



Love City Livin'

Boat removal progressing in Hurricane Hole

By **ANDREA MILAM**
St. John Correspondent

ST. JOHN — Salvage company Donjon Marine continued its effort this week to remove hurricane-damaged boats and debris from Hurricane Hole's Princess Bay, Borck Creek, Otter Creek, and Water Creek, along with Mary Creek and Leinster Bay.

The operation is expected to move to Hassel Island on Friday as part of a two week-long process to clear the territory's National Park waters.

Many boat owners have cleared their vessels from the Virgin Islands National Park's storm refuge in the months since Irma, leaving 49 vessels in Hurricane Hole, most of which are beyond repair.

The largest concentration of wreckage was found in Princess Bay, where boats were piled on one another along the shoreline and sunk within the bay.

Donjon, which was hired by the U.S. Navy at the request of the park, has been working 12-hour days since Aug. 14, using a sling to pull up boats that are relatively intact, and a clamshell to recover boats that were broken to pieces during the storm.

Boat owners who wished to attempt to repair their damaged vessels were permitted to haul their boats out of Hurricane Hole once they were recovered by Donjon. The entire salvage operation is being funded with U.S. taxpayer money, said park Superintendent Steve Black.

"We wanted it to happen faster, but things like this take time," Black said. The superintendent noted that Resolve Marine, which was hired by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to salvage vessels in the territory earlier this year under the direction of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources and the U.S. Coast Guard,



Daily News photos by ANDREA MILAM

The Donjon Marine barge is loaded up with wrecked vessels in Princess Bay, Hurricane Hole. The marine salvage contractor is in the territory this week removing boats that were wrecked or damaged during Hurricane Irma.

Saavy, a vessel that suffered major damage during Hurricane Irma, inset, rests on the Princess Bay shoreline awaiting salvage by Donjon Marine last week.



could not address the wreckage in park waters due to the Stafford Act provision that prevents one federal entity from working for another.

The park needed congressional approval to fund the salvage effort, which was granted in February. The park didn't see that money until June 14, Black said, delaying the removal of

boats in park waters.

While park officials awaited the beginning of the Hurricane Hole salvage operation, they cleared debris from mangrove roots and verified there was no risk of fuel spillage, said park Natural Resources Manager Thomas Kelley.

The wrecked vessels recovered dur-

ing the park salvage job will be transferred to a 400-foot-long barge that arrived in the territory last week, then taken to Jacksonville, Fla., for disposal. Donjon Marine worked at a pace of removing around one vessel per hour.

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Kelley noted that Hurricane Hole's storm chain system remained intact during Irma; much of the wreckage was caused by cleat, anchor, and line failures.

"It was Hurricane Hole's first real test since the mooring chain system was installed around 2004 and 2005," said Kelley.

Chief of Natural Resources Management for the southeast region Darrell Echols, who's acting as the project lead, said the fact that some boats can be recovered and restored makes the salvage effort slower and trickier. Though park officials had a good handle on the number of boats to be salvaged and their locations, they did find one surprise in Princess Bay.

"We found a wreck we didn't know was there," said Echols. "It looks like it exploded. There's debris extending out to 50 to 70 yards around it. Other than that, things are playing out the way we expected."

The salvage operation is expected to wrap up on Tuesday.



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Love City happenings

Cruz Bay Family Practice to hold open house on Friday

Cruz Bay Family Practice welcomes residents to their office on the third floor of The Marketplace for an open house on Friday from 2 to 6 p.m. See the new office, meet the providers, learn about the health care services offered at the Red Hook Family Practice's St. John office and get a free blood pressure check.

Mongoose Junction to host 'Junction Jam' on Friday

Mongoose Junction will host The Junction Jam, a party at the Cruz Bay shopping venue, on Friday from 5:30 p.m. to midnight. Five different DJs will provide entertainment, and there will be \$3 Cruzan drinks, \$5 Tito's drinks, and \$5 Jameson shots.

School supply giveaway set for Saturday in Cruz Bay

Two hundred backpacks and school supplies will be distributed to St. John children on Saturday from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Frank Powell Park in Cruz Bay. Sponsored by the Dynamic Dancers, St. John Community Foundation, Rotary Club of St. John, and the St. John Youth Organization, all St. John children and families are welcome to enjoy free burgers and hot dogs. There will also be a cotton candy machine, bouncy house, face painting, and other fun kid-friendly activities.

Love City Car Show Sept. 3 at Coral Bay ball field

The fourth annual Love City Car Show will take place on Sept. 3 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Coral Bay ball field. Local bands and DJs will provide entertainment, and there will be food and drinks on sale. Admission is \$3 for car entry, \$2 for adults, and \$1 for children, who will receive a free match-box car. For more information, visit www.lovecitycarshow.com or call Big Al Smith at 340-690-0605.

'Love City Rise Up!' CD release party set for Sept. 6

The public is invited to attend the Love City Rise Up! CD release party on Sept. 6 from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at High Tide. Come mingle with the artists, who will be on hand to share their experiences making the song, which is a heartfelt tribute to St. John and its people's resiliency. All proceeds from sale of the song, written by frequent visitor Dean Doeling, will be donated to nonprofit organizations on St. John that have helped in the hurricane recovery effort. CDs will be for sale at the party, or can be pre-ordered at <https://lovecityriseup.bigcartel.com/products>.

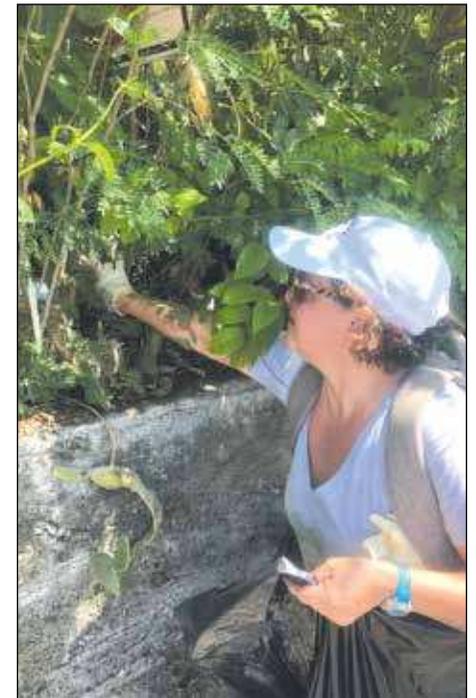
Carolina Corral free back-to-school fun day Oct. 13

The Carolina Corral will host a free back-to-school fun day on Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with a variety of games including balloon toss, egg and spoon, chicken races, and a donkey obstacle course. There will be crafting activities and a contest to see who can take the best selfie with a Carolina Corral resident, along with food, drinks, and pony or donkey rides. Free transportation will be provided between Cruz Bay and Coral Bay.

National Park needs volunteers at Hurricane Hole

The Virgin Islands National Park is requesting volunteer assistance in the cleanup of Hurricane Hole. Volunteers are asked to work from the shore to remove debris from the mangroves and place the material in piles before Monday, when it will be picked up by the marine salvage company that is working to clear the territory's national park waters, and shipped off-island.

Trash patrol



Daily News photos by ANDREA MILAM

Brandon Smith clears trash in Cruz Bay as part of a regular effort, dubbed Get Trashed, to clear litter from St. John streets and beaches. Top right, Tammy Soto clears trash from some bushes. Susan Crane displays her haul, bottom right.

Thirteen people joined Saturday's effort, collecting 25 bags of trash, including three large bags of plastic items that were brought to Connections for recycling. The group estimates they also picked up more than 1,000 cigarette butts. To learn about how to join the September Get Trashed cleanup, find them on Facebook.

St. John makes list of Top 10 islands

Three islands in the V.I., and one in Puerto Rico, made "Travel + Leisure" magazine's readers' list of Top 10 Caribbean islands. "Our readers weren't deterred by last season's hurricanes: seven of the Top 10 islands were impacted by the storms — and are now on their way to recovery," the magazine noted.

The list appears in the August edition. The Top 10, with reader scores, are:

1. Anguilla 87.43
2. Virgin Gorda 85.43
3. Jost Van Dyke 84.89
4. St. John 84.77
5. St. Lucia 84.04
6. Turks & Caicos 83.93
7. Vieques 82.63
8. Bermuda 82.52
9. Cuba 82.45
10. Aruba 82.41



Cruz Bay, St. John.

Photo by SALWAN GEORGES

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