



General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Buck Island Reef National Monument

August, 2005

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Overview

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- ✦ Schedule
- ✦ Monument Highlights
- ✦ Management Zones / Prescriptions
- ✦ Alternatives
- ✦ Summary
- ✦ Next Steps

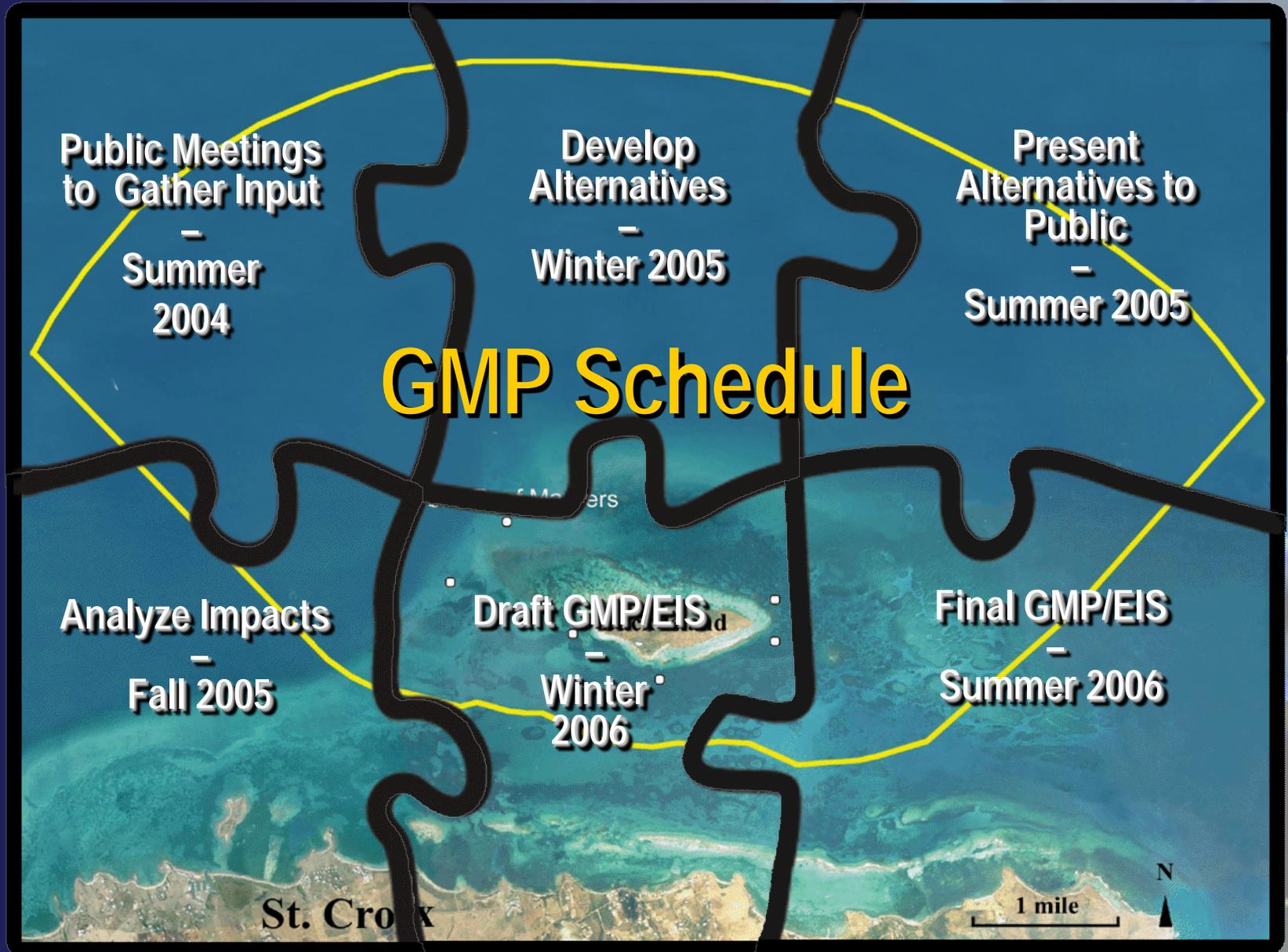


Objectives

- ★ Summarize status of the Buck Island Reef National Monument General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.
- ★ Obtain input on the preliminary alternatives.



GMP Schedule

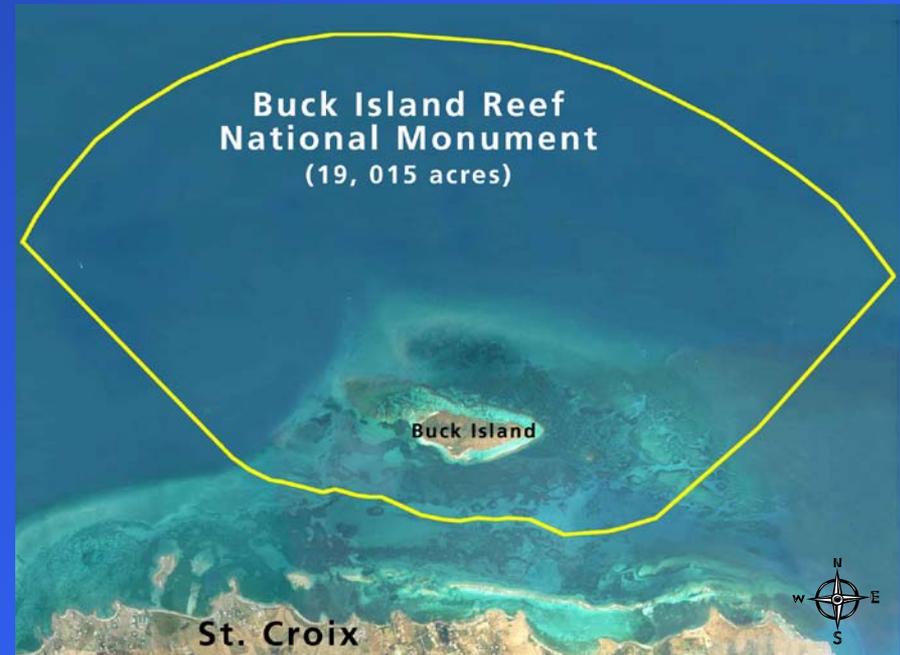




Monument Highlights

Monument Highlights

- ✦ Expanded in 2001, includes 19,015 acres of submerged lands with extensive coral reefs.
- ✦ Only fully protected marine area in the National Park system.
- ✦ No. 1 tourist destination in St. Croix.
- ✦ Interim Regulations – Published April 2003; Implemented May 2003.





Buck Island Reef National Monument

(19, 015 acres)

Buck Island

St. Croix





Monument Highlights

Legend

- Reef Markers
- ▲ Mooring Buoys
- ▭ Anchorage Area
- ▭ Underwater Trail and Mooring Area

PARSONS



Monument Highlights (cont.)

- ✦ All extractive uses prohibited.
- ✦ Anchoring allowed only in designated areas (sand that is 10 to 15 feet deep).
- ✦ Use or possession of fishing equipment is prohibited in the Monument.





Management Zones / Prescriptions



Public Meetings

Date	Activity
May, June, and July, 2004	Media Outreach Conducted (print, radio and television) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ News releases, PSAs, postings, and fliers distributed.▪ Invitations mailed, faxed, and hand distributed.
June 2004	Scoping letters mailed / distributed
June 2004	Newsletters distributed
June 23, 24, and 25, 2004	Public meetings conducted
July 16, 2004	Public meeting conducted, focus on fishermen
June and July, 2004	Stakeholder meetings conducted

Stakeholders Involved

★ Partners and stakeholders notified and meetings held:

- Fishermen
- Boating Community
- Concessionaires
- Territorial, Local and Federal Agency Representatives
- Environmental and Other Organizations
- Small Businesses



Key Issues Identified

- ✦ Moorings: Number and Location
- ✦ Anchoring: Number
- ✦ Visitor Use and Experience: Recreational Opportunities
- ✦ Education and Outreach: Type, Location, Amount
- ✦ Fishing: Traditional fishing rights
- ✦ Protect Resources: Balance with use





Proposed Management Zones

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





Proposed Management Zones

- Anchoring Zone : Areas where sand is 10 to 15 feet deep and boaters may anchor by permit.



Proposed Management Zones

■ Island Discovery Zone :

Areas on Buck Island that offer opportunities to hike, picnic, experience the sights and sounds of nature, learn about the island's natural and cultural features, and enjoy the surrounding views.



Proposed Management Zones

■ Recreation Zone :

Areas surrounding Buck Island that offer a variety of recreational opportunities, including swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, sunbathing, and boating.



Proposed Management Zones

- Marine Hazard Zone:
Areas where navigation is hazardous and resources are sensitive. To provide for safe navigation, only boats less than 30 feet would be allowed to enter. Visitors would be able to swim and snorkel in these areas.



Proposed Management Zones

- **Resource Protection Zone** : Areas that focus on resource preservation, protection, and scientific research. Boaters would be able to traverse these areas, and enjoy views of Buck Island. Moorings would be provided in designated areas.
- **Anchoring Zone** : Areas where sand is 10 to 15 feet deep and boaters may anchor by permit.
- **Island Discovery Zone** : Areas on Buck Island that offer opportunities to hike, picnic, experience the sights and sounds of nature, learn about the island's natural and cultural features, and enjoy the surrounding views.
- **Recreation Zone** : Areas surrounding Buck Island that offer a variety of recreational opportunities, including swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, sunbathing, and boating.
- **Marine Hazard Zone**: Areas where navigation is hazardous and resources are sensitive. To provide for safe navigation, only boats less than 30 feet would be allowed to enter. Visitors would be able to swim and snorkel in these areas.



Management Prescriptions and Zones

Category	Resource Protection Zone	Anchoring Zone	Island Discovery Zone	Recreation Zone	Marine Hazard Zone
Visitor Use					
Day Hiking on Trail			✓	✓	
Guided Interpretive Tours	✓		✓	✓	✓
Picnicking (in provided NPS grills)				✓	
Nature Observation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sunbathing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swimming		✓		✓	✓
SNUBA Diving					
Scuba Diving (Concession and Private)				✓	✓
Snorkeling (Concession and Private)		✓		✓	✓
Surfing					
Pets	ON BOARD VESSELS ONLY				
Overnight Stay Vessels		✓			
No Wake Zone		✓		✓	✓
Shallow draft vessels (i.e., Beach Cats, Kayaks, Canoes, Dinghies)	✓	✓		✓	✓
Motorized Vessels	✓	✓		42 FEET (or less) IN THE LAGOON / LESS THAN 150 ft. OUTSIDE LAGOON.	30 Feet (or less)*
Private vessels not exceeding 150 feet in length	✓	AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS		AT DESIGNATED MOORINGS	
Habitat Restoration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scientific Research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Waste Receptacles					
Special use permits for large groups and special events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kinds and Levels of Development					
Trails			✓	✓	
Picnic areas				✓	
Moorings - Day Use Only	AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS			AT DESIGNATED LOCATIONS	
Anchoring by permit		✓			
Restrooms				✓	
Kiosks			✓	✓	
* Exception for NPS administrative purposes					
Activities not considered appropriate include: open beach fires, camping, jet skis, water skiing, boogie boarding or para-sailing, or motorized vehicles on Buck Island.					



Preliminary Alternatives

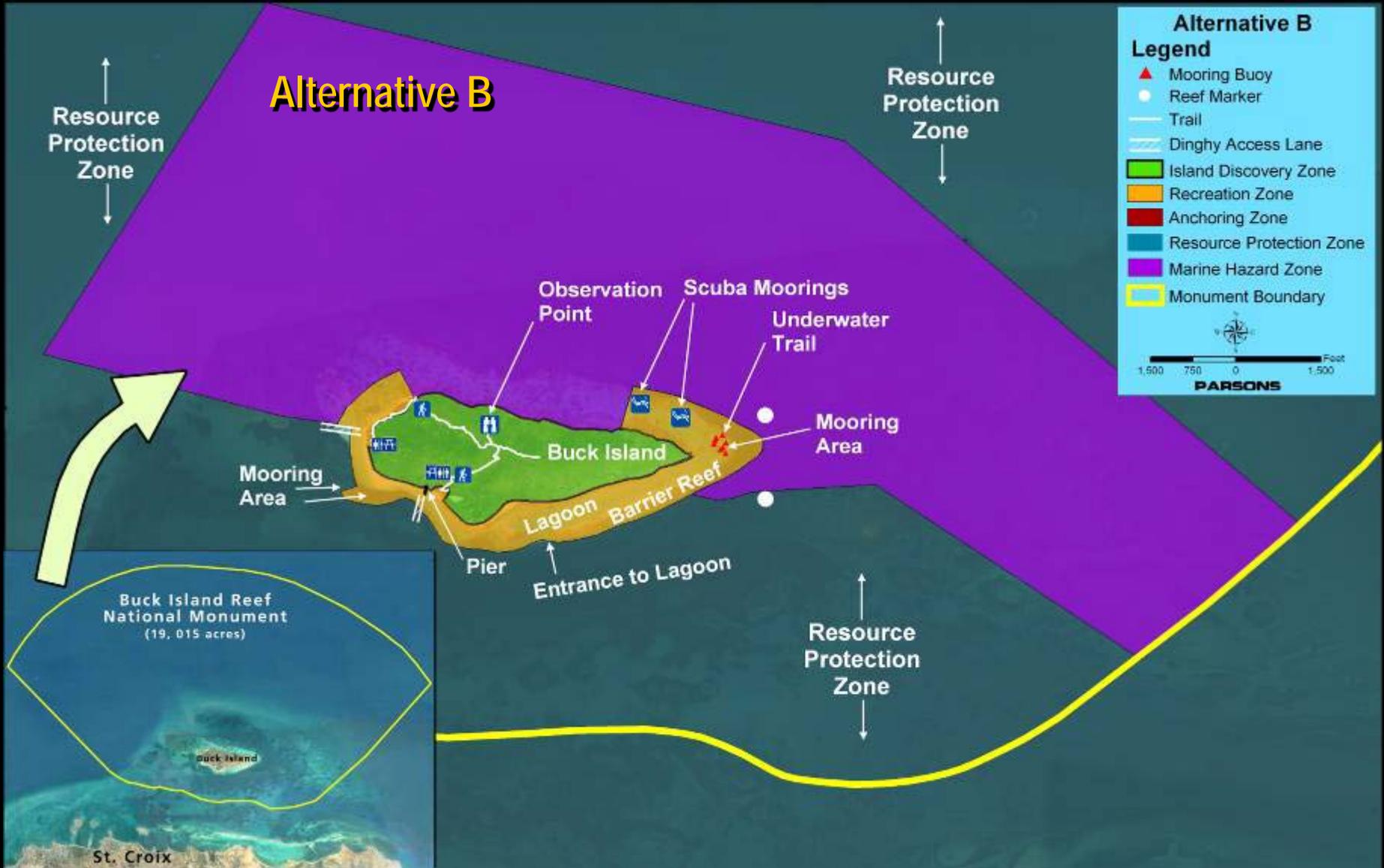


Alternative A – Continuation of Current Management Practices





Buck Island Reef National Monument





Similarities Between Alternatives

- ✦ Regulations frame every alternative. Proclamation prohibits extractive use and allows for anchoring in areas where sand is 10 to 15 feet deep.
- ✦ 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.



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

NOTE:

Differences between alternatives are highlighted.



Alternatives Summary - Differences (cont.)

Category/Feature	Alternative A (No Action)	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
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.

NOTE:

Differences between alternatives are highlighted.



Next Steps

- ✦ **Complete public meetings to present preliminary alternatives.**
- ✦ **Summarize input - comments on preliminary alternatives requested by September 6, 2005 .**
- ✦ **Prepare Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement.**
- ✦ **Conduct public meetings to present this Draft and address your comments.**



Questions / Comments?