

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Park Service Seeking Small Number Of Local Volunteers To Assist In Search For Lucy Schuhmann

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Virgin Islands National Park staff planned to expand their search on Thursday morning for Lucy Schuhmann, 48, of Kentucky. Local park staff are being assisted by technical climbing experts from other NPS units, and have also requested a small number of island residents to support their search efforts.

Weather conditions in the area continue to improve as Tropical Storm Karen moves north and away from the Virgin Islands, and all ports are open.

According to an NPS release, the ground search is being expanded Thursday as additional hiking trails, roadsides and shoreline will be searched. The park is requesting

assistance from volunteers to conduct ground searches led by NPS staff. Only adults who are physically fit and acclimated to local weather conditions should volunteer.

Prospective volunteers must meet at the Salt Pond parking lot by 10:30 am on today. Volunteers must bring boots, field clothing, raingear, lunch and two refillable water bottles. Up to 16 volunteers are needed and will be released by 3:30 pm at the Salt Pond parking lot. Only persons available for the entire time should assemble. Drinking water and safety gear will be provided by the park.

Today some of the most remote and rugged areas of the park were searched. NPS said the terrain is very steep and thickly vegetated, and conditions are hot, wet and humid. Safety of the park staff and volunteers is of concern as the recent storms have downed trees and other vegetation along hiking trails. High sea conditions have continued throughout the day and debris pose hazards to persons searching the shoreline. Much of the southern shoreline of St. John is cliff and boulders, and access in many places is limited to swimming in from small watercraft.

A ground-based search of the hiking trails and shoreline, as well as marine-based snorkelers and SCUBA divers, have investigated the land and waters off of the south shore of St John. In addition, a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter searched the area on Tuesday. No sign of the missing woman was found.

Since she was first reported missing the Virgin Islands Police Department, St. John Rescue, the US Coast Guard, and volunteers have supported efforts to locate Ms. Schuhmann.

She was reported missing on Thursday, September 19 by the proprietor of the vacation rental where she was staying in Coral Bay on St. John. Park staff are in close contact and assisting the family of Ms. Schuhmann, who request privacy at this time, according to the release.

The Park Service asks that the public refrain from visiting the Salt Pond area while the search is ongoing.

Individuals with information that they believe may assist in the search are encouraged to call 866.995.8467, option 2. NPS said it will provide regular updates via media releases and social media.

Contact Thomas Kelley at 340-690-2440 should you have any questions.