terrain, to make as many park features as possible accessible to all. The Friends is committed to helping them achieve this laudable goal.

Last year we constructed a handicapped-accessible boardwalk along the lower portion of the Francis Bay trail and recently we have completed a handicapped-accessible trail through the ruins at Cinnamon Bay. The trail starts opposite the exit from the Cinnamon Bay Campground, goes through the forested area, then winds its way around the major features of the sugarcane processing factory and warehouse. The trail is about 600 feet long.

This trail is a little different from the Francis Bay trail as it is a combination of a concrete walkway and a boardwalk. We used

the concrete walkway wherever we could, as it is less intrusive than a boardwalk and we didn't want to detract from the site. However, parts of the trail through the ruins are steep and rough, so the boardwalk was used to span the rough areas and manage the gradients to ensure accessibility.

We also employed two approaches to constructing the trail. Captured Images Construction and Carlson Construction were contracted to do parts of the trail, and as at Francis Bay, volunteers constructed the rest. Again we were able to draw on St. John's pool of talented professionals and enthusiastic volunteers to construct the boardwalk. The quality of the trail testifies to the quality of those who helped build it.

Two other volunteers who were very important to the success of this project are well-known local architect Rob Crane, who designed the boardwalks for both this project and Francis Bay, and Rosanne Ramos, also an architect and relatively new to St. John, who is a specialist in inclusive design. Rosanne did the overall design and advised us on the standards and specifications of accessible trails.

We are extremely grateful to Diageo USVI and to Chuck & Monica McQuaid for their generous financial support of the project. We are also very proud to have MSI Building Materials as a partner in both the Francis Bay and Cinnamon Bay projects, and thank them for their generous contributions of lumber.

Later on this year we hope to complete the second part of the Francis Bay Trail extending it for another 700 feet to the beach. So, if you missed out on the opportunity to help build the Cinnamon Bay Trail, come out and help us with this one. 🌿



Become a Friend...

If you've never been a member, join us in our mission to protect and preserve the VI National Park!

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Make checks payable to: Friends of VINP

Name: _____

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Join Today!!

Mail this form to our office or return it to the
Friends Store in Mongoose Junction!
Friends of VI National Park, PO Box 811, St John, VI 00831

SAVE THE DATE!

■ Earth Day Environmental Fair & Reef-Fest Apr. 29&30, 2011:

April 29, 2011 will mark the 6th annual Earth Day Environmental Fair for local school kids on St. John. Through hands-on teaching methods, story-telling, and environmental demonstrations, the youth of St. John will learn about ways to respect and preserve the world around them. On April 30th St. John youth will participate in a day of learning on the beach during the 2nd Annual Reef Fest at Hawksnest Beach. Participants will enjoy a guided snorkel or kayak, learn how to ID fish, participate in on-land educational exhibits, try their luck in a sandcastle building contest, and much more.

In celebration of Earth Day, all individuals and groups who have adopted a beach or trail will also be asked to clean up their locations on Sunday, April 24, 2011. 🌿

DONOR THANK YOU

Our success, this and every year, is made possible through the generous support of the many individual donors, businesses and organizations whose gifts, both cash and in-kind, contributed to help protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Virgin Islands National Park and to 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 past donations fundamentally transformed the Friends and our support of the park. The impact of their contributions continue to be felt every day.

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

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*Denotes bequest

Please let us know if we inadvertently omitted your name or placed you in the incorrect group. Please note that the above includes donations made between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010.

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PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2010



Guy Benjamin students work hard to remove a tangled fishing net from the seashore during the 2010 Coastweeks.

2010 was a very busy and productive year for the Friends. It is the projects and activities that we support and/or implement that define us, and this year we have a lot in which we can take pride.

Our most significant program accomplishments this past year include:

- Completion of the 2nd phase of the Accessible Trails project, with a trail that opens the ruins of the Cinnamon Bay factory complex to everyone. These ruins are a regular stop on island tours and now will be accessible to all.
- An accomplishment-laden year for the Archeology Program, with significant discoveries as they excavated for a new lift station at Cinnamon Bay and the discovery of seven new historic and prehistoric sites. Three of these new sites were plantations found while doing the research project with the University of Copenhagen.
- Inauguration of a “Ranger-in-Training” camp as a part of the offerings of our Eco-camps held at VIERS each summer. This is a 5-day camp for 13-16 year-olds that introduces them to the work of park rangers.
- Installation of a webcam under the pier at Great Lameshur Bay. This was accomplished in collaboration with Teens4Oceans, a school group from Denver, and VIERS.

We continue to focus considerable attention on educational programs for school children and facilitate use of the park as a living classroom. This past year:

- About 600 kids went on ranger-led activities such as hikes down the Reef Bay Trail, seashore walks along Leinster Bay, bird-watching expeditions to Francis Bay, and visits to Annaberg.
- Nine classes from five schools received small grants to fund projects and activities that used the park as a learning resource.

- Despite the rain, more than 550 kids participated in this year’s Earth Day Environmental Fair where, thanks to about 25 exhibitors and presenters, the kids had fun as they learned about the environment and conservation. This year we also added Reef Fest as the inaugural marine-themed component to the Earth Day Fair. There were 150 attendees to this marine education day.
- Over 1000 kids from St. John and St. Thomas attended the 19th Annual Folk Life Festival, the park’s premier cultural event.
- 120 kids had the opportunity to spend 3-5 days in the park in our summer Eco-Camps, Science Camp, and Ranger-in-Training camps at VIERS, learning about marine and terrestrial ecology.
- Eight high school students from both the Virgin Islands and mainland US worked for a month in VINP as part of the SCA Trail Crew Project, repairing trails and learning important technical, team-building, leadership and cross-cultural life skills.



Kids enjoy new kickboards at the 2010 Learn to Swim Program.

In addition to the projects mentioned above, we also continued support of:

- The Learn-to-Swim program at Trunk Bay
- Presentation of *Benji*, chronicling the life of St. John patriarch Guy Benjamin, by Carabana Ensemble Theater at Cinnamon Bay Amphitheater
- Historic research looking into the role that Spain played in the Virgin Islands, particularly St. John
- Provision of picnic tables and grills for Francis Bay and Lameshur Bay
- And, last, but certainly not least, our ever-growing walk-up volunteers program that is performing vital trail and other maintenance support to the park. 🌿

PROJECTS FOR 2011

The Friends' Board of Directors recently approved an ambitious program plan for 2011 valued at almost \$600,000. Below are the details of our program plan which, as you can see, includes many of our traditional projects as well as some new ones.

Cultural Resource Preservation Projects

- **Annaberg Cultural Demonstrations** (\$1,000 – funded): Provides supplies for the Annaberg Living History program, which consists of a baker baking bread in a “Dutch Oven”, and a gardener maintaining and interpreting a subsistence garden plot.
- **Archeology Museum Exhibits** (\$157,000 – partially funded): Conversion of the Archeology lab at Cinnamon Bay into a mini-museum, including providing museum-quality display cases and development of the exhibits.
- **Archeological Research and Volunteers** (\$90,800 – funded): Continued ongoing support for the archeology program, covering stipends and other costs for interns and international collaboration with the University of Copenhagen.
- **Cultural Evening at Cinnamon Bay** (\$10,000 – funding needed): Replacing the cultural play, we will initiate a new program around cultural music, such as the history of the “African Drum” and its use as a communication tool.
- **Folk Life Festival** (\$12,000 – funding needed): This is the 20th anniversary of the festival. This year it will focus on Virgin Islands culture. It will feature traditional dance and music, storytelling, arts and crafts.
- **Hassel Island** (\$57,600 – funded): Conservation of artifacts uncovered at the Creque Marine Slipway and development and installation of interpretive signage for the site. Also, covers the publication of a document on Hassel Island which will include reproductions of maps and plans, photographs, rare books and manuscripts.
- **Historic Research Program Support** (\$16,000 – funded): Supports continuation of the research begun in the Spanish Archives and the beginning of research in the British Archives for documents and data related to VI National Park resources.

Education Projects

- **Earth Day Fair and Reef Fest** (\$7,800 – funding needed): As part of a week of Earth Day activities, an Earth Day Environmental Fair will be organized for local school kids. Through hands-on teaching methods, story-telling, and environmental demonstrations, the youth of St. John will learn about ways to respect and preserve the world around them. In an aquatic component, called Reef Fest, youth will participate in a day of learning on the marine resources of St. John.
- **Eco-camps** (proposed \$45,000 – funding needed): Funds at least 120 school children to attend the Eco-camps, a Science camp, and a Ranger-in-Training camp at VIERS. Kids experience 3–5 days in the park learning about marine and terrestrial eco-systems.

- **Learn to Swim** (\$1,100 – funded): Provides materials and equipment for the park's Learn-to-Swim program conducted each summer at Trunk Bay.
- **Marine & Terrestrial Natural Hazards Brochures & Web Pages** (\$7,500 – funding needed): Produce brochures, posters and in-depth web pages for “Hazardous Marine Life”, “Other Marine Creatures,” and “Injurious & Poisonous Plants” found in the Virgin Islands National Park and St. John.
- **Scholarship Fund** (\$3,000 – funding needed): Provides three \$1000 scholarships to VI students studying natural sciences at the university level.
- **School Kids in the Park – SKIP** (\$18,000 – funded): The flagship of our environmental education program for children, the project funds small (\$500 max) grants for teachers to use VINP as a teaching/learning resource, and provides transport for ranger-led field trips into the park.
- **VINP Research Documentary Film** (\$12,000 – funding needed): Production of a video in collaboration with NOAA that will document the scientific work underway in VINP by NPS, NOAA and its partners. Production costs to be shared with NOAA.

Natural Resource Protection Projects

- **Accessible Trails** (\$98,600 – partially funded): Construct a handicapped-accessible trail through the Cinnamon Bay ruins and complete the boardwalk at Francis Bay. The project will also conduct an accessibility assessment in the park and develop a trail rating system.
- **Adopt-a-Trail/Beach** (\$3,600 – funded): Provides supplies and materials for the trail and beach clean-ups and the Volunteer Walkup Maintenance program.
- **North Shore Hike and Bike Trail** (\$4,800 – funding needed): Prepare plans and documentation to allow the park to apply for a federal grant to fund a hiking and biking trail from NPS HQ to Caneel/Honeymoon Beach.
- **GIS & Database Support** (\$4,200 – funding needed): Support intern stipends for a university student to assist the park with GIS and database data entry.
- **Lionfish Response** (\$4,800 – funding needed): Support efforts to reduce lionfish populations in Virgin Islands National Park and VI Coral Reef National Monument. This project will primarily be used to put together lionfish capture kits that will be used by NPS, USGS, NOAA and other divers when working in park and monument waters. It will also develop educational and outreach materials to inform the public about the threat of lionfish.
- **SCA Trail Crew** (\$42,000 – funding needed): A Summer Trail Crew program will involve VI and mainland US kids in trail repair and maintenance. This year's crew will consist of four high school students from the VI, four students from the mainland US and 2 crew leaders. They will repair/improve approximately 10 miles of park trails. 🌱



Joe Kessler

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY JOE KESSLER

I am writing this as I attend a meeting of the executive directors of friends groups from around the country. There are representatives of groups who assist parks, big and small, from Maine to Hawaii and from Alaska to the Virgin Islands. While we all think that our park is the most beautiful, or most interesting, or the most special, the fact is that all of these parks are all very special places – or they wouldn't be national parks – and are each special in their own way. As a country we are very fortunate to have such a wide variety of these special places at our disposal; and for my colleagues at this meeting we all feel privileged to work with our national park to help preserve and protect these parks and make them better places for this and future generations.

It is often said that National Parks are in the “forever business”. In good times and bad the national parks are a constant and people take solace in knowing that their favorite park, or parks, will always be there. They feel comfort in knowing that they will always be able to enjoy its natural beauty, its part in the history or culture of the country, or the recreational opportunities that it provides.

Of course I think that Virgin Islands National Park is the most special. And while my colleagues at this meeting may want to take exception to this, I am sure that many of you – members of the Friends of VI National Park – will agree with me. In any case, we can all agree that with its clear azure waters, beautiful coral reefs, verdant hillsides, plethora of historical sites and rich cultural history, Virgin Islands National Park is an exceptional place. And, whether you live here, spend part of the year here, visit regularly, or just visited once, I am sure that you feel that your life is richer for the existence of this park.

As members of the Friends you have helped make this park what it is, and more importantly, what it will be in the future. We all have a vested interest in the health and well-being of this park and your support helps the park immeasurably. You have read in the *Tidings* what we have accomplished this past year and what we are planning for 2011. You should take pride in these accomplishments as they are yours – none of this is possible without you. To help us achieve what we have planned for the future, I hope that Virgin Islands National Park remains one of your philanthropic priorities. I look forward to seeing you out in the park. 🌿

DIRECTORY –

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Coming events!

■ **Friends 7th Annual Gala, Feb. 5, 2011:** On Sat., Feb. 5, 2011 we invite you to join Friends of VINP to celebrate our accomplishments and our partnership with VI National Park. The gala will be held at Cheryl & David McDaniel's beautiful new villa, Butterfly Beach. Raffle tickets will be sold in advance and at the event, and prizes will include jewelry, art, excursions, dinners and other exciting items yet to come. Join us for St. John's premier social event of the year!

■ **Folk Life Festival, Feb. 24–26, 2011:** Once again, Friends of Virgin Islands National Park and the National Park Service will partner to present the Annual Folk Life Festival in celebration of Black History month. The 20th anniversary of the Festival will be held on February 24-26, 2011 at the Annaberg Sugar Mill Ruins. This year's theme is “Cultural Potpourri for All a We” and will expound upon the cultural similarities of our neighboring islands and show how their cultures have enhanced our own. Dance and music will again be a highlight of the festival as the St. Lucia Association and Dominica Association dance troupes, along with Smalls and the Music Makers, take the stage.

■ **Beach-to-Beach Power Swim, May 29, 2011:** Now's the time to begin your training for the 8th Annual Friends Beach-to-Beach Power Swim on May 29, 2011! And, it's time to start thinking about Race for A Reason, our participant fundraising challenge. It's going online this year to make it even easier to get everyone involved! Head to www.friendsvinp.org/swim for all the details about registration, Race for a Reason and sponsorship. See you in the water! 🌿

www.friendsvinp.org



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