

Morningstar, Windsor Forest & Concordia (East) Hike

Pointers of the hike:

- 1. Hike starts of Estate Concordia (East) the home of Hubert H. Harrison. Hubert H. Harrison (1883-1927) Great Educator, Orator, Writer, Editor, Labor Leader, Political Activist, and nonconformist born on the island of St. Croix on April 27,1883, at Estate Concordia (East) in the Danish West Indies. His father was William Adolphus Harrison and his mother's was Cecelia Elizabeth Haynes. Harrison was a powerful speaker and great American intellect that had a tremendous impact on the landscape of politics and race in America.**
- 2. Estate Concordia (East) was once a productive plantation now in ruins and hidden by trees and thick vegetation. This estate includes chimney, well tower, sugar plantation ruins, windmill, manager house, stable, slave quarters now modernized and occupied. East of the estate is a stream or small river according to the late naturalist George A. Seaman was once permanent that flow into Salt River Bay and south shore of the island. Estate Concordia had many owners, including Friderich Holmstead in 1736, Johan W. Schopen & Adrian von Beverhoudt acquired from Holmstead with 40 enslaved Africans in 1746. In 1809 window Elizabeth Forester acquires the estate with 2 free & 182 enslaved Africans. In 1948, Dr Reginald H. Moore acquires the estate. In 1951, Bertha E. Moore acquires the estate and divided equally among 5 Moore children in 1961.**
- 3. From this estate, you will hike to Estate Windsor Forest. This was also a productive sugar plantation from the beginning of the 1730s. This estate has many historic structures and ruins for example as a sugar mill on top of small hill. In recent history, the estate has been used as a dairy operation (Island Dairies).**
- 4. On this new trail, there are native and non-native plants. As we hike, some of the plants will be pointed out for their medicinal use and other benefits to human. For example, Chinaberry or locally call Lilac (Melia azedarach) is an introduced species but now uncommon in the Virgin Islands. This species is poisonous and has insecticidal or**

flattened properties. Leaves and dried fruits have been used to protect stored clothing and other articles against insects. The berries are toxic to animals and have caused death to pig. In the Virgin Island and other tropical countries, various parts of the tree which include flowers, fruits, leaves, barks, and roots have been employed medicinally.

- 5. Windsor Forest Estate is a dry forest. The original forest (virgin forest) was destroyed over 200 years ago to establish a sugar plantation. The trail within this secondary forest crosses guts(streams) and is in the valley of the estate. There are uncommon or rare native trees on this trail.**
- 6. We will cross the beginning of the East Scenic Road to Morningstar Estate. Now, we are entering Salt River Bay National Historical Park & Ecological Preserve property. This is the basin of a floodplain environment. Salt River contains one of the only intact natural ecosystems left in the Virgin Islands. This continuum of freshwater streams, wetlands, floodplain, salt ponds, mangrove forests, shallow estuary with extensive seagrass beds, coral gardens and reefs, and a biologically rich submarine cany is unique to the Caribbean region.**
- 7. During the geological period of mountain building, which took place approximately 80 million years ago, St. Croix was emerging from emerging from the ocean according to geologists.**
- 8. As the Northside and East End ranges rose above sea level, they formed two islands, which joined at Slat River Bay a large coral reef, the Kingshill Marl. Further uplift joined the two islands and completed the geological building of St. Croix. St. Croix was never a volcano island, but volcanoes played an indirect role in its formation.**
- 9. The rocks underneath the mountain ranges of St. Croix were formed from the debris of volcanic activity spewed out of the ocean floor during the period of the late Cretaceous. Salt River Bay plays a role when the limestone or (white marl) exposed at the surface of the Central valley of St. Croix, which is considerably younger (lower**

Miocene, 20 million years, and is probably the remains of a coral reef that formed as the island was uplifted.

- 10. At the floodplains (Estate Morningstar), there is a Danish historic (1700 century) well tower, located on the west side of Sugar Bay. The well tower was constructed of stone masonry and coral block by enslaved Africans. It is about 16 feet in diameter and is estimated to be over 40 feet high. The well tower was part of the sugarcane operation of the estate. The tower was probably used as a pumping mill to funnel water through a channel for sugar cane.**
- 11. From this historic site, we hike northwest to Sugar Bay. This area periodically floods during heavy rainfall. There are crab holes throughout the floodplain. Ahead of you, is a historic check dam we believe to control the water flow of the area.**
- 12. The Sugar Bay mangroves, which often form gallery forests, illustrate the zonation of black, white, and red mangrove species. The mangrove prop roots support many algae and invertebrates, including the valuable mangrove flat tree oysters. The mangrove function as natural filters for silt and debris that was down from the upper slopes. The water that flows out the mangroves into the shallow bay is purer and better able to support the extensive seagrass beds, coral gardens and reef beyond. These habitats provide nurseries for the many fish, shellfish and lobsters that are reasonably common along St. Croix's north coast.**
- 13. There are some 27 or more threatened or endangered plants and animals live in the Salt River area. This includes three plants: Swamp fern, *Malpigia infestissima* (touch-me not), and Vahl's Boxwood; three sea turtles: Green, Hawksbill and Leatherback; birds such as White-crowned Pigeons, Caribbean Coot, etc., etc.**
- 14. These overall pointers give you some understanding of the natural, cultural, historical, and marine resources of the areas.**

Olasee Davis/Bushman STX Hiking Association.

