

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DPNR to Remove 30 Derelict Vessels in Territory's Waters With \$1 Million NOAA Grant

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Damage vessels in the USVI. By. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources has announced its plan to remove derelict and abandoned vessels across the territory.

DPNR said approximately 30 vessels will be removed at a cost of \$1 million. Funding for this project is provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Program to assist the territory recover from the 2017 hurricane season, DPNR said. Target vessels were identified by the department, but the selected contractors will also be removing marine debris surrounding the vessels.

“This is another example of the Bryan/Roach Administration’s commitment to a full recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the restoration and maintenance of our marine resources,” said D.P.N.R. Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol.

According to the release, the target areas chosen for the removal are Flamingo Pond on Water Island, the St. Thomas East End Reserves, specifically Inner Mangrove Lagoon and Benner Bay, Coral Harbor on St. John, and Salt River and Altona on St. Croix. These locations were chosen by the department due to their importance as refuge areas during hurricanes as well as for their ecological value and surrounding habitats, DPNR said.

An additional \$1 million is also available for community-based hurricane debris cleanups. The department said it will issue sub-awards to allow local organizations to receive funding to remove debris from the 2017 hurricane season from locations with large scale debris such as roofing material and appliances. This funding opportunity is available through August 2022 and recipients must have a registered SAM and DUNS number.

“DPNR really encourages individuals and groups to collaborate in order to receive these awards,” said Kristina Edwards, CZM education and outreach coordinator. For more information email Edwards at kristina.edwards@dpnr.vi.gov.