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Tourism to National Park Units on St. Croix creates \$8 Million in Economic Benefits *Report shows visitor spending supports 105 jobs in local economy*

CHRISTIANSTED – A new National Park Service (NPS) report shows that 148,753 visitors to the National Park units on St. Croix, USVI, in 2014 spent \$8,459,200 in communities near the park. The three National Parks on St. Croix are Christiansted National Historic Site (1952), Buck Island Reef National Monument (1961), and Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (1992). That spending supported 105 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$10,232,200.00.

“Our St. Croix parks welcome visitors from across the country and around the world,” said Superintendent Joel A. Tutein. “We are delighted to share our island’s story and the experiences that we provide here. We also feature our parks as a way to introduce our visitors to the Virgin Islands and all that it offers. National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it’s a big factor in our local economy as well. We appreciate the partnership and support of our neighbors and are glad to be able to give back by helping to sustain local communities.”

The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by U.S. Geological Survey economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas and Christopher Huber and National Park Service economist Lynne Koontz. The report shows \$15.7 billion of direct spending by 292.8 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 277,000 jobs nationally; 235,600 of those jobs are found in these gateway communities. The cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy was \$29.7 billion.

According to the 2014 report, most park visitor spending was for lodging (30.6 percent) followed by food and beverages (20.3 percent), gas and oil (11.9 percent), admissions and fees (10.2 percent) and souvenirs and other expenses (9.9 percent).



To download the report visit <http://www.nature.nps.gov/socialscience/economics.cfm>

The report includes information for visitor spending at individual parks and by state. To learn more about national parks on St. Croix and how the National Park Service works with Virgin Islands communities to help preserve local history, conserve the environment, and provide outdoor recreation, go to www.nps.gov/vi. Also download the smartphone application: Search for 'NPS.STX' on the Android or Apple store.

www.nps.gov/CHRI

The National Park Service will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2016. Look for more Find Your Park initiatives in the coming year.

