

Image not found or type unknown

USACE, Office of Disaster Recovery, Create Silver Jacket Team in USVI for Flood Mitigation

Disaster Recovery / **Published On February 06, 2020 04:02 PM /**

Staff Consortium **February 06, 2020**

Image not found or type unknown



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Jacksonville District and the U.S. Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery held the first meeting of the year for their newly created Silver Jackets team at the Virgin Islands Cardiac Center in Christiansted on Monday.

According to the release, Silver Jackets is an interagency flood risk management team with federal, state, tribal, and local agencies who work together to reduce the risk from flooding and enhance response and recovery efforts from natural disasters.

U.S.V.I. Office of Disaster Recovery, Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien, leads the team with the support of federal and local partners. The goal is to have each agency bring their resources, funding, and programs together to help meet the flood risk management goals of the

territory.

Marci Jackson, the Corps representative on the Silver Jackets team, says, “The Jacksonville District Corps of Engineers is excited to partner with the USVI. They are fortunate to have such a dedicated team, and I look forward to the opportunities that are ahead of us.” The overall goal for the Corps is to have a Silver Jackets team in every U.S. state and territory.

Managing flood risk through the entire cycle, preparation and training, response, recovery, and mitigation ensures that teams make a lasting impact on the communities they serve.

Silver Jackets USVI team members consists of the Virgin Islands Public Finance Authority, Virgin Islands Office of Disaster Recovery (ODR), Virgin Islands Department of Public Works, Virgin Islands Department of Planning and National Resources, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), University of the Virgin Islands and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

Moving forward, the team is working on project proposals for 2021 to address flood risk management priorities for the territory, such as an education campaign to promote community mitigation planning and flood plain management.

“The Silver Jacket teams across the United States are a great interagency tool to develop flood risk reduction plans, as well as for sharing knowledge and best practices on how to respond and execute recovery efforts when natural disasters occur,” said USACE Jacksonville District Commander, Col. Drew Kelly.

“While no single agency has all the answers, leveraging multiple programs and perspectives can provide a cohesive solution. The U.S. Virgin Islands team is strong, and I am proud the Jacksonville District is part of this important effort. We are committed to supporting the team by providing staff, information sharing, and collaboration as well as program support,” he said.

Viewing flood mitigation in its totality not just by rain but also through coastal flooding and degradation is a critical piece for the local community.

“As the Virgin Islands continues to move out of the recovery phase, the formation of a Silver Jackets team adds another layer of support. With four projects in various phases of the approval process, our partnership is already creating opportunities to build a more resilient community and infrastructure,” ODR Director Adrienne L. Williams-Octalien.

Those projects, Savan Gut, Turpentine Run, Estate LaGrange, and the South Atlantic Coastal Study, will lay the groundwork for much needed flood mitigation in the territory. The team will meet again in April to discuss the status of these and future projects.