

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Coastweeks Beach Cleanup Kicks Off On Sept. 9, Volunteers Needed

Community Center / **Published On September 11, 2015 09:17 AM /**

Staff **September 11, 2015**



More than 1,000 Virgin Islands residents will take part in the 30th annual Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup Sept. 19 – Oct. 31, ridding the territory's beaches of waste, from soda cans and plastic bags to tires and home appliances, a University of the Virgin Islands press release has made known.

The Coastweeks cleanups on selected St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John beaches are coordinated by the Virgin Islands Marine Advisory Services (VIMAS). VIMAS is a division within the UVI Center for Marine and Environmental Studies program.

“Last year we had 1,134 volunteers on all three islands,” said Howard Forbes, Jr., VIMAS coordinator. “That is good, but given the population size of the territory, I would really like to see many more people come out to be a part of Coastweeks. The cleanups increase our awareness and understanding of the importance of our beaches and marine resources.”

VIMAS will assist groups, clubs, organizations and schools to organize and conduct shoreline and underwater cleanups.

St. Thomas beach clean ups scheduled to date include:

Sept. 19 - Brewers Bay	9 a.m.
Sept. 19 - Hassel Island Frenchtown)	8:30 a.m. (transportation provided from
Sept. 26 - Red Hook Salt Pond	8 a.m.
Oct. 3 - Coki Point	9 a.m.

On St. Croix numerous groups have committed to doing clean-ups, including: UVI Psychology Club, UVI Recycle Club, UVI SCI100 classes, CRABBS Dive Club, Good Hope Country Day School, St. Croix Educational Complex, St. Croix Environmental Association, and Central High School ROTC. Some of the beaches to be cleaned are Altoona Lagoon, Little Bay, Dorsch Beach, Cowboy Beach, Frederiksted Pier, Cane Bay, and Southgate Coastal Reserve.

Dates and times are being coordinated. Interested parties can contact Marcia Taylor, St. Croix Coastweeks coordinator at (340) 693-4046 or mtaylor@uvi.edu.

On St. John beach clean ups are planned by community members who have adopted various beaches across the island, according to Karen Jarvis, who works with the Friends of the Virgin Islands National Parks and is a Coastweeks coordinator.

Jarvis says the general public is invited to join in a cleanup of Trunk Bay beach. The date is still to be determined and interested parties can contact Jarvis for information at (340) 779-4940 or kjarvis@friendsvin.org

Forbes said one goal this year is to go beyond the shorelines and into the bushes surrounding the beaches, where he said there are larger items discarded by the public. “We have found anything from vials of blood, dishwashers, tires, washing machines and toilets,” he said.

Forbes said VIMAS is partnering with The Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA), who will help transport and dispose of debris that is collected.

Coastweeks is also going green this year. Rather than using paper forms to collect data and document waste accumulated, Forbes said information will now be input into a smart phone app. “The app has icons of cigarette butts, cans and other items waste collectors can click on. It helps tabulate specific waste collected and estimates the weight,” Forbes said. That data is returned to the Ocean Conservancy. Last year 10,000 pounds of trash

was collected between St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

Teachers and other environmental groups are encouraged to participate in one of the scheduled Coastweeks cleanups, or schedule a cleanup of their own up to Oct. 31. For more information on scheduling a beach cleanup or other VIMAS related activities, visit <http://vimas.uvi.edu> or contact Forbes at (340) 693-1672 or howard.forbes@live.uvi.edu

Feature Image: Shoys Beach, St. Croix.

© Viconsortium 2026