

SER Offers Restoration Program for St. John

The recently founded Society for Ecological Restoration has jumped right into the business of public involvement in restoration efforts and the raising of public awareness. The primary target is St. John in the Virgin Islands. The nature of this initial project and the manner in which it came about both illustrate the enormous vitality of the "networking" that is binding the conservation community into a global entity.

SER News, the Society's quarterly newsletter, describes the "remarkable set of coincidences" that led to this pilot project. An entrepreneur, Stanley Selengut, who operates a St. John resort that is widely recognized for its environmental sensitivity, read about SER's 1989 Oakland conference in the March issue of *Smithsonian* magazine. He saw the Society's proposed "Excursion" program for public participation in restoration work as a valuable way of reconciling conservation and development interests.

SER, in turn, recognized St. John as "virtually a restoration project waiting to be undertaken," saw the fine work that had been done already by the National Park staff there, and recognized the opportunities for tackling the unfinished restoration business of the island (tropical dry forests and coral reefs being two of the most endangered ecosystems on earth.)

On top of the public relations value of tying in with the Columbus quincentennial, SER board members liked the tie-in with the national park, which, as part of a Biosphere Reserve system, has a standing commitment to both restoration and the harmonizing of human activities with conservation considerations.

The SER Excursion program is modeled after the highly successful Earthwatch program, except that it will specialize in the actual work of restoration and associated education programs rather than research. Information may be had from Bill Jordan, editor of the *SER News* and of *Restoration & Management Notes*, 1207 Seminole Hwy, Madison, WI 53711; (608) 262-9547.