

Community Update

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Caneel Bay Resort at Virgin Islands National Park - CERCLA Activity – EE/CA

Spring 2021



Virgin Islands National Park

Brief History

The Caneel Bay Resort was developed in 1956 on the site of a former plantation on St. John. In 1983, the resort's owners donated approximately 150 acres of land to the United States with a Retained Use Estate Indenture Agreement (RUE) that allowed private operation of the resort for 40 years, until 2023. With restaurants, lodging, water and wastewater treatment plants, fuel and maintenance facilities, and a small landfill, the resort was similar in many ways to a village. Some building materials, cleaning supplies, and pesticides, popular in the 1950s-70s, contained potentially hazardous ingredients and may have been used at the resort. Also, gasoline and diesel were stored and used on-site to fuel the emergency generator and vehicles. The resort has been closed since September 2017, after sustaining damage from hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Environmental Investigations

The National Park Service (NPS) is the lead agency at this site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and has authority to investigate and clean up sites with contamination that may be harmful to human health and the environment. As the RUE comes to an end, NPS is gathering information to evaluate if contaminants of potential concern (COPCs) are present, and, if so, where they are located and whether they need to be removed. A soil and groundwater investigation in 2014 found COPCs, including pesticides, metals, asbestos, and petroleum in three general areas: Area 1 is near the wastewater treatment plant; Area 2 includes the maintenance, landscaping, and fuel storage facilities; and Area 3 is the debris/compost landfill. NPS performed a Removal Site Evaluation (RSE) of the Caneel Bay Resort in 2017 and, based on its findings, decided to conduct an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA). In February 2021, NPS carried out field investigation activities to support the EE/CA. The investigation included all three areas identified in the RSE. During the investigation, NPS collected soil samples, conducted surveys to find buried waste, and visually inspected building materials around the resort for signs of asbestos. The field investigation activities concluded on February 25, 2021.

Next Steps

The soil samples collected during the field investigation will be analyzed by an accredited laboratory. NPS will then present the results of the investigation, the calculated risks to human health and the environment, and response action alternatives (if required) in an EE/CA report. NPS currently anticipates that the draft EE/CA report will be available for public review and comment in May 2021.

Community Involvement

Following completion of the EE/CA report, a public Notice of Availability of the report will be published in the Virgin Islands Daily News. The public comment period will last at least 30 days and will be extended for an additional 15 days upon timely request. During the comment period, NPS will hold a public meeting to help convey its findings and proposed actions and to answer questions. After the comment period ends, NPS will select an alternative, inform the public and stakeholders of its decision, and provide responses to significant public comments in an Action Memorandum.

NPS Community Involvement

An information repository containing the administrative record file, which contains the documents considered in the selection of a cleanup action, has been established and is available for public review at the Virgin Islands National Park Cruz Bay Visitor Center or online at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/CaneelBayAssessment>. The project website will be updated as the investigation progresses.

Virgin Islands National Park
Cruz Bay Visitor Center, Cruz Bay, St. John
(340) 776-6201 x238
Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm