



IMPACT REPORT

2023

**Friends Of
Virgin Islands
National Park**





Annaberg Plantation. Photo by Kayden Richards, Friends Artist-In-Residence

FRIENDS OF VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL
PARK IS THE OFFICIAL PHILANTHROPIC
PARTNER OF VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL
PARK.

OUR MISSION IS TO PROTECT AND
PRESERVE THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL
RESOURCES OF VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL
PARK AND CORAL REEF NATIONAL
MONUMENT WHILE CONNECTING VISITORS
TO THE PARK AND THE PARK TO THE
COMMUNITY.


Friends of
Virgin Islands National Park

PROTECT PRESERVE CONNECT





FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends

At night on St. John a symphony of natural sounds from wind and creatures serenades us as we stargaze. What a blessing for us, and our corals that spawn under the moonlit sky!

The beautiful interconnected geometry in the night sky is reflected in the connections between the individuals, families, organizations, and businesses that rally to support Virgin Islands National Park and Coral Reef National Monument.

From individuals and schools to service organizations, everyone Friends of Virgin Islands National Park engaged with this past year came with an impressive eagerness to get out into our Park and be involved with conserving its resources. The impact of your volunteerism this year is a testament to the power of just how well and how hard we work together! In all, 8,816 hours were generously donated by volunteers in support of the Park.

As you will see in the pages ahead, our trail crew leader, Aaliyah Hodges supported by Mark Gestwicki, Taylor White, and Ameir Sprauve, maintained the 27 miles of park trails and 30 historical ruins with 470 walkup and campground volunteers. Likewise, Sea Turtle Program Coordinator Willow Melamet and UVI graduate Katie Ayres coordinated 67 trained volunteers to walk our shores every morning during nesting season. All of our fundraising and community events managed by Jennifer Stone were only possible thanks to 327 volunteers.

Similarly, our business partnerships strengthen our ability to deliver on our mission. This past year more than 100 businesses sponsored events helping to raise critical funds for youth programs such as Earth Day, Culture Day, and Learn To Swim.

This past year we worked hard to match our Park's priority needs with available resources, funding almost \$2 million in programs and projects. We connected with other agencies and their expertise by partnering with US Fish and Wildlife and USDA, for example, to address shared land management concerns. Friends also raised funds through a generous foundation gift to build the Park's capacity to hire additional staff during peak season. And working with the Park, we completed the rebuild of the biggest local attraction in Cruz Bay – the playground!

There is a blessing embedded in every gift we give and receive. Your support and generosity reflects a love for Virgin Islands National Park and for those who call St. John home. On behalf of the Friends, I encourage you to review this Impact Report with a sense of pride – YOU make all the difference!



TONIA LOVEJOY
Executive Director

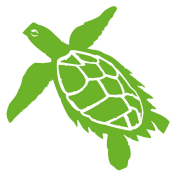


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FOUNDED
IN
1988

2300
MEMBERS





Thank You To You

**Our Donors, Members, Sponsors, And Volunteers For Sharing Our Love
For The Park And Making The Work We Do Possible!**



2023 BY THE NUMBERS

FY_23 ending September 30, 2023

300
trees in
community
giveaway



planted

150 native plants on
north shore beaches

1,050 mangroves

100 endangered solanum
conocarpum

maintained

27
miles of trails

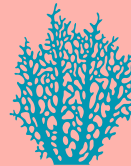
30
historic ruins

CORAL*

47
Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease
(SCTLD) treatment dives

2,838
corals treated for SCTLD

49
lionfish responders trained

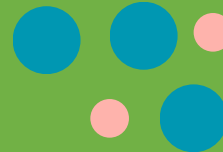


*CORE Foundation

turtle protection



25
confirmed nests protected
and monitored



3
species nested
hawksbill, green, leatherback

10
nesting beaches



2,289
hatchlings made it to sea

300
SEMINARS

hikes, talks & boat trips aimed at educating and engaging visitors

14
community beach cleanups

8,816
VOLUNTEER HOURS



1,575 hours
contributed by 67 trained sea turtle volunteers

5,237 hours
by 470 trail camp and walkup volunteers

2,004 hours
by 327 event volunteers

SKIP

School Kids In The Park



8 schools

835 students

51 park trips

5 classroom presentations

14 subjects

1
playground rebuild

YOUTH

38 Summer Camp, Learn To Swim & educational sessions for 3 camps



9 Summer trail youth crew

1 Moko Jumbie Crew support

7 University scholarships

4
events
Paddle The Park, Annual Gala, Earth Day, Power Swim

2023 **BY THE NUMBERS**
FY_23 ending September 30, 2023





WELCOME TO VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK AND CORAL REEF NATIONAL MONUMENT

At Virgin Islands National Park, coral reefs, quiet coves, blue-green waters and white sandy beaches fringed by green hills help frame more than 3,000 years of human history spanning the archaic period through European colonialism and post-colonial emancipation. It comprises 7,259 acres of terrestrial habitat, which is about 60% of St. John's land mass.

The Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument abuts 5,650 acres of submerged lands that are part of Virgin Islands National Park. This tropical marine ecosystem includes mangroves, sea grass beds, coral reefs, octocoral hardbottom, and sand communities, and algal plains, along with threatened and endangered species, like green and leatherback sea turtles, reef fish, dolphins, and sea birds.

Together, the two parks drew nearly 200,000 visitors in 2022 contributing more than \$31 million to local economies.





PROTECT

MARINE CONSERVATION

The Friends marine resource protection priorities are focused on coral reef and mangrove ecosystem health and restoration, sea turtle nest monitoring, invasive lionfish removal, and marine stewardship outreach and education for the local and visitor boating community.

SEA TURTLE MONITORING AND PROTECTION

Since 2015 the Virgin Islands National Park Sea Turtle Program, funded and coordinated by the Friends, has been monitoring and protecting sea turtles on St. John. The main objectives are to document nesting activity, promote conservation through education outreach, and mitigate threats to sea turtles that utilize the beaches and waters of the Park.

Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles have been recorded nesting on St. John, with the critically endangered hawksbill producing the majority of nests. Over the past seven years, the program has been built on the core foundation of volunteer-based monitoring, nest protection, research, and education outreach.

Regular volunteer-based beach monitoring was conducted on 47 beaches between 1 and 7 days a week by 67 volunteers and the program coordinators. Over 1,765 beach patrols were conducted, contributing to over 1,575 volunteer hours. During these patrols, 764 beach clean-up efforts were recorded. New this season was the use of the Epicollect5 app, which allowed volunteers to enter their beach patrol log electronically via a phone streamlining data collection.

Fifty nesting activities were documented between April 23, 2022 and January 28, 2023 on ten nesting beaches, yielding 25 confirmed nests, 24 dry runs, and 1 possible nest. Incubation time ranged from 52-89 days, with an average incubation time of 60.16 days for all species and 66.82 days for hawksbill only. The egg count for these excavated nests was 2,530 eggs. During excavations, 194 hatchlings were found alive in the cavities and released. The majority of these hatchlings were entangled in roots. In all 2,289 hatchlings made it to the sea.





CORAL REEF PROTECTION

Our beautiful coral reefs and marine ecology are fragile! Through our partner, CORE Foundation, the issue of invasive lionfish as well as the impact of Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD) and coral bleaching is being addressed. This year an additional 49 volunteers were trained and certified to respond to lionfish sightings and 47 coral treatment dives took place to treat 2,838 corals for SCTLD. In addition, CORE is investigating coral growing options in the Park. This year, they received a Scientific Research Permit from the NPS and built a coral nursery. *Acropora palmata* (Elk horn coral) and *Acropora Cervicornis* (Stag horn coral) specimens have been collected and fixed to the rebar nursery in Leinster Bay. Weekly cleanings are conducted to remove bad algae from the coral fragments and the dome itself. The hope is to outplant these fragments in the future.

ANCHORLESS PARK

The mooring system that the Friends helped establish in the park goes a long way to helping protect coral and sea grass from damage by anchors. Thanks to this system, there are only three places in the Park where anchoring is allowed. Friends continues to advocate for the ongoing maintenance and monitoring of the system and funds one of the Park's divers.

KEEPING OUR BEACHES CLEAN

Marine debris and trash on the beaches is an ongoing challenge. Friends coordinated 14 beach and shore cleanups during Ocean Week (October) and Earth Week (April) with the support of other island non-profits and local businesses.

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Outreach and education efforts on sea turtles, coral conservation, and other marine issues were expanded this year. Over 12 school trips were held and sea turtle and coral seminars included a weekly information table at Maho as well as two evening talks at Cinnamon, and a presentation at the USVI Yacht Show. Thanks to Ocean Surfari a monthly boat seminar is hosted by a sea turtle, coral and marine expert. A snorkel card and good turtle etiquette flyers were made available to local marine businesses and villas and advertising appeared in Destination magazine and the Cruising Guide to the Virgin Islands.





PROTECT

TRAILS MANAGEMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

The Friends Trails Program runs annually from November to August and is essential to keeping Virgin Islands National Park accessible and safe. The Trail Crew performs duties such as hiking trail and historic site maintenance, native plant restoration, and trash/debris removal. This year, the program included 470 volunteers, who contributed 5,237 hours of labor.

TRAIL MAINTENANCE

The Friends Trail Crew's main priority is keeping all 27 miles of hiking trails in Virgin Islands National Park open, safe, and accessible. Hikers in the National Park often see the volunteers clearing vegetation, improving trail watershed, constructing retaining walls and steps, maintaining scenic vistas, and replacing signage.

COASTAL PLANTING & BEACH STABILIZATION

The coastline of St. John was severely impacted by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. In response to this devastation, the Friends and the National Park Service started a coastal planting initiative with the goal of stabilizing and protecting popular north shore beaches from further erosion. Since 2019, over 750 trees have been planted. During the 2022/23 season, volunteers planted 100 native trees at Cinnamon Bay and 50 at Leinster Bay. These trees were propagated from locally sourced seeds by local horticulturist and expert Eleanor Gibney, who also acted as the lead advisor on the project.



MANGROVE RESTORATION

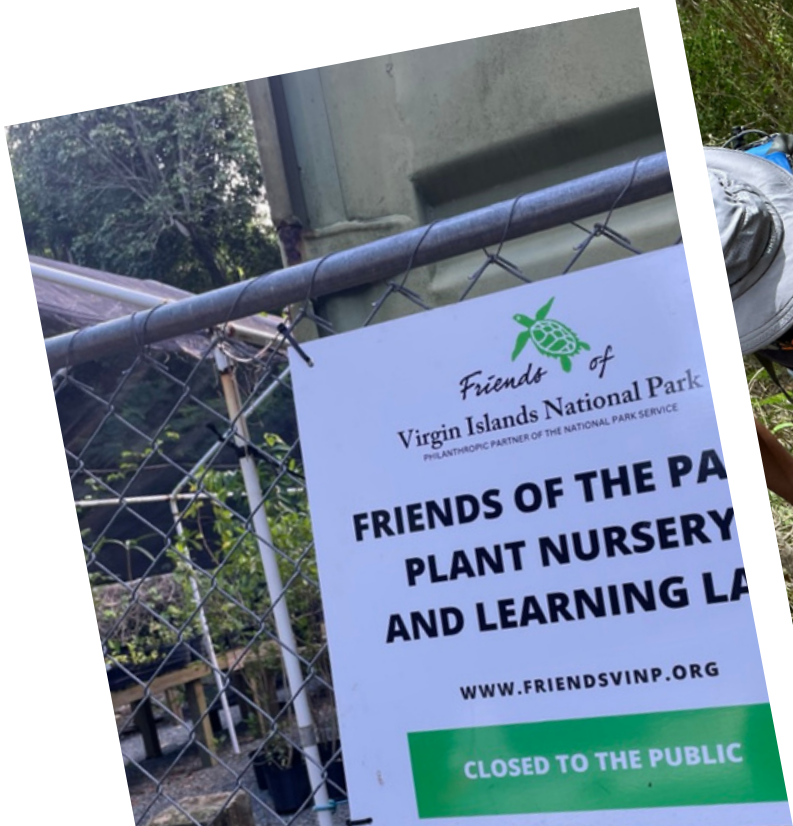
Friends partnered with Iowa State University and Virgin Islands National Park to plant 1,050 mangroves in the Annaberg wetland area. Friends hired a six-person crew of local youth to carry out this large-scale planting project. Black, white, and red mangroves were planted in clusters along the perimeter of the Annaberg wetland.

ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES PROTECTION

Solanum conocarpum, or marron bacora, is a federally listed endangered plant that is endemic to the Virgin Islands. The world's largest population is located near Salt Pond on St. John and consists of less than 200 individuals. Friends of Virgin Islands National Park has been working to protect this population by removing invasive species and cultivating and planting a new population of 100 nursery-raised plants in a second location in the Park.

NURSERY MANAGEMENT AND PLANT PROPAGATION

The Plant Nursery and Learning Lab raises native trees for coastal plantings, fruit bearing trees for plant giveaway, and rare and endangered plants that need protection. The nursery is also utilized as an educational space to teach youth about native plants and their traditional uses.





PRESERVE

PRESERVING HERITAGE AND HISTORY

HISTORICAL RUIN PRESERVATION

The Trail Crew maintains 30 historic sites within the Park to ensure they remain venues for education and an opportunity for visitors and residents to connect with the history on St. John. This season, the crew uncovered ruins that hadn't been cleared in many years including hidden structures at Fredriksdal and Leinster Bay. Leinster Bay was recently accepted into the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program which honors, preserves, and promotes the history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight.

ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM SUPPORT

Archaeologist, Dr. Brittany Mistretta, was hired by the National Park and funded by Friends to perform artifact analysis and cataloging work following an archaeological excavation at Cinnamon Bay that suggests that the indigenous Taino people had a large village in the area for multiple generations.

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

The Artist-In-Residence program aims to connect Virgin Island creatives to the Park by promoting their work, offering mentorship, and providing work experience and financial support. Friends has built a website for ancestral St. Johnian and photographer, Kayden Richards as well as hired him to take photos in the Park and at events. Last year, Friends secured a Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands National Endowment for the Humanities grant on his behalf for a storytelling project that will be completed by the end of 2023.

SHARING CULTURE

Friends includes cultural content in its seminar programs, visitor outreach and in youth programs. Demonstrators of cooking and gardening techniques are at Annaberg three days a week and weekly seminars take place at Cinnamon that are attended by both visitors and residents. In recognition of Black History month, cultural days for the schools on St. John are held in February featuring musical and moko jumbie performances, and presentations of broom making, johnny cake baking, and archeology.





NURTURING OUR YOUTH

The future of conservation resides in our youth! Friends of the Park's youth programming aims at making learning fun, engaging youth with the natural and cultural resources in the Park, familiarizing them with the trails and the ocean, nurturing their curiosity and talents, and providing scholarship and job opportunities.



SCHOOL KIDS IN THE PARK (SKIP)

The SKIP program encourages local educators to use the Park as a "living classroom," facilitates visits to the Park, and works to remove barriers that may limit students' participation by covering transportation costs and more. Working with the park's interpretative rangers, Friends has enabled thousands of youth and their educators to establish a personal connection with their Virgin Islands National Park. This year Friends helped facilitate 56 field trips and classroom visits for hundreds of students of all ages from 8 schools on St. John and St. Thomas. In addition, an online resource on the Friends website has materials and lesson plans for teachers.

SCHOLARSHIPS & INTERNSHIPS

Seven university-level scholarships for the 2022-23 academic year were awarded to Virgin Island youth. The \$5,000 awards fall under the auspices of the Friends' two scholarship programs: the Noble Samuel Scholarship and the Jeffery Matheny Scholarship. Scholarship recipients were Ki'Janne' Alfred (Stetson University, Florida); Sanaa Burke (University of Delaware); Kaj Gerard (University of Virgin Islands); Caliyah Helliger (Howard University); Lila Uzzell (University of Virgin Islands); and Lyric Vacharat (University of North Carolina Wilmington).

Scholarship students and others are encouraged to intern with the Friends. This past year interns worked with our trails crew, turtle team, Learn To Swim instructors and summer camp program coordinators.



LEARN TO SWIM

Friends offers free swim lessons to all ages every first and third Saturday of the month as well as providing training and job opportunities for instructors and lifeguards. This year there were 46 students and 14 classes with 4 training sessions for instructors and lifeguards.

SUMMER ON ST. JOHN

A busy summer included 46 swim lessons, trips to the Park and more for the 120 kids attending summer camps on the island, as well as Summer Trail Crew and a new addition, the Junior Ocean Explorers camp. Junior Ocean Explorers is for students in grades 3-6. Participants spent a week at Cinnamon Bay Beach learning swimming, snorkeling and water safety techniques, diving into marine science and art projects, and more.



SUMMER TRAIL CREW

Summer Trail Crew is a six-week paid program for local Virgin Islands high school students aged 15 to 18. The crew worked on trail work, habitat restoration, and historic site maintenance interspersed with educational opportunities including CPR and First Aid training, resume building, and presentations from local experts on traditional arts and crafts, coral reefs, sea turtles, and frogs. Every Friday is known as Friday Fun Day where the students engage in recreational activities such as kayaking, sailing, snorkeling, and volleyball.

This hard working, dedicated crew consisted of 9 members, 7 of whom were returning for a second year. The participants were Omari Mark, Jack Oram, Kemoi Thomas, Alexia Brookes, Tumayah Bartlette, Cordell Abraham, Aleja Meade, Maxim McMahan, and V'Keshia Adams. They were supervised by Trail Crew Leader, Aaliyah Hodge.

PLAYGROUND REBUILD

The new playground in front of the National Park Visitor Center in Cruz Bay opened in March 2023. Friends worked with the National Park Service and the community to rebuild the playground that was damaged in the 2017 hurricanes. Thanks to a generous gift from Dr. Steven and Jann Paul as well as other donations from over 100 individuals and businesses, this place of joy, adventure, and imagination was created.

The build included a wonderful community mosaic project managed by Tiny Tile Mosaics, and the planting of native trees from the Friends plant nursery.

The second phase of the project will include interpretative signage for the landscaping, shade structures, a replica of the original customs house, and additional seating.



The playground is a tribute to everyone in our island community and beyond who contributed time, effort, creativity, sweat, and money to the making of a fun, creative place for our children to play!

Thank You!



CONNECT

SEMINARS, HIKES & EVENTS

Connecting people to the Park and the Park to the community is part of the mission of Friends of Virgin Islands National Park. Friends events aim to encourage people to engage with and celebrate the gifts of the Park and of St. John. In turn, they educate, entertain, and challenge visitors and residents of all ages, and in some cases are important fundraisers to support the protection and preservation of the Park.



SEMINARS & GUIDED HIKES

Working alongside the National Park Service, Friends coordinated and managed a full schedule of seminars, hikes, demonstrations, boat trips, and volunteer opportunities with something every day from Monday to Friday from November through June. In all, there were 275 events, hikes, and seminars including Fridays With Friends, Cinnamon Campground Chats, and Reef Bay hikes.

EARTH WEEK

Every April, a week of seminars, tree giveaways, and beach cleanups is anchored by Earth Day. This year was the 14th Annual Earth Day event for St. John schools and the theme focused on saving the beautiful oceans that surround our island home. It was a joy to see kids posters displayed with pride, engagement and conversation about everything from mangrove restoration to watershed management, and piles of marine debris collected! Twelve businesses and organizations hosted booths at the Fair which was held in Franklin Powell Park. Fun included a Litter Stomp Parade around the block and a Fourth Grade Junior Ranger awards presentation by Park rangers.

OCEAN WEEK

Inspired by International Coastal Cleanup Day, Friends holds Ocean Week every October and joins millions around the world because every bottle, every straw, every piece of trash we clean up can lead to a cleaner, healthier ocean. Thanks to local schools and businesses cleanups were held on seven island beaches.

BEACH TO BEACH POWER SWIM

The biggest event that Friends holds occurs every year over the Memorial Day weekend. The 20th Beach To Beach Power Swim was celebrated with 332 participants including four 20-year swim veterans - Craig Barshinger, Karen Cannell, Alfredo Del Olmo, and Jeff Miller.

The event is made possible thanks to some 69 sponsors and a battalion of volunteers! In the water and on the shore 140 people including high schoolers doing their community service hours, volunteered. From safety kayakers to timers, and everything in between, we are so grateful for the many helping hands that have made the Power Swim possible each year! The fabulous logo was designed by Kavone Wyatt. Kavone is a civil engineering student at University of the Virgin Islands and also designed the 2021 logo.

PADDLE THE PARK

This fun event includes three SUP courses that all start and end on Maho Bay beach with some 50 paddlers on the water. In it's 9th year, the event is an opportunity for all ages to come out and have fun and raise some funds for marine and other conservation work in the Park at the same time.

VILLAS FOR THE PARK

An online auction and important fundraiser, Villas For The Park is made possible thanks to the generosity of hotel and villa owners and managers across the Virgin Islands. Winning bidders get to enjoy an island vacation while providing critical funds. The 2022 event was the 6th Annual Villas For The Park auction and the catalog included stays on St. John, St. Thomas, St. Croix, and Lovango.



WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR PARK

DONATE

Please donate online via our website or mail checks to Friends of Virgin Islands National Park, P.O. Box 811, St. John, VI 00831

BECOME A MEMBER

ADOPT A SEA TURTLE

VOLUNTEER

SHOP

Proceeds from sales of Virgin Islands National Park merchandise and more support our work. Please visit the Park Store in the National Park Visitor Center or shop online.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Planned giving is an opportunity to leave a legacy on St. John for future generations. Please contact Lisa Lord Price at lprice@friendsvinp.org.

Thank You!

**VISIT OUR
WEBSITE**

www.friendsvinp.org





ADVOCACY & VISION

Taking a step back to reflect on where we have been and where we are going is part of ensuring that the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park continues to be a valued partner to our park and our community. Over the past 35 years, the organization has witnessed a sea of change on St. John, and in the world at large. Today, we are clear. As an environmental organization and community partner on an island, protecting our marine resources and ensuring that everyone has equitable opportunity in that sphere is vital; that as an organization both internally and externally we need to work with diversity, equity and inclusion in mind; and that managing visitation on our small island must be a priority.

MARINE STEWARDSHIP & LEARN TO SWIM

It is incumbent that Friends partner with universities, schools, agencies, NGOs, and the public to advance opportunities to educate, protect and conserve our precious marine resources and expand outreach and education for the local and visitor boating community.

More than a safety issue, being able to swim opens up a world of joy above and below the water as well as employment opportunities in the tourism and marine industries, and in areas like marine research and conservation. On an island swimming is an essential skill and that is why Friends is working to strengthen our pipeline of environmental education experiences by anchoring them around a swim program operated in partnership with the Park, and the non-profit and business community.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Friends commissioned a study this year to look at the organization's history in the context of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and determine the action steps and the deliberate effort needed to advance our commitment to promoting a culture that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization, the National Park System, and the wider U.S. Virgin Islands community.

VISITATION & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Balancing the human impact on natural and cultural resources is critical to the future health of Virgin Islands National Park. Future planning has to take into account visitation numbers, parking and vehicle management, boat traffic, as well as the future of Caneel Bay. Friends will continue to work with the Park and the community to look for solutions that contribute to long term sustainability.



Friends Of The Park License Plates

2023 saw the introduction of new Friends license plates featuring the beautiful sea turtles found in our waters. These plates are available for for motor vehicles and motorcycles registered in the Virgin Islands. Proceeds go towards protecting and preserving the natural and cultural resources in the Park.





Gifts That Keep On Giving

VISIT THE PARK STORE IN THE NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER

OR SHOP ONLINE

Proceeds from your purchase go towards protecting and preserving the natural and cultural resources in the Park. Thank you for making a difference!



THIS IS ST. JOHN, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS!

Welcome! Welcome!
To Our Island And Our Park!

ENJOY YOUR VISIT!

For love of turtles, please keep your distance and don't touch them.

Protect our coral and yourself! Wear reef safe sunscreen and protective clothing. Stand only on sand and not on coral or rocks.

Pack it in, pack it out. Please take trash with you or put it in a bin.

Only park in designated areas to protect vegetation and combat erosion.

Visit the National Park Visitor Center and Store in Cruz Bay for more information, maps, and cool mementos of a great island vacation.

DID YOU KNOW
THAT OVER 60%
OF ST. JOHN IS A
NATIONAL PARK?

Destination
Magazine
Advertisement Friendsvnp.org.



HELP PROTECT & PRESERVE
Plan your visit and learn about local history and cultural resources



Virgin Islands National Park
Virgin Islands Coral Reef
National Monument
U.S. Virgin Islands



RESPONSIBLE VISITATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

2022/2023

ST. JOHN, US VIRGIN ISLANDS

VisitorGuide

VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK
VIRGIN ISLANDS CORAL REEF NATIONAL MONUMENT

Welcome To Our Island

Stunning beaches, miles of trails, marine life, fauna and the island of St. John is Virgin Islands National Park and Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument. Enjoy the park's natural and cultural resources and hike our trails. Don't forget to drive responsibly.

Friends of Virgin Islands National Park offers volunteer opportunities from Monday through Friday.

This season you can enjoy a boat pickup on Monday.

**Hike Our Trails
Explore Our History**

There are 27 miles of trails in the park ranging from moderate walks like Lind Point to the more strenuous Ram Head or Cinnamon Bay Trails. Remember to wear a hat and carry water. The trails are all well marked and trail maps can be purchased in the Park Store or in the Friends' online store. If you would like to work on the trails maintenance crew, walk up volunteers are welcome on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

As you hike, be sure to stop and visit the markings and ruins that people before us have left behind. There is much to learn from the Reef Bay petroglyph rock carvings made by the indigenous Tainos possibly as early as AD700 to the remains of the sugar plantations worked by enslaved people that dominated the island during Danish colonial times and gave rise to the 1733 rebellion and emancipation in 1848.

USEFUL NUMBERS

- Emergency Response
Call 911 or (340) 776-9110 where there is cell coverage. Text 911 is not available.
- NPS Visitor Center and Store, Cruz Bay
(340) 776-6201 |
VIS_Interpretation@nps.gov
- NPS Park Ranger Hotline | (866) 995-8467
- Report Sea Turtle Nesting Activity
VINPTurtles@friendsvnp.org |
(760) 470-8995
- Report Injured Turtles Throughout the USVI
STAR Network | (340) 690-0474
- Report Invasive Lion Fish Locations
CORE | (833) 774-2673

SNORKELING TIPS TO PROTECT YOU AND THE MARINE WORLD

Colorful corals (especially orange) and sea urchins are endangered species. In our waters we have hawksbill, green and leatherback turtles. You will see them grazing on sea grass. Enjoy the magic of these creatures from a distance and for their safety avoid snorkeling in shallow water as your fins will damage coral. Boaters slow down for those or chase them. Use the zoom feature on your camera.

the water so turtles will center.

This snorkel card is available to marine businesses. Get in touch.

SNORKELING TIPS



BE A TURTLE FRIEND

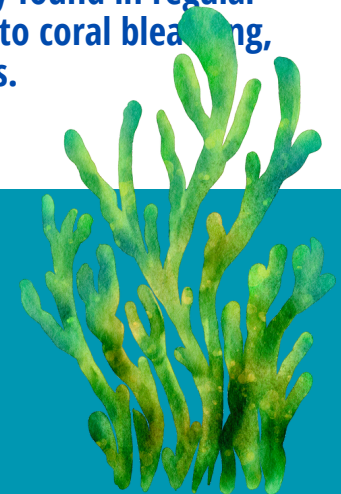
6 to 10 feet



PROTECT YOURSELF AND OUR REEFS

-  Sea turtles are endangered species. In our waters we have hawksbill, green and leatherback turtles. You will mostly see greens grazing on sea grass.
-  Enjoy the magic of these creatures from a distance and for their safety, **please don't touch them or chase them.** Use the zoom feature on your camera.
-  Reduce your use of plastics. Plastic bags, for example, look like jelly fish in the water so **turtles will eat them.**
-  Have a turtle-y awesome time in our **National Park.**
-  Don't touch coral especially orange or brightly colored corals, they may sting. Coral are fragile creatures and damage easily.
-  Avoid snorkeling in shallow water as your fins will damage coral and an unexpected wake or wave could throw you into coral.
-  Stand only in sand and not on coral or grass for their protection and yours. Sea urchin stings are painful.
-  Use mineral-based reef safe sunscreen and protective clothing like rash guards. Active chemicals like oxybenzone and octinoxate typically found in regular sunscreen are poisonous, may lead to coral bleaching, and are banned in the Virgin Islands.

Help Us Spread The Word!






Friends of
Virgin Islands National Park

www.friendsvinp.org

