



Buck Island Reef National Monument

General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement

Newsletter #3 March, 2012

News from the Superintendent

The National Park Service is pleased to announce the release of our General Management Plan to guide the future of Buck Island Reef National Monument. The General Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Statement will serve as the guide for the park's protection and management over the next 15-20 years. We invite you to attend public meetings in March during which we will present an overview of our planning efforts over the past few years and describe our proposed management alternatives, including the NPS Preferred Alternative. This newsletter provides background and contact information on this project and outlines how you can participate. We look forward to seeing and hearing from you as we continue to chart the future course for Buck Island Reef National Monument.

Joel A. Tutein

Update on the General Management Plan

Buck Island Reef National Monument's boundaries were expanded by Presidential Proclamation in 2001 to include 19,015 acres of submerged lands, making it one of only a few fully protected "no take" marine reserves in the National Park System. The monument expansion identified the need to develop a new General Management Plan to guide future resource preservation and visitor use at the park. Over the last several years, the National Park Service (NPS) has developed a General Management Plan /Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) for Buck Island Reef National Monument that evaluates a range of management alternatives to meet the distinct challenges for the park.

In 2004, the NPS met with public officials, agencies, stakeholders, and the public to obtain input for the Buck Island Reef National Monument GMP. Based upon this input, the NPS presented four preliminary management alternatives to the public in 2005. In 2006, changes to the alternatives were made to address the listing of elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, the need to protect these species and their critical habitat, and subsequent public input.

Four separate management alternatives were considered in the Draft GMP/EIS that would preserve significant natural and cultural resources, provide for public enjoyment, and address competing demands for limited resources and priorities for available funds and staff. The NPS's Preferred Alternative, Alternative B, emphasizes resource protection, civic engagement and partnering programs, and best addresses requirements established in the Presidential Proclamation. Alternative B increases resource protection by phasing out the existing anchoring

area adjacent to West Beach over a 10-year period as moorings are installed. Larger vessel anchoring would be available by permit in five designated areas, as a way to minimize conflicts with near shore resources and visitors. Alternative B implements new management zones that include:

Marine Hazard Zone: A shallow water zone that protects 5,000 acres of critical habitat for newly listed threatened marine invertebrates, elkhorn and staghorn corals.

Resource Protection Zone: Encompasses the majority of the park's marine environment. It is dedicated to resource preservation, protection, and scientific research. This zone protects a variety of distinct reef habitats: shallow to deep reefs, seagrass beds, shelf edge communities and oceanic habitats.

Island Discovery Zone: Provides on-island recreation areas including beaches, picnic areas, hiking trail and observation areas.

The NPS appreciates your input into this planning process and would like your feedback. We ask that you provide your comments at the public meetings, by letter, or through the NPS planning, environment and public comment website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BUIS>. A copy of this newsletter and the Draft GMP/EIS is also available on this website. We ask that you submit your comments by May 1, 2012.

The Buck Island Reef Management Team thanks you for your continued involvement and support during this planning process. Your input will be addressed during the next step of the planning process, preparation of the Final GMP/EIS.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Buck Island Reef National Monument
2100 Church Street, #100
Christiansted, VI 00820

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™



For More Information and How to Comment

We invite you to comment via our NPS planning, environment and public comment website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BUIS>, where you will find a copy of this newsletter and the Draft GMP/EIS. You may also write to us at:

Mr. Joel A. Tutein, Superintendent
Buck Island Reef National Monument
2100 Church Street, #100
Christiansted, VI 00820

Public Meeting Schedule: March 2012

Christiansted National Historic Site
Christiansted, St. Croix

Slave Market (Former Post Office Building)
Wednesday March 28th 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Slave Market (Former Post Office Building)
Thursday March 29th 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Free parking at Fort Christiansvaern will be available for meeting attendees.