

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan for The United States Virgin Islands



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Coastal Zone Management
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Introduction 3**
 - a. Background 3**
 - b. Purpose 4**
- II. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection 5**
 - a. Geographic Extent of the Plan 5**
 - b. Lands and Values to be Protected and Assessment of Need 5**
 - c. Priority Areas 17**
 - d. Other Relevant Plans 21**
- III. Process for implementing the CELCP 21**
 - a. Territory Lead Agency 21**
 - b. Agencies Eligible to Acquire Land under the Plan 21**
 - c. The Nomination Process 22**
- IV. Coordination and Public Involvement 23**
 - a. Interagency Coordination 23**
 - b. Public Involvement 23**
- V. Certification and Approval 24**
- VI. References 25**
- VII. Appendix I: Proposal Ranking Criteria 27**

FIGURES

- Figure 1. Map of The United States Virgin Islands 5**
- Figure 2. National Heritage Map of St. Croix 7**
- Figure 3. MARXAN Map Analysis for the Three Islands: Conservation 8, 9, 10**
- Figure 4. MARXAN Map Analysis for the Three Islands: Human Impact Threats 11, 12, 13**
- Figure 5. MARXAN Map Analysis for the Three Islands: Priority Conservation Areas with Protected Areas 14, 15, 16**
- Figure 6. Satellite Image of Coakley Bay Beach 18**
- Figure 7. Hawksbill Turtle 18**
- Figure 8. Coakley Bay Beach 18**
- Figure 9. Menchinel Beach 19**
- Figure 10. Green Turtle 19**
- Figure 11. Neltijeberg Beach, St. Thomas 20**

I. Introduction

a. Background

In small islands, terrestrial, coastal and marine environments are inextricably linked. Activities carried out anywhere on one of these islands have a nearly immediate effect on its coastal ecosystems and biodiversity. The economy and public health of the small islands depends directly on marine and coastal ecosystems and the biodiversity which they support. Because local communities in small islands such as the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) depend directly and almost exclusively upon the marine environment, and because most of the population and infrastructure are located on the coast, these islands are extremely exposed to the negative impacts of environmental degradation. With an increase in development pressures of coastal communities, changing climate patterns, spread of invasive species, and increased unsustainable harvest of natural resources, coastal ecosystems of the USVI have degraded precipitously. Due to these changes, coastal ecosystems are in direct threat of fisheries collapse, severe coastal erosion, and loss of cultural and historical heritage associated with people's use of the coastal zones.

One means by which the USVI Department of Planning and Natural Resources' Division of Coastal Zone Management (DPNR-CZM) addresses these problems is by advancing the Territory's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). This is a federal grant program conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Public Law 107-77, the Department of Commerce, Justice and State Appropriations Act of 2002, charges the Secretary of Commerce to establish the program "for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses" giving priority to lands that can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

According to the NOAA CELCP guidelines of 2003, states and territories that wish to participate in the program must first produce a plan and have it approved. This plan should outline priorities for coastal area conservation and the process for proposal nomination and submission. This process ensures that the program meets the Congressionally defined goal of being nationally competitive and objective. The USVI does not currently have a comprehensive land conservation plan for the coastal zone. A number of Territory wide efforts have identified potential conservation areas through their planning processes, however. Both public and private interests are realizing the threats to the Territory's natural coastal resources that come with a growing population and intensifying development. Regional coastal conservation plans are developing as these interested parties are taking a collaborative approach to identifying conservation priorities for acquisition.

USVI applicants for funding through the CELCP are advised to refer to this plan in preparing their applications, as the plan identifies project focus areas and the criteria that will be used to rate their applications. Applications that do not support the goals of

this plan may not be competitive at the state and federal levels. Successful applications will be advanced to the federal competitive process. This plan must be updated at least once every 5 years to reflect changes that have taken place within the USVI. Updated CELC plans will be submitted to the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM).

b. Purpose

The USVI's intent in preparing this plan was to identify the types of lands and features most in need of protection, to map the areas where these lands and features are most commonly found, and to establish a fair and open competitive funding process that facilitates their protection. In adherence with NOAA guidelines for preparing this plan, writers did a comprehensive search for other agencies and organizations involved in coastal land protection, gathering data from each in order to arrive at a consensus of the highest priority areas for conservation. To the extent possible, the plan incorporates the existing efforts and priorities of these organizations. To the extent possible, the plan incorporated the existing efforts and priorities of those organizations.

Coastal areas are vital to the nation's well-being for reasons that include economic, environmental and health benefits. Coastal areas are increasingly popular residential and recreational areas, important for commerce and essential habitat for many birds, fish and other species. The demand for space by a rapidly growing population of over 100,000 humans in the USVI has resulted in extensive loss and degradation of natural ecosystems. Pressure from development is having a negative impact on resource quality in many areas. The increased demand for developable land in the coastal area is causing a rise in property values, which puts further pressure on landowners to maximize the use of their land. Sprawling residential communities and commercial centers have replaced or fragmented much of the native forest. Hotels, condominiums, and marinas have been constructed on coastal wetlands and marine recreational activities have damaged fragile mangrove swamps, coral reefs, and sea grass beds. Habitat loss and diminished water quality is stressing the populations of many coastal species. Further, a growing concern in the USVI is the limitation of beach access by major developments. This will create a negative social impact on the citizens of the USVI.

This program protects coastal and estuarine areas that are of significant value by permanently sheltering them from development. By purchasing land outright, this program provides a way for state and local governments to set aside coastal areas while equitably compensating private owners. The CELCP Plan provides an assessment of priority conservation needs within the coastal zone. It also serves as a guide for project applicants and evaluators in the selection and nomination of coastal and estuarine land conservation projects within the USVI. This guidance document outlines project eligibility requirements; coast-wide priority focus areas for conservation; existing state and regional acquisition plans consistent with the goals of CELCP; and a description of the Territory's evaluation criteria and scoring system to be utilized by the

Division of Coastal Zone Management in ranking USVI project applications that will compete at the national level for funding.

II. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection

a. Geographic Extent of the Plan

The **United States Virgin Islands** is a group of islands in the Caribbean that are an insular area of the United States. The islands are geographically part of the Virgin Islands archipelago and are located in the Leeward Islands of the Lesser Antilles.

The USVI consist of the main islands of Saint Croix, Saint John and Saint Thomas, along with the much smaller but historically distinct Water Island, and many other surrounding minor islands and Cays.

Latitude/Longitude: 18° 20N, 64° 50W.

Land Area: St. Croix: 84 sq miles (216 sq km); St. John: 20 sq miles (52 sq km); St. Thomas: 32 sq miles (83 sq km). The total land area of the territory is 133.73 square miles (346.4 km²). As of the 2000 census the population was 108,612.^[2] Land area on

the USVI is limited and is considered to be all coastal by definition land adjacent to the marine or coastal estuarine environment and consisting of a coastal watershed.

b. Lands and Values to be Protected and Assessment of Need

One of the most effective means for ensuring access to coastal areas as well as conservation mechanisms for wildlife and habitats is the acquisition of land to be protected in perpetuity. Since 1960, several advancements have been made to select and designate unique, valuable and ecologically important landscape features, often-coastal sites, as possible candidates for inclusion in a territorial system of parks and protected areas for the USVI. The principal objective has been to establish a protective program for conservation and a management strategy for surviving remnants of the

Figure 1. Map of the US Virgin Islands



territory's natural and cultural heritage. The prioritization of sites for protection in the CELCP draws upon this work.

The following outlines the criteria used for prioritization of critical lands for protection based on an analysis of areas heavily used and valued by the public (social and cultural values), lands with significant ecological values, and by level of imminent threat (*i.e.* by development or other conversion, incompatible use, or other human impacts). Lands which are identified as priority by these methods will further need to be considered by other CELCP standards such as feasibility of acquisition and likelihood of effective management. Studies, reports, analysis, planning efforts, summaries of public input activities and methodologies that contribute to this ranking are listed in the **References** section at the end of this plan.

Social and Cultural Values

The USVI holds its public trust rights as a common heritage and a primary conservation value. These include the right of the public to have natural land available and accessible for their use and enjoyment, and the right of access to the public waters of the state. An artifact of the Territory's changing coastal culture has been a growing battle to elevate private property rights over the public trust. As more coastal lands become privatized and developed, opportunities for public trust access and enjoyment diminish. Public access to beaches and shoreline areas is a concern. These areas are popular recreation sites with residents as well as tourists, with residents preferring less-developed beaches, while tourists remain near hotels and resorts. There is a considerable demand for beaches and shore access in areas that are less developed, including demands by the natives to preserve areas for seasonal recreation and camping. Further consideration of areas that provide educational opportunities and those with high cultural value reflecting traditions, customs, beliefs and folk life that are a valuable part of the USVI history contribute to the criteria for selection of priority CELCP lands.



Figure 2. Map: National Heritage Map of St. Croix

Ecological Values

Ecological values are difficult to define and vary with multiple parameters. Conservation priority is a product of habitat suitability, habitat abundance, diversity of species supported, the listed species supported, the present condition, the present use, the threat of conversion, and the area of the habitat type that is already in conservation. Maintaining ecosystem function, retaining biodiversity, protecting water quality, building ecological corridors and greenways, and minimizing habitat lost to erosion through vegetative shoreline stabilization are examples of priority ecological values. Priority will be given to coastal areas composed of native forest and/or natural terrestrial and coastal communities that have high biodiversity value or provide an especially high level of ecosystem services.

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US Virgin Islands Irriplacibility Map
Protected Areas Not Locked In - No Prime Agriculture Lands
St. Croix

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January 28, 2009

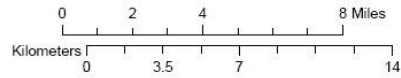
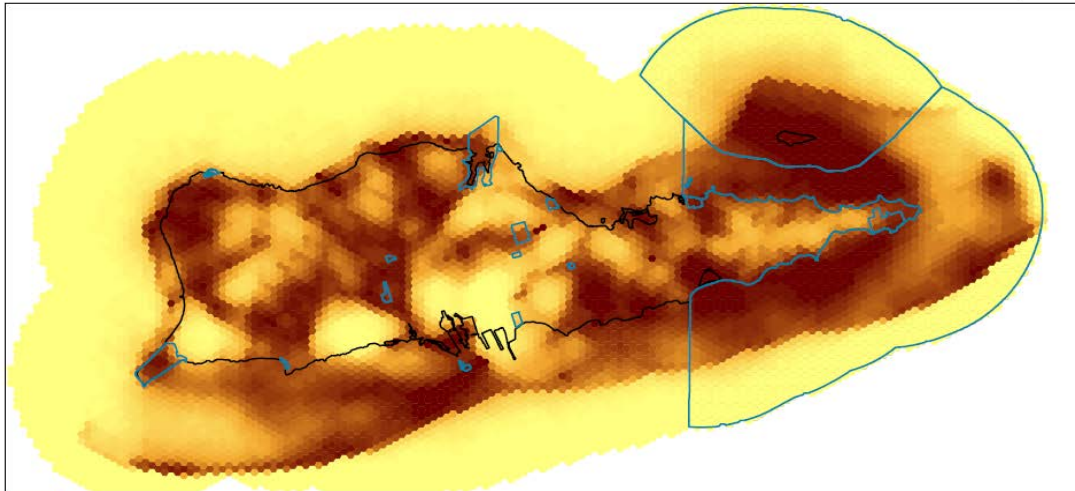


Fig. 3A

US Virgin Islands Irriplacibility Map

Protected Areas Not Locked In - No Prime Agriculture Lands
St. Thomas

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January 28, 2009

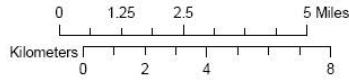
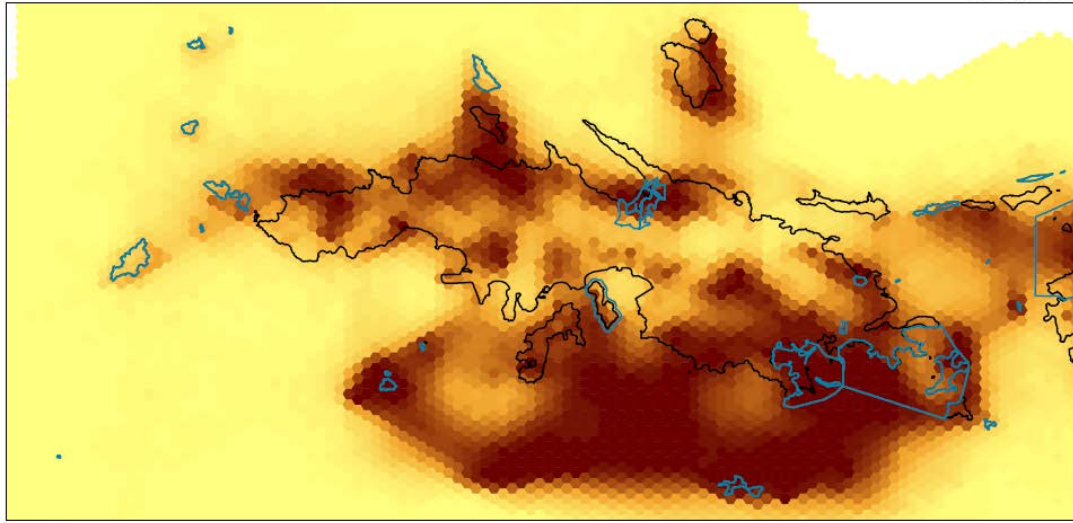


Fig. 3B

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US Virgin Islands Irriplacibility Map
Protected Areas Not Locked In - No Prime Agriculture Lands
St. Thomas

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January 28, 2009

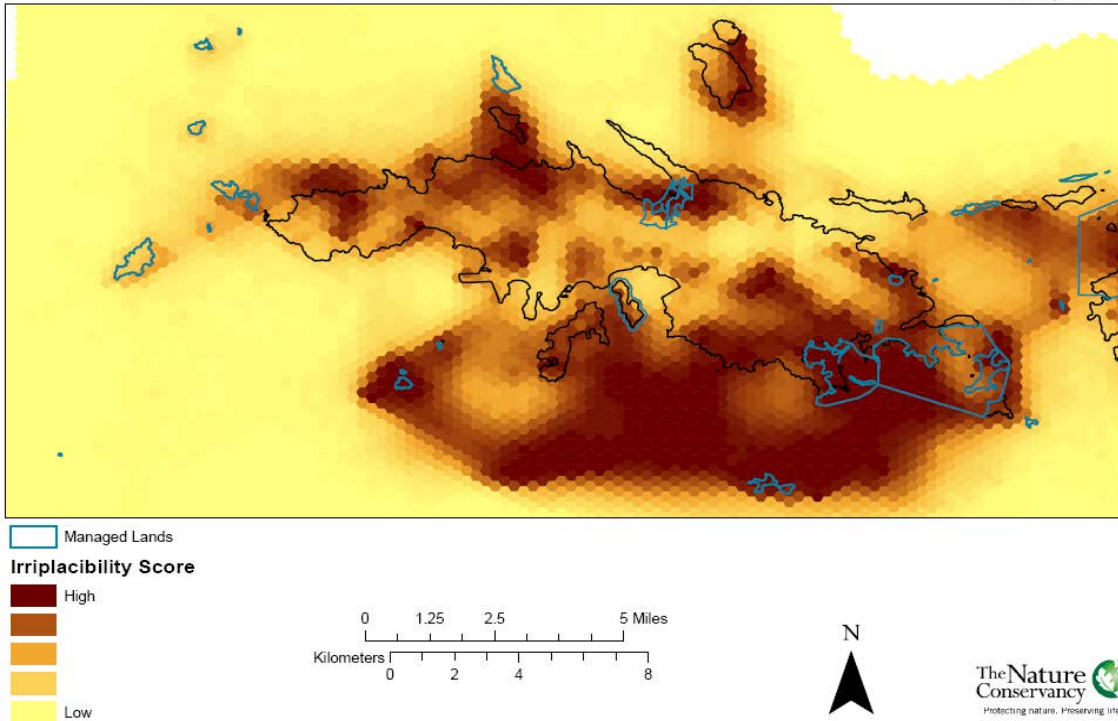


Fig. 3C

Figure 3. Map MARXAN Analysis for the Three Islands: Conservation

Threat Priority Ranking

Priority areas for acquisition are those threatened by conversion. Areas on the main islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John islands have been targeted for development. Many of these areas are along the coasts, and would be made into hotels and resorts, or cut and dredged for the purpose of creating a mariner. Some investors and developers have already filed for permits for these types of projects. The applications remain on file with DPNR - Coastal Zone Management, with the possibility that the projects will resume in the future. These types of threats to the limited remaining environmentally valuable and undeveloped coastline would be minimized through the USVI CELCP Plan.

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US Virgin Islands Integrated Impact Layer
No DOA Managed Lands - St. Croix

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January 28, 2009

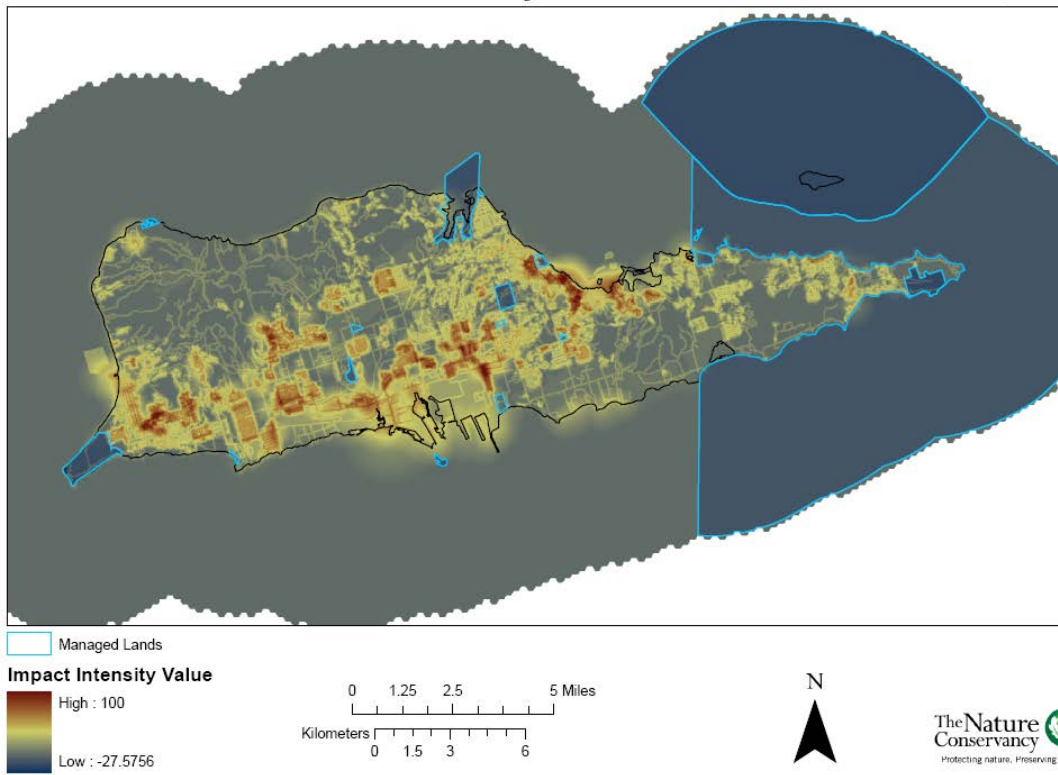


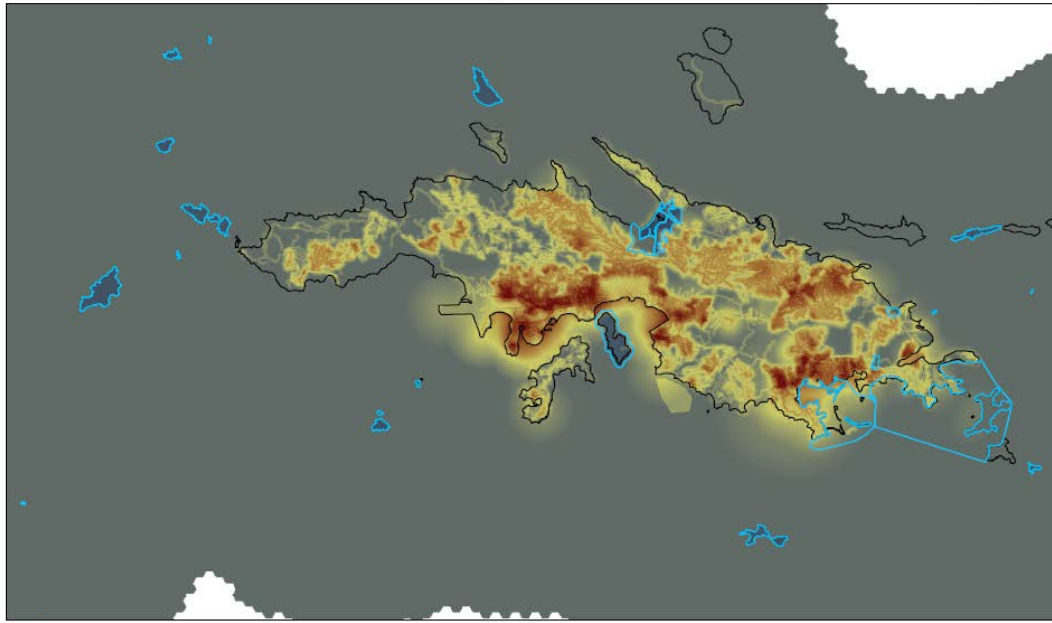
Fig. 4A

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US Virgin Islands Integrated Impact Layer
No DOA Managed Lands - St. Thomas

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Managed Lands

Impact Intensity Value

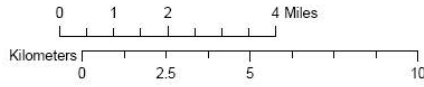


Fig. 4B

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US Virgin Islands Integrated Impact Layer
No DOA Managed Lands - St. John

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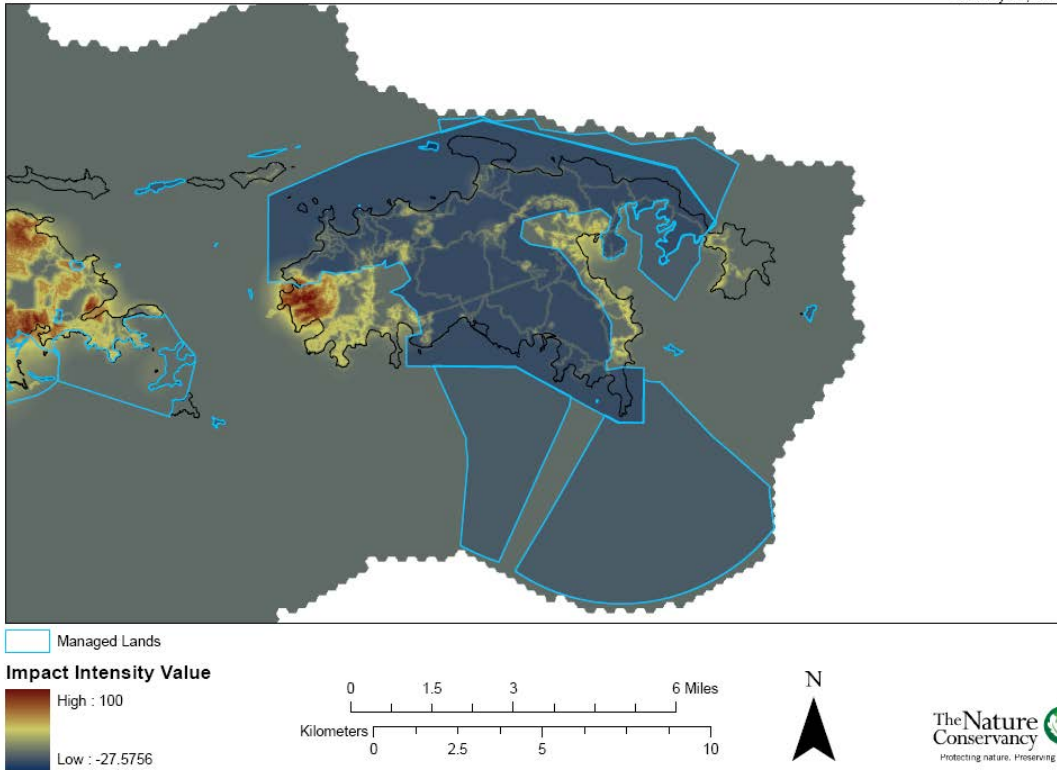


Figure 4. Map MARXAN Analysis for the Three Islands: Human Impact Threats

Lands to be Protected

The lands with significant ecological and/or social values that are threatened by development or other pressures that can be addressed by effective management and protection of the area will then be given greatest priority for the CELCP.

The USVI's coastal land conservation efforts must continue to prioritize the protection of public trust rights. Other social values that can be protected and enhanced through land conservation include education, improvements to public health, preservation of historic or cultural areas, public access, and aesthetic natural areas. Culturally significant areas include important historic and archeological sites, and natural or cultural heritage areas. These areas are often lost or fragmented by development, and preservation funding is extremely limited. Priority will be given to coastal lands that are traditionally used by people for recreation (i.e. weekend camping, picnics, kayaking, snorkeling, swimming

and sunbathing), and which are critical for gaining access to the coastal and marine resources.

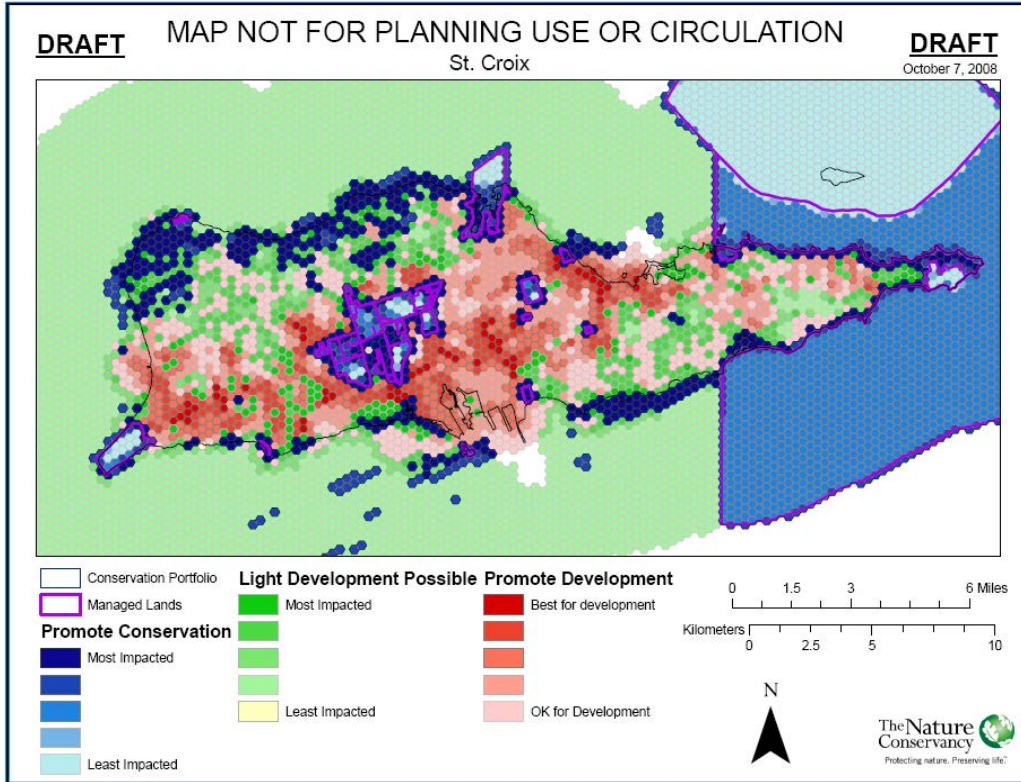


Fig. 5A

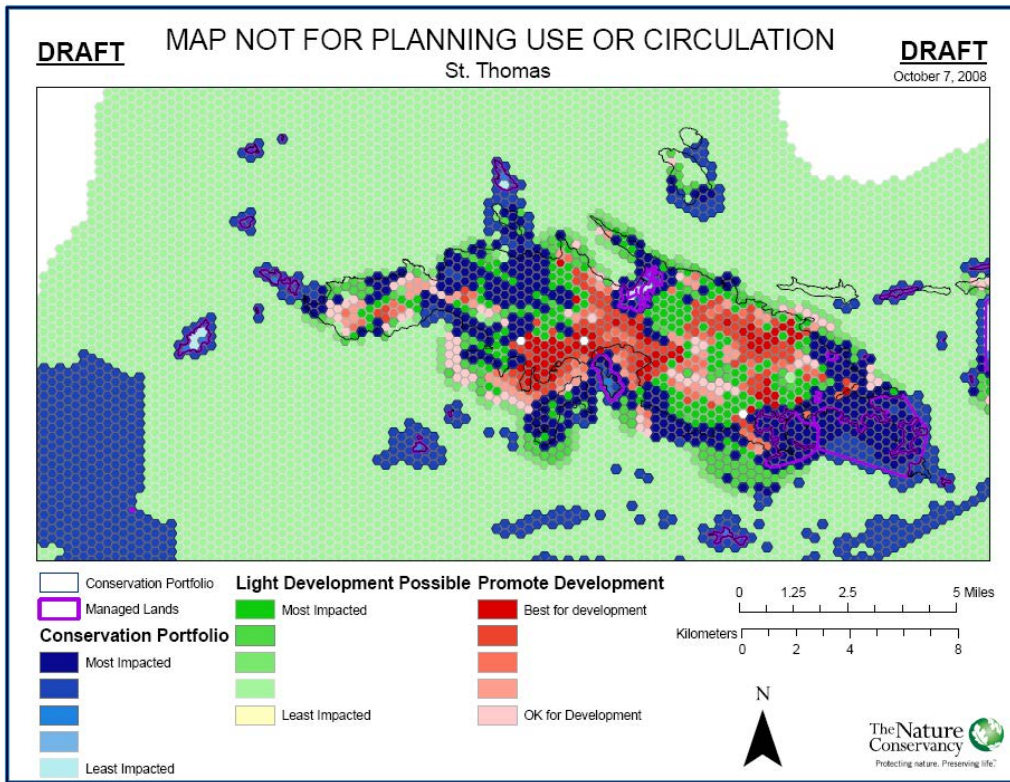


Fig. 5B

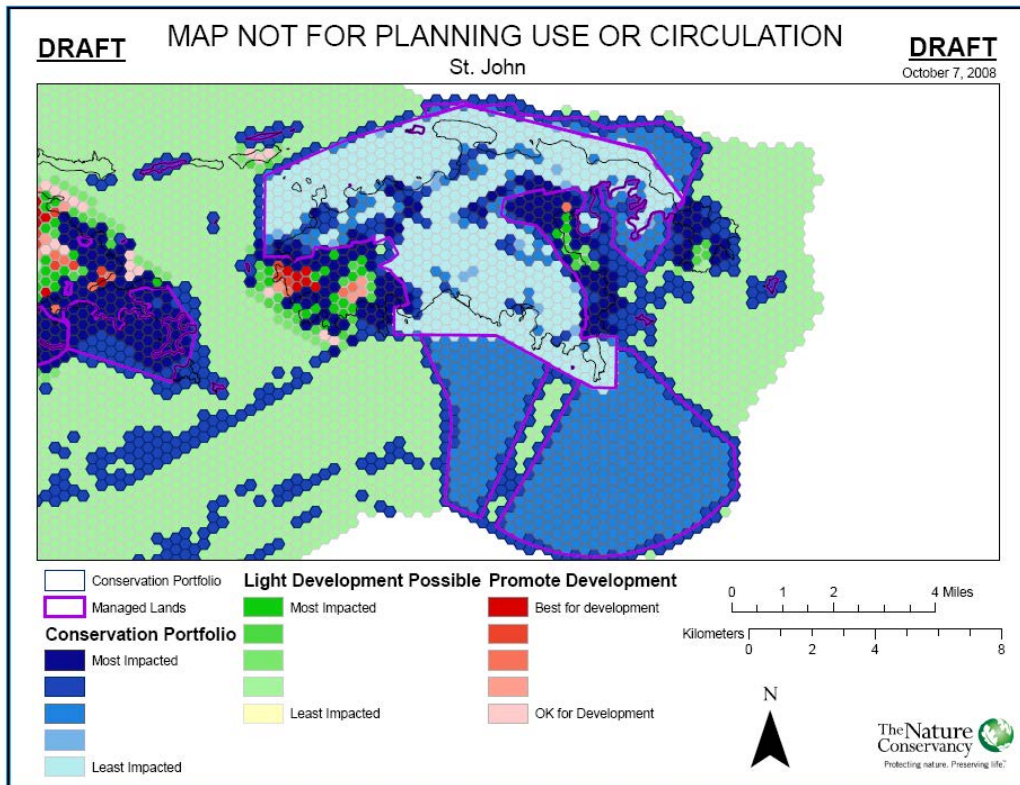


Fig. 5C

Figure 5. Map MARXAN analysis for the Three Islands: Priority Conservation Areas with Protected Area

Protecting wetlands and mangrove lagoons and the valuable habitat they provide is very important in the USVI. These ecosystems functions include flood reduction, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, and habitat enrichment. Additionally, wetlands provide important roosting habitats for a number of protected bird species and mangroves serve as important nursery grounds for a number of commercially important fish and invertebrate species. Most of St. Croix and St. Thomas's original wetlands were destroyed over the course of the past four decades, due to natural disasters and the development of major refineries on St. Croix and resorts and mariners on St. Thomas making the conservation of what remains a high priority.

The supply of fresh ground water for consumption is also a major concern. The aquifers/water tables in many areas in the USVI have been compromised over the years, especially before the commissioning of the CZM in 1978. It is of the utmost importance to protect the lands that serve as aquifer recharge areas for maintaining the island's water supply.

The USVI has coral reefs surrounding all of its major islands. These reefs are under stress from land-based non-point-source pollution. Preventing development of highly eroding land adjacent to or upland of reefs through implementation of the USVI's CELCP Plan will serve to decrease the sedimentation that stresses the coral reef health.

c. Priority Areas

The following are “project areas”, or discrete priority areas for conservation, based on the USVI (above) and national (listed in Appendix II) criteria for the program. These priority areas represent the values to be protected through the program and areas threatened by conversion. These consist of geographic areas or habitat types identified by a coastal management plan as areas of concern, significant areas within other coastal, estuarine, or watershed management plan(s) that may be priority areas for conservation, and areas that provide linkages or corridors among conservation areas within a geographical area.

There are several areas of concern that are located on the islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix that are the highest priority for this Plan because they are widely used by the general public, are under the greatest development pressure, and are ecologically significant. Areas on St. John are also included in the Plan due to their value as habitat and their use by the local people.

I. St. Croix Areas

East End of St. Croix: The Coakley Bay Beach

The marine resources of the east end of St. Croix are protected by the St. Croix East End Marine Park. However, the shore and coastal area of certain bays are not explicitly protected by the Park’s jurisdiction to the mean highest high tide level. Coakley bay is located on the north-eastern coast of St. Croix and is somewhat protected by a barrier reef. The offshore reef provides habitat to a number of marine fishes, reptiles, and invertebrates as well as the threatened *Acropora* spp. of coral. The shallow area between the reef and the bay has a mixed sand and sea grass habitat home to a number of sting rays, sea horses, herbivorous fish and invertebrate species. The endangered and threatened Hawksbill and Green Turtles rely heavily on this area for food.



Figure 6. Satellite Image of Coakley Bay Beach. Note: Part of reef north of the bay.



Figure 7. Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys Imbricata*)

The bay is of significant ecological value due to its rich diversity of habitats and high number of rare, endemic and threatened species, and it is also a popular beach for visitors who kite surf here, snorkel, swim and sunbathe.



Figure 8. Coakley Bay

Despite the fact that the area is flood-prone, there already exists homes and other residential buildings interspersed with undeveloped private land. The threat of development and restricted access to the bay from land elevates this coastal area to a priority acquisition site. The CZM/DPNR agency has created an educational site in the area to increase public awareness about the importance of wetlands and their myriad beneficial functions. The area has the potential for effective management and continued sustainable use.

Menchinel Beach

Located on the south side of the island of St. Croix, is one of the more pristine beaches for public enjoyment. Waters at this beach are usually calmer than the surrounding beaches because of the cove shape and the reef that is located about a half of a mile

off shore. This area also contains many flat, sandy and shaded areas for picnicking and weekend camping.

This beach has a vast aquatic environment due to the reef and the presence of sea grass, which supports spawning of juvenile fish also due to the presence of a fresh water pond that flows into this cove during heavy rainfall. All indigenous turtles, Leatherback, Hawksbill and the Green Turtle nest at Menchinel Beach.



Figure 9. Menchinel Beach



Figure 10. Green Turtle (Chelonia Mydas)

Currently there is no major development taking place at this site, however as similar coastal areas on the south shore of St. Croix are rapidly being proposed for large resort developments, this area should be given priority for protection due to its unique ecological and social value. DPNR-CZM work with other agencies to reduce non-point source pollution in this geographic area, but the presence of private land is a complicating factor. Completing the implementation of the plan will further improve drainage to the area-preventing run-off from further impacting the reef. Purchase Acquisition of the adjacent land through the CELCP would be ideal for conservation purposes and would assure that the area does not undergo further development that would exacerbate the problem.

II. St. Thomas Areas

Perseverance Bay: This is a privately owned watershed on the southwest side of St. Thomas, consisting of two parcels, one of 140 acres and the other of 38 acres. Four stream channels drain into the bay. There are two salt ponds inland from the beach, into which three of the four channels drain. These ponds reduce sedimentation of the bay and provide refuge and foraging resources for migratory birds, including the locally endangered Bahama duck. The waters of the bay contain valuable sea grass beds, which support endangered and threatened sea turtles and provide refuge for fish nurseries, including for the endangered Nassau grouper. The beach may also present additional value for nesting sea turtles. The undisturbed upland forest provides habitat

for most of the island's terrestrial wildlife, including the rare Bridled Quail Dove. In addition to the wildlife resources on the site, there are also valuable archaeological ruins from a historically significant sugar plantation.

Neltijeberg Beach: A pristine stretch of beach on the northern side of the island with that also provides areas for turtle nesting that have been disturbed by human activity. This beach also historical structures that date back before the Danish settlement of the 19th century. This beach is being threatened by vehicular traffic and minor development.



Figure 11. Neltijeberg Beach

Northwest Cays of St. Thomas: These cays have been threatened with major resort development. Due to many environmental concerns and public comment, none have come to fruition. Many also provide habitats for endangered lizards. Each individual cay provides unique natural resources separate from any other cay, due to prevailing winds and climate, topography, distance from main islands, and other factors, and as such should be considered a unique and irreplaceable resource. These islands offer a refuge to many species that have been extirpated from the larger islands by human activity, including the Puerto Rican Racer and the Slipperyback Skink, both of which only occur on these insular reserves.

III. St. John Areas

Newfound Bay

This bay, pond and upland ecosystem lies outside of the park and protected waters of St. John. Newfound Bay would be listed by many knowledgeable people as one of the richest and most diverse ecosystems left on St. John. The protection of this keystone resource would preserve bay, pond, salt ponds, watershed, lagoon, coral reef and nursery areas for the future.

d. Other Relevant Plans

While this CELCP Plan is not based on any existing land use plans for the USVI, the CZM Office will ensure that CELCP Plan is compatible with other government agencies' planned uses and maintain a strong working relationship between the agencies. In 2008, DPNR-DFW completed the "Virgin Islands Potential Restoration Projects" report in response to the Vista Bella Oil Spill of 1991. This report addresses habitat needs of critical and endangered species in the USVI and was used in creating the CELCP Plan.

III. Process for implementing the CELCP

a. Territory Lead Agency

In light of the CZM Office's ability to manage land development within public land, USVI government will vie for CELCP funding to purchase private land in an effort to meet the challenge of effectively conserving the coastline of each of the three main islands, St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John. DPNR-CZM will be responsible for: soliciting projects that are consistent with priorities outlined in the state's plan, reviewing them for completeness, prioritizing them according to state criteria, and nominating projects to the national selection process. Multiple agencies are encouraged to submit proposals to DPNR-CZM as a consolidated package to NOAA. The lead agency will also be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of and in a manner consistent with this program.

DPNR-CZM has experience acquiring land, whether trusted to the local people through federal mandate or a legislative act, and managing it for conservation purposes. The purchased land will then be deeded to DPNR for management. Deeds will be written by CZM natural resource managers in consultation with their legal counsel to ensure that all conservation restrictions run with the land and cannot be altered or amended in any fashion. DPNR - CZM will be responsible for demonstrating how these restrictions will be enforced in perpetuity.

The DPNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) of the USVI is the agency responsible for the assessment of marine and wildlife resources within the territory and the management of territorially-owned wildlife refuges. Funding for the DFW is limited exclusively to federal grants, and thus DFW's activities are constrained by the priorities of funding agencies.

b. Agencies Eligible to Acquire Land under the Plan

As stated in the, "306A(e) of the CZMA (16 USC 1455a(e))", CELCP guidelines, local governments are eligible to receive CELCP funds. DPNR- CZM is statutorily authorized to acquire land, or easements thereon, and hold title to the land for environmental conservation purposes. Land ownership in the USVI is regulated similarly to that of mainland USA. In order to own land, individuals do not have to prove themselves to be indigenous, as is the case in the neighboring islands of the British

Virgin Islands. Lands in the USVI fall into three categories: private lands, public lands, and government acquired lands. Private lands are lands that are alienable by the titleholder. Public lands are those that were given in trust to the people of the USVI through federal and Legislative acts and are managed by the DPNR and the Department of Property and Procurement (P&P). Government acquired lands are lands purchased by the government for public purposes, the use of which is controlled by deed restrictions.

Therefore, CZM Office, as the USVI CELCP lead agency, will manage the receipt of awarded CELCP funds and their allocation to DPNR – CZM for land acquisition. The recipient may in turn allocate grants or make sub-awards to other state agencies, local governments, organizations, in coastal land acquisition, conservation, or management in the state; and other interested parties to carry out approved projects. NOAA may, at its discretion and in consultation with the applicable coastal state, make grants directly to any of these eligible entities in order to expedite completion of an approved project. The recipient, or other appropriate public agency designated by the recipient, will hold title to the land, or interests in land, in perpetuity. NOAA will not make grants under the CELCP to nongovernmental organizations unless otherwise directed by Congress. Eligible coastal states that have submitted, and received approval of, a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan, may submit proposals to NOAA for federal funding under this program, provided that appropriated funds are available for competitive awards. The state lead agency may solicit, and include in their application, project proposals from additional state agencies, or local governments as defined at 15 CFR 24.3, or entities eligible for assistance under section 306A(e) of the CZMA (16 USC 1455a(e)), provided that each has the authority to acquire and manage land for conservation purposes.

c. The Nomination Process

As the lead CELCP agency, CZM Office will be responsible for reviewing and prioritizing qualified proposals for nomination to the national selection process. The state lead agency determines whether a proposal should be accepted for consideration on the basis that it is complete and eligible under the criteria identified in section 2. The vetting process will entail CZM Office coordinating the nomination process by calling together the divisions of DPNR, Property and Procurement and The Nature Conservancy to propose specific parcels of private land for acquisition. DPNR – CZM will hold title to the land for environmental conservation purposes using the approved CELCP Plan criteria to rank each proposed parcel (see VII. Appendix I: Proposal Ranking Criteria, page 27). CZM Office will verify the eligibility of the selected parcels under the NOAA guidelines before drafting a CELCP funding proposal to the Governor for final approval. The Governor's Office will submit the completed proposal to NOAA for consideration.

IV. Coordination and Public Involvement

a. Interagency Coordination

CZM coordinated with the division of Fish and Wildlife, St. Thomas and St. Croix, to tackle ongoing efforts to protect and conserve our coastline and natural habitats. The Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) of the US Virgin Islands is the agency responsible for the assessment of marine and wildlife resources within the territory and the management of territorially-owned wildlife refuges. DFW provided technical background information about nursery habitats and migratory birds that frequent our natural environment. DFW is to be consulted before

In 2008, The Nature Conservancy convened local experts and provided tools and technical assistance to identify and rank high priority conservation sites, as well as those most suitable for development. Through multiple iterations of the MARXAN analysis for the prioritization of protected areas, stakeholder review and input, this robust analysis forms the basis by which coastal preservation projects are justified (reference for report here). These are centered around conservation issues include preserving coral reefs, coastal wetlands, seagrass beds and mangrove forests and their function, water supply protection, threat of unsustainable development, and public use capacity and accessibility. These are all issues that the DPNR Office is addressing in other projects, and the CELCP Plan provides an opportunity to dovetail target efforts.

b. Public Involvement

During the acquisition of the priority areas, public hearings and decision meetings will be held in accordance to CZM's rules and regulations that govern the permitting process for the development of property for public use, the beach accesses, easements and allowable parking areas. The owners of the surrounding properties will be notified before any of the conservation efforts are implemented and allowed to comment on the plans.

As it stands, we have had commentary by the public on the priority areas that have been threatened by development and, in some areas, vehicular traffic. Some of the comments concerning development came through proposed development on the cays surrounding St. Thomas.

As of January 2009, most of the data regarding the location of important cultural sites has been collected for determination of the St. Croix National Heritage Area Feasibility Study. The map in shown in Figure 2. was generated during several public meetings held on St. Croix over summer 2008. The map depicts significant resources on the island and will be incorporated into the feasibility report being prepared by the planning arm of the National Park Service.

V. Certification and Approval

A. Certification that the plan is consistent with the Territory's approved Coastal Zone Management Program:

 _____ 2/24/09

Gregory A. Richards
Property Coordinator

Division of Coastal Zone Management, Department of Planning and Natural Resources

B. Approval of plan by designated official of Territory's lead agency:

 _____ 2/24/09

Janice D. Hodge, Director

Division of Coastal Zone Management, Department of Planning and Natural Resources

V. References

Coastal Zone Management Office, DPNR. Kemit Lewis, Resource Ecologist.

Division of Fish and Wildlife, DPNR. (2008). Virgin Islands Potential Restoration Projects, Vista Bella Oil Spill.

Geographic Response Plan for Oil Spill Response: San Juan Sector

<http://ocean.floridamarine.org/acp/sjacp/>

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Virgin Islands Code, Title 12, Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 7

www.turtles.org

Green Sea Turtle Recovery Plan

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/readingrm/Recoverplans/Atl_green_tur_rp.pdf

Hawksbill Sea Turtle Recovery Plan

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/readingrm/Recoverplans/Alt_hawks_tur_rp.pdf

St. Croix Sea Turtle Information

<http://cars.er.wuqs.gov/seaturtles.pdf>

VII. Appendix I: Proposal Ranking Criteria

Each proposal is rated on a scale of 1-5 for each category. Those scores are then multiplied by a factor based on the relative important of that value. Final scores are out of total possible 100.

Criterion	Point Value 1-5 5 = high	Weight	Final Value
Ecological Value i.e. endangered/threatened species habitat, conservation corridor, wetland, provides important hydrological function, aquifer recharge area for water supply, highly erodible soil upland to near shore ecosystems,		5	
Conservation Value i.e. potential for restoration, absence/presence of contamination, compatible existing use		5	
Recreational Value i.e. suitable for passive recreation, availability for public access		3	
Threat of Conversion i.e. market availability, infrastructure, imminence of development		4	
Aesthetic Value i.e. attractions such as overlooks, general appeal		2	
Historical/Cultural i.e. significant site, federal designation		3	

Appendix II: National Standards for CELCP Site Selection Criteria

Policies of the Coastal Zone Management Act Relating to Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation.

Related to ecological and conservation values, the CZMA declares it national policy to:

- Protect fish and wildlife and their habitat in the coastal zone;
- Protect estuaries to provide opportunities for long-term research, education, interpretation, and stewardship;
- Manage development to maintain and improve coastal water quality to protect and enhance natural resources and existing uses of those waters;

Related to recreational, historical, and aesthetic values, the CZMA declares it national policy to:

- Maintain and enhance environmentally sound public access to the coasts for recreation purposes;
- Protect barrier islands within the coastal zone to provide protection against storm surge, wave damage and flooding, and maintain sand supplies and protect important recreational areas;
- Give priority consideration for coast dependent uses, including recreation; and

- **Assist in the sensitive**