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DPNR to Launch Project Determining Conditions of Major Watersheds in St. Croix and St. Thomas

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USVI Watershed Management Studies Advanced Assistance Project Map. By. DPNR.

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) announced Wednesday that the Division of Coastal Zone Management is kicking off a project to characterize the conditions of several major watersheds across St. Thomas and St. Croix, and to provide recommendations and design details to reduce flooding and improve management of stormwater and rainfall runoff.

According to the release, the watersheds of focus, indicated in the feature image, encompass areas with critical infrastructure like the airport and major roadways; commercial, government and residential investments; and agricultural activity. The watersheds were selected as high priority based on their importance to Virgin Islanders as places where structural and natural assets have

been affected by changes to land cover and associated flooding risks.

The Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) produced as a result of this project will accompany previous and ongoing Watershed Plans across the Virgin Islands, including Coral Bay and Fish Bay in St John, Smith Bay in St Thomas, and the East End of St Croix. WMPs help identify the root causes of flooding, which often occur somewhere other than the major or visible site of a flooding problem.

“DPNR along with our partners will use the WMPs to guide and inform future development and improvement projects to be more resilient to existing and future land, water, and climate conditions,” said DPNR Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol. “This is another example of the Bryan/Roach Administrations’ commitment to ensuring resilience in our redevelopment by using these plans to mitigate repetitive loss from floods.”

According to the release, DPNR will be hosting meetings in the coming weeks to introduce the project to agency and institutional partners, as well as public meetings to introduce the project to anyone interested in learning about and providing input to this work.

For more information contact Hilary Lohmann, Coastal Resilience Coordinator at hilary.lohmann@dpnr.vi.gov. This project is funded through an award from the Federal Emergency Management Authority (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Advanced Assistance.