



VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK POTENTIAL LAND EXCHANGE



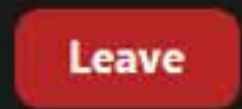
Virtual Civic Engagement Meeting

April 7, 2022



VIRTUAL MEETING TOOLS

- You will be in listen-only mode for the presentation
- You may type your question or add your comment at any time during the presentation
- Look for the **Q&A** and **Raise Hand** icons in the bottom row of Zoom controls.
- Please note we will be addressing questions at the end of the presentation.



St. John Land Exchange Task Force



HOW TO COMMENT

Please visit:
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/StJohnLandExchange>

The screenshots below are for the Caneel Bay project, but the same navigation applies to the Land Exchange project.



Step 1- Click 'Open for Comment'



Step 2- Click the newsletter



Step 3- Click 'Comment Now'



Step 4- Comment!



Meeting With You Today

Land Exchange Task Force and Support Staff

- [Nigel Fields](#) | NPS-VIIS | Superintendent
- [Elsa Alvear](#) | NPS-VIIS | Program Coordinator
- [Chaneel Callwood](#) | Department of Education | Architect-New Schools
- [Elizabeth Centeno](#) | Special Assistant to the Governor
- [Salman Elrubaie](#) | NPS-Region 2 | Supervisory Reality Specialist
- [Colette Monroe](#) | Governor's Office | Senior Policy Advisor
- [Dwayne Peterson](#) | DOI Office of Insular Affairs | Desk Officer
- [Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington](#) | GVI Dept of Education | Chief Operations Officer
- [Anthony D. Thomas](#) | GVI Commissioner of Dept of Property and Procurement
- [Mark Kinzer](#) | NPS-Region 2 | Env. Protection Specialist
- [Alexa Miles](#) | NPS-DSC | Project Manager



Brief Context And History

- In November 2019, Governor Bryan offered the small island of Whistling Cay for consideration in an exchange, reenergizing negotiations, resulting in a **preliminary land exchange agreement on October 22, 2020.**
- For nearly three decades, the Territorial government of the US Virgin Islands on St. John and the US government have discussed approaches to expanding education on St. John.



Public Education On St John: A Brief History

- Moravian Missions mid-late 1800's -- Annaberg School and East End School
- 1930's petition to federal government for schools the growing needs of families on St. John
- Earlier leaders in education: Guy Benjamin and Julius Ebenezer Sprauve
- 1970's to present VI governors fought for increased educational funding
- Steps toward siting of new school in 2013-2014
- Post-hurricanes Irma and Maria: purpose and focused vision today



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

- NPS seeks input on a potential land exchange between Virgin Islands National Park and the Territorial Government of the US Virgin Islands (GVI) on St. John.



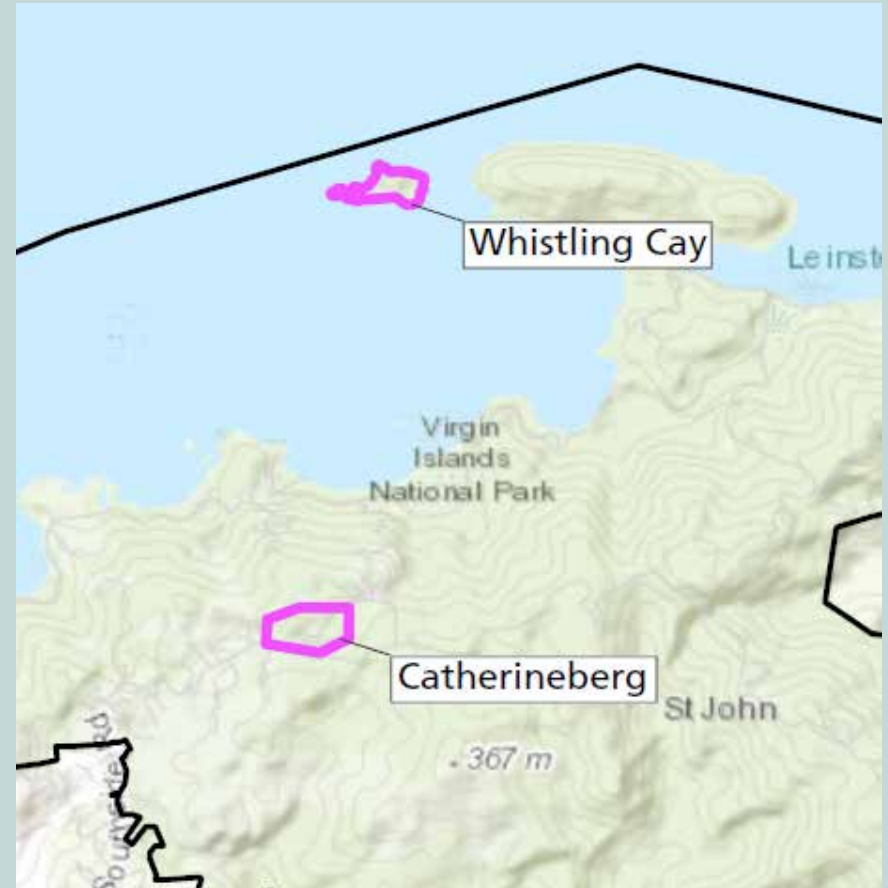
Catherineberg windmill from John Head Rd.

- NPS is preparing to conduct an environmental analysis of the proposed land exchange and requests your assistance to identify issues, concerns, and opportunities.



PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

- The purpose of this NPS project is for the NPS to respond to the request from the GVI to exchange a parcel of NPS-owned land, known as the Catherineberg Estate (Tract No. 01-137A), with the GVI as a possible location to support the island's local educational needs.
- In exchange, the GVI has offered the island of Whistling Cay (Tract No. 02-101) for consideration.





NEED FOR THE PROJECT

- The government of the Virgin Islands has determined that public education on St. John is lacking and is currently only available through the eighth grade.
- In order to complete a public high school education, students must commute by boat each day or relocate to St. Thomas during the school year.
- For nearly three decades, the GVI and the US government have discussed approaches to expanding education on St. John.



NEED FOR THE PROJECT

- This potential exchange provides the opportunity for local officials to achieve their long-standing effort to construct the first K-12 public school on the island of St. John.



Early renderings of what kind of educational facilities could be constructed at Catherineberg, with the windmill tower in the background.



CATHERINEBERG



Existing Conditions

Land Transfer Parcel Boundary

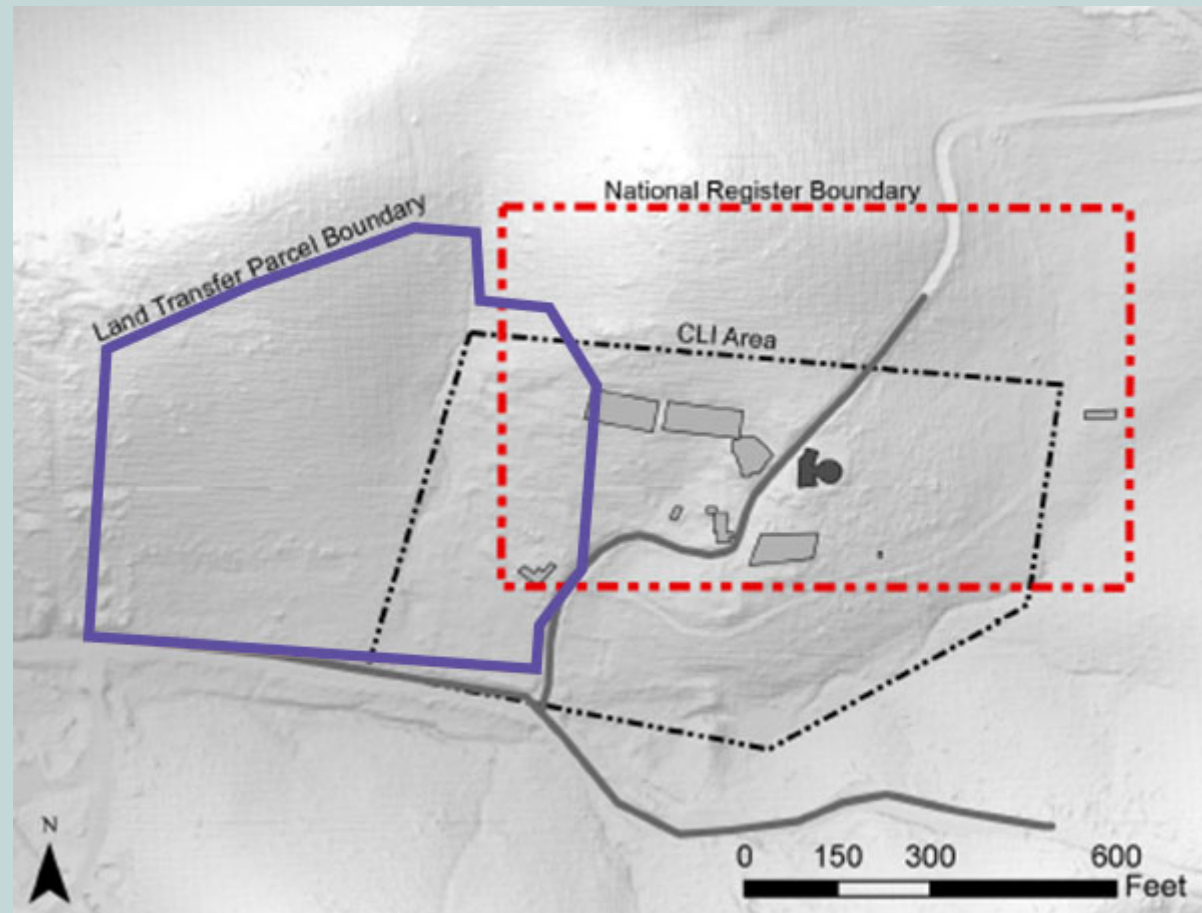
John Head Rd

Centerline Rd



CATHERINEBERG

- Portions of the parcel being considered for transfer overlap with historic resources
- Archeological surveys (Phase I and II) completed on the exchange parcel
- NPS is completing a Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) to inform the evaluation of potential impacts from the transfer





CATHERINEBERG HISTORY

- Indigenous people's use of the Virgin Islands extends to approximately 1000 BC
- Catherineberg (and associated estates) produce sugar 1718-1896



A period drawing showing the process of boiling, skimming, and cooling of sugar in a factory (St. Croix Landmarks Society).



CATHERINEBERG HISTORY

- 18th and early 19th-century buildings and structures to support sugar production include an animal mill, oxpounds/animal pens, factory and cure house, rum still, and a village for enslaved laborers
- Windmill at Catherineberg constructed between 1800 and 1826



Stone foundation remnants in the enslaved laborers' village (Quinn Evans 2021).



CATHERINEBERG HISTORY

- Slavery abolished in Danish West Indies in 1848 led to a decline in sugar production, increase in subsistence farming and bay rum leaf harvesting
- Cholera epidemic on St. John in 1853-54
- Cattle introduced at Catherineberg by 1870
- Last sugar cane crop at Catherineberg in 1896

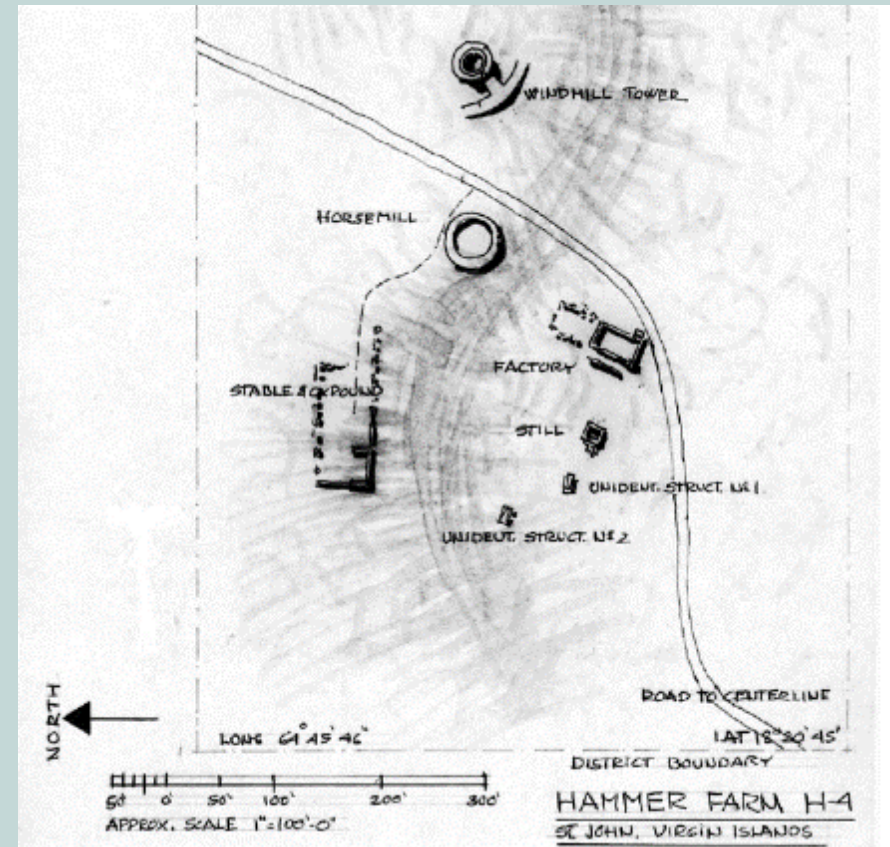


Watercolor painted by Frederik Von Scholten, 1838, zoomed in to show Catherineberg (VIIS Archives).



CATHERINEBERG HISTORY

- Bishop family purchased Catherineberg in 1945
- The Bishops converted the animal mill to a cistern for hydroponic farming
- Property transferred to NPS in 1968
- Portion of Catherineberg listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978



Map of the Catherineberg Historic District National Register Nomination (Gjessing 1978).



CATHERINEBERG TODAY

- Dense forest representative of post-agricultural succession
- Approximately 1 acre of wetland along an intermittent drainage channel
- Multiple cultural resources within and adjacent to the parcel
 - Historic buildings/structures
 - Archeological sites





WHISTLING CAY

- Lies just west of Mary Point Peninsula in Maho Bay Quarter.
- Primarily undeveloped tropical forest
- One historic structure on the island, a guardhouse (also known as the Custom House), recorded in a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS VI-87)
- No formalized access





Preliminary Land Exchange Agreement (October 2020)

- Department of Property and Procurement's role
- Purpose of the Preliminary Agreement
- Catherineberg parcel intended for public educational purposes by GVI
- Whistling Cay intended for undeveloped recreation and preservation by NPS
- Reversionary clauses apply



PROPERTY APPRAISALS

- Fair market value must be achieved to protect the public trust.
- Appraisal and Valuation Services Office (AVSO) is delegated authority from the Secretary to determine fair market value.
- AVSO performs an appraisal review to ensure that all appraisal results are supported and compliant with applicable appraisal standards.



VALUATION OF THE PROPERTIES

- Catherineberg Parcel: \$1.23 million
- Whistling Cay: \$1.44 million





NPS Proposed Action

- NPS environmental analysis will consider potential impacts of construction of educational facilities at Catherineberg parcel.
 - Early preliminary designs will inform the type and scale of facilities that may be constructed. For example:
 - Buildings up to two stories high
 - Athletic fields
 - Parking lots
 - Detailed design will be subject to separate environmental review.
- No changes in use or management strategy at Whistling Cay.



No Action vs. Proposed Action

NO ACTION

- No land exchange
- Catherineberg remains under NPS ownership
- Whistling Cay remains under GVI ownership

PROPOSED ACTION

- Land exchange moves ahead per agreement (subject to revisions)
- Catherineberg parcel transferred to GVI
- Whistling Cay transferred to NPS

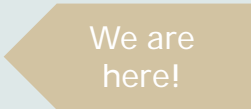


RESOURCE CONCERNS

- Cultural Resources
 - Cultural Landscape
 - Historic Buildings/Structures
 - Archeology
- Adjacent Communities
- Visitor Use and Experience



PLANNING PROCESS

Milestone	Targeted Schedule
Civic Engagement 	Early 2022
Environmental Analysis	Spring 2022
Public Review	Summer 2022
Decision Document	Late 2022



HOW TO COMMENT

Comments can be submitted two ways:

1. Submit comments electronically at:
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/StJohnLandExchange>

-- OR --

2. Mail or hand-deliver written comments to park headquarters:

Superintendent
RE: Potential Land Transfer
Virgin Islands National Seashore
1300 Cruz Bay Creek
St. John, VI 00830

Please
provide
comments by
April 27



THANK YOU!

We will now answer questions about the project and planning and compliance processes.

Please submit your questions via the Q&A or Raise Hand buttons.





CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Agency	Consultation Requirement
USFWS	Section 7- ESA
SHPO	Section 106
Agency	Coordination
DPNR- CZMA	Concurrence
DPW, Office of Disaster Recovery, VI Housing Authority, Dept. of Finance, ADA Coord.	Situational Awareness