



# Buck Island Reef Bulletin

Newsletter One - June 2004

## Park Begins Preparation of General Management Plan

### News from the Superintendent

*The National Park Service is pleased to announce that the development of a new General Management Plan to guide the future of Buck Island Reef National Monument is underway. The General Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement will serve as the overarching blueprint for the park's protection and management over the next 15-20 years. You are invited to participate in the development of the plan in the months to come. This newsletter provides general background and contact information on this important effort and how you can participate. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you as we begin to chart a course for the future of Buck Island Reef National Monument.*

*Joel A. Jutein*

### Background

Buck Island Reef National Monument was established in 1961, and its boundaries were expanded in 2001. The park is now one of only a few fully protected marine areas in the National Park System. The purpose of Buck Island Reef National Monument is:

- To further preserve and protect the island and tropical marine ecosystem including coral reefs, sea grass beds, octocoral hard bottom, sand communities, algal plains, shelf edge, and oceanic habitats;
- To protect threatened and endangered species and enhance their habitats and survivability;
- To enhance the health and diversity of fisheries resources through their protection;
- To protect and manage terrestrial and submerged cultural resources; and
- To preserve this area of outstanding scientific, aesthetic, and educational importance for the benefit and enjoyment of the people now and in the future.

The national monument's outstanding resources provide ample opportunities for education and scientific research. The 176- acre island and surrounding coral reef and open ocean support a large variety of native species. Several threatened and endangered species use and live in the waters within the monument, including humpback and pilot whales, dolphins, brown pelicans, least terns, and sea turtles.



The Hawksbill Turtle is one of several Federally Endangered Species located within the park.

In addition, Buck Island will be one of two federally protected areas that will support the federally endangered St. Croix ground lizard. The elkhorn coral barrier reef ecosystem that surrounds two-thirds of the island and has extensive coral formations and many reef fishes. The monument also contains important cultural resources, including the wrecks of two eighteenth century slave ships—the Mary and General Abercrombie—and archeological sites from Danish rule in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### Planning Perspective

Preparation of the General Management Plan is the first phase of a planning and decision making process used by the National Park Service to clarify and communicate future goals and objectives for the park. The plan will define future resource conditions and visitor experiences that should be achieved and maintained. The public plays a key role in the development of the plan by helping the National Park Service identify issues of concern. These issues are then addressed in the planning process.



Public meetings will be held at the Danish West India Guinea Company Warehouse (Old U.S. Post Office Building).



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Buck Island Reef National Monument**  
 2100 Church Street #100  
 Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820-4611

First Class Mail  
 Postage and Fees  
**PAID**  
 City, State  
 Permit Number






**EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA**

The National Park Service appreciates your early input into this planning process and would like your feedback. We request that you provide your comments at the public meetings, or you may provide comments by phone or mail using the following contact information:

**Comments? Write to:**  
**National Park Service**  
 Buck Island Reef National Monument  
 2100 Church Street #100  
 Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820-4611  
 Joel A. Tutein, Superintendent  
 CHRISuperintendent@nps.gov  
 (340) 773-1460

**What to Expect**

The planning process includes:

1. Public Meetings to Gather Input
- 
2. Develop Alternatives
- 
3. Assess Impacts
- 
4. Draft Document
- 
5. Public Meetings to Gather Comments
- 
6. Finalize Document

The first step in the process will be to have public meetings to define the issues. You are invited to attend any of the public meetings to be held the week of June 21, 2004.

<i>Area /Date and Time /Location</i>
Christiansted, St. Croix June 23, 2004, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
June 24, 2004, 6:30- 8:30 p.m.
June 25, 2004, 9:30- 11:30 a.m.
National Park Service Danish West India Guinea Co. Warehouse Ground Floor (Old U.S. Post Office Bldg.) 2100 Church Street #100 Christiansted, St. Croix