



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPNR KICKS OFF WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROJECT FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) is pleased to announce that the Division of Coastal Zone Management is kicking off a project to *characterize the conditions* of several major watersheds across St. Thomas and St. Croix and to *provide recommendations and design details* to reduce flooding and improve management of stormwater and rainfall runoff.

The watersheds of focus, indicated in the images below, encompass areas with critical infrastructure like the airport and major roadways; commercial, government and residential investments; and agricultural activity. The watersheds were selected as high priority based on their importance to Virgin Islanders as places where structural and natural assets have been affected by changes to land cover and associated flooding risks.

The Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) produced as a result of this project will accompany previous and ongoing Watershed Plans across the Virgin Islands, including Coral Bay and Fish Bay in St John, Smith Bay in St Thomas, and the East End of St Croix. WMPs help identify the root causes of flooding, which often occur somewhere other than the major or visible site of a flooding problem. "DPNR along with our partners will use the WMPs to guide and inform future development and improvement projects to be more resilient to existing and future land, water, and climate conditions," said Commissioner Oriol. "This is another example of the Bryan/Roach Administrations' commitment to ensuring resilience in our redevelopment by using these plans to mitigate repetitive loss from floods," concluded Commissioner Oriol.

DPNR will be hosting meetings in the coming weeks to introduce the project to agency and institutional partners, as well as public meetings to introduce the project to anyone interested in learning about and providing input to this work. For more information contact Hilary Lohmann, Coastal Resilience Coordinator at hilary.lohmann@dpr.vi.gov.

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