

Virgin Islands
Resource Conservation &
Development Council, Inc.

1998 ANNUAL REPORT

November 1999



“Making Things Happen”





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VISION

“BALANCING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
WITH A QUALITY ENVIRONMENT”

MISSION

“TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE
PEOPLE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS RESOURCE
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA
THROUGH THE CONSERVATION OF NATURAL
AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, AND THE
STIMULATION OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.”

PRIORITY AREAS

1. Agriculture
2. Community Development
3. Cultural and Natural Resources
4. Infrastructure
5. Economic development
6. Council effectiveness

The V.I. RC&D Council is currently developing strategies to address these areas of concern. Hence, council members are asked to form committees that implement these strategies through projects that address the identified goals and objectives.



WHAT IS RC&D?

RC&D stands for Resource Conservation and Development. The V.I. RC&D program is a locally-run and directed program that is managed by the V.I. RC&D Council, Inc. and its Board of Directors. Members of the VI RC&D represent various local and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, community groups, and individuals who volunteer their valuable time and resources for the betterment of the Virgin Islands' community.

The V.I. RC&D Council accomplishes its goals and objectives by bringing together needed resources to get the job DONE! The strength of V.I. RC&D is in giving members of the V.I. community the opportunity and ability to solve their own problems.

The V.I. RC&D is an independent, locally-administered, non-profit, 501(c)3 organization that was incorporated in June 1990. The V.I. RC&D Council effectively develops partnerships with governmental, non-governmental and private organizations. These alliances provide the necessary tools that allow the V.I. RC&D Council to accomplish its goals and objectives. The V.I. RC&D Council is also able to acquire technical and financial support from government agencies, private companies, private foundations, institutions and individuals.

The V.I. RC&D Council receives administrative and technical assistance and office facilities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- Natural Resources Conservation Service.

WHO IS RC&D?

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President – Julie Wright

Vice President – May Cornwall

Treasurer – Angela Ramos-Michael

Secretary – Stafford Crossman

VICD Representative – Joe Samuel

Member-at-Large – Dr. Louis Petersen

Member-at-Large – Olasee Davis

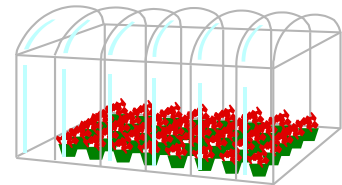
GOALS & OBJECTIVES

▶ **PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AS A VIABLE INDUSTRY.**

- Facilitate ways to introduce new marketing initiatives for VI grown agricultural products.
- Support activities that inform producers and consumers about the productivity and marketability of agricultural products.
- Inform producers of federal and territorial assistance programs.
- Encourage agricultural diversity.

▶ **ENHANCE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP.**

- Develop a shared community vision.
- Increase community involvement.
- Teach decision-making skills to youth and adults.
- Increase cooperative programs between government and non-governmental organizations.



▶ **ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION OF OUR CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES.**

- Reduce the impact of pollution.
- Assist in the protection of areas of particular concern and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- Assist in the establishment of a territorial park system.
- Increase educational activities.
- Assist in the preservation and/or renovation of historical resources.
- Promote V.I. beautification activities.



▶ **FACILITATE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.**

- Supplement educational facilities.
- Encourage improvements to the public transportation system.
- Promote proper waste disposal systems.
- Improve water distribution systems.
- Assist in housing and health care initiatives.
- Expand and improve recreational facilities.
- Support upgrades to fire and police facilities.

- ▶ **ENCOURAGE DIVERSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**
 - Assist in the establishment and expansion of businesses that market local products.
 - Assist in the development of a small business incubation program.
 - Coordinate education efforts for businesses.
 - Support job training and career development.
 - Expand tourism.

- ▶ **IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE V.I. RC&D COUNCIL.**
 - Secure support from foundations and other funding sources.
 - Improve leadership capability.
 - Participate in regional and national RC&D meetings.
 - Expand the membership of the RC&D Council.



1998 PROJECTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

BOVONI LANDFILL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT.

The V.I. RC&D Council received grant funds from the USDA-NRCS Environmental Justice Program to conduct an environmental justice and health outreach and education project targeted towards alleviating problems at the Bovoni Landfill on St. Thomas. Long-term underground fires and recent above ground blazes have raised much public concern over health effects from breathing fumes or drinking cistern water contaminated with ash from the fires. DEED (Delta Economic Energy District, Inc. – a nonprofit consulting group) was contracted to conduct the public awareness and outreach project. The overall objective of the project is to provide awareness to the general public and to surrounding communities on the dangers of landfills and the right of all Virgin Island residents to a safe, healthy, productive and sustainable environment. Project funding \$100,00.00.

FOURTH ANNUAL VIRGIN ISLANDS NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION CONFERENCE.

The conference theme, *NPS Impacts on Our Coral Reefs*, honored the UN's designation of 1997 as the Year of the Reef at the Fourth Annual Nonpoint Source Pollution Conference held in Gertrude's Restaurant, St. Croix, December 2 - 3, 1997. The goal of the conference was to raise the over 100 attendees' awareness of Virgin Islands' NPS pollution problems. The conference featured a mini erosion and sediment control training workshop that included a

hands-on demonstration field day, and a youth awareness campaign culminating in a poster and essay contest centered on the conference theme. V.I. RC&D sponsored the conference, in cooperation with the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Project funding \$20,000.00.



DPNR Commissioner Beulah Dalmida-Smith with poster contest winners and St. Croix Marine Advisor, Marcia Taylor.

PEOPLE'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION.

Acting on the belief that the U.S. Virgin Islands is in need of more philanthropic organizations that can improve, restore, and enhance the quality of life for people in the territory, a concerned citizen generously contributed funds to form the Peoples First International Foundation. The foundation will fund projects focused on education, the disabled, the environment, youth, and community development. The V.I. RC&D was asked to serve as a conduit to receive the funding and to assist with the formation of the Foundation. Project funding: \$12,225.00

GRANT-WRITING WORKSHOPS.

Government programs and projects are strapped for funding due to the economic crisis of the territorial government. In an effort to provide local government and non-profit agencies with alternatives to supplement dwindling government funding, the V.I. RC&D Council teamed up with Dr. Don Udell of Resource Development Specialists to conduct a grant-writing workshop. This workshop provided local, federal, and non-governmental agencies with the skills to develop grant proposals geared towards private foundations. The six-day workshop was held on St. Croix at the Cormorant Beach Club and Restaurant for approximately 35 participants. Project funding: \$12,000.00.



Dr. Don Udell teaching grant writing workshop.

MAGENS BAY TREE RESTORATION PROJECT.

Several hurricanes and intermittent droughts destroyed or severely damaged many of the trees along the beachfront and in the mangrove swamp, basin forest and arboretum at Magens Bay on St. Thomas. Magens Bay is internationally famous for its beauty, based in part on its diverse forest and cultural resources. It is one of a very few publicly maintained beaches and the most popular natural recreational attraction on St. Thomas for both residents and visitors. Through a \$10,000.00 grant from the V.I. Department of Agriculture's Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program, administered by V.I. RC&D, the UVI Cooperative Extension Service along with the Magens Bay Authority set out to restore the natural beauty of Magens Bay. This restoration effort, which has been occurring in phases, has progressed from post-hurricane removal of trees, hazardous branches and debris to current replanting efforts to improve the condition of the landscape at Magens Bay for the health of the watershed and for Virgin Islanders to enjoy.



Newly planted rare, native *Sida* tree at Magens Bay.

PINK HIBISCUS MEALY BUG PROJECT.

The pink hibiscus mealybug (PHM) (*maconellicoccus hirsutus*, Green) is a serious new threat to U.S. agriculture. This pest, with its heavy, cotton-like, white and waxy covering, attacks more than 200 plant species, including beans, chrysanthemum, citrus, coconut, coffee, cotton, corn, croton, cucumber, grape, guava, hibiscus, peanuts, pumpkin, rose and mulberry. Since it arrived in Grenada in 1994, the PHM has spread to Guyana, and at least 14 other Caribbean islands, including the U.S. Virgin Islands, wreaking havoc with crop production.



USDA staff examine PHM infested plants.

The V.I. RC&D and the V.I. Department of Agriculture (VIDA) entered into an agreement to educate the farming and gardening community about the dangers of the pest. As part of this agreement, VIDA hired a University of the Virgin Islands student to assist with PHM management efforts and to develop an education program. To date, VIDA has been experimenting with natural predators of the PHB, including wasps, ladybugs, and a hybrid pumpkin that attracts PHMs. Project funding: \$5,000.00.

FOREST PRODUCTS TOUR.

The V.I. RC&D and the U.S. Forest Service identified several potential small forest product-based businesses throughout the territory that were in need of information, ideas, resources and contacts to improve their operations. To address and/or assist with forestry-related concerns and problems faced by these small business operators, the V.I. RC&D and USFS brought in two consultants to visit approximately 20 forest-based businesses. A draft report of the trip was submitted to USFS for review and a follow-up project will be implemented to help those small business owners develop their business plans. Project funding: \$4,700.00.



RC&D members and consultants meet with St. Thomas business owner.

1998 FORESTRY TRAINING.

The V.I. RC&D Council received a \$3,000.00 grant from the U.S. Forest Service to plan Forestry Training activities to support the Council's activities. Phase I of the training provided Council members with the opportunity to attend the Puerto Rico Urban Forestry Conference, held November 3-4, 1997 in Ponce. The conference highlighted one of the most important urban forestry issues in Puerto Rico and the wider Caribbean, "*The Conservation of Trees During Construction.*" Phase II of the training grant was used to lead nineteen Council members on a nature excursion and hike to Buck Island National Monument during the RC&D annual business meeting.

ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN FOR ENFORCEMENT OF SUPPORT, INC. (ACES) CHILD SUPPORT SEMINAR.

The St. Croix chapter of ACES requested the V.I. RC&D act as a conduit to administer \$2,625.00 in grant funds received from the V.I. Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc. Working alongside the Department of Justice, the Attorney General's office, the Department of Human Services, the V.I. RC&D Council, and V.I. Legal Services, the St. Croix ACES chapter planned and implemented the ACES Child Support Seminar. The seminar was held to educate parents, officials, and the general public on the child support program. The seminar's goals were to enhance community leadership and to increase cooperation between government and non-governmental organizations. Speakers including Geraldine Jensen, National ACES President; Jens Feck from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and Aurjul Wilson, Director of Paternity



ACES seminar attendees listen closely to speakers.

*and Child Support Division of the Department of Justice provided information to approximately 30 participants. The seminar was held at Villa Morales Restaurant, Frederiksted, St. Croix, on June 19, 1998.

EROSION & SEDIMENT CONTROL TRAINING WORKSHOPS.



Workshop attendees pose with newly installed silt fence at Estate St. George's Hill, St. Croix.

The V.I. RC&D assisted the UVI Cooperative Extension Service with managing funds and registration for two erosion and sediment control training workshops. Two construction sites -- a shopping center on St. Thomas and a home/farm site on St. Croix -- were seeded (by hand and with a hydroseeder) and covered with mulch matting during the "*Practical Approaches for Effective Erosion & Sediment Control Training Workshop*," held May 28-29 and June 1-2, 1998. A silt fence and triangular dike check dam were also installed at the St. Croix demonstration site. Approximately 65

contractors, architects, engineers, government agency personnel, and other interested residents attended the workshops.



PROJECTS FUNDED FOR 1999

- ▶ **NONPOINT SOURCE WATERSHED MAPPING** – V.I. RC&D entered into a contract with Island Resources Foundation, Inc. (IRF) to produce a comprehensive GIS database that maps point and nonpoint sources of pollution throughout the V.I. This project was funded through a \$25,000.00 grant from DPNR.
- ▶ **ST. JOHN SEDIMENTATION STUDY**– Continuation of the study initiated by DPNR, IRF, the National Park Service, and USGS to determine the rates and volumes of sediment lost from a developing watershed, and compare those with rates from a pristine watershed. The first phase of the study determined that the unpaved road network on the island was the primary source of sedimentation. Future efforts will continue to quantify erosion and sedimentation rates and evaluate BMPs to control erosion and sedimentation in the Fish Bay watershed. The project was funded through a \$25,000.00 grant from DPNR.

- ▶ **FIFTH ANNUAL V.I. NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION CONFERENCE** – The V.I. RC&D will continue to provide grant management and project assistance for the annual NPS conference, to be held in St. Thomas, utilizing \$20,000.00 of DPNR grant funds.
- ▶ **MASTER BACKYARD COMPOSTING PROJECT** – the V.I. RC&D, using \$20,000.00 in grant funding from the USDA-NRCS, have entered into an agreement with UVI-CES to conduct a Master Backyard Composting project. The project will help the community reduce the amount of organic waste entering our landfills by recycling it as compost.
- ▶ **V.I. HOME & FARM WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT (VI*A*SYST) TRAIN-THE-TRAINER WORKSHOPS** – The V.I. RC&D received a \$5,000.00 grant from DPNR to continue it's partnership with UVI-CES in the VI*A*Syst program. The funds will be used to conduct workshops to train UVI and government personnel, community leaders and other interested residents to conduct home and farm water quality assessments. The VI*A*Syst program is a voluntary pollution prevention program designed to make residents and farmers aware of conditions and practices on their property that may increase health and pollution risks, and to provide assistance in reducing that risk.
- ▶ **PLANT MATERIALS INITIATIVE** – V.I. RC&D will continue to cooperate in the USVI Plant Materials Initiative, along with VIDA, UVI-CES, UVI Agriculture Experiment Station, the V.I. Conservation District, and USDA-NRCS. These agencies will continue to promote the use and management of plants for conservation purposes, and will continue to research the most effective native and naturalized species for conserving soil and water. Project funding: \$5,000.00.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you for taking the time to review our Annual Report. The Virgin Islands RC&D Council would like to thank all the businesses, community groups, consultants, educational institutions, elected officials, territorial and federal government agencies, and individuals who provided cooperative support to RC&D programs and projects in 1998.

All V.I. RC&D programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status.

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