

The Virgin Islands Consortium

NPS Initiates Next Phase of Environmental Assessments at Caneel Bay Resort

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Hurricane Maria destroyed the Caneel Bay Resort in St. John. An agreement between U.S. Department of the Interior and EHI Acquisitions is set to jumpstart construction after years of impasse. By. ANNE BEQUETTE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ST. JOHN — The National Park Service (NPS) said today it has initiated the next phase of environmental site assessments at Caneel Bay Resort within Virgin Islands National Park. The assessment will identify the nature and extent of possible environmental contamination on the property, an important next step in determining the future of the resort, the park said.

“The continuation of environmental site assessments at Caneel Bay Resort is critical to the future health and vitality of St. John and helps advance the National Park Service’s commitment to environmental stewardship,” said Virgin Islands National Park Superintendent Nigel Fields. “The data gathered during this assessment will help us make science-based decisions about cleanup and redevelopment of the resort.”

Sampling and analysis for an Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA), in alignment with Environmental Protection Agency guidelines, will take place over the next several weeks, followed by laboratory analysis and evaluation of potential risks to human health and the environment, according to the release. The NPS values and encourages public participation and will share opportunities about future public comment periods throughout this process.

About the Evaluation

The EE/CA centers on three locations identified during previous environmental assessments and surveys, including:

- Area 1: Approximately 1.7 acres in the vicinity of wastewater treatment plant structures, located on the southeastern side of the resort;
- Area 2: Approximately 5.4 acres that encompass the engineering, maintenance, landscaping and fuel buildings and facilities, located to the southwest of the wastewater treatment plant; and
- Area 3: An approximately 0.5-acre debris landfill located immediately east of Honeymoon Beach.

The NPS said these areas will be examined for the presence of contaminants, including pesticides, cleaning and landscaping chemicals, PCBs and petrochemicals. The NPS will also collect preliminary data about the possible presence of lead-based paint and asbestos and determine if further analysis is needed.

Data collected during this assessment will be used to inform potential response actions and evaluate appropriate next steps. Removal actions will only be required if unacceptable contamination or associated risks are identified, the release stated. The EE/CA report will compare potential approaches for cleanup, remediation or other recommend actions, and the public will have opportunities to comment on these possible approaches.

The NPS said it is conducting this work pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 9601, et seq. and its implementing regulations under the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), 40 C.F.R. Part 300.

Public Involvement

Community involvement is at the core of this work. In the coming months, the public will be invited to comment on the EE/CA report and supporting documents. During the comment period, the NPS will host a public meeting to help convey the findings and proposed actions. The NPS will review and consider public comments and select the best

option for cleanup, remediation or other recommended actions. Additional information, including reports and associated documents about the Caneel Bay environmental site assessment as well as the Administrative Record for the project, is available at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/CaneelBayAssessment>

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