

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DPNR Receives \$840,200 Grant From FEMA To Help Mitigate Flooding And Losses Resulting From Flooding

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The Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) recently awarded the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) \$840,200 for a Watershed Management Studies Advanced Assistance Project, the Office of Disaster Recovery (O.D.R.) has announced.

Watersheds work to protect the environment and, ultimately human life and property by controlling destructive run-off and degradation. The plan will cover a total of eight basins in the territory. The locations on St. Croix are Long Point Bay, Diamond, Bethlehem, HOVENSA, and Salt River and on St. Thomas, Cyril E. King Airport, St. Thomas Harbor, and Bolongo Bay.

"With this project, we will target areas known to flood and identify ways to reduce the repetitive loss from flooding," Jean-Pierre Oriol, Planning and Natural Resources Commissioner.

The scope provides for a study to include a land and water resource inventory, a hydrologic assessment, and a watershed resource assessment. Targeted goals, objectives, and specific action steps to include flood mitigation and water quality improvement will also be integrated into the review, according to the O.D.R.

The project requires coordination with community members and the territory at large through planning sessions and public meetings, which will be incorporated into the final report.

"Facilitating projects that will improve infrastructure and preserve our natural resources while protecting against flood damage is a win-win for the territory and helps to build resilience," said Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, O.D.R. director. "Once completed, the Watershed Management Studies Advanced Assistance Project will help to control the flow of run-off that could flood homes and damage the environment in the event of a disaster."

The study will be completed in approximately 13 months and will determine the location of future watersheds and positively impact how DPNR maximizes the territory's land and water resources.