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NPS Opens Final Public Comment Period and Releases Finding of No Significant Impact for Potential St. John Land Exchange

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The National Park Service has opened the final 45-day public comment period for Virgin Islands National Park's potential land exchange of St. John land with the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands for the island's public education needs.

NPS said interested parties may submit comments from January 8, 2023 until Feb. 21, 2023, to the following address: Land Resources Program Office - National Park Service, 2975 Horseshoe Dr. S., Suite 800, Naples, Florida 34104. Alternatively, comments may be emailed to russell_webb@nps.gov.

According to the release, local officials have expressed a long-standing need to construct the first public K-12 school on the island of St. John. The territory determined that the Catherineberg Estate is the preferred site on St. John for a new public school, due to its central location along an existing roadway and its relatively gentle slopes, in exchange for Territory-owned Whistling Cay.

The park posted a Notice of Realty Action, or a public notice of terms and conditions to interested parties through [online](#) and print newspapers, for awareness prior to the final public comment period opening.

The NPS issued a [Finding of No Significant Impact](#) (FONSI) on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the potential land exchange. In response to a request from the Territory in August 2022 to conduct an EA, the FONSI outlines the land exchange and explains why the plan will have no significant effects on natural, cultural, or human environments. Because of this, an environmental impact statement is not needed. The FONSI includes a summary of public comments received during the public comment period that closed on Sept. 22, 2022, as well as a determination that the activity will not lead to an impairment of park resources and values.

NPS said it will continue to support and coordinate with the Territory as requested on additional compliance elements as the land exchange proceeds and future design and development of the school progresses.