



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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Monday, July 24, 2023

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**VIRGIN ISLANDS TERRITORIAL PARK SYSTEM IS A GO!**

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources is pleased to announce to the territory the launch of the new **DIVISION OF TERRITORIAL PARKS & PROTECTED AREAS**. "The Government of the Virgin Islands has taken a momentous stride towards safeguarding its natural resources and prioritizing environmental conservation with the establishment of the Division of Territorial Parks & Protected Areas," said Commissioner Oriol. "This groundbreaking endeavor highlights the Government of the Virgin Islands' commitment to preserving the diverse natural and cultural resources of the Virgin Islands and fostering sustainability for the benefit of present and future generations," Commissioner Oriol continued.

Commissioner Oriol is also pleased to announce that the new Division of Territorial Parks & Protected Areas will be led by Ms. Kristina "Kitty" Edwards. Edwards has been a driving force within DPNR for seven years, overseeing diverse environmental projects and actively participating in community initiatives. Commissioner Oriol also welcomes the confirmation of two new Territorial Park Board Trust members, Aaron Hutchins and Anna Francis. They join Carlos Tessitor and Conn Davis, who were previously appointed by the Honorable Albert Bryan Jr.

The Division of Territorial Parks & Protected Areas assumes responsibility for managing and developing the Territorial Parks system and protected areas across the US Virgin Islands. Its key objectives encompass the preservation of natural heritage, promotion of biodiversity, and facilitation of sustainable recreational activities within these regions through comprehensive conservation planning, as outlined in Act 8609 signed by Governor Bryan. Through the implementation of robust conservation strategies, the Division aims to protect the territory's rich biodiversity, lush landscapes, and pristine marine environments for the people of the US Virgin Islands.

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