

# 2003- 2005 Coral Management Assistantship US Virgin Islands Statement of Work

## Location of the Project

The host agency for the 2003-2005 U.S. Virgin Islands Coral Management Assistantship is the Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Program (VICZMP), located within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources. The assistant will be located in the VICZMP St. Croix office.

The US Virgin Islands are located about 1,400 miles south-southeast of Florida. St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas are the three largest islands with many offshore cays surrounding them. The topography of St. Thomas and St. John primarily consists of steep mountains which form lush, vegetated valleys that slope gently to the shoreline. Cobblestones line some shorelines while white sandy beaches or mangrove forests line others. The warm constant water temperature and remarkable clarity provide ideal conditions for coral reef growth. The coral reefs are comprised of shallow fringing reefs that parallel the coastlines and of scattered patch reefs. The Virgin Islands' climate is temperate, with temperatures ranging from approximately 78 °F to 94 °F.



## Program/Agency Background

The Virgin Islands Coastal Zone Management Act was passed by the U.S. Virgin Islands Legislature in 1978, as a means of regulating development and managing coastal resources in the territory. Several of the VICZMP goals that are set forth in the Virgin Island Coastal Zone Management Act, Section 903 (b) relate to the protection of coral reefs. In particular, the VICZMP is charged with conserving ecologically significant resource areas for their contribution to marine productivity and valuable wildlife habitats, and preserving the function and integrity of reefs, marine meadows, salt ponds, mangroves, and other significant natural areas.

The Virgin Islands' coral reef ecosystems are under heavy pressures. Hurricanes and other major storms, higher than normal wave and water temperatures, and diseases that have affected the coral reefs and their inhabitants have combined with destructive boat anchoring practices, boat groundings and cargo spills, careless land usage, improper dredging practices, and over-fishing to cause dramatic deterioration of the Virgin Islands'

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coral reefs. Within the last 15 to 20 years, the amount of live coral has declined dramatically, while the abundance of algal life forms has increased proportionately.

The Governor of the Virgin Islands signed into law Act 6572 in January 2003, thus establishing the St. Croix East End Marine Park (EEMP). In accordance with the Coral Reef Task Force Action Plan, the establishment of the EEMP followed a collaborative process that involved federal and local resource managers, scientists, nongovernmental organizations, stakeholders, academia, and others. The EEMP encompasses approximately 155-square-kilometers (60-square-miles) of territorial waters and has a shoreline area of about 17 miles. It contains significant marine resources that include an extensive barrier reef, a complex mosaic of fringing reefs along most of the shoreline, sea grass beds, mangrove communities, and other associated habitats. Recognizing the value of the marine resources, and the challenges facing the marine ecosystems, the Virgin Islands Government established the EEMP to protect and maintain the biological diversity and other natural values of the area for the long-term, promote sound management practices for sustainable production purposes, and protect the natural resource base from being targeted for other land use purposes that would negatively impact the area's biological diversity.

One of the most important strategies that will benefit the long-term sustainability of the EEMP is the implementation of an education and outreach program. VICZMP has begun development of an education and outreach program, as well as the first video that will be used as a general education and outreach tool by the EEMP. The education and outreach program will not only entail dissemination of the video being produced, but will also develop a variety of outreach goals, the opportunities available to reach those goals, and a plan for the development of future media products.

Another program which would benefit greatly from an education and outreach program is the Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Program (NPS Program). This program works within the VICZMP to improve the quality of the waters surrounding the islands and cays of the Virgin Islands.

Nonpoint source pollution occurs when water flows across land and picks up and carries pollutants to nearby water bodies. Trash, pesticides, sewage from broken pipes or failing septic systems, petroleum products, or any other material that can be transported by flowing water can be considered a nonpoint source pollutant. Nonpoint source pollution is gradually reducing the quality of life in the Virgin Islands by destroying natural resources. The primary goal of the NPS Program is to reduce and reverse these impacts.

### **Project Goals and Objectives**

The goal of this assistantship project is to develop and implement education and outreach programs for the EEMP and for the NPS Program. These overlapping education and outreach programs will:

- Create environmental education opportunities for the general population of the Virgin Islands, as well as EEMP users

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- Demonstrate how the EEMP is integrated into a system of supporting and sustaining habitats
- Promote awareness of and stewardship for the EEMP throughout the Virgin Islands, and specifically in St. Croix
- Promote awareness and build support for the NPS Program

### **Project Description**

Below is a description of the overall project, with general milestones and outcomes. The assistant will be integrated into the VICZMP, and will network with partner organizations and other agencies to complete this multifaceted project. The assistant will be involved in each of these tasks and how they choose to develop the education and outreach plans will depend on the skills and abilities they bring to the project. Note that some of these tasks will be accomplished concurrently.

#### ***Orientation (3 months)***

The assistant will be introduced to staff and management of the VICZMP and partner agencies. The assistant will review background information regarding the Virgin Islands' NPS Program, coral reef initiative, as well as other coastal management issues. The assistant will participate with program staff in field visits, interagency meetings, and outreach activities. After participating in these activities, the assistant, with input from their mentor, will write a project work plan that will be reviewed and revised after the first year of the assistantship

#### **Outcomes:**

- Familiarity with staff, operations, and resources of state coastal program
- Integration into the VICZMP and clarification of role in project
- Assessment of education and outreach needs
- Development of a project work plan

#### ***Research existing education and outreach efforts and identify gaps (6 months)***

The assistant will continue to research and evaluate existing education and outreach materials and documents at the VICZMP, as well as among project partners. This process will include interacting with education and outreach staff within the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Virgin Island Marine Advisory Service, and the University of the Virgin Islands Cooperative Extension Service. These organizations have active education and outreach components and would be a good source of information.

Based on interactions, document reviews, and material reviews, the assistant will identify gaps in the existing education and outreach efforts related to the EEMP and the NPS Program. The assistant will prepare a draft document that outlines their findings and make recommendations about what types of materials need to be developed and how to effectively distribute them.

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### Outcomes:

- Review and evaluate existing outreach and education efforts
- Review existing assessment methods and approaches
- Determine the gaps in the education and outreach efforts and outline a plan that will address them
- Prepare draft document
- Begin product development for education and outreach program
- Assist in drafting relevant sections of grant proposals that will be funded during later stages of project

### ***Develop and distribute education and outreach materials (1 year)***

Working with input from the VICZMP staff and various project partners such as the Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Virgin Island Marine Advisory Service, and the UVI-Cooperative Extension Service, the assistant will develop the appropriate materials and messages for the general public and other audiences about the St. Croix East End Marine Park and the NPS Program. In some cases, the assistant will create materials using software provided by the VICZMP and in other cases an outside contractor will be hired to create materials. Education and outreach materials might include print material, audio-visual material, and Public Service Announcements. Distribution methods might include school events, special events, public forums, meetings, and the media.

### Outcomes:

- Develop appropriate materials and messages for the public related to the EEMP and the NPS Program
- Distribute information by attending various events and interacting with the public
- Assist in developing and hosting various events to distribute information

### ***Evaluate education and outreach efforts (3 months)***

Update draft document with any further recommendations based on the results of developing and distributing education and outreach materials for a year. The document will detail project partners, materials developed, distribution methods, target audiences and messages, contractor contact information, and software used to create materials.

### Outcomes

- Circulate draft document internally
- Summary of feedback and recommended modifications
- Prepare final document based on feedback
- Ensure all projects to develop materials are either completed or turned over to other VICZMP staff in a smooth fashion

## **Assistant Mentoring**

The assistant will be mentored by Bill Rohring. Bill primarily works in the VICZMP St. Thomas office, but does visit St. Croix several times per month. He is responsible for

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writing grant proposals for both the NPS Program and the St. Croix East End Marine Park. He also is responsible for project development and oversight for both programs. In addition, he is involved with permit reviews, watershed-based planning, Nonpoint Source Conference planning, and the development and implementation of a local action strategy for land-based sources of pollution. Bill will be the primary point of contact for administrative questions and project guidance. Ursula Anlauf, a VICZMP staff resource ecologist and marine biologist, will be available to the assistant on a day-to-day basis since both Ursula and the assistant will be located in the VICZMP St. Croix offices. Bill and the assistant will communicate regularly to review timelines and evaluate progress.

The assistant will be considered part of the VICZMP, and will be expected to attend staff meetings and participate in program discussions. They will be provided opportunities to join staff on field visits, and in internal and external meetings. The assistant will have ample opportunities to meet education and outreach staff within all levels of government, nonprofit groups, and academic institutions. This project will provide an exciting opportunity to learn about aspects of a natural resource management program and a wide range of island management issues.

The assistant will receive assistance in identifying key individuals with whom to meet and important sources of background information. They will be provided with the necessary resources to carry out the project.

### **.Project Partners**

The VICZMP will actively work with other agency staff, community organizations, government agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations to fully make available new education and outreach materials and to ensure that the VICZMP development of new education and outreach materials is sound and compatible with existing materials.

Potential partners include:

- Marine Park Committee
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- University of the Virgin Islands
  - Cooperative Extension Service
  - Conservation Data Center
  - Marine Advisory Service
- Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources
  - Coastal Zone Management Program
  - Division of Environmental Protection
  - Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Virgin Island Department of Tourism
- Virgin Island Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Committee
- Virgin Island Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

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### **In Kind Support**

The assistant will have access to all of the amenities and services of agency staff, including office space and equipment, personal computer, telephone, fax, and e-mail. Use of agency vehicles will be permitted.

In addition, the VICZMP will provide funds for administrative travel, purchases of supplies and software, as well as printing, photocopying, mailing, and incidental costs for project products.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Bachelor's degree in a natural or environmental science or related area of study with 4 to 6 years experience in education and outreach OR a master's degree in a related area of study with 2 years experience in education and outreach
- Valid driver's license

### **Desired Background and Skill Sets**

- Demonstrated oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills
- A proven ability to be well organized and able to manage and prioritize multiple tasks
- Experience, through an internship, fellowship, or part-time job, in environmental science or natural resource management
- Proficient in Spanish
- Public speaking, events planning, and meeting facilitation experience
- Ability to work independently
- Creative, flexible, adaptable
- Experience living and working in another culture or in an island community
- Experience working with different user groups
- Experience with Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, or similar graphic design software