

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

SALT RIVER BAY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE

[Converted to electronic form by Damon J. Gomez (NOAA/RSMAS) in 2002. Copy available at the NOAA Miami Regional Library. Minor editorial changes were made.]

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PURPOSE OF WORKSHOP

The following booklet is a synopsis of planning workshops held to develop “management objectives” for Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (SARI). The purpose of the workshops was to develop a series of clear statements specific to SARI that will guide the management of the Park. These “management objectives” will be the cornerstone of the Park’s Statement for Management and other planning and management documents.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology utilized was to assemble a diverse group of Virgin Islands government officials, Salt River Preserve Commission members, concerned citizens, environmental group representatives, and National Park Service officials and use a nominal group process to develop a series of “management objectives” for the Park. These objectives were then shared with the local community, revised, edited, and set forth in this document.

The specific process used in the workshop in developing the management objectives was:

Review of the legislation relating to SARI.

Development of a vision for the Park.

Development of a statement of purpose for the Park.

Development of statements of significance that indicates the Park’s major attributes.

Listing of issues currently affecting the Park.

Drafting of management objectives, based on the aforementioned factors, to guide the management of the Park.

VISION

The Vision is defined as the guiding principle for development and operation of the Park.

The Park is a living museum containing sacred grounds and a unique complex of ecosystems. The dignity, sanctity, and integrity of important natural, historical, and archeological sites shall not be compromised.

PURPOSE

The Purpose is defined as the reason the Park was established.

The purpose of SARI is to preserve, protect, manage, and interpret its unique resources. The scenic vistas of Salt River Bay encompass the remains of thousands of years of human habitation set within a mosaic of dynamic tropical coastal ecosystems.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Park is summarized in statements that capture the essence of the Park's important natural, cultural, historical, recreations, scientific or other values.

Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve at St. Croix is significant because it:

1. Encompasses all major cultural periods in the U.S. Virgin Islands including: Taino, Caribbean, African, and other pre-European societies, the Columbus contact and Spanish, French, Dutch, English, and Danish periods.
2. Contains numerous important archeological sites including:
 - a. The only ceremonial ball court ever discovered in the Lesser Antilles.
 - b. The only known site where members of the Columbus expedition set foot on what is now United States territory.
 - c. Spanish, French, Dutch, English, and Danish settlements.
3. Presents an outstanding opportunity to preserve and interpret Caribbean history and culture.
4. Contains the largest remaining classical mangrove forest in the U.S. Virgin Islands and a unique variety of tropical marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
5. Contains habitat for 27 known threatened and endangered species.
6. Has outstanding scenic vistas.
7. Encompasses an internationally recognized rare submarine canyon and associated ecological communities.

8. Is one of a few recognized “hurricane holes” in the region.
9. Is utilized as an important camping and picnic area for island residents.
10. Provides for world class SCUBA diving in a marine canyon.
11. Provides a unique opportunity for cultural and natural scientific research.
12. Provides an outstanding opportunity for partnership between the Federal government and the government of the Virgin Islands to jointly manage the Park and provide for the training of Virgin Islands’ residents and development of a territorial park system.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The following Management Objectives will guide the Park's actions over the next years.

Interpretation

Provide information and education opportunities which encourage understanding and appreciation for the value of resources research and preservation in the areas of:

1. Salt River Coastal Ecosystems.
2. Interaction of cultures which have impacted on the continuum of cultural evolution from pre-European to Modern times; and
3. The interrelationship of inhabitants and their environment.

Visitor Experience

To transport the visitor through a variety of experiences reflective of significant sites and conditions that include:

1. Native American and Pre-European sites.
2. Columbus contact.
3. European and West African inhabitation.
4. Marine and terrestrial ecosystems. (while allowing for important recreational opportunities)

Cultural Resource Protection

Identify, document, and protect the physical record of human activity to allow Park visitors and the general public a sensory and emotional understanding of the cultural continuum, most especially:

1. Fort Sale and European settlement sites—stabilize (ensure there is no further erosion or degradation) Fort Sale and settlement sites in order to preserve the remaining resources and provide sites for interpretation.
2. Ball court and archaeological sites (village site and pre-columbian areas at Cape of Arrows)—identify, mark boundaries, stabilize, interpret and ensure an atmosphere respectful of the sanctity of burial sites.

Natural Resource Protection

Maintain and restore (man impacted) natural coastal and marine ecosystems to sustain their dynamics.

Research

Facilitate scientific research within SARI to increase knowledge about the unique cultural and natural resources and enhance resource protection, interpretation, and management.

Training

To provide for the training of residents of the Virgin Islands to institute and manage a Territorial Park System.

Area Relationship

Ensure that the concerns and suggestions from U.S. Virgin Islands' residents are solicited and fully considered in the development and management of the Park.

U.S. Virgin Islands/National Park Service Relationship

Cultivate a productive working partnership to develop a jointly managed world class U.S. Virgin Islands/NPS Park at Salt River.

ISSUES

The following issues were raised during the Workshop. The Management Objectives will direct their resolution through management decisions, planning documents and staff actions.

1. Impacts on important resources and values from camping, commercial fishing in the bay, jet skis, live-aboard boats (trash and sewage), power boats (effect on sea grasses), etc.
2. Lack of resource data on and protection of resources (archaeological sites, turtle nests, black coral, etc).
3. Relationship of NPS, Commission and VIIS Government.
4. How to develop a model of inclusion of Island residents for use and commercial potential (concessions) in the Preserve.
5. Developing a preservation ethic regarding the Preserve.
6. Acquisition of lands in the Park (priority and funding).
7. Development in and around the Park.
8. Size and extent of concessions.
9. Use of Salt River Bay as a "hurricane hole".
10. Training of Virgin Islands' residents.
11. Effects of agricultural procedures on bay resources.

LEGISLATION

The following highlights of the Park legislation, Public Law 102-247, February 24, 1992:

Section 102. Findings:

1. In order to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations certain internationally significant historical, cultural, and natural sites and resources in the Virgin Islands, there is established the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve at St. Croix, Virgin Islands (SARI). [Section 103, placed here for emphasis].

a. Salt River Bay area encompasses all major cultural periods in the U.S. Virgin Islands;

b. contains the only ceremonial ball court ever discovered in the Lesser Antilles;

c. the only known site where members of the Columbus expedition set foot on what is now United States territory;

d. contains sites of Spanish, French, Dutch, English, and Danish settlements;

e. presents an outstanding opportunity to preserve and interpret Caribbean history and culture;

f. has been a national natural landmark and has been nominated for acquisition as a nationally significant wildlife habitat;

g. contains the largest remaining mangrove forest in the U.S. Virgin Islands and a variety of tropical marine and terrestrial ecosystems which should be preserved and kept unimpaired for the benefit of present and future generations; and

h. is worthy of a comprehensive preservation effort that should be carried out in partnership between the Federal Government and the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

2. Section 103:

a. The park shall consist of approximately 912 acres of land, waters, submerged lands, and interests therein with the area generally depicted on the map entitled Salt River Study area—Alternative C.

3. Section 104 Acquisition of Land:

a. The Secretary of the Interior may acquire land and interest in land within the boundaries of the park by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands from acquiring land or interest in land within the boundaries of the park.

b. Lands, and interests in lands, within the boundaries of the park which are owned by the U.S. Virgin Islands, or any political subdivision thereof, may be acquired only by donation or exchange. No lands or interests therein, containing dwellings lying within the park boundary as of July 1, 1991, may be acquired without the consent of the owner unless the Secretary determines that the land is being developed or proposed to be developed in a manner which is detrimental to the natural, scenic, historic, and other values for which the park was established.

4. Section 105, Administration:

a. The park shall be administered in accordance with this title and with the provisions of the law generally applicable to units of the national park system, including, but not limited to, the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service" and for other purposes, approved August 25, 1916 and the Act of August 21, 1935. In the case of any conflict between the provisions of this Act and such generally applicable provisions of law, the provisions of this Act shall govern.

b. The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with the U.S. Virgin Islands, or any political subdivision thereof, for the management of the park and for other purposes.

c. Not later than 3 years after the date funds are made available for this subsection, the Secretary, Commission, and public shall develop and submit a general management plan for the park. It shall describe the appropriate protection, management, uses and development of the park consistent with the purposes of this title.

(1) The General Management Plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Plans for implementation of a continuing program of interpretation and visitor education about the resources and values of the park.

(b) Proposals for visitor use facilities to be developed for the park.

(c) Plans for management of the natural and cultural resources of the park, with particular emphasis on the preservation of both the cultural and natural resources and long-term scientific study of terrestrial, marine, and archeological resources, giving high priority to the enforcement of the provisions of the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the National

Historic Preservation Act within the park. The natural and cultural resources management plans shall be prepared in consultation with the Virgin Islands Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

(d) Proposals for assessing the potential operation and supply of park concessions by qualified Virgin Islands-owned business.

(e) Plans for the training of personnel in accordance with subsection (d).

d. Training Assistance: During the 10-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this title, the Secretary shall provide the funds for the employees of the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands directly engaged in the joint management of the park and shall implement, in consultation with the government of the U.S. Virgin Islands, a program under which Virgin Islands' residents may be trained in all phases of park operations and management. The Secretary shall not provide more than 50 percent of the funding for such purposes.

6. Section 106: Establishment of a commission to make recommendation on how all lands and waters can be jointly managed in accordance with the Act.