

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Limited Access Available At National Park Sites On St. Croix

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Stabilization and recovery work at Christiansted National Historic Site, above, Buck Island Reef National Monument, and Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve on St. Croix continues to be managed by a National Park Service Incident Management Team, the National Park Service (NPS) announced recently. All the parks on St. Croix sustained damage from Hurricane Maria. The majority of the damage includes downed trees, loss of power, structural and building damage, shoreline erosion, and storm-washed debris.

Portions of the Christiansted National Historic Site are anticipated to reopen soon. The park has cleaned up the waterfront, removed hazardous trees, and continues to

work toward providing for a safe and enjoyable visitor experience, NPS said.

The NPS and Friends of St. Croix will host the return of Jazz in the Park on Friday October 27, 3-5 p.m. at the Bandstand. The Eastern National Bookstore at Historic Scale House has resumed daily operations, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. with cash sales only.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues operating the Disaster Relief Assistance Program on the first floor of the park's Danish West India Guinea Company Warehouse (Old Post Office Building) from 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. daily. The parking lot at Fort Christiansvaern is open from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. daily to facilitate public access to the emergency supplies distribution and to make claims with FEMA.

Buck Island Reef National Monument sustained substantial damage to shoreline, vegetation and coral reef areas. Buck Island Reef marine areas are open to the public as well as everything below the high water mark on Buck Island. The area is open to concessions operations.

Contractors have restored critical private-aids-to-navigation to provide safe boat operations within park waters, NPS said. The channel markers to underwater trail lagoon are on station. The underwater trail and SCUBA moorings are all in service. Designated anchoring area buoys have been re-established and boats visiting the beach should anchor within this zone.

All park facilities above the high water mark remain closed to public, including the 100-foot-long cement pier on the south side. The park will continue to work on cleaning beach, hiking trail, and picnic areas.

Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve Visitor Contact Station was badly damaged by hurricane Maria and will remain closed to the public for the foreseeable future, NPS said.