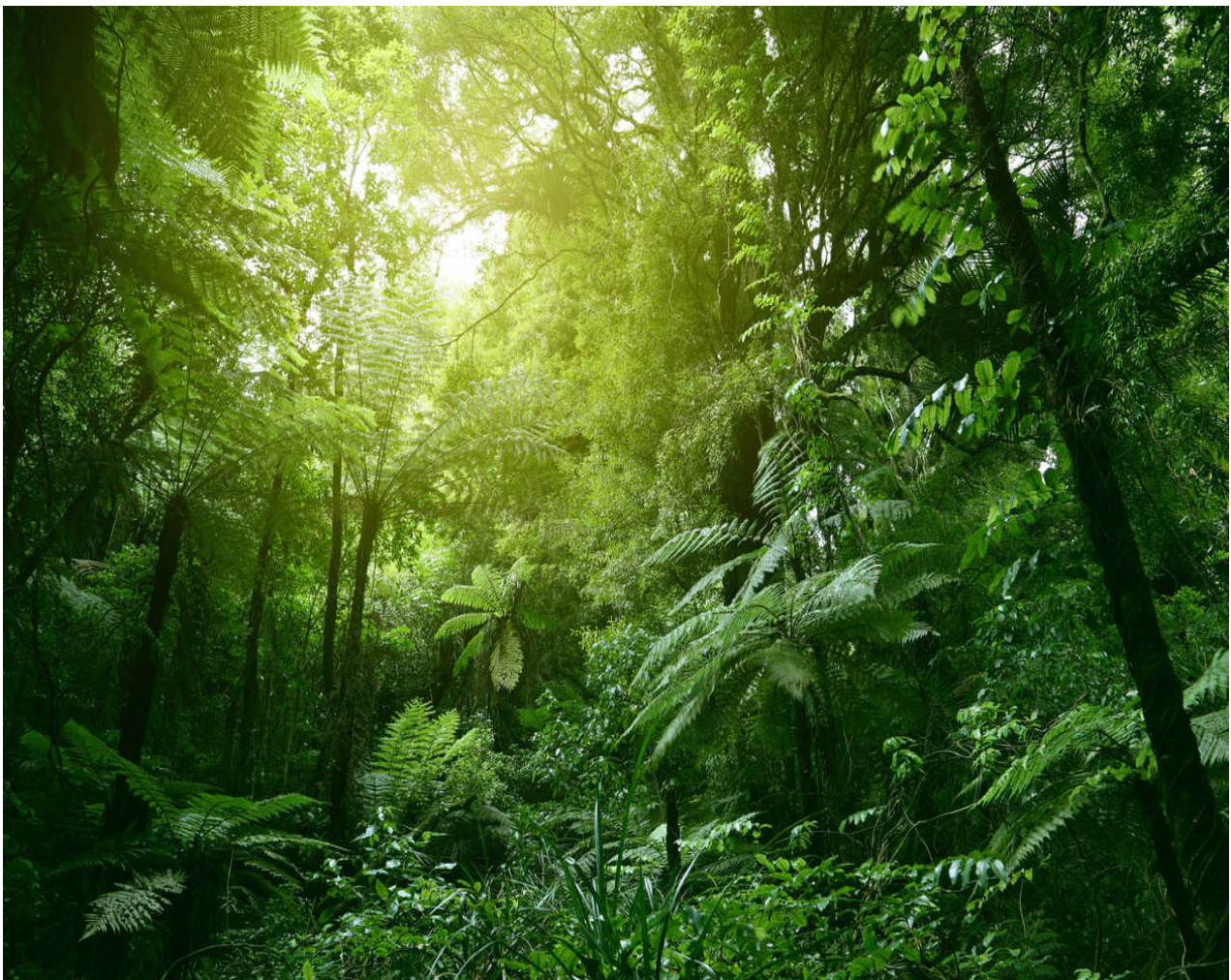


The Virgin Islands Consortium

First National Woodland Survey of Virgin Islands Announced; Local Landowners With Forest, Wooded Land and Bush to Receive Survey Documents in Coming Months

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The USDA Forest Service and the V.I. Department of Agriculture announced Monday they are developing a version of the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS) for the local environment and conditions of the U.S. Virgin Islands. According to the release, in the coming months, the survey will be mailed to USVI landowners with forest, wooded land, and what is locally referred to as bush.

The NWOS is a periodic survey conducted throughout the U.S. that aims to understand how many private forest landowners there are and why they own forested or wooded land.

There were nearly 47,000 acres of forest, including wooded land and bush, in the USVI in 2014, when the third and most recent [forest inventory](#) was conducted by the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA), the release stated. Through FIA, the Forest Service has collected data on forest cover and characteristics in the USVI since the mid-1990s, yet little is known about the islands' forest and wooded land owners or their preferences, practices, needs, and plans for their land.

"Implementing the NWOS in the USVI will provide information on the islands' forest landowners and how they view and use their wooded lands, what motivates their land-use decisions, and what role they play in forest conservation and recovery," said Tom Brandeis, a research forester with the FIA Program.

Local landowners were identified from public ownership records and selected from a randomly-generated list to receive the survey.

"Whether landowners own one acre with trees or bush, hundreds of acres, or something in between, we are interested in hearing from them," said Kathleen McGinley, a research social scientist with the Forest Service International Institute of Tropical Forestry (IITF). "Since data are only being collected from a limited number of landowners, every survey is especially important."

Every landowner who receives a survey is encouraged to fill it out and return it in the envelope provided. The greater the number of participants, the more information and insight the Department of Agriculture will have to offer programs and services that are tailored to meet the specific needs of local communities across the USVI, according to the release.

NWOS surveys are part of a broader effort to understand changing forest conditions across the islands. The results will complement the fourth cycle of FIA field measurements. The latest forest field measurements began in 2020 but were postponed due to the pandemic. The field crews plan to resume these measurements later this year.

The National Woodland Owner Survey is carried out nationwide and implemented by the [Family Forest Research Center](#), a joint venture between the USDA Forest Service and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

For more information about the National Woodland Owner Survey:
<https://www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/>.

For more information on the first National Woodland Owner Survey of the USVI, email Brett Butler at brett.butler2@usda.gov.