



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ST. THOMAS EAST-END RESERVE PUBLIC USE SURVEY

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources announces that the Division of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) is updating the 2011 St. Thomas East End Reserves (STEER) Management Plan and is soliciting the public's input.

CZM is releasing a short, voluntary public survey about public access and activities in STEER. This survey is the first of several outreach activities in this two-year management plan update process. "The purpose of the survey is to update our understanding of the popularity of different areas in STEER and different activities that occur", said Commissioner Oriol. "The department will compare this information with a related activity and use survey conducted back in 2012", continued Commissioner Oriol. Results will inform the placement of informative signage and highlight areas where environmental resources may experience high impact from human use.

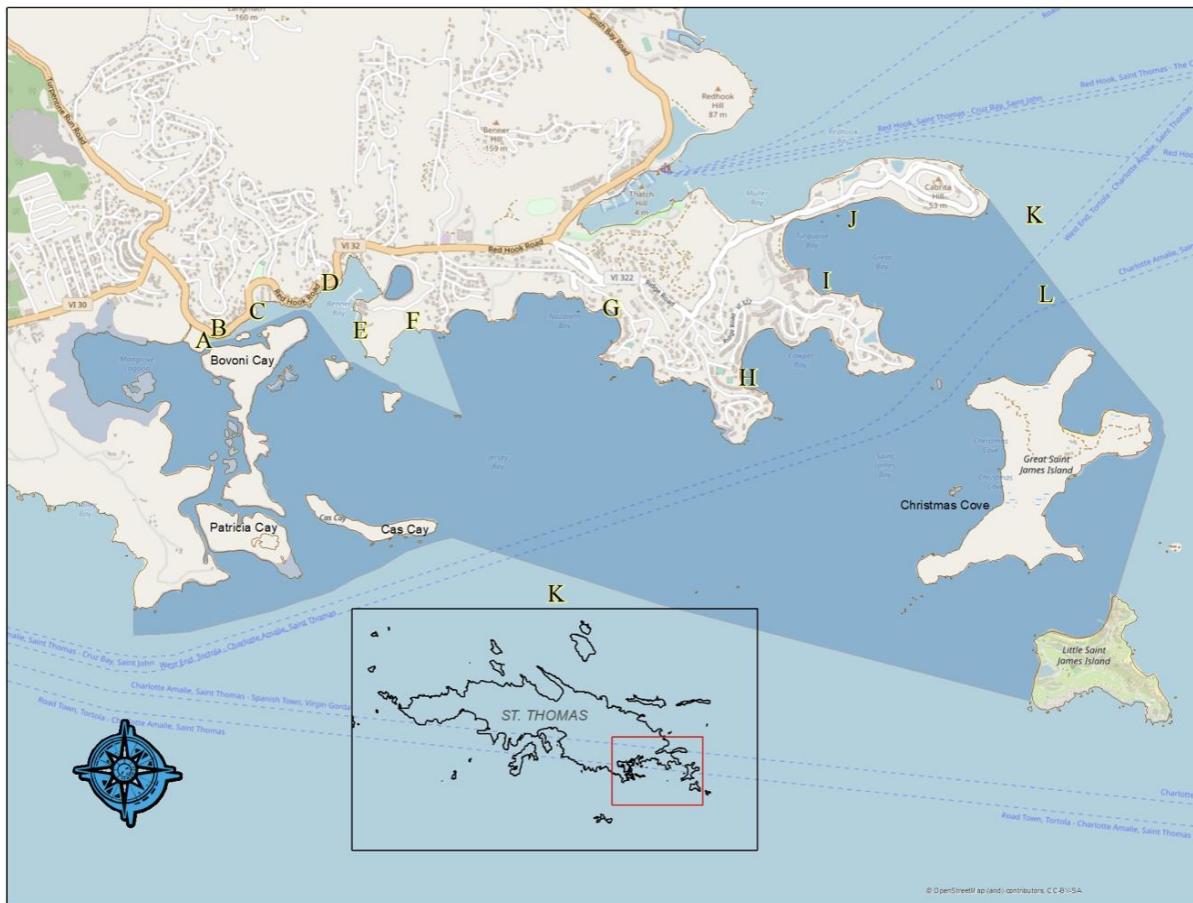
To participate in the three-question survey, use the QR code below or visit:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/c03bd563213d4333ac87187f69850924>

For more information on the STEER Management Plan update process, please contact Kerrin Toner at kerrin.toner@dpr.vi.gov.



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Map of STEER, used in the quick 3-question access & activities survey.



Image of STEER, from Cas Cay looking west.

STEER is one of only three locally managed marine protected areas in the USVI, and the only one in St Thomas (others being St Croix's East End Marine Park and Salt River). STEER includes the waters and cays that are between Mangrove Lagoon in Bovoni and Turquoise Bay in Cabrita Hill, and out seaward to Little St James island (images below). STEER encompasses three distinct Marine Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries (MRWS): Cas Cay/ Mangrove Lagoon, St. James and Compass Point Pond (*VIRR Title 12, Ch. 1, §94 & §96*). Collectively these MRWS contain 9.6 km² of valuable coastal, marine and fisheries resources including salt ponds, lagoons, reefs, cays and the largest remaining mangrove forest in St. Thomas. In 2011, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Department of Commerce supported the development of a detailed and comprehensive management plan to focus on all three of the reserves as a single managed unit. Today, STEER refers to the protected area encompassing all three of the MRWS co-managed by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources' (DPNR) divisions of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and Environmental Enforcement (DEE) and Environmental Protection (DEP).