



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

DPNR INVITES COMMUNITY TO MAROON COMMEMORATIVE DAY AND TREE PLANTING CEREMONY AT MAROON SANCTUARY TERRITORIAL PARK

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) is pleased to invite the community to attend a special commemorative gathering and tree planting ceremony honoring the enslaved Africans, known as the Maroons, who once sought refuge in the rugged hills and valleys of what is now the Maroon Sanctuary Territorial Park on St. Croix.

The Maroon Sanctuary Territorial Park encompasses approximately 2,400 acres, including the historic Maroon Ridge and Annaly Bay areas. This protected landscape is recognized as a sacred and culturally significant place where generations of Maroons resisted oppression and pursued freedom, leaving an enduring legacy of courage, resilience, and self-determination.

"The establishment of the Maroon Sanctuary Territorial Park reflects our commitment to preserving not only the natural beauty of these lands, but also the powerful history they represent. As we gather to honor the Maroons, we recognize their remarkable struggle for freedom and ensure that their legacy remains a source of inspiration and education for future generations. We invite the community to join us in commemorating this important chapter of Virgin Islands history" stated Commissioner Oriol.

The Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas (TPPA), led by Director Kristina "Kitty" Edwards, is partnering with community organizations and cultural leaders to host the event and celebrate the legacy of the Maroons.

Director Edwards emphasized the importance of preserving these ancestral lands and their historical significance.

"As we work toward protecting ancestral lands across the territory through the development of our Territorial Parks System, we want to respect these spaces and remind

the community of their cultural significance,” Edwards said. “We will continue to collaborate with community partners in the responsible stewardship of these lands.”

The Maroon Commemorative Day event, guided by Dr. Chenzira Davis-Kahina and Professor Olasee Davis, will be held on Friday, September 25, 2026, at 3:00 p.m.

Community members traveling to the event should proceed down River Road toward West Scenic Road. Near the top of “The Beast,” attendees should take the right turn and pass through the hanging chain at the entrance. Parking will be available at the new Mt. Eagle Trailhead.

Participants are encouraged to bring a chair and a refillable water bottle. Individuals interested in exploring the trail should wear appropriate outdoor attire and footwear.

For more information, contact Director Kristina “Kitty” Edwards at kristina.edwards@dpnr.vi.gov.

Photo Credit: Chantelle Quiñones

