

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Leadership Shift at Virgin Islands National Park: Fields Heads to EPA, Simmons Steps Up

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From left to right, Nigel A. Fields and Scott B. Simmons. By. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

In a recent announcement from the National Park Service, Scott B. Simmons is set to serve as Acting Superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park and Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument from July 30, 2023. He will be stepping in for Nigel A. Fields, the outgoing Superintendent, who is set to take up a senior executive position at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Fields, who had been with the NPS since December 2018, has led recovery efforts totaling approximately \$50 million on St. John following the devastation of Hurricanes

Irma and Maria. He permanently assumed the superintendent position in March 2020.

Under Field's leadership, numerous recovery projects were initiated and accomplished, including coral reef restoration efforts, the redevelopment of Cinnamon Bay Campground, and the renovation and reopening of the Cruz Bay ballfield and playground. These projects were completed in collaboration with the Virgin Islands Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation and the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park.

Fields was instrumental in expanding partnerships and advancing community engagement for redevelopment plans in the Caneel Bay area. He also supported the Government of the Virgin Islands in their land exchange request for constructing a new public school, which would be the first public high school on St. John.

Reflecting on his tenure, Fields stated, "It's been an honor and career highlight to work with such talented, passionate professionals. I look forward to seeing the continued recovery and progress the park and community will make together."

NPS Regional Director Mark Foust praised Fields's tenure, saying, "Nigel has provided effective and consistent leadership in the critical years of hurricane recovery. His ability to manage complex projects has been instrumental in moving the park forward. He will be missed."

Simmons, the incoming acting superintendent, joined the Virgin Islands National Park in 2021 for a one-year assignment and later was selected as the permanent Deputy Superintendent, managing park operations. A civil engineer by training, Simmons has considerable experience as a park manager and has served in several key roles within the Department of Interior and NPS.

Simmons, his wife Beth, and their two children are excited to continue their adventures in St. John, exploring the outdoors and sharing a passion for reading, NPS said.