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Volunteers, First Responders, and Crane Lift Horse to Safety in Second Cistern Incident This Year

A horse trapped in a cistern near Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion was freed Friday night after hours of work by first responders and volunteers, in a second rescue this year that raises renewed concerns about the safety of abandoned or open cisterns.

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A horse is rescued from a disused cistern on Friday, July 11, 2025 near the Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM.

For the second time this year, a horse has been rescued after falling into a disused cistern on St. Croix.

Led by St. Croix Rescue, on Friday first responders and volunteers worked for hours to cut through the equine's concrete and steel cage in order to safely hoist it out from where it had fallen near the Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion.

As some rescue workers were cutting through the cistern's roof, others were removing branches from nearby trees to allow access for heavy equipment.

[\[Watch: Horse is Rescued from Disused Cistern\]](#)

Night had fallen before the horse was secured in a harness and hoisted free using a truck-mounted hydraulic crane. Seemingly in good spirits despite the hours-long ordeal, the animal was quickly calmed by volunteers before being led away for further evaluation.

The rescue operation was supported by Barney's Trucking, Cruzan Cowgirls, V.I. Fire and Emergency Medical Services, with St. Croix Rescue leading. The effort demonstrated once again the power of collective community action in addressing unexpected emergency scenarios.

The Cruzan Cowgirls organization was also instrumental in the rescue of a horse from a cistern in [April of this year](#). At the time, the incident sparked community concerns over the safety of abandoned or disused cisterns dotted across the landscape, and whether regulations should guide how they are decommissioned and sealed.