



Buck Island Reef Bulletin

Newsletter Two – July 2005

General Management Plan Preliminary Alternatives

News from the Superintendent

Thank you for your comments and suggestions for improving Buck Island Reef National Monument and planning for its future. Your comments and ideas were, and continue to be, instrumental in devising future guidance for the Monument that will be gathered together in a General Management Plan. In this second newsletter, we utilized some of your ideas and organized them into draft alternatives. We again need your advice, suggestions, and comments on these alternatives or the elements that make up each alternative.

We value your input regarding the future management of Buck Island Reef National Monument. Preserving and conserving the resources through public communication and involvement is essential to the completion of a successful plan. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Joel A. Tutein

The Plan's Purpose

The purpose of the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) is to present a plan for managing Buck Island Reef National Monument for the next 15 to 20 years. General management plans represent the broadest level of planning conducted by the National Park Service (NPS) and provide guidance for making informed decisions about the future of park resource conditions and visitor experiences.

In June and July 2004, the NPS conducted public meetings to identify issues and to solicit public input on the

park's future. Based on these meetings the planning team developed a set of management alternatives. The NPS welcomes your input on the alternatives.

Planning Perspective

The key issues identified during the public meetings were access, level of education and outreach, and protection of resources. The issues helped the team to develop proposed management zones. Each zone specifies a particular combination of future resource conditions, visitor experience, and management approaches. The planning team developed five zones (described below) that could be appropriate for the future management of Buck Island Reef National Monument: Resource Protection Zone, Anchoring Zone, Island Discovery Zone, Recreation Zone, and Marine Hazard Zone. Alternatives for future park conditions and management were developed by arranging these zones in different configurations in the park.

Management Zones

The Resource Protection Zone represents areas that focus on resource preservation, protection and scientific research. Boaters would be able to cross these areas, and enjoy views of Buck Island. Moorings would be provided in designated areas.

The Anchoring Zone represents areas where sand is 10-15 feet deep and boaters with permits may anchor.

The Island Discovery Zone represents areas that provide opportunities to hike, picnic, experience nature, learn about the island's natural and cultural features, and enjoy surrounding views.

The Recreation Zone represents areas surrounding Buck Island that offer a

variety of recreational opportunities including swimming, snorkeling, and scuba diving.

The Marine Hazard Zone represents marine areas where navigation is hazardous and resources are sensitive. For safety, only boats less than 30 feet would be allowed to enter these areas.

Management Prescriptions

For each management zone, management prescriptions (potential future uses and conditions) were developed. The prescriptions determine what visitor activities, resource conditions and facilities are appropriate in each of the zones. For example, in the Recreation Zone visitors would be allowed to have picnics; however, picnics are restricted in all other zones of the park. Prescriptions also determine the type and level of facility development that may be allowed in a specific zone. For example, kiosks are permitted in the Island Discovery and Recreation Zone but are not permitted in any of the other zones of the park.

Management prescriptions also indicate the level of resource and visitor management that will be needed in order to protect the park's resources and ensure that visitors are safe.

Developing Preliminary Alternatives

The NPS planning process requires a range of alternative future conditions and management. Each alternative is built around an underlying theme that describes a possible direction for the future of Buck Island Reef National Monument. Four alternatives for public consideration include the "no-action" alternative and three action alternatives.

Alternative A

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the NPS to include an alternative that is referred to as “No Action”, in which current management policies and procedures would continue into the future. This alternative is used as a way to evaluate the effects of the other three alternatives and is also useful in understanding why the NPS or the public may believe that changes are necessary.

This alternative would involve continued use of the existing 20-acre anchoring zone at West beach by permit only. The underwater trail (with ten moorings and two scuba moorings) and all other facilities in the park would be continued to be used and managed as they are now.



Alternative B

Alternative B would provide more resource protection by elimination of the existing 20-acre anchoring area and provide moorings instead. The existing anchoring area would be eliminated, but approximately 35 to 40 moorings would be provided.

The underwater trail would have ten boat moorings and two scuba moorings. Dinghy access lanes would also be provided to protect swimmers and snorkelers.

As with Alternative A, all of the current land-based facilities – picnic areas, grills, restrooms, the pier, and buoys - would continue to be provided and maintained.

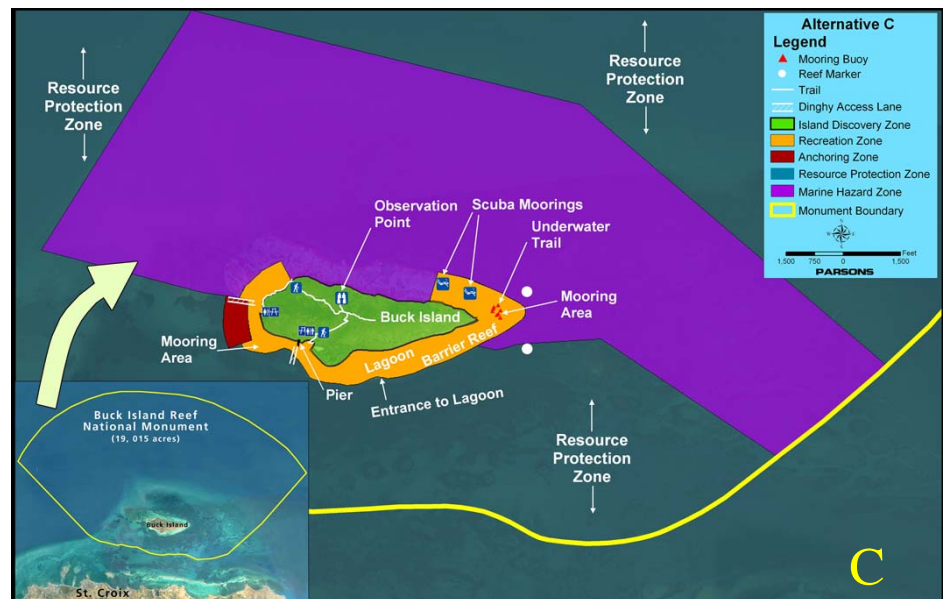
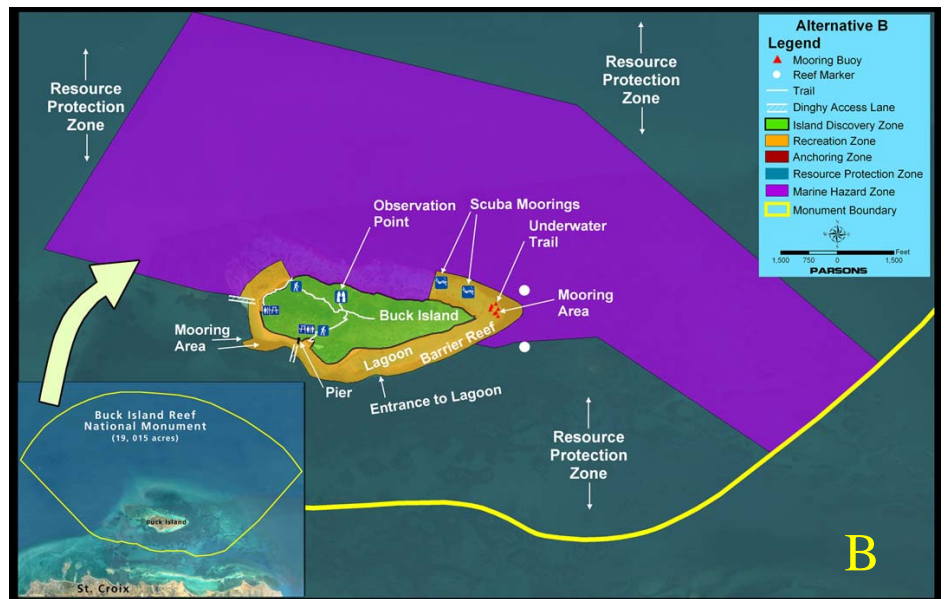
Alternative B includes four of the five management zones – Recreation Zone, Marine Hazard Zone, Resource Protection Zone, and Island Discovery Zone.

Alternative C

Alternative C would provide increased access as compared to Alternative B by providing an 18 acre anchoring area at West Beach.

Anchoring would be allowed by permit only in areas where the sand is 10-15 ft. deep. Mooring areas would be located at the east and west ends of Buck Island.

As with the previous alternatives, all of the current land-based facilities - picnic



areas, grills, restrooms, the pier, and buoys - would continue to be provided and maintained.

Alternative C includes all five management zones.

Alternative D

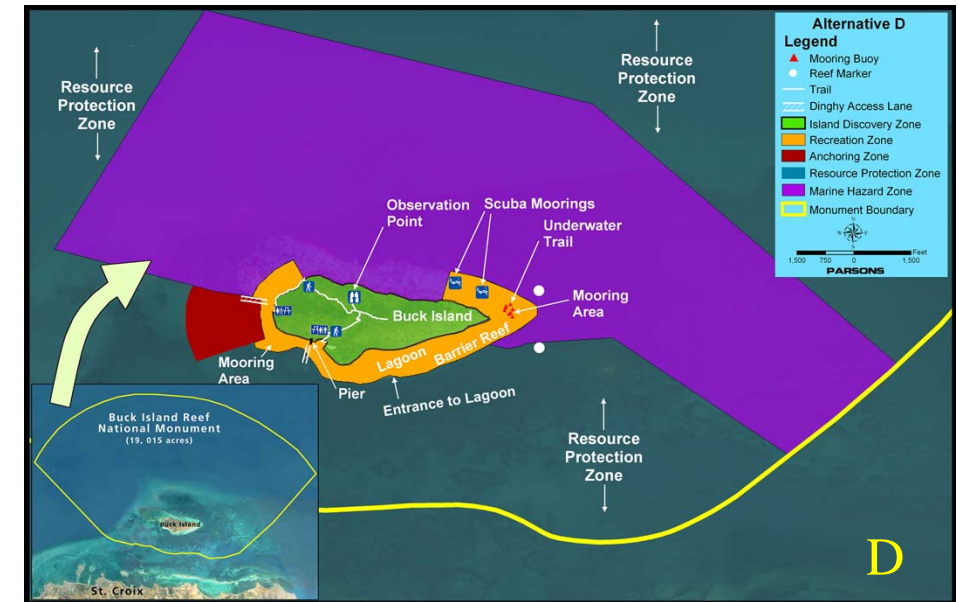
Alternative D would provide more access by expanding the anchoring zone at West Beach to 68 acres. Anchoring would be by permit only in areas where the sand is 10-15 ft. Mooring areas would be located at the east and west ends of Buck Island.

As with the previous alternatives, all of the current land-based facilities – picnic areas, grills, restrooms, the peir, and buoys - would continue to be provided and maintained.

Alternative D also includes all five management zones.

Alternative Similarities

Existing regulations for Buck Island Reef National Monument help frame every alternative. The 2001 presidential proclamation that expanded the park prohibits extractive uses and allows for



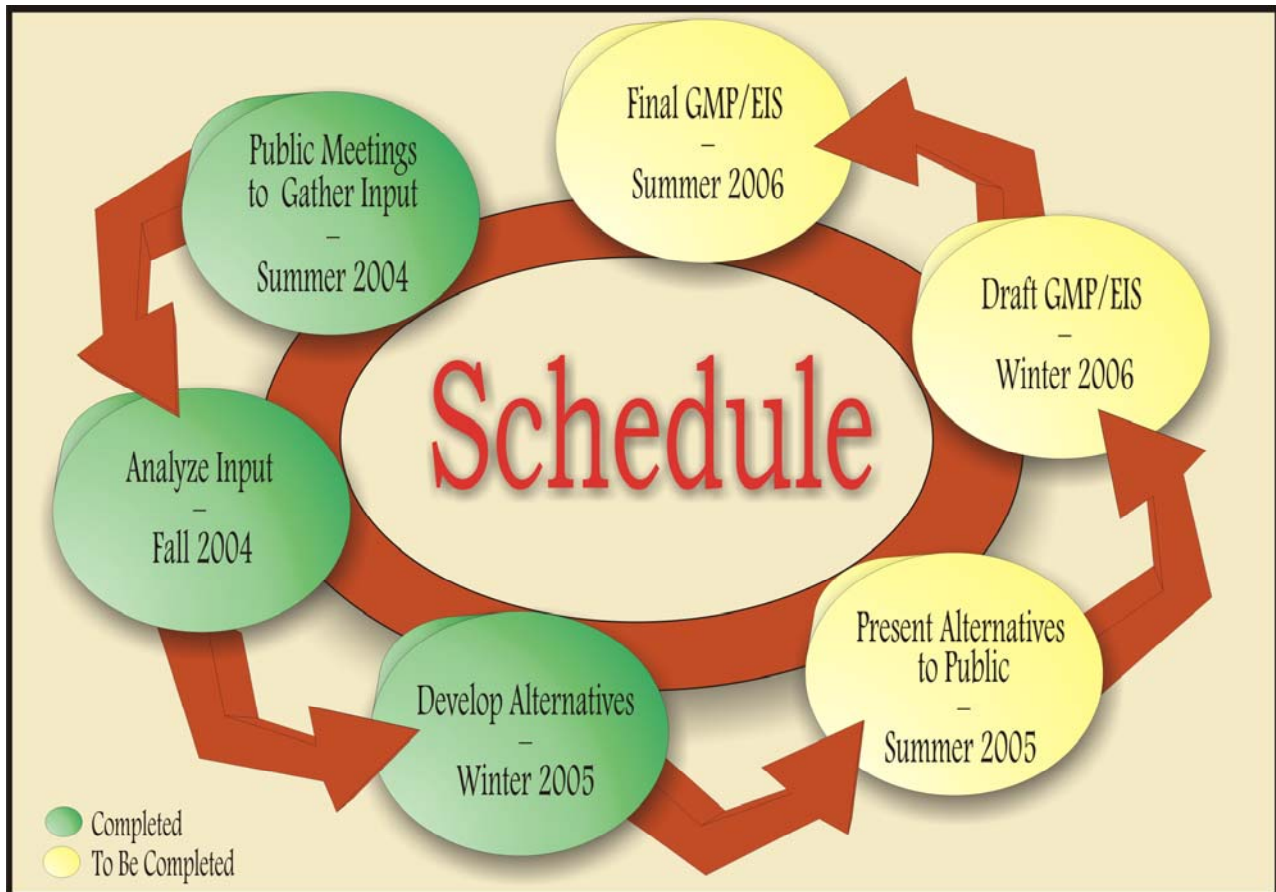
anchoring only in areas where the sand is 10 to 15 feet deep.

The Marine Hazard Zone, Island Discovery Zone, and Recreation Zone are the same for all action alternatives.

Existing restrooms, picnic, dock facilities, and trails (hiking and underwater) would continue to be provided under all action alternatives.

Differences Between Alternatives

The table on page 4 summarizes the key differences between the alternatives.



Alternatives Summary - Differences

Category/Feature	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Anchoring	Anchoring area along west end (20 acres, 40 to 80 boats)	Moorings only; eliminate anchoring in the monument	West end anchoring zone (18 acres)	West end anchoring zone (68 acres)
Moorings	Moorings in designated areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ East End: 10 Moorings for underwater trail and 2 for scuba. 	Moorings in designated areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ East End: 10 Moorings for underwater trail and 2 for scuba. ➤ Southwest of Pier: 8 to 10 moorings. ➤ West end: mooring system with 30 to 45 moorings. 	Moorings in designated areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ East end: 10 Moorings for underwater trail and 2 for scuba. ➤ Southwest of Pier: 8 to 10 moorings 	Moorings in designated areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ East end: 10 Moorings for underwater trail and 2 for scuba. ➤ Southwest of Pier: 8 to 10 moorings
Beach use	Yes - access from anchoring area and moorings	Yes - beach use appropriate, access from moorings only. Dinghy access lanes provided.	Yes - access beach from anchoring zone and moorings. Dinghy access lanes provided.	Yes - access beach from anchoring zone and moorings. Dinghy access lanes provided.
Pier, upland trail, underwater trail	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Boating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Anchoring permit required. ➤ Length of boat permitted inside lagoon is less than 42 feet. 	Limits identified : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resource Protection Zone: Vessels less than 150 feet ➤ No Anchoring Zone ➤ Recreation Zone: Less than 42 feet inside lagoon; Less than 150 feet outside lagoon ➤ Marine Hazard Zone: Less than 30 feet 	Limits identified : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resource Protection Zone: Vessels less than 150 feet ➤ Anchoring Zone: Vessels less than 150 feet, by permit ➤ Recreation Zone: Less than 42 feet inside lagoon; Less than 150 feet outside lagoon ➤ Marine Hazard Zone: Less than 30 feet 	Limits identified : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resource Protection Zone: Vessels less than 150 feet ➤ Anchoring Zone: Vessels less than 150 feet, by permit ➤ Recreation Zone: Less than 42 feet inside lagoon; Less than 150 feet outside lagoon ➤ Marine Hazard Zone: Less than 30 feet
Potential for recreational opportunities	Continued use of traditional anchoring area, beach, underwater trail, upland trail and pier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eliminate anchoring area; ➤ Increased number of moorings in designated areas; ➤ Traditional means of recreation do not change with the exception of bow to stern anchoring being eliminated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One anchoring zone; ➤ Moorings in designated areas; ➤ Traditional means of recreation do not change with the exception of bow to stern anchoring being eliminated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Larger anchoring zone; ➤ Moorings in designated areas; ➤ Traditional means of recreation do not change with the exception of bow to stern anchoring being eliminated.
Education / Outreach	Conducted from Christiansted, by concessionaires and rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducted from Christiansted and on Buck Island, by concessionaires and rangers; ➤ Increased opportunities for concessionaire led tours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducted from Christiansted and on Buck Island, by concessionaires and rangers; ➤ Increased opportunities for concessionaire led tours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conducted from Christiansted and on Buck Island, by concessionaires and rangers; ➤ Increased opportunities for concessionaire led tours.

*Differences between alternatives are highlighted.



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Buck Island Reef National Monument
2100 Church Street #100
Christiansted, St. Croix, VI 00820-4611
(340) 773-1460

COMMENT FORM

General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Please provide us with feedback on the alternatives for Buck Island Reef National Monument. If you need more space, feel free to attach additional pages to this form. If you prefer, you may comment via e-mail at BUIS_GMP@nps.gov. The National Park Service will not consider anonymous comments.

1. Do you think the range of alternatives for managing Buck Island Reef National Monument is appropriate? If not, what is missing or inappropriate?

2. Which alternative do you prefer for managing Buck Island Reef National Monument and why? If you don't like any of the alternatives, please describe your preferred alternative. (Your comments will help the planning team develop a preferred alternative.)

3. What else would you like the planning team to know as it develops the general management plan?

Your Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
City/State or Territory/Zip: _____
Date: _____

Please submit the completed form by **September 6, 2005** to the address above.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service appreciates your 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
 CHRI_Superintendent@nps.gov
 (340) 773-1460

What's Next?

The next step in the planning process is to obtain comments on the preliminary alternatives. You are invited to attend any of the public meetings to be held August 2-4, 2005.

Schedule for Public Meetings

Christiansted

August 2, 2005, 6:30 -8:30 p.m.

August 3, 2005, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

August 4, 2005, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

National Park Service
 Danish West India Guinea Co. Warehouse
 Ground Floor (Old U.S.P.O. Bldg.)
 2100 Church Street #100
 Christiansted, St. Croix