



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park Service News Release

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Contact: [Nigel Fields](#), 340-776-6201 ext. 431

National Park Service seeks public input on Caneel Bay redevelopment options

Public comment period runs Jan. 18-Feb. 17

ST. JOHN, U.S. Virgin Islands—The National Park Service (NPS) today released an initial set of concepts that could guide the redevelopment of Caneel Bay at Virgin Islands National Park. The public is invited to provide input on the concepts for 30 days beginning January 18.

"We developed a preliminary range of options that prioritize the protection of resources and expand public access to Caneel Bay," said **Virgin Islands National Park Superintendent Nigel Fields**. "Civic engagement is an important part of the redevelopment process. We look forward to receiving the public's feedback as we work together to create the best possible future for Caneel Bay."

While the Caneel Bay retained use estate (RUE) will remain in place until its expiration on September 30, 2023, the NPS [began planning for the Caneel Bay redevelopment](#) last fall. The goals of the redevelopment plan are to ensure the preservation and protection of natural, cultural and marine resources, provide for economic development opportunities through commercial services, maximize operational efficiencies, and ensure compliance with law, regulation and policy.

In line with these objectives, four preliminary redevelopment options are proposed for the public to comment on, including:

- **Alternative A— The NPS preliminary proposed action** balances enhanced public access, recreational opportunities, resource protection and park operational efficiency, while re-establishing a world-class overnight experience at a luxury resort. Additionally, the concept calls for a mid-range overnight experience at Hawksnest Beach separate from the resort, and the NPS would provide space for an organization to design, fund, construct, and operate a community destination, such as an amphitheater, museum or cultural center.
- **Alternative B** offers a similar management approach to Alternative A, except the resort area is expanded and a mid-range overnight experience and public access at Hawksnest Beach is removed.
- **Alternative C** includes all resort zone elements identified in Alternative A, and the resort zone is similar to that of the historic boundaries of the Caneel Bay RUE. No visitor services would be

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provided at the site for non-resort guests, and the NPS would not provide a community space at the Caneel Bay area.

- **No-Action Alternative** assumes sole management by the NPS upon expiration of the RUE in 2023. The NPS would not issue any permit, lease or concession contract. The NPS would minimally restore the site to allow for safe access by visitors through existing roads and trails, including safe access to beaches.

Additional information about the proposed redevelopment options can be found at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CaneelBayRedevelopment> and will be discussed at the public engagement meetings.

NPS will hold a virtual public meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m. AST. Members of the public can attend the virtual event or submit written comments by visiting:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/CaneelBayRedevelopment>

Written comments may also be hand-delivered or mailed to the park headquarters at:

Caneel Bay Redevelopment and Management Plan
c/o Superintendent Nigel Fields
1300 Cruz Bay Creek
St. John, VI 00830

www.nps.gov

About Caneel Bay: *Caneel Bay currently operates under a retained use estate (RUE), a unique arrangement crafted by Laurance S. Rockefeller in 1983, setting aside the 150-acre resort for independent operation and management within Virgin Islands National Park without NPS oversight. The NPS expects to assume full responsibility for the property when the RUE expires on September 30, 2023. The resort was severely damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 and remains mostly closed. In addition to long being an economic driver on the island, Caneel Bay is also an important cultural and historical site and the location of the 1733 Akwamu Slave Rebellion, one of the first sustained revolts of enslaved people in the Americas. Current information about the NPS redevelopment of Caneel Bay is available at go.nps.gov/CaneelBay.*

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 423 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov, and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).