

The Virgin Islands Consortium

National Park Service Announces Limited Use, Closures, and Cancellations for St. Croix Facilities in Response to Covid-19

Coronavirus / **Published On March 24, 2020 07:15 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 24, 2020**



Buck Island on St. Croix By. Trip Savvy

The National Park Service (NPS) at Christiansted National Historic Site, and Buck Island Reef National Monument, Salt River Bay NHP & EP, in St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands is implementing an immediate public use limitation, area closures and cancellation for all permitted events and demonstrations covered by the regulations at 36 CFR 2.50 and 2.51.

This closure is implemented under section 36 CFR 1.5 (a), and based upon a determination that such action is necessary for the maintenance of public health and safety. Specifically, the NPS said it will not accept applications for permits for demonstrations or for special events that are scheduled to occur over the next eight weeks. All events currently scheduled will be cancelled or postponed to a later date, in the discretion of the applicant.

This limitation is in response to public health advisories and limitations on events and gatherings from the CDC and from the Government of the Virgin Islands and after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, NPS said. Specifically, this decision, which was made after consultation with the territorial state is based on CDC guidance regarding mass gatherings and events and the spread of COVID-19, and GVI Department of Health.

Large events and mass gatherings can contribute to the spread of COVID-19 in the United States via travelers who attend these events and introduce the virus to new communities. Examples of events and gatherings include but not limited to conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings, and other types of assemblies. These events can be planned not only by organizations and communities but also by individuals.

Accordingly, the NPS said it has determined publication as rulemaking in the Federal Register is unwarranted under 36 C.F.R. § 1.5(c). This is consistent with hundreds of earlier partial and temporary park closures or public use limitations, the legal opinion of the Office of the Solicitor, and judicial adjudications.

Current Closures and Advisements remain in effect:

Christiansted NHS:

All park events and permits have been cancelled until further notice.

Fort Christiansvaern, parking lot and visitor restrooms will be closed to the public until further notice.

Eastern National Bookstore at Scale House will be closed until further notice.

Park administration buildings will be closed to the public; please call park staff at the number provided for assistance with activities or questions related to park operations. You may also reach out to us through our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ChristianstedNPS>

Information on any updates on closures will be provided through all media outlets and posted as necessary.

Buck Island Reef NM:

Buck Island Reef National Monument waters will remain open to boating activities in open waters. All Buck Island Reef permits will be temporarily canceled, this includes both anchoring and mooring permits. NPS facilities are closed including picnic areas, comfort stations, moorings, and shoreline, beaches, underwater trail and hiking trail for next 30 days. The Park Superintendent has suspended all authorized concession boating operations until further notice. NPS strongly urges all public boat operators to observe CDC recommendations and to maintain social distancing when boating.

Salt River Bay NHP & EP: SARI Visitor Contact station remains closed from damage caused by hurricane Irma/Maria.