

APPENDIX C

AGENCY CONSULTATION

APPENDIX C-1

AGENCY MEETING SIGN IN SHEET

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands



Marine Research and Education Center and Hotel Demolition – Environmental Assessment Agency Meeting Sign-in Sheet

Name/Organization	Address	Phone	Email
Aaron Hutchins, DPNR	45 Mars Hill, Fsted	773-1082	hutchins.aaron@vidpnr-dep.org
Claude Gerard DPNR/KZ	45 Mars Hill, Fsted	773-1082	cloude-gerard@viczmp.com
Wes Toller	" "	" "	Toller.Wes@VIDPNR-DEP.org
Alexis Dourant	#45 Mars Hill	773-1082	
William Tobias	" "	713-2415	williamtobias@vitekon.net
Steven Wright	NPS/SEPO	404-562-3124 ext 660	Steven M. Wright@nps.gov
Samuel Stoltz	EA	410 329 5143	stoltz@caest.com
Michael Bayar	HNTB	202-654-1079	mbayar@hntb.com
Tracy Layfield	EA	410-771-4950	tlayfield@caest.com
Joe Joseph	NEXI SOUTH ASSOC	770-498-4155	joe.joseph@newsouthassoc.com
ZH Star	NPS CHQ/BUS/SA	773-1460	Zandy_hillis_star@nps.gov

-NPS-

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

APPENDIX C-2

EXAMPLE AGENCY LETTER



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service
Christiansted National Historic Site
Buck Island Reef National Monument
Salt River Bay Historical Park and Ecological Preserve
2100 Church Street #100
St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00820
(340) 773-1460



July 21, 2006

Jim Casey
Virgin Islands Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Virgin Islands Field Office
Tunick Building, Suite 102
1336 Beltjen Road
St. Thomas, VI 00801

Re: Proposed Marine Research and Education Center and Abandoned Hotel Demolition at Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve

Dear Mr. Casey,

The National Park Service is preparing an Environmental Assessment for the above referenced projects located at Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. The Environmental Assessment will be prepared in accordance with the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service National Environmental Policy Act guidance (Director's Order 12). The location of the park is shown in the attached Figure 1 and the project areas are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

The NPS will conduct an agency meeting associated with the upcoming Environmental Assessment for the proposed Marine Research and Education Center and Abandoned Hotel Demolition. The meeting will be held on Monday, August 21, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the Visitor Contact Station at Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve, #26 Estate Salt River, St. Croix, VI.

Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (or SARI) was created in 1992 to preserve, protect, and interpret nationally significant natural, historical, and cultural resources (United States Congress 1992). The NPS and the Government of the Virgin Islands jointly manage and maintain the 1,015-acre park. SARI's natural resources include both sea and land resources, containing some of the largest remaining mangrove forests in the Virgin Islands, as well as coral reefs and a submarine canyon. NPS and the Virgin Islands government are working together to protect these resources.

St. Croix has been the host of over thirty years of world class marine research. Both Fairleigh Dickinson University's (FDU) West Indies Laboratory (WIL) in Teague Bay and NOAA National Undersea Research Program (NURP) facility and their manned undersea research habitats "Hydrolab" and "Aquarius" were located in the submarine canyon in Salt River Bay. These two facilities brought hundreds of students and researchers from our local communities and





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from all over the world to study and work in and around the island's marine environment. Unfortunately both facilities were closed after hurricane Hugo. The loss of these facilities greatly impacted the educational opportunities our island resources offer and hindered on-going and future research.

In 1999, a consortium of universities including University of North Carolina at Wilmington, University of South Carolina, Rutgers/State University of New Jersey, and the University of the Virgin Islands established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Interior (DOI)/National Park Service (NPS) and the Department of Commerce/ National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forming the Joint Institute for Caribbean Marine Studies (JICMS). The goal of the consortium is to re-establish a Marine Research and Educational Center (MREC) on the island of St. Croix. Initially the former FDU West Indies Laboratory site was considered for the marine laboratory but was not feasible. In 2004 the JICMS Board of Directors in cooperation with DOI/NPS began working to determine the feasibility of locating the MREC in the park at SARI. SARI was selected as the ideal location for the MREC for the following reasons:

- a. The long-term conservation and education goal for NPS and the Government of the Virgin Islands who jointly manage and maintain the 1,015-acre park;
- b. Legacy of the former FDU/WIL and NOAA/NURP programs with years of baseline information on the marine community inside and outside the bay and into the depths of the submarine canyon;
- c. Need for scientific information for the Government of the Virgin Islands to restore and maintain St. Croix's last living and functioning mangrove, estuarine, and coral reef ecosystem;
- d. The close proximity to the target resources for education and research, and;
- e. Long-term security for the project through park ownership and management.

Three alternative locations within SARI are being considered for the MREC facility (Figure 2):

- East Site, west of Estate Judith's Fancy, where the Virgin Grand Hotel was planned and partially built;
- South Site, location of the former NOAA Undersea Research Center; and
- West Site, includes the NPS Visitor Contact Station and the Salt River Marina.

The MREC facilities would include several structures: main building (i.e., offices, classrooms, teaching labs, conference rooms, and library); education center (main hall, theater, lecture hall), dormitories, cafeteria, staff housing, maintenance building, wet laboratory, and marine operation facilities. The MREC facility design concept would be less than 4 acres, excluding roads.



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In addition, the NPS is undertaking the demolition of the abandoned hotel structure located on the east side of Salt River Bay (Figure 3). This hotel structure was part of a development project started in the late 1960s that was never completed. The structure is deteriorating and presents safety and environmental concerns for the park. The park proposes to remove the entire structure, reuse and recycle as much of the materials as possible, and return the site to a more natural condition.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the proposed project, to request data or information you may have on resources potentially affected by the proposed project, and to request comments on the proposed action. In accordance with Section 7(c)(1) of the Endangered Species Act, we are requesting information on whether any proposed or listed species or their critical habitats are present within the project site.

Your response within 30 days from the date of receipt of this letter will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me at 340-773-1460. Letters have also been sent to the agencies listed in Enclosure 1.

Sincerely,

Joel A. Tutein
Superintendent

Enclosures

cc: S. Wright, NPS
File 61790.04

**Salt River Bay
National Historical Park
and Ecological Preserve**



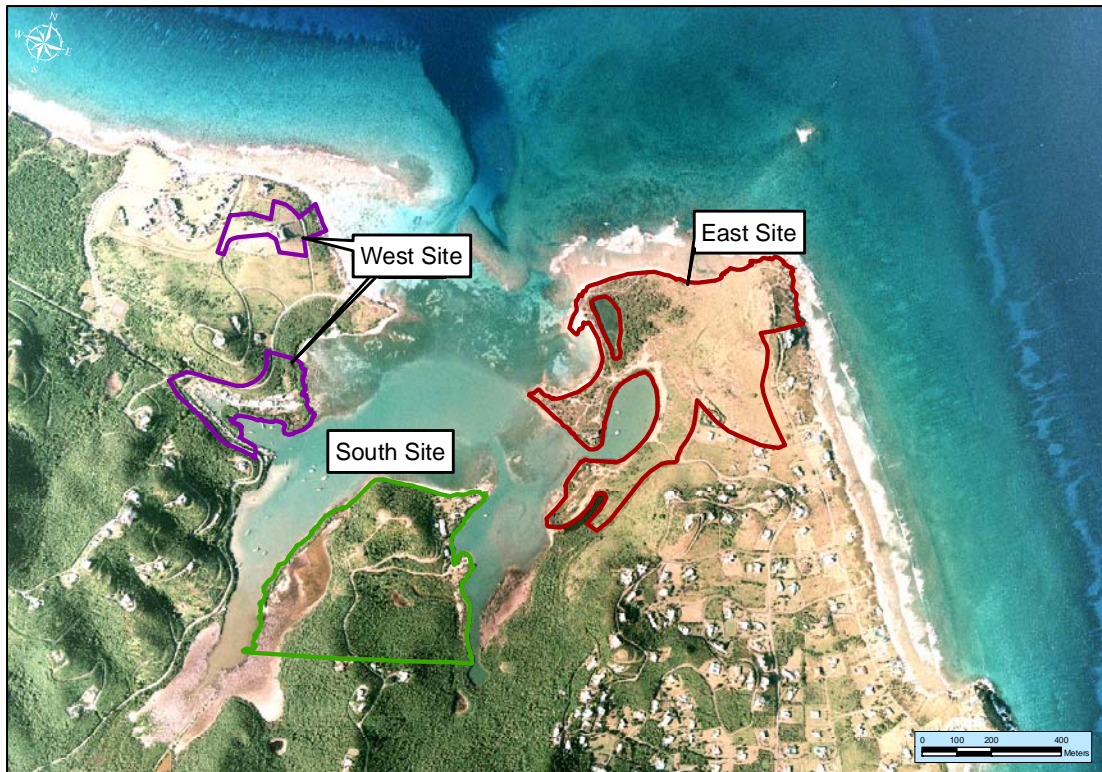


Figure 2. Alternative locations for the Proposed Marine Research and Education Center



Figure 3. Abandoned Hotel Structure

ENCLOSURE 1

AGENCY DISTRIBUTION LIST SALT RIVER BAY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE (SARI)

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Edwin Muniz
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Boqueron Ecological Services Field Office
Carr 301, KM 5.1, BO Corozo
Boqueron, PR 00622
Phone: 787-851-7297

Pablo Vazquez
Resident Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
400 Fernandez Juncos
San Juan, PR 00901-3299
Ponce, PR 00731
Phone: 787-841-3181

Mark Evans
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207-0019
Phone: 904-232-2235

Dr. Joseph J. Kimmel
Supervisory Fishery Administrator
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue, South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone: 727-824-5305

Jennifer A. Moore
NR Specialist
NOAA/NMFS Protected Resource Division
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue, South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
Phone: 727-824-5312

FEDERAL AGENCIES (continued)

Lisamarie Carrubba
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
P.O. Box 3323
Lajas, Puerto Rico 00667
Phone: 787-851-3700

Carl-Axel Soderberg
Director
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Caribbean Environmental Protection Division
Centro Europa Building
1492 Ponce Deleon Avenue, Suite 417
San Juan, PR 00907-4127
Phone: 787-977-5801

Jim Casey
Virgin Island Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Virgin Islands Field Office
Tunick Building, Suite 102
1336 Beltjen Road
St. Thomas, VI 00801
Phone: 340-714-2333

LT. Kevin Reed
U.S. Coast Guard
Resident Inspection Office
9B Print Street
Christiansted, VI 00822
Phone: 340-772-5557

USVI AGENCIES

Aaron Hutchins
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Protection
45 Mars Hill
Frederiksted, VI 00840
Phone: 340-773-1082 x2308

Dr. Barbara Kojis
Director
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Division of Fish & Wildlife
6291 Estate Nazareth 101
St. Thomas, VI 00802
Phone: 340-775-6762

Dean C. Plaskett, Esq.
Commissioner
Department of Planning & Natural Resources
Cyril E. King Airport
Terminal Building - 2nd Floor
St. Thomas, VI 00802
Phone: 340-774-3320

Mr. Myron Jackson
State Historic Preservation Office
17 Kongens Gade
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, VI 00802
Phone: 340-776-8605

Victor Somme, III
Director
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Coastal Zone Management
45 Mars Hill
Frederiksted, VI 00840
Phone: 340-773-1082

John Beagles
Chairman Coastal Zone Management Commission
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Coastal Zone Management
45 Mars Hill
Frederiksted, VI 00840

APPENDIX C-3

AGENCY RESPONSE LETTERS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 824-5312; FAX 824-5309
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

SEP 8 2006

F/SER31: LC

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Mr. Joel A. Tutein
Superintendent
National Park Service
2100 Church Street #100
St. Croix, VI 00820

Dear Mr. Tutein:

This responds to your letter dated July 21, 2006, regarding the proposed construction of a Marine Research and Educational Center within the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (SARI), St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Your letter requests comments and information from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) regarding resources that may be affected by the proposed project in particular Endangered Species Act (ESA) proposed or listed species or their critical habitats.

The proposed project consists of the construction of a main building containing classrooms, offices, teaching laboratories, conference rooms, and a library; an education center containing a main hall, theater, and lecture hall; dormitories; cafeteria; staff housing; a maintenance building; a wet laboratory; and marine operation facilities. The buildings would encompass an area of 4 acres, not including roadways. Three alternative sites are being considered by the National Parks Service (NPS) for the construction of the research facility; the east site where the Virgin Grand Hotel was planned and partially built, the south site where the NOAA Undersea Research Center was located, and the west site where the SARI Visitor Contact Station and Salt River Marina are located. Regardless of whether the east site is selected as the location of the research facility, the hotel structure will be demolished due to its deteriorated condition.

NMFS has determined that the proposed project is located within the range of the following threatened and endangered species: hawksbill, leatherback, loggerhead, and green sea turtles, and elkhorn and staghorn corals. Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) sea turtles are listed as endangered. Green (*Chelonia mydas*) and loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) sea turtles are listed as threatened. Elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) and staghorn (*A. cervicornis*) corals are listed as threatened. Depending upon the site location chosen and the extent of in-water construction, sea turtle refuge and foraging habitat and coral colonies may be affected by the proposed project. Sea turtles and corals may likely be affected by the operation of the facility depending upon the research activities to be realized. The waters adjacent to Sandy Point on the southwest corner of St. Croix up to and including the waters from the



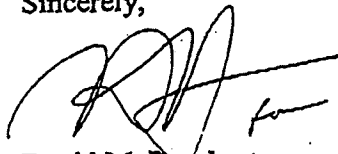
hundred fathom curve shoreward are designated critical habitat for the leatherback sea turtle (50 CFR 226.207). Due to the distance of this area from the project site, it is unlikely that designated critical habitat would be affected by the proposed construction of the research facilities. However, marine research realized through the facility could affect designated critical habitat.

Based on the information contained in your letter, NPS is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project. A biological evaluation (BE) should also be prepared as part of project planning and design stages either as an independent document or as part of the EA. The BE should include background information regarding the presence of threatened and endangered species in the project area, including the results of any surveys performed as part of the development of the proposed research facility project, an effects analysis evaluating the potential adverse impacts to listed species and their habitat, a determination of the effects of the action on threatened and endangered species, and a request for concurrence on potential project effects on threatened and endangered species under NMFS' purview. The BE should be submitted to NMFS initiating ESA Section 7 consultation (50 CFR 402.13-14).

If formal consultation is necessary, Section 7 allows NMFS up to 90 days to conclude formal consultation with your agency and an additional 45 days to prepare our biological opinion (unless we mutually agree to an extension). Our anticipated biological opinion completion date is 135 days from the date of our receipt of the information requested in the BE. In addition, if formal consultation is initiated, the ESA requires that the federal action agency make no irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that limits future options. This practice ensures agency actions do not preclude the formulation and implementation of reasonable and prudent alternatives that avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of endangered or threatened species, or destroying or modifying their critical habitats. If the information we have requested from the NPS allows us to determine that the section 7 consultation can be accomplished informally, NMFS will respond within 30 calendar days, if possible.

If you have any questions regarding the ESA section 7 consultation process and how to prepare a biological evaluation, please contact Dr. Lisamarie Carrubba by e-mail at lisamarie.carrubba@noaa.gov or at (787) 851-3700. We look forward to collaborating with the NPS to further the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

Sincerely,



David M. Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources

Ref: T/SER/2006/04337
File: 1514-22 O.4.a

APPENDIX C-4
CONTACT RECORD



**EA Engineering, Science,
and Technology**

Date: September 14, 2006

Project: Salt River

Project Number: 6179004

COMMUNICATIONS RECORD FORM

Distribution: Salt River Correspondence File

Person Contacted: Mr. Sindulfo Castillo

Affiliation: USACE, Chief of Regulatory for the Antilles Office

Address: Puerto Rico

Type of Contact: Telephone (787) 289-7040 or (787) 729-6905 x 3054

Person Making Contact: Sarah Koser

Communications Summary:

I contacted Sindulfo Castillo to discuss applicable permits for the demolition of the hotel at Salt River. I described the project and the Federal mangrove wetlands that have been delineated at the site. He stated that *as long as no wetland impacts are anticipated, no permit is required*. However, if the hotel will be demolished by explosion, dust will be an issue for the adjacent mangrove wetlands. If the hotel will be demolished via mechanical methods, dust would not be an issue for the adjacent mangroves. He also recommended protecting the mangrove wetlands and any practices that could avoid incidental impacts to the mangroves. I stated that the National Guard would be demolishing the hotel and they have stated that plywood would be used to avoid any incidental impacts and Sindulfo agreed that would be an acceptable practice. He also stated that the DPNR and the CZM departments may require additional permits for this project.

I also asked Sindulfo about any other USACE projects in the area, but he did not know of any, including the stormwater project that was completed at St. Croix recently. He directed me to Pablo Vasquez, the construction manager at (787) 729-6874 or 6875 x 3001 and Jose Martinez at (787) 729-6875 x 3106.

Signature: _____

We also discussed the MREC and the impacts to mangrove wetlands that would occur. He stated that a Section 10 and 404 Permit would be required and that it would be sent to him for review along with the wetland delineation appended to the permit. He may or may not conduct a site visit, depending on money and resources (which may not be available). Wetland avoidance and minimization must occur and then mitigation would be discussed. He stated that a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio or potentially more, could be required for impacting mangroves and this would be determined at a later date. All mitigation must occur onsite. I suggested enhancing the existing mangroves, which were devastated in 1988 by hurricanes, and he agreed that enhancement would be a good mitigation strategy and that ratios would be determined at a later date. He also suggested giving as much time possible for permit review; 120 days is normally required, but a year in advance would be the best case scenario.

Send Permit to Sindulfo Castillo to review at:

400 Fernandez Juncos Avenue
Stop 7 1/2 Antilles Office
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

For permit applications (**from website**) in St. Croix, forward the application to:

Commissioner
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
6003 Anna's Hope
Christiansted, U.S. Virgin Islands 00820-4433
For additional information call (340) 773-3450
Contact: Damaris Delgado

Signature: _____