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69 Acres of Beachfront Property in Frederiksted Acquired by Government For V.I. Park System, Bryan Announces

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Janeke Simon **March 21, 2023**

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HNS Hesselberg in Frederiksted, St. Croix. By. SCREENSHOT/GOVERNMENT HOUSE

On Tuesday morning, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. announced the acquisition of prime acreage in Frederiksted by the government for [transfer to the Virgin Islands Territorial Park Trust](#).

Mr. Bryan began by noting the territory's ongoing rebuilding and reconstruction effort, and continued by saying that the islands now had the chance to do much more than just repair or replace hurricane-damaged physical infrastructure.

“We are in a rare time in the Virgin Islands, when we also have the opportunity to rebuild a rich culture and history that has laid dormant for so many years because we just didn’t have the funds. So today I have a great announcement, what is but a first step in revitalizing our culture and history,” the governor said.

He then announced that the government had acquired a piece of land known as the HNS Hesselberg. “When we got the opportunity to buy this 69 acres, it’s something we couldn’t resist,” Governor Bryan said. “By acquiring this property, we are able to preserve environmentally significant wetland and cultural resources. We are able to secure coastline and beach access for residents for generations to come, and expand camping and other recreational facilities for residents, among other uses.”

The land encompasses almost 2000 feet of shoreline — a popular camping spot — and about a third of the salt pond behind the beachfront. It abuts the Vincent Mason Pool and Sandy Point Wildlife Refuge.

The governor was careful to explain that the property would be vested in the Virgin Islands Park System, not the National Park overseen by the federal government. The local park system, he said, is a recent initiative created in 2022 to ensure that lands are held by the local government to be “preserved, protected, maintained, and used for the long term benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations,” according to Governor Bryan. Mr. Bill bringing the park to life was sponsored by Senator Samuel Carrion.

Mr. Bryan credited community members, particularly Greg Richards, for raising concerns about the depletion of land for traditional campsites along the Frederiksted beachfront, and attributed those concerns to spurring the government’s decision to acquire the land in question, which is often used for camping and recreation.

The territory's leader also noted that the property was acquired at somewhat of a bargain, through the efforts of the Public Finance Authority, which secured the land for \$1.2 million, well below its appraised value of \$1.7 million and list price of \$1.95 million.

The funds for the acquisition were part of the \$3.65 million received from the sale [of the King’s Alley Hotel](#). Governor Bryan said during Tuesday’s announcement that those funds were meant, from the beginning, to be reinvested into St. Croix. The purchase and transfer of the Hesselberg parcel was just the first action taken in support of that goal, and in support of a broader territorial objective.

“Acquisition of this property is also part of our broader push to finally develop a comprehensive land and water use plan that will ultimately determine — based on the input of our people and our community — what land we want developed, what land we want preserved, and how that land should be developed.”

Governor Bryan went on to applaud and encourage Virgin Islanders for [their eager participation in the recent town hall meetings](#) that have been convened by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources to discuss a territorial land and water use plan.

In closing, the governor stressed that the acquisition by the government will not disrupt traditional activities held in the area such as camping. "I want to make sure we understand this. This does not change people's ability to camp on that property or any of the activities that traditionally go on. We do, however, want to be able to see a future where we start to label our parks, we start to give guides around them — hiking trails and the like — to make sure that people not only appreciate

our park system, but understand other work that went into it, the Virgin Islanders that may have traversed there or lived there, and celebrate our rich and very phenomenal cultural heritage," he said.

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