

The Virgin Islands Consortium

USVI Receives Federal Grant To Support Land Acquisition Project To Protect Endangered Species

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Agave eggersiana is listed as an endangered species in the USVI. By. GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. Virgin Islands has been awarded over \$1.3 million from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support land acquisition and conservation planning projects.

The grant funding comes as part of the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF). Over \$36 million in awards have been given to six states as well as the USVI to support conservation efforts for 32 listed and at-risk species.

According to a statement from the Department of Interior, these grants are in support of the Biden administration's "America the Beautiful" initiative, a decade-long call to action for the conservation of 30 percent of American lands and waters by 2030.

The money for the territory comes from the Recovery land Acquisition Grant Program, which "provides funds for the acquisition of habitat in support of Service-approved recovery plans."

The announcement does not indicate to which local or implementing agency the funds will be awarded, nor the details of the project which aims to provide permanent protection for endangered species in the USVI.

Federal conservation efforts in the territory have been viewed with skepticism by some, especially on St. John. Residents there chafe against the expansive boundaries of the Virgin Islands National Park, which some feel unduly restricts development, keeps land prices high, and exerts a form of neocolonial control over the island and by extension the territory.