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National Park Service Announces Asbestos Cleanup at Caneel Bay Resort Site for Early 2024

Engineering reports identify hazardous substances at resort site

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Hurricane Maria destroyed the Caneel Bay Resort in St. John. By. NEW YORK TIMES.

The National Park Service announced on Thursday that work to remove asbestos-containing material (ACM) at the Caneel Bay Resort site (site) within the V.I. National Park will begin in early 2024.

According to the release, this first phase of environmental cleanup at Caneel Bay will focus on removing asbestos-containing debris from 2017 Hurricanes Irma and Maria. On-site work will be conducted pursuant to NPS's delegated authority under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

“After much planning and evaluation, we are pleased to begin environmental cleanup at Caneel Bay,” said Penelope Del Bene, acting superintendent, Virgin Islands National Park. “We look forward to contributing to a safer, healthier environment for our local community.”

Plans for ACM removal work resulted from the park’s 2021 [Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis \(EE/CA\) Report](#) and 2022 [EE/CA Report Addendum](#), which documented releases of hazardous substances at the site. That report and others can be found here [ParkPlanning - Public Involvement for the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis \(EE/CA\) Site Assessment at Caneel Bay Resort \(nps.gov\)](#)

NPS said safety will be its top priority throughout the removal work. "Contractors on the project will have the proper accreditations to safely handle, pack and transport ACM. NPS has also hired an independent company to monitor the ACM removal actions and conduct perimeter air monitoring to ensure asbestos fibers are not released into the environment," NPS said.

According to the release, work areas will be closed, except to qualified individuals. On-site work is expected to last three to four weeks. Over the course of the project, a total of six 20-foot-long cargo containers will be brought into the site, loaded with appropriately bagged and labeled ACM, and removed from the island as each container is filled. Containers of ACM will be transported from St. John to St. Thomas using a local barge service.

ACM removed from the site will be disposed of in a permitted landfill in the continental United States. All project activity will be conducted in accordance with federal law and industry standards. During the work period, visitors may notice increased equipment noise. Minimal traffic impacts are expected.

NPS said anticipated future removal actions under CERCLA include the removal of contaminated soil in the Site’s landscaping, maintenance and engineering area, as well as the removal of soil and waste from the landfill near Honeymoon Beach.

Current information about the NPS environmental cleanup efforts at Caneel Bay will be available at <https://www.nps.gov/viis/caneelbay.htm>.