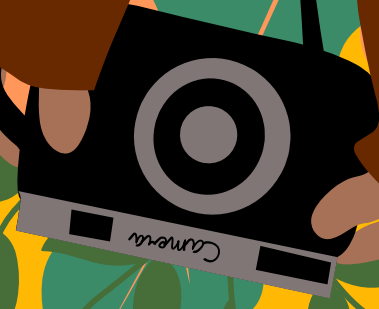




VI History Month 2025 Challenge

On Common Ground:

**Preserving Our Past,
Protecting Our Future**



Show or tell the story of a local historical or natural site through essays, mixed media, photography, video, or digital content that reflect the "past, present, and future" changes of the chosen site and highlight the **Tragedy of the Commons**, a concept that explains how shared resources suffer from overuse and neglect when individuals act in their own short-term interest.

VI History Month 2025 Challenge Guidelines

" On Common Ground: Preserving Our Past, Protecting Our Future"

Show or Tell: The Virgin Islands' Natural & Cultural Heritage
Past, Present, and Future



The U.S. Virgin Islands is home to breathtaking natural wonders and cultural landmarks that tell the story of our past. However, many of these treasures face growing threats due to human activity, environmental changes, and lack of conservation efforts. This challenge invites participants to explore how these sites have changed over time and what we can do to protect them for future generations.

What is the Tragedy of the Commons?

The Tragedy of the Commons describes how shared resources—like the environment, fisheries, or historic sites—are often overused and depleted when individuals act in their own self-interest rather than considering the long-term well-being of the entire community. In the Virgin Islands, this principle applies to many of our natural and cultural assets that suffer from neglect, overuse, or mismanagement.

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Examples of the Tragedy of the Commons in the USVI:

- **Coral Reef Destruction:** Depletion of marine life, careless anchoring, and pollution damage coral reefs, which provide marine habitats and protect our shores from erosion.
- **Beaches & Coastal Areas:** Popular beaches suffer from littering, sand erosion due to construction, and pollution from boating and runoff.
- **Marine Life Decline:** Without sustainable fishing practices, fish populations decline, impacting both marine ecosystems and livelihoods.
- **Historic Ruins & Cultural Sites:** Vandalism, lack of maintenance, and over-tourism damage historical landmarks such as plantation ruins and cultural heritage sites.
- **Water Scarcity & Pollution:** Land clearing, overuse, and pollution of freshwater sources, including guts, wells, and aquifers, leading to shortages and contamination.

This challenge encourages participants to show or tell how these issues have played out in the Virgin Islands—what these places were like before, how they are being affected now, and how we can work toward positive change in the future.



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Submission Categories:

Participants can choose one of the following formats:

1. Essay: A written exploration (500-1,500 words) of a historical or natural site, its challenges, and solutions for preservation.
2. Mixed Media: A combination of visuals and text, such as a digital collage, illustration, or educational poster.
3. Photography/Video: A series of photos or a short video (2-5 minutes) documenting a site's transformation and the need for conservation.
4. Digital Media: Infographics, animations, interactive maps, or short documentaries that educate on sustainability and conservation.

Challenge Guidelines:

- Each entry must illustrate a "past, present, and future" perspective of a natural or cultural site in the Virgin Islands.
- Submissions should address the Tragedy of the Commons and highlight sustainable solutions.
- Topics can include:
 - Coral reef conservation
 - Coastal erosion and rising sea levels
 - Overfishing and marine protection
 - Historic preservation of cultural sites
 - Waste management and pollution control
 - Agro-economics and food security
- All work must be original and properly cited if applicable.

VI History Month 2025 Challenge Guidelines

Evaluation Criteria:

Entries will be judged on:

- Creativity and originality (25 points)
- Historical and environmental accuracy (30 points)
- Effectiveness in conveying past, present, and future perspectives (20 points)
- Connection to sustainability principles and Tragedy of the Commons (15 points)
- Overall impact and call to action (10 points)

+10 extra points will be awarded for entries that include sustainability insights such as audio/video interviews, excerpts, or quotes from local subject matter experts in the private, public, or nonprofit sectors.

All submitted entries are eligible for a maximum total of 110 points.



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Submission Deadline: Friday, April 11, 2025, at 5 p.m. Atlantic Standard Time

- Physical artwork will only be accepted on FRIDAYS at: Fort Frederik, Fort Christian, or Elaine Ione Sprauve Library & Cultural Museum of each week leading up to the deadline. Please email us if you need to make alternate arrangements.

- All other media **MUST BE SUBMITTED** via email at vihm.dpnr@usvi.onmicrosoft.com. Please provide video links where applicable.

Winning submissions will be showcased in DPNR's Earth Week celebrations and VI History Month exhibits, with select works featured in community outreach programs and on DPNR's digital platforms. A formal presentation for top entries and prizes will be announced on each island.

Let's work together to preserve the past and protect our future—one story, one image, one idea at a time.

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