



PUBLIC ENTITY NEWSLETTER



Issue no.08

Celebrating Black History Month

To celebrate Black History Month, the Saba Archeological Center Foundation, through the Saba Heritage Center, hosted special events and presentations focusing on Saba's rich history.

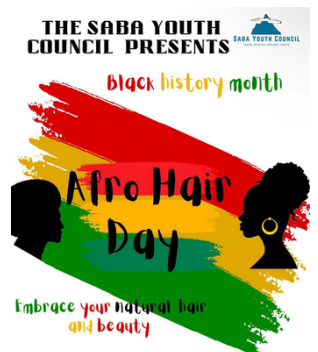
This special week kicked off with the book launch of *"Better Than We": Landscapes and materialities of race, class, and gender in pre-emancipation Saba, Dutch Caribbean* by Dr. Ryan Espersen. A core mission of the Saba Heritage Center is to develop impactful public programming focused on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and its enduring legacy.



During the opening speech for the event, Director Sharifa Balfour also shared her gratitude for the contributions made by the Netherlands Bank, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) and The National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (Ninsee). For this momentous occasion, a free copy of the book was also offered per household on Saba.

Throughout the rest of the week, residents had the opportunity to explore in great detail the research methods used for the book, how archaeology and landscape analysis were used to show what the lives of the marginalized communities were like and insight on how to use the National Archives database to research your ancestry. Espersen was also joined by Dr. Arwin Ralf to present The Genetic Legacies of Slavery and Poverty Project, a major initiative that focuses on the hereditary and socio-economic impacts of slavery on Saba's past and present population.

In addition to events planned by the Saba Heritage Center, the Sacred Heart School and the Saba Comprehensive School, via the Saba Youth Council, called on students to participate for 'Afro Hair Day' in recognition of Black culture, heritage and identity.



On the final day of the month, the first Adopt a Box storyboard dedicated to Saba's often untold history of slavery was unveiled. This unveiling is the beginning of a series that will be placed in each village on Saba, ensuring that these stories are acknowledged, remembered, and shared.

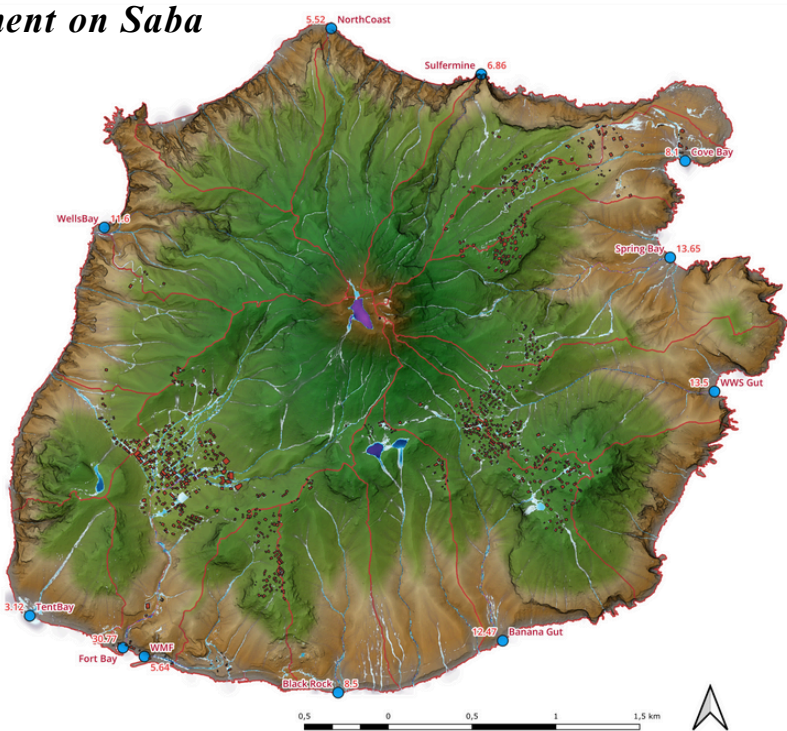
These events serve as a reminder of a history that must not be forgotten, bringing to light stories of hardship and resilience faced by those who came before us, and their impactful legacies.

Advancing Rainwater Management on Saba

Over the past six months, there has been significant focus on understanding and managing rainwater on Saba. Using LiDAR data provided by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, a high-resolution Digital Terrain Model (DTM) of the island was developed by Policy Advisor Javier Dinten Fernandez. The model forms the foundation for analyzing how rainfall moves across Saba's steep landscapes.

Fernandez collected rainfall data from multiple locations on the island and then created three rainfall scenarios:

- A 0.5-year event (moderate rainfall, occurring roughly every six months)
- A 5-year event (more intense rainfall, expected once every five years)
- A 100-year event (an extreme storm, statistically occurring once in a century)



SABA
Fastflood 5 Year Storm

Project: Rainwater Management Plan
Source: AHN
Scale: 1:16000 on A3
Date: February 06, 2025
Made by: Javier Dinten Fernandez
Office: Nature and Environment
System: Metric
Status: Concept
CRS: EPSG:SABA_concept

Description:
Saba is a small island in the Caribbean with a diameter of about 4.6 km (2.9 miles) and an area of approximately 12 km² (5 mi²). It is a special municipality of the Netherlands and features Mount Scenery, a dormant volcano that is the Kingdom's highest point at 870 meters (2,854 feet). Together with Bonaire and Sint Eustatius, it forms the BES-islands.

Legend
Digital Height Model 2023
0 Meters 860 Meters
Buildings DSM
FastFlood
Max discharge values
Fastflood Design Storm 5 year: return period
Floodmap_GSS_V1
0 Meters 7 Meters

This drawing is for reference only and does not confer any legal rights. It provides a general representation of spatial data and should not be used for detailed planning or legal purposes. All coordinates and measurements must be verified with the Kadaster using an official survey report (meetbrief). Data is presented in metric units: angles in degrees and elevations in meters.

Public Entity Saba
Church Street 6, The Bottom
Dutch Caribbean
T: +5994163292
E: info@sabagov.nl

These scenarios helped generate three flood maps, illustrating how water accumulates and flows during different levels of rainfall. To make this data accessible, an online flood map viewer has been developed, which you can explore [here](https://saba.gov.nextgis.com): <https://saba.gov.nextgis.com> (choose the display option for Saba Rainwater Runoff Floodmap 2024).



Spring Bay area, 1991



Spring Bay area, 2023

More Monitoring Needed

As evidenced in the photos of Spring Bay, this area has eroded over time. One key takeaway from the research conducted is the urgent need for better monitoring on Saba. Currently, there are gaps in data that limit our understanding of rainwater runoff and erosion processes.

To improve this, we need to:

- Install more reliable rainfall measurement stations.
- Measure streamflow in gullies during rainfall events.
- Conduct regular drone surveys to track erosion in high-risk areas.

The work done so far is just the beginning. By prioritizing monitoring now, we can build a stronger foundation for long-term rainwater and erosion management on Saba.

Next Steps: Moving Toward Action

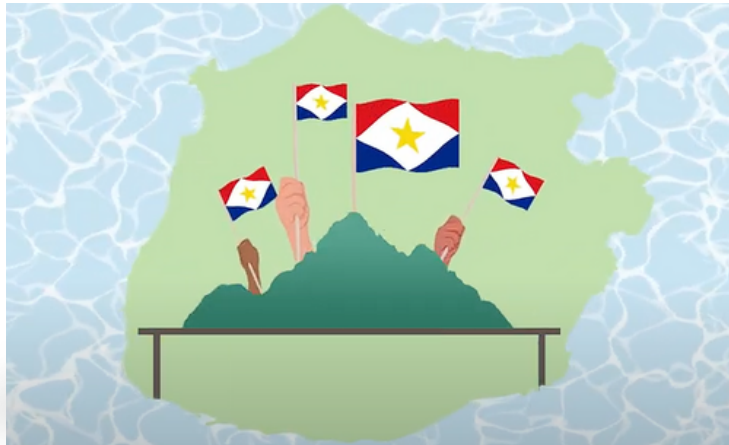
During Fernandez's time on Saba, he also identified several areas where measures could be implemented to reduce the negative impacts of excessive runoff. These locations could serve as starting points for future mitigation efforts.

However, before effective solutions can be put in place, investment is needed for better data collection. A clearer understanding of rainfall, runoff, and erosion patterns will ensure that future interventions are well-informed and effective.



Developing Saba's first Spatial Development Plan

Public Entity Saba has begun research to be used as part of the first Spatial Development plan for the island. This plan will help determine where new buildings (homes, businesses, roads, community facilities, etc.) will be placed while preserving areas we value (historic buildings, natural areas and marine environment).



What is Spatial Planning?

Spatial planning balances development and conservation to shape the future of the physical environment.

Why do we need a Spatial Plan on Saba?

Homes, businesses, and community buildings all take up space, and space is limited in Saba. What is even more limited is relatively flat piece of land connected to a road that can be built on.



The Spatial Development Plan will therefore find a balance between how land is used to make sure Saba can continue to grow and change, but in a way that also makes life better and preserves what we value about Saba.

How can you provide input for this plan?

The community survey is the first step in the preparation of the Spatial Development Plan. You can share your thoughts on what kind of housing we should promote, how we should enhance the environment, what kind of businesses you would like to see, and how the public services are functioning.

By completing the survey, you help us to find out what Sabans find important to address in the Spatial Development Plan.

What happens next?

Together with the results of the survey, and previously conducted data research as well as conversations with local organizations and partners on the island, we will have an insight into the challenges and opportunities for the future development of Saba. This will then be presented in a study report.

Next, we will work with partners and the community to develop a shared vision for the future development of Saba. What should Saba look like in 25 years time, and how do we get there? This vision will be prepared over the spring and summer with various opportunities to get involved.



Once the vision is established, zoning regulations will be developed in 2025 and 2026, which will help guide applications and permits for building.

Community engagement sessions for the different villages will be organized to plan the future of your area together. The plan will then be presented to the Island Council for consideration in 2026.

Upcoming Events: March

- International Women's Day Recognition: Honoring Our Female Legends

March 8th

Hosted by Community Development and Culture

- Women's History Month: The Experiences of Enslaved Women

March (Finalized date to be announced)

Hosted by Saba Heritage Center

- International Day of Forests: Treevia Night

March 21st

Hosted by Public Entity Saba (through the Nature and Environment Policy Plan) and Sea & Learn Foundation

