

Briefing Statement

Bureau: National Park Service
Issue: Museum Collection Storage Facility
Park Site: Christiansted NHS/Buck Island Reef NM/Salt River Bay NHP & EP
Date: August 5, 2006

Current Status: CHRI/BUIS/SARI Museum collections consist of over 400,000 objects both natural and cultural materials including pre-historic, colonial, militaria, archeological, wet specimens, flora, herpetological, insect, geological, and archival . Most natural history collections are currently stored off island as are a large portion of the archeological materials. CHRI museum collection storage is currently located in a historic structure under substandard conditions. The majority of the collecting is inaccessible for research, education, and management purpose because collection is not fully processed and cataloged, or it is off island.



Background: The 2004 NPS Christiansted NHS Collection Management Plan recognized the critical need to improve collection storage conditions and access to the collections. To address these needs NPS funded and conducted this Value Analysis for a museum collection facility. A three-day Museum Facility Value Analysis Study was conducted on August 1-3, 2006 to assess requirements and location for a permanent museum collections facility that meets standards for park collections and possibly other local partner museum collections. An interdisciplinary VA study team included professionals and partners from NPS, Denver Service Center, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Government of the Virgin Islands, Department of Planning and Natural Resources/ State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Education, University of Virgin Islands, St. Croix Foundation, St. Croix Landmark's Society, and the St. Croix Archeological Society. The VA team analyzed the risks and advantages unique to operating and locating such a facility in a tropical island environment. Using the VA methodology a functional analysis was performed discussing the special criteria for building on tropical islands and how to meet DOI and NPS museum facility requirements for the project. Five alternative locations on St. Croix were evaluated, including new construction on NPS property, purchasing a historic property, and a leasing option. Three locations were selected through the CBA process as the highest value in absence of cost – 1) Privately owned historic property adjacent to CNHS, (2) Salt River Bay Visitor Contact Station grounds, and (3) the proposed Salt River Marine Research Education Center (MREC).



Proposed site of Salt River Bay NHP & EP Marine Research Education Center, St. Croix, Virgin Islands

Recommendation: After factoring in estimated capital and other costs the MREC gave the best value for the project for the following reasons (1) it consolidates the functions of two critical NPS mission related developments, i.e. research, education opportunities, and preservation of park collections and, (2) it expands partnership opportunities beyond NPS and Government of Virgin Islands, (3) it creates a venue for multi-disciplinary education providing on site context (pre-Columbian, pre-Colonial, historic and natural resources are present) at SARI which will directly support education and research, (4) a sustainable development is already planned which will provide education, exhibition, and research functions, (5) and addresses local heritage concerns by keeping island collections on island.

Benefits and efficiencies gained by co-locating facility include construction staging area requirements, mobilization, project oversight, site planning and development, road construction, parking and other infrastructure costs. Once facility is constructed it will provide improved access to heritage assets for the local and international community and economic benefits.

Museum Collections Facility Size: 3500 square foot

Facility Functions: Museum collection storage, field collection processing, research space, wet specimen preparation and storage, archives, cultural artifacts, holding area i.e. isolation and treatment, data management and storage for digital and electronic data.

Facility Total Cost (Class C Estimate): \$1.8 million (total construction) 2006 dollars

Operational Funding Cost: \$35K per year (maintenance, overhead, etc)

Staffing Requirements: 2.5 FTE including GS11 Museum Specialist, GS5/7/9 Museum Technician, and GS5 Seasonal Museum Tech (training position)

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