



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Salt River Bay National
Historical Park and
Ecological Preserve
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Salt River Bay National Historical Park & Ecological Preserve News Release

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Native Plant Community Restoration at Salt River Bay March 12, 2018

SALT RIVER BAY – Beginning on March 15th, National Park Service (NPS) contractors will continue park project to restore native plant communities on the east side of Salt River Bay NHP & EP (SARI). The project work area is on NPS's 72-acre parcel adjacent to Estate Judith's Fancy where invasive non-native plant species' populations cover over 90% of the area. Discarded landscape plants and cuttings from surrounding area have invaded the area over the last 50+ years. In 2012, NPS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Caribbean Exotic Plant Management Team, and NPS Youth Conservation Corps high school students initiated exotic plant control in the park and began native plant restoration. With contractor support NPS will continue to control targeted invasive non-native plants that displace native plant species and alter plant community diversity. These species



Sea Grape, flagged, amongst Guinea Grass

alter nutrient and fire patterns, modify geomorphology, hydrology, and biogeochemistry and, reduce the site's recreational uses. To date NPS has planted over 1200 native plants grown locally into the park lands on the east side of the bay. These plants survivorship is between 40-60% and many of the trees have grown to over 20 feet tall! However, these trees continue to be crowded out by non-native invasive African guinea grass. Over the next few weeks, an NPS contractor will target non-native plants such as guinea grass, tan-tan, rubber vine or purple allamanda, and Ginger Thomas, throughout the previously disturbed landscape. More native trees and shrubs will be planted to improve erosion control and plant diversity in the coastal area.

A recent NPS-funded vascular plant inventory of SARI recorded hundreds of acres dominated by non-native invasive species such as guinea grass, rubber vine, and tan-tan. These once-popular exotic landscape plants threaten the

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ecological integrity of the native flora and associated fauna on the island of St. Croix. To meet SARI's management objectives and the NPS Organic Act, non-native invasive plants of immediate concern will be removed. Licensed, trained professionals under NPS contract will treat invasive plants and continue native plant re-introduction. Treatment within 25 feet of mangroves and shoreline will be treated through mechanical removal, hand pulling, cutting with weed eaters, and mowing in place. Outside of the shoreline area, the NPS contractor will mulch and mow, cut and treat only the stem and new growth (grasses) with an approved herbicide. No herbicide application will occur if rainfall is anticipated within 30 minutes of application or during high wind conditions.

NPS is committed to maintaining and enhancing the natural and cultural resources of Salt River Bay. We are continuing our invasive non-native plant maintenance program to ensure these nuisance species do not re-establish and native species are protected and habitat improved for plants, fruits, wildlife, and eventual recreational uses of the landscape.

The immediate goals of control / management of invasive non-native plants are:

- Manage and reduce the populations of invasive non-native plants found on NPS lands within SARI.
- Improve conditions for native flora and fauna and recreational uses.
- Increase the public and territorial conservation agencies' awareness of environmentally sound management practices and the potential threats from invasive non-native plant species.
- Work with our park neighbors to control continued introduction of invasive non-native plants to the park.

Details of plant control targets and target plant out species are in the project's Environmental Impact Statement:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=374&projectID=10033&documentID=35937>

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/REDS/factsheets/0178fact.pdf>

For further information please contact Tyrone Brandyburg, Acting-Superintendent, 340/773-1460 x 222, Zandy Hillis-Starr, Chief Resource Management, 340/773-1460 x 235 or Clayton Pollock, Biologist, 340-773-1460 x 238 at Salt River Bay NHP & EP; Terri Hogan 970/267-7306 at Biological Resource Division, Fort Collins, CO, or Brian Lockwood, Florida/Caribbean Exotic Plant Management Team Liaison at 786-249-0073.

The National Park Service thanks all of our community members and friends for 26 years of support for Salt River Bay National Historical Park & Ecological Preserve

More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 417 National Parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities.

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