National Park Service News Release

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Contact: NewsMedia@nps.gov

Virgin Islands National Park is Modifying Operations To Implement Local Health Guidance

St John, US Virgin Islands – Virgin Islands National Park is announcing additional modifications to operations to support federal, territory, and local efforts to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and to protect park resources. Beginning April 10, Virgin Islands National Park will resume mooring fee collection in order to help boaters during the territorial stay-at-home order. In addition, the Government of the Virgin Islands requires all boaters to complete the one-page health screening form.

The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners is our number one priority. The National Park Service (NPS) is working with federal, territory, and local authorities to closely monitor COVID-19. We will notify the public when we resume full operations and provide updates on our website (www.nps.gov/viis) and social media channels.

“We heard from boaters who are requesting to maintain their mooring during the territorial stay-at-home order. And we heard from residents who want assurance that federal and territorial rules are being followed,” Virgin Islands National Park Superintendent Nigel Fields said. “This reservation approach allows mariners to determine their length of stay within 30 days while being good stewards of St John’s waters, shorelines and beaches.”

Closures established on March 23 and April 6 remain in effect. Virgin Islands National Park is offering very limited services outside those that support visitor or resource protection. Park rangers remain on duty and park regulations will be enforced.

The waters of Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument remain open. Law enforcement staff will remain on duty and may be reached at 1-866-995-8467.

The NPS encourages people who choose to visit the waters of Virgin Islands National Park during this pandemic to adhere to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and territory and local public health authorities to protect visitors and employees. As
services are limited, the NPS urges visitors to continue to practice Leave No Trace principles, including pack-in and pack-out, to keep outdoor spaces safe and healthy.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I reserve a park mooring for my vessel?
During the Territorial State of Emergency, the following applies for reserving a park mooring for up to 30 days:

Come to the Cruz Bay Visitor Center Pavilion at the date and time associated with your mooring bay. Have cash or credit card with the name of your boat, and the buoy number.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>11th</th>
<th>Friday April 10th</th>
<th>Saturday April</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0800-0900</td>
<td>Hawksnest</td>
<td>Salt Pond</td>
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<td>0930-1030</td>
<td>Leinster</td>
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<td>1100-1230</td>
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<td>1100-1300</td>
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<tr>
<td>1300-1500</td>
<td>Honeymoon/Caneel</td>
<td>All remaining/ first come, first served</td>
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<td><strong>Monday April 13th</strong></td>
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<td>0900-1100</td>
<td>All remaining/ first come, first served</td>
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Details:
A numbered reservation buoy, corresponding with each numbered buoy in the park will be available at the Cruz Bay dock upon making an advance payment for overnight mooring. It is important that boaters currently moored in the park make note of their mooring number before departing to pay at the Cruz Bay dock.

- Boaters are to arrive at the Cruz Bay dock *during the allotted time* for their designated bay.
- Boaters will pick up their numbered reservation buoy that corresponds with the moor they have been or will be using.
- Boaters use the “iron ranger” pay station by the dock and flagpole to complete the registration envelope. For safety purposes boaters must remain 6 feet apart when completing the information and approaching the pay station. The following information will be needed:
  - Boater name, address and email address
  - Vessel name
  - Length of stay
  - Senior Pass or Access Pass number (if applicable)
  - Payment information and signature
- Once the registration envelop is completed, boaters will approach the on-site park ranger to confirm registration information, length of stay and reservation mooring number.

What is the schedule of fees?
Normal overnight fees apply as follows: $26.00 per vessel per night or $13.00 per vessel per night for Senior Pass holders or Access Pass holders. *Fees are nonnegotiable and nonrefundable.* It is suggested that fees are paid up to two weeks at one time. 30 days maximum or up to May 15th—whichever is first.

**Where can I dispose of wastes/trash?**
You must travel offshore three miles or make pumping arrangements for sewage. Trash pickup from your boat may be available for a fee. Ultimately, trash removal is your responsibility. Boaters are encouraged to use authorized NPS permitted trash collectors providing convenient boat-to-boat service or land-based trash disposal. All NPS facilities are closed due to the territorial stay-at-home order. NPS trash receptacles must not be used. Boater trash must not be left on shore. All are expected to be good stewards and to help us care for the national park and for St. John.

**May we swim or snorkel?**
Yes, but be mindful of the number of vessels around you, and remember, the beaches are closed until further notice.

**Can we access park roads from the beach during the closure?**
Yes, but only for travelling to get provisions, remove trash, or other essential activities. Beaches and trails are closed to recreational activities, and as always, glass and dogs are not permitted on beaches.

**Must I remain on the boat overnight?**
Yes. Mooring in park bays is currently intended to provide visitors with a location to shelter in place and practice social distancing. Using NPS moorings for vessel storage is not permitted.

**Where can I dispose of sewage and liquid waste?**
Sewage discharge in park waters is strictly prohibited. Vessels must travel three miles offshore or must make arrangements for pumping.

**Is the fee refundable if my departure is sooner than what I paid for or if the bay is closed by the NPS?**
No, all fees are nonrefundable.

**Can we temporarily leave a dingy on the beach while getting essential supplies?**
Yes, enter the bays via the designated buoy channel, and tie to a dinghy line just offshore or beach your boat. Do not tie off on vegetation, rocks, or other natural features. Do not leave your boat ashore overnight.

**Where can we walk our pet?**
Beaches, trails, and parking lots are closed until further notice. You may walk your dog along a safe portion of the road or take your pet outside of the park.

**Credit card or cash?**
Credit cards are preferred for safety of park staff.
How do I check out and return the reservation buoy?
Registered mariners will receive check out information via email from park staff. They may also confirm any last minute or unexpected changes with their bay hosts.

www.nps.gov

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 419 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov, and on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

NPS FACEBOOK STATEMENT OF APRIL 9

A message from Virgin Islands National Park
A belated "Welcome to St. John" to you, your family and crew. We've been very glad to hear of the safe isolation and quarantining many of you have practiced since arriving in the USVI.

Please note that a long-term permit from VI DPNR is not required to be in National Park waters.

The NPS fee applies to all overnight guests in park waters, whether mooring or anchored in a designated area. The NPS appreciates the collaborative ways some sailors are using to safely get to Cruz Bay. Whether by sailing in, using a dingy, water or land based taxi-- any of those methods can work.

Only one person needs to come to the Cruz Bay station to register and to pick up their reserve buoy. Proxies are also allowed upon mutual agreement between boaters.

The registration process is outdoors and designed to be quick and straightforward. The timing and schedule adherence is important specifically to prevent crowding. Social distancing will be practiced by the NPS staff and is expected to be respectfully practiced by boaters to keep everyone safe.

DPNR has advised us that all boaters are required by the VI Territory to complete the health survey form which is fillable online. NPS staff will not have health survey forms to hand out. It can be found here: https://dpnr.vi.gov/…/2020-04.01-USVI-Covid-19-arrival-pass…. The completed form should be emailed to: dee@dpnr.vi.gov.

Thank you for keeping yourselves and the residents of St. John safe.

The pandemic, multiple closures and shelter-in place orders are new for all of us but we will get through it, safely, together. We wish everyone a pleasant and safe stay in National Park waters.