

St. Croix National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Update, January 2009

Photo by Nate Olive



Public Meeting at Legion Hall, Christiansted

Project Update

In September 2008, staff from the Denver Service Center of the National Park Service held public meetings in Fredriksted, Christiansted, and at the Sunny Isle Pavilion in mid-island. During these meetings the Denver Service Center team received valuable input on the opportunities and challenges associated with a national heritage area (NHA) designation for the island of St. Croix. The Denver Service Center team also received feedback on the themes and stories that a St. Croix National Heritage Area would share with the nation. Information collected at the public meetings, through comments submitted on the project website, or mailed to the Denver Service Center office is now being used to write the *Draft St. Croix National Heritage Area Feasibility Study*.

What Is a National Heritage Area?

A national heritage area is a locally managed place designated by the United States Congress. In this area natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity that were shaped by geography. In national heritage areas, residents, businesses, governments and nonprofit organizations can collaborate to promote conservation, community revitalization, and economic development projects.

For more information on national heritage areas, please visit: <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas>.

Project Schedule

**GATHER
PUBLIC INPUT**
Summer - Fall 2008

**PREPARE & PUBLISH
DRAFT STUDY**
Winter 2008 - Fall 2009

**GATHER PUBLIC
INPUT ON DRAFT**
Winter 2010

**FINALIZE STUDY & MAKE
RECOMMENDATION**
Spring 2010

**CONGRESSIONAL
ACTION**

HOW IS A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA DIFFERENT FROM A NATIONAL PARK?

- A national heritage area is not a unit of the National Park System
- A national heritage area is locally coordinated and managed
- The National Park Service's involvement is advisory in nature

WHAT ARE THE LOCAL BENEFITS FROM NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA DESIGNATION?

- Preserves stories, culture, and natural resources
- Fosters community pride
- Enhances opportunities for education and inspiration
- Provides economic stimulus

Heritage Area Themes

Heritage area themes relate the stories that a St. Croix National Heritage Area would share with the nation. In July 2008, the Denver Service Center team collected public input on the nationally significant places, people, traditions, customs, and beliefs of St. Croix to begin to understand these stories. The information was analyzed, and five distinct categories of comments emerged. These categories include geography and the natural environment, modern-day St. Croix, indigenous cultures and early contact, slavery and emancipation, and the seven flags of St. Croix.

In September 2008, the Denver Service Center team presented these categories as the preliminary framework for the development of heritage area themes. In the September public meetings, the Denver Service Center team asked the public to provide additional input on the emotions, relationships, and values associated with the identified places, people, traditions, customs, and beliefs. The public also provided supportive feedback on the preliminary heritage area theme framework.

The Denver Service Center team is working to refine the heritage area themes to be included in the *Draft St. Croix National Heritage Area Feasibility Study*.



We are Still Seeking Your Input on the Local Coordinating Entity of a St. Croix National Heritage Area

The study will need to identify a local entity that is well positioned and capable of coordinating the various interests, projects, and fundraising efforts of the national heritage area. This local coordinating entity could be a federal commission comprised of appointed local citizens, a new nonprofit organization, an existing nonprofit organization, a coal-



tion or network of existing organizations, or something else. It is up to the people of St. Croix to determine how a St. Croix National Heritage Area would be managed and that is why the Denver Service Center team is still accepting comments on this critical component through February 2009. If you would like to share your thoughts, or if you are part of an organization that is interested in the coordination of a St. Croix National Heritage Area, please submit your comments to the address or website at the bottom (left) of this page.

Some questions to consider as you provide input

Should the local coordinating entity be a nonprofit organization, federal commission, educational organization, or something else?

Will this organization be entirely new or some combination or coalition of existing organizations?

Do you have suggestions for big-picture projects or programs for a proposed St. Croix National Heritage Area?

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Project Website:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sero>

