



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Buck Island Reef National Monument
2100 Church Street #100
Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820-4611
(340) 773-1460

IN REPLY REFER TO:

May 6, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190, as amended), the National Park Service is preparing a General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Buck Island Reef National Monument. The purpose of this letter is to request your comments regarding the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, identify issues of concern that you might have, and solicit your input on the future management direction for the park.

The Purpose and Need: Buck Island Reef National Monument was established in 1961 to preserve one of the finest marine gardens in the Caribbean Sea. In 2001, the monument was significantly expanded to further preserve and protect the island and tropical marine ecosystem including coral reefs, sea grass beds, octocoral hard bottom, sand communities, algal plains, shelf edge, and oceanic habitats; to protect threatened and endangered species and enhance their habitats and survivability; to enhance the health and diversity of fisheries resources through their protection; to protect and manage terrestrial and submerged cultural resources; and to preserve this area of outstanding scientific, aesthetic, and educational importance for the benefit and enjoyment of the people now and for the future. The expansion of the monument identified the need for the development of a new General Management Plan to guide the future direction of resource preservation and visitor use at the monument. The general management planning process provides a comprehensive approach to establish the basic management philosophy for the park and provide strategies for addressing issues and achieving identified management objectives. The General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement will evaluate the environmental impacts of a range of alternatives to address distinct management approaches to preserving significant natural and cultural resources for public enjoyment, competing demands for limited resources, priorities for using available funds and staff, and differing interests and views of what is most important.

National Park Service managers constantly make difficult decisions about ways to preserve significant natural and cultural resources for public enjoyment, about competing demands for limited resources, about priorities for using available funds and staff, and about differing interests and views of what is most important. The General Management Plan process provides methods and tools for resolving these issues in ways that minimize conflicts and promote mutually beneficial solutions that articulate how public use and enjoyment of the park can be part of a strategy for ensuring that resources are protected unimpaired for future generations.

The Process and Importance of Public Input: The General Management Plan process provides for early identification of concerns, issues, expectations, and values of existing and potential visitors, neighbors, people with traditional cultural ties to lands within the park, cooperating associations, other partners, scientists, scholars, and other government agencies. Input gathered during this process will be used in the Environmental Impact Statement to assess and compare the effects of each alternative on the natural and man-made environment. The Environmental Impact Statement will also recommend selection of a “preferred” management alternative. The National Park Service is requesting the public’s input throughout this project.

Public Meetings: Your input is a key element in the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. You are invited to attend any of the public meetings to be held the week of June 21, 2004 at the following locations:

<i>Area</i>	<i>Date and Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
Christiansted, St. Croix	June 23, 2004 6:30 -8:30 p.m.	National Park Service Danish West India Guinea Company Warehouse Ground Floor (Old U.S. Post Office Building) 2100 Church Street #100 Christiansted, St. Croix
Christiansted, St. Croix	June 24, 2004 6:30-8:30 p.m.	National Park Service Danish West India Guinea Company Warehouse Ground Floor (Old U.S. Post Office Building) 2100 Church Street #100 Christiansted, St. Croix
Christiansted, St. Croix	June 25, 2004 9:30-11:30 a.m.	National Park Service Danish West India Guinea Company Warehouse Ground Floor (Old U.S. Post Office Building) 2100 Church Street #100 Christiansted, St. Croix

Additional public meetings will be scheduled upon release of the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. Time and place of the additional public meetings will be published in advance of these meetings.

Who to Contact: If you are interested in providing input on the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, you are invited to attend any of the above meetings, or respond by mail or telephone to:

Mr. Joel A. Tutein, Superintendent
Buck Island Reef National Monument
2100 Church Street #100
Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820-4611
(340) 773-1460
CHRI_Superintendent@nps.gov

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review during regular business hours. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety. Submitting comments will ensure that you are included on the mailing list for further information. If you do not wish to comment at this time, but want to remain on the mailing list, you must notify the planning team at the address listed above. Although your comments are always welcome, comments received by July 26, 2004, are requested.

Supplementary Information: The Draft and Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement will be made available to known interested parties and appropriate agencies. A regional map of the park is available on the internet at <http://www.nps.gov/buis/pphtml/maps.html> and is also attached for your convenience. Please visit our website for additional information: <http://www.nps.gov/buis/index.htm>. Full public participation by federal, territorial, and other agencies as well as other concerned organizations and private citizens are invited throughout the preparation of this document. The National Park Service would like to thank you for reviewing this letter, and for preparing and submitting your written comments.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joel A. Tutein

Superintendent
Christiansted National Historic Site
Buck Island Reef National Monument
Salt River Bay National Historical Park & Ecological Preserve