

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Island Green Launches First Community Composting Program on St. John; Two New Positions Available for Brush Chipping Manager & Laborer

Business / **Published On November 02, 2019 09:14 AM /**

Staff **November 02, 2019**



ST. JOHN -- A groundbreaking composting program is being launched by Island Green Living Association in cooperation with VI Waste Management Authority this November, Island Green has announced. According to the release, the aim of the USVI Zero Waste Composting Pilot Program is to keep a vital resource – vegetative debris – from filling the territory's already overflowing landfills while cutting the island's carbon footprint.

A powerful Vermeer BCXL1800 Brush Chipper has been purchased with shipping and delivery compliments of Crowley Logistics, Boyson Inc., and local trucker Michael Marsh.

Funded through a grant from Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands and private donations, Island Green's composting program will create two part-time jobs while providing valuable compost and mulch to the community and educational opportunities for students, the release said. The program is in the process of being designated as a Clinton Global Initiative Call to Action.

"Island Green has long advocated for recapturing our island's usable 'waste' and seeing it for what it is – a valuable RESOURCE," said Harith Wickrema, Island Green Board president. "With the help of Waste Management, our composting program will reduce tons of green and brown debris from being transported to the landfill on St. Thomas resulting in significant environment benefit and financial savings. The final product will be utilized by farmers, residents and landscapers. We are also creating two new jobs which will hopefully go permanent after the six month pilot program."

The two new part-time (15-25 hours per week) workers being sought to join the innovative waste reduction team are a brush chipping manager and laborer. Training on the Vermeer BCXL1800 brush chipper will be provided. The brush chipping manager will operate and maintain the chipper and manage the laborer. Brush chipping manager candidates should have experience with heavy equipment operation and supervisory capabilities.

The laborer will be responsible for operating a chainsaw to cut brush into manageable pieces and feeding it into the chipper. Both jobs are physically demanding and require the ability to stand and walk continually during shifts and lift, push and pull up to 50 pounds. These are six-month positions with the opportunity to go permanent. Those interested can learn more details and apply by contacting Executive Director Kelly Lawson at kelly@islandgreenliving.org, or calling 340-998-4446.

The Iowa State University EARTH Program, managed by Dr. David Minner, used an ISU Capstone class to develop a comprehensive wood chipping and composting plan for St. John which served as the basis for the Island Green grant with the Community Foundation, according to the release. Dr. Minner serves on the Island Green board and is a key player in making this venture a reality.

Currently vegetative debris cut from the National Park, Public Works, local landscapers and homeowners get put into satellite dumpsters around St. John and is mixed with other waste that ultimately heads to an overburdened landfill on St. Thomas. The release said the USVI Zero Waste Composting Pilot Program will stop this cycle and instead allow this carbon source to remain on island to help regenerate the land.

The Bovoni landfill on St. Thomas has less than two years capacity remaining and the Anguilla landfill on St. Croix is slated to close next year. The ultimate goal of Island Green's composting program is to not only become permanent on St. John, but provide a roadmap for the rest of the territory and beyond, the release said. Island Green said it will work with local schools to provide field trips and educational programming for students.

Established in 2004, Island Green Living Association is a registered 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization on St. John dedicated to sustainability throughout the USVI. www.islandgreenliving.org.

