



National Parks Conservation Association®  
*Protecting Our National Parks for Future Generations®*

National Headquarters

November 19, 2009

The Honorable Donna M. Christensen  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Christensen:

On behalf of our 325,000 members I want to express our support for H.R. 3726, a bill to establish the Castle Nugent National Historic Site at St. Croix in the United States Virgin Islands. H.R. 3726 would establish protection for 11,500 acres, two-thirds of which are submerged, that contain valuable natural and cultural resources, including coral reefs, endangered sea turtle nesting sites, significant cultural landscapes related to Caribbean history, and numerous pre-Columbian archeological treasures.

At the heart of this legislation is the Castle Nugent estate, believed to be the last intact example of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Danish cotton plantation on the island of St. Croix. Castle Nugent would play an important role in interpreting the history of Danish settlement, plantation life, and the impact of the Caribbean slave trade on indigenous Awarak Indians, people of African descent, and the economic, social, and political development of St. Croix. Adding such a resource to the National Park System would help the Park Service interpret and preserve what Associate Director for Park Planning Steve Whitesell has referred to as "an outstanding Caribbean cultural landscape." While we recognize and appreciate the concerns expressed by the National Park Service regarding the desire to defer further action on H.R. 3726 until the completion of a special resource study, NPCA also recognizes the pressing need to act now to prevent the sale of this land, which could lead to incompatible development and the loss of this treasured landscape.

NPCA supports H.R. 3726 and we look forward to assisting your efforts to pass this important piece of legislation in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

John Adornato, III  
Regional Director