

NEW COMMENT PERIOD on Marina Impacting Park Resources

From: Friends of Virgin Islands National Park (friends_of_virgin_islands_nation@mail.vresp.com)

To: dlsilverman@yahoo.com

Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2015, 03:33 PM AST



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Dear Friends,

Since the beginning of the year we have alerted you to the plans to build a very large marina in Coral Bay that will threaten the marine resources of Virgin Islands National Park and the Coral Reef National Monument.

Many of you responded to our call to action and sent letters and emails to the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACoE). Due to some changes in the marina developer's application for the project – which did not lessen any of the negative environmental or other impacts of the project – the ACoE issued a new public notice and public comment period for the project. Please follow this link to read the public notice:

<http://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/PublicNotices/tabid/6072/Article/607770/saj-2004-12518-sp-jcm.aspx>

We remain particularly alarmed about environmental issues and the impact this development will have on nearby VI National Park lands and VI Coral Reef National Monument waters both at Hurricane Hole and to the south of St. John.

There is also widespread concern about this development on social, economic, and environmental grounds. In addition, the viability of its location and its feasibility as a sustainable business is also called into question. You can read more about these concerns at www.savecoralbay.com

Due to ACoE regulations **only public comments responding to the new public comment period will be considered; so, if you share our concern about this project I again urge you to voice your opinion by responding to the US Army Corps of Engineers' request for public comment.** You can provide your comments by mail or electronically (see instructions below), but please do so as soon as possible – the deadline for receiving comments is August 24, 2015. We have included a form letter below for you to send or personalize.

Some issues/talking points you may want to consider include:

This marina would be a significant threat to nearby NPS-protected lands and waters. National Park land abuts the site of the proposed marina and the waters of Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument are only a mile away as a gull flies and 1½ miles by water.

Within Coral Harbour it would eliminate a minimum of nine acres of seagrass beds, create a sizeable obstruction to water flow in the bay, add an unknown amount and number of

contaminants to the bay waters from all the vessels and generally lead to severe degradation of water quality. There are no physical barriers in the sea and the degradation of the waters of Coral Bay will have a negative impact on the waters of nearby Hurricane Hole and beyond.

The National Monument contains significant biological flora and fauna, including several threatened and endangered species, which forage, breed, nest, rest, or calve in the waters. Humpback whales, pilot whales, four species of dolphins, brown pelicans, roseate terns, least terns, hawksbill sea turtles, leatherback sea turtles, and green sea turtles all use portions of the monument. Countless species of reef fishes, invertebrates, plants and algae utilize these submerged lands during their lives, and over 25 species of seabirds feed in the waters. Between the near shore nursery habitats and the shelf edge spawning sites, habitats in the monument play essential roles during specific developmental stages of reef associated species, including spawning migrations of many reef fish species and crustaceans. These are threatened by the marina and the development has given no consideration to the potential negative cumulative impacts to park and monument resources caused by significantly increased vessel traffic.

Mitigation measures proposed by the developers, such as planting seagrass where there is none presently (and where they probably would not grow), and planting mangroves in an area unsuitable for mangroves, are simply not adequate.

The Environmental Assessment prepared for this marina gives no consideration to impacts to the monument's water quality, marine resources, wetlands (mangroves) coral reefs, sea grasses, fish, marine invertebrates, and species of concern protected by the Endangered Species Act.

There is an opportunity to request a public hearing about the application for the marina. In your response to the US Army Corps of Engineers please request a public hearing, and give a reason such as the need for more information, or because of the public controversy.

I urge you to voice your concerns about this marina. Even if you sent comments the last time, please respond again. In all cases please cc nomarina@friendsvinp.org

- Option 1: Send a personal email or letter on what this marina will mean to you and the national park that means so much to you.
- Option 2: Resend the letter/email that you sent in response to the original call to action.
- Option 3: Cut and paste the sample letter below and send as an email. Please feel free to revise/customize the letter as you see fit.

Please treat this as a matter of urgency. Whether you send one sentence or a full page please register your concern now.

Emails can be sent to: Mr. José A. Cedeño-Maldonado, Antilles Permits Section
Subject: Application SAJ-2004-12518 (SP-JCM) – Coral Bay Marina
To Address: jose.cedeno-maldonado@usace.army.mil
cc Address: nomarina@friendsvinp.org

Mail can be sent to:
Mr. José A. Cedeño-Maldonado
Antilles Permits Section
400 Fernández Juncos Avenue
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901-3299

Please put "Application SAJ-2004-12518 (SP-JCM) – Coral Bay Marina" as the subject of the letter and fax a copy of the letter to 340-693-9973.

Thank you for your concern regarding this threat to park and monument resources. Together we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Joe Kessler
President

SAMPLE LETTER (cut and paste into an email, modify as you see fit):

Subject: Application SAJ-2004-12518 (SP-JCM) – Coral Bay Marina
To Address: jose.cedeno-maldonado@usace.army.mil
cc Address: nomarina@friendsvinp.org

August 5, 2015

Mr. Jose Cedeño-Maldonado
Army Corps of Engineers
Antilles Permit Section
400 Fernandez Juncos Avenue
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901-3299
Subject: Application SAJ-2004-12518 (SP-JCM) – Coral Bay Marina
Dear Mr. Cedeño,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed "St John Marina" located in Coral Bay Harbor, St John, US Virgin Islands, a project of "The Summers End Group, LLC." I believe this project is totally inappropriate in a location with such close proximity to the Virgin Islands National Park and the Coral Reef National Monument.

Virgin Islands National Park, and the Coral Reef National Monument, are priceless, irreplaceable natural resources and national treasures. The proposed project would threaten their significance through visual, noise and environmental impacts.

For these reasons I believe it is not in the public interest to approve a permit for the Summers End Group marina. Should the permit not be immediately denied by the Army Corps, I request that the Army Corps convene a public hearing on this application due to the significant public interest in the project and controversy over the project's complex impacts.

Sincerely,

Thank you for supporting Friends and our VI National Park. Park-owned land can never be developed - and with our help it will be preserved, protected and educating others future generations. This is what makes St. John so special, and your support so important.



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