



GREEN DIGEST

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**SHOUT OUT TO
OUR VOLUNTEERS!**
WE LOVE YOUR GREEN
SPIRIT!



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**LANDMARK SAFE
SUNSCREEN LAW GOES INTO
EFFECT IN USVI**



**MOST FAR-REACHING
PROTECTIONS & EARLIEST
IMPLEMENTATION IN THE U.S.**

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YES WE CAN!

With a batch of 300,000 crushed cans recently setting sail for Puerto Rico this September, Island Green Living Association has recycled nearly 800,000 aluminum

cans, breathing new life into this valuable resource while keeping it out of our overflowing landfills. Our aluminum recycling program currently operates ...



PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Harith Wickrema, Board President

Dear Readers,

As 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, we consider the significance of this auspicious milestone while at the same time feeling a sense of uncertainty related to COVID-19. Coronavirus impacts everyone – from international cities to our own little islands. The pandemic has changed all of our lives but social distancing does not mean we should stop advocating and protecting our environment and health. US Virgin Islanders embody the mission of Earth Day: to drive transformative environmental change for people and the planet.

Sustainability is among the most important global issues of our time. Given our reliance on outside sources for many goods and services, waste management issues and dependence on tourism, the USVI and other islands in the Caribbean are especially vulnerable. We at Island Green Living believe together as a “village” we can accomplish results – yes, measurable, visible results – that will move us toward preserving our islands.

This includes food security with home-, school-, and community-based gardening – even roof top gardening – as well as composting, which will allow less dependency on imported groceries. During the lock down in the spring, you may have noticed sparse or empty grocery shelves. USVI can

become more self-sufficient if we accelerate growing our own food in our gardens and farms.

Education is essential, with emphasis on our youth. We need to teach kids to look at “waste” as a valuable RESOURCE. We need to underscore the importance of sustainability and resilience and the meaningful part they can play – igniting their passion to become a generation of green warriors battling global warming. Green Curriculum in our schools, including a ‘Green Word of the Day’ or similar program, will be key.

Working as ONE we can eliminate redundancy, waste of human capital and conserve valuable resources. Through collaboration, individuals and organizations can share ideas and cooperate on projects. The Governor has clearly shared the administration’s desire to support and work with the community. Let us all combine forces to work as ONE team with public/private partnerships.

Thanks to such collaborations, we are chipping and mulching our brown and green debris, plastic straws have become a thing of the past, toxic sunscreen is now banned, burning of debris was barred after the hurricanes and soon there will be new legislation that will hopefully make us Styrofoam-free.

These accomplishments would not be possible without the dedication of our Governor, senators and the unwavering support of the community including our volunteers, members and benefactors. That means YOU. We are grateful for your support and commitment to preserving our paradise. Together our territory will survive COVID-19 and we look forward to continuing to make progress on our green initiatives. It is through collaboration – working as ONE territory, ONE village – that we will make a difference. territory will survive COVID-19 and we look forward to continuing to make progress on our green initiatives.

It is through collaboration – working as ONE territory, ONE village – that we will make a difference.

Cheers,
Harith

Harith Wickrema
President
Island Green Living



Dr. David Minner, ISU EARTH Program

FIRST EVER MUNICIPAL CHIPPING PROGRAM ON ST. JOHN

The first phase of a groundbreaking chipping program was launched in early 2020 by Island Green Living on St. John in cooperation with the VI Waste Management Authority and thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) and private donations.

The program was designated a Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action for its excellence in finding a sustainable solution to handling everyday green and brown debris as well as its value in disaster relief following future storms.

The aim of the Brush Chipping 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 and advancing resilience in the aftermath of future hurricanes. The ultimate goal of Island Green's program is to not only become permanent on St. John, but provide a roadmap for similar programs on St. Thomas and St. Croix.

To get things started, a powerful Vermeer Brush Chipper was procured, with shipping and delivery compliments of Crowley Logistics, Boyson Inc. and local trucker Michael Marsh. 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 CFVI. Dr. Minner serves on the Island Green board and was a key player in making this venture a reality.



Ariel Stolz, Dr. Greg Guannel -Director of the Green Caribbean Center at UVI, Anthony Novelli, Kelly Lawson, Harith Wickrema, Michael Marsh

LAUNCHED THANKS TO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Vegetative debris typically gets put into satellite dumpsters around St. John and is mixed with other waste that ultimately heads to an overburdened landfill on St. Thomas. The Brush Chipping Pilot Program stops this cycle and instead allows this carbon source to remain on island to help regenerate the land. So far more than 1,100 cu yds. of brush have been processed.



David DiGiacomo, IGL board member; Harith Wickrema; Kelly Lawson, IGL Exec Director; Dr. David Minner; Ryan Erger, Vermeer; Shena Esannason, IGL Board Member & VIWMA; Julian Doran, Chipping Manager; Elvis Pemberton, WMA; Bill Dennis, St. John Repair Shop; Matt Moody, Love Cit Strong; Steve DeBlasio, Anthony Novelli

Island Green hopes to continue the program with additional grant and private funding and for it to ultimately become self-sustaining. Additionally the plan is to provide critical feed stock for a one year composting demonstration project with **Sustainable Generation (SG) and Gore-Tex**. The SG/Gore system produces compost in just two months and could fundamentally change the way the entire territory handles organic waste while providing valuable vocational training.



Anthony Novelli, Cole Chesnut with Vermeer, Ryan Erger with Vermeer, Kelly Lawson, Steve DeBlasio, VITEMA Deputy Director of Logistics

THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ISLAND GREEN'S PROGRAM IS TO NOT ONLY BECOME PERMANENT ON ST. JOHN, BUT PROVIDE A ROADMAP FOR SIMILAR PROGRAMS ON ST. THOMAS AND ST. CROIX.

ISLAND GREEN LIVING'S NEW HOME



Kelly Lawson, Bryan McKinney, Paula Smail, Tommy Lord, Elise DuPont and Erin Lieb



Rob Crane, Island Green Treasurer, with Doug White and construction worker

We are fundraising to construct a comprehensive Sustainable Living Center which will include areas for training/education, new recycling pavilions, expansion of our processing capabilities with updated equipment and will be operated by solar power. Stay tuned.

**WE HOPE TO
SEE YOU SOON.**

ISLAND GREEN LIVING'S NEW HOME

In 2019 Island Green Living Association moved from our previous location to just across the street, adjacent to the Susannaberg Transfer Station on St. John. We are now located below the VITEMA building on Gifft Hill Road. Look down from Tony's Kitchen on Centerline and that is us!

A FEMA grant funds repairs to the existing Public Works warehouse on our new site to bring it to pre-storm conditions. Once fully complete, the building will temporarily house the aluminum crusher and provide an office for staff. Our ReSource Depot is operated out of several containers.



Jim Kriner, Juli Camrud, Anthony Novelli, Esme Lagunas, Annelise Camrud, Brad Camrud



Senator Kurt Violet, Senator Oakland Benta, Senator Donna Frett-Gregory, Senator Athneil "Bobby" Thomas, Senator Janelle K. Sarauw, Harith Wickrema, Senator Novelle E. Francis Jr., Senator Myron Jackson, Senator Javan E. James, Senator Allison DeGazon, Senator Steven Payne

LANDMARK SAFE SUNSCREEN LAW GOES INTO EFFECT IN USVI

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. recently made history with the signing of Act 8185, banning the importation, sale and distribution of chemical sunscreen containing the “toxic 3 Os” of oxybenzone, octinoxate and octocrylene. The legislation, which was co-sponsored by eight senators lead by Senator Marvin A. Blyden and Senator Janelle K. Sarauw, makes the USVI the first to embrace the FDA’s recent announcement recognizing

only zinc oxide and titanium dioxide (mineral sunscreen) as safe and effective ingredients.

The USVI ban adds the ingredient octocrylene to the two

chemicals prohibited in Hawaii and Key West, meaning safer mineral sunscreens become the default choice. The full ban went into effect nine months earlier than the other U.S. bans, on March 30, 2020.

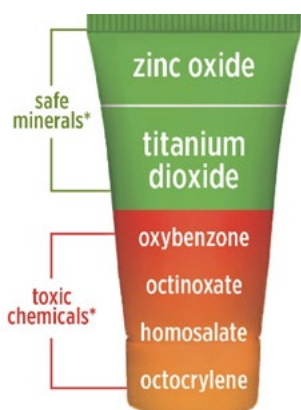
According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), there is scientific evidence indicating that oxybenzone is deadly to coral and threatens overall reef health. These chemicals not only poison our waters, they poison us. They have been found in breast milk, blood and urine and cause cell damage that may lead to cancer, disrupt hormones and can cause severe allergies.

MOST FAR-REACHING PROTECTIONS & EARLIEST IMPLEMENTATION IN THE U.S.

There are safer, more sustainable alternatives. Non-nano mineral sunscreen containing zinc oxide and titanium dioxide, such as those offered by Stream2Sea and Badger, protect against the sun and do not harm coral.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has put together a rating system where coral-safe sunscreens

can be found. Coverings such as rash guards and hats also are effective against the sun’s damaging rays.



say YES to minerals

Natural minerals reflect UV rays to protect from burning and aging rays. They rub in sheer and are immediately effective. Because minerals aren't absorbed, they are safe and gentle on sensitive skin, and just as gentle on the planet!

say NO to chemicals

Chemical sunscreens disperse UV rays through the body and need 20 minutes to become effective. They're absorbed into the skin and the bloodstream, where they've been linked to health issues from allergies to infertility. They've even been tied to the destruction of the coral reefs.

*SUNSCREEN TOXICITY RATINGS - FROM EWG.ORG/SKINDEEP



President Bill Clinton with Harith Wickrema

"WE'VE GOT TO DO THIS."

-President Bill Clinton

MOVING FORWARD

Landmark Safe Sunscreen Law Goes into Effect in USVI

The danger of toxic sunscreen received unexpected attention thanks to President Bill Clinton, when he credited Island Green President Harith Wickrema with educating him about the hazards of the “toxic 3 Os” during his speech at the CGI Post-Disaster Recovery Event on St. Thomas in 2019. Clinton went on to urge attendees to use only coral-safe sunscreen. “We’ve got to do this,” he said.



Host Tyler Mathisen discussing the toxic sunscreen ban on CNBC's Power Lunch

“Not only have Brad and Juli contributed financially and through hands-on aluminum recycling and volunteer efforts, they have also been immensely valuable to us in terms of their intellectual and marketing acumen, such as their direction on ending the use of IGLA in favor of the more descriptive ‘Island Green,’” said Island Green Board President Harith Wickrema. “The organization would not be the same without them. They are an inspiration and we are tremendously grateful.”

BRAD & JULI CAMRUD HONORED WITH THE RESILIENT ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPION AWARD



Juli and Brad Camrud Recognized with Resilient Environmental Champion Award

Longtime Island Green benefactors Brad & Juli Camrud are the recipients of Island Green’s inaugural Resilient Environmental Champion Award, granted in recognition of their unparalleled dedication to sustainability issues on St. John. The Atlanta couple, who have a home on St. John, first became involved with Island Green several years back when they learned of the non-profit’s efforts to promote sustainable building practices. But they got really excited when the organization expanded their scope by addressing issues such as net zero waste, composting and aluminum recycling.

**"WHAT MANY FAIL TO REALIZE
IS THAT ENVIRONMENTAL
RESPONSIBILITY CAN ALSO
HAVE A GREAT FINANCIAL
BENEFIT."**

“Having been involved with international travel over my 30 year career, it is impossible to not see the environmental toll that is caused by human activity,” explained Brad, who with his wife owns The Link Group, an international marketing research company.

“This has inspired us to become active in environmental causes. St. John, in particular, is a really unique situation both in the fact that the environment is a true part of the fabric of the community and it is a small enough community for a handful of dedicated people to really make a difference.”

And Brad and Juli truly have made a difference. Over the years, they have spent countless hours volunteering with the Island Green team. They’ve also generously contributed to Island Green’s coffers, allowing the organization to expand its good works. “A lot of things can be done to help the environment that don’t cost anything though. Island Green needs people to volunteer to pick up cans on beaches, get cans to the facility, crush cans, help with composting, etc. and that can really make a difference,” added Brad.

“Not only have Brad and Juli contributed financially and through hands-on aluminum recycling and volunteer efforts, they have also been immensely valuable to us in terms of their intellectual and marketing acumen, such as their direction on ending the use of IGLA in favor of the more descriptive ‘Island Green,’” said Island Green Board President Harith Wickrema. “The organization would not be the same without them. They are an inspiration and we are tremendously grateful.”

According to the Juli and Brad, who drive a Tesla, power their home with solar energy and are committed to zero waste initiatives, being green is not only important ethically, it also makes good economic sense: “What many fail to realize is that environmental responsibility can also have a great financial benefit. For instance, solar panels on St. John will completely pay for themselves in 7-8 years, after which time people have FREE power for their home. The same holds true with using your own glass containers and buying in bulk, such as eco-friendly cleaning supplies at a place like St. John Eco Station, etc.”

NEW GREEN DECADE IN THE TERRITORY



Adam Cook, Dr. David Minner, Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Harith Wickrema, Kelly Lawson

GOVERNOR BRYAN AND FIRST FAMILY SHOW GREEN SPIRIT ON ST. JOHN COLLABORATION IN ACTION

Governor Albert Bryan Jr., First Lady Yolanda Bryan and their daughter spent two days on St. John touring the island to gain a deeper understanding of green initiatives here. Arranged by Island Green President Harith Wickrema as part of the non-profit's objective of COLLABORATION for 2020 and beyond, it included key organizations and programs on the island.



Kelly Lawson; Shikima Jones, St. John Administrator; Governor Albert Bryan Jr.

The visit kicked off at Eco Serendib Villa and Spa where a "Seed to Plate" dinner curated from the Villa's organic garden set the stage. Early the next morning, Board Chairman Miles Stair greeted the Governor at Giffit Hill School, where he toured the campus including a visit to the cafeteria where students cook food grown at the Iowa State University EARTH Program Gardens. Next St. John Administrator Shikima Jones-Sprauve joined for visits to Island Green's Resource Depot, followed by the joint Waste Management/Island Green Zero Waste



David McCay, Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Harith Wickrema, Andy Rutnik

Composting Pilot Program site. Later Harith accompanied the Governor to introduce the President of Friends of the VI National Park, Todd Sampson, who shared plans for a new playground and other projects.

The Governor was given a firsthand look at how we turn "waste" into a resource, sustainable initiatives on the horizon and the importance of green education. Dr. David Minner, coordinator of the ISU EARTH Program, Todd Sampson and others were on hand to provide insight on



First Lady Yolanda Bryan, Governor Albert Bryan Jr., Harith Wickrema with his son Neil, Deputy Chief Of Staff Kevin Rodriguez

composting, organic gardening, significance of the toxic sunscreen ban, preservation, community involvement, can crushing, recycling/source separation and so much more.

The visit came to a close with the Governor and First Lady joining Harith as his guest at the Friends of the VI National Park Gala at Rhonda and David McCay's residence. Here's to the start of a great new GREEN decade in the territory!

RETHINK, REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE.

The condition of our environment is clear. But there is much that we as individuals can do to make a difference: Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Here are some specific ways YOU can bring about change:

- Before making a purchase, ask yourself, “Do I want it or do I need it?”
- Avoid single use disposable bags and plastic containers for water, beverages etc. Say no to Styrofoam carry out containers. Similar to refillable water bottles, take your own reusable containers.
- Re-use and support reuse through thrift stores such as Resource Depot in St. John, Reuse Emporium in St. Thomas, etc.
- Recycle wherever possible and support community and municipal recycling.
- Be cognizant of food waste and mitigate whenever possible. Compost at home and support municipal composting.
- Use natural products where possible such as mineral-based, non nano sunscreen.
- Say NO to plastic straws. Don’t litter and keep things such as cigarette butts off our beaches. And if you see litter, pick it up!
- Properly dispose of boating waste.
- Embrace renewable energy, installing solar and wind to power. Build with green material. Move toward adoption of electric vehicles.
- Reduce traffic jams to our beaches by using taxi shuttles vs individual jeeps.
- Walk and bike whenever possible.

These may seem like small individual actions, but collectively we can make a huge impact.



Doug White, Karen Vahling, Rob Crane, Joan Wilson, Bill Willigerod, Barry Devine

Thanks to the vision and dedication of Island Green founders Doug White, Bill Willigerod, Barry Devine and Rob Crane, Island Green has proudly served the community since 2004. Originally launched as Island Green Building

SALUTE TO OUR FOUNDERS



Doug White

Association, we became Island Green Living Association in 2014, reflecting our overarching mission of expanding sustainability to all aspects of island living.

In particular, without the passion and commitment of Doug White, who retired from the board in late 2019, Island Green could not have reached this point in our evolution. Just one example is how, despite severe damage to his own home due to the 2017 hurricanes, Doug worked tirelessly on efforts to rebuild Island Green’s home. He persevered despite setbacks and delays, working with FEMA and VITEMA to repair our badly

ravaged building. Today we are ready to reopen our doors. We sincerely appreciate Doug’s generosity, dedication and leadership. You inspired and educated me and many others with breakthrough sustainable ideas and actions. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and vision.

We salute you!
Harith



CFVI - A FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE USVI

By Dee Baecher-Brown, President, CFVI

For nearly 30 years, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) has been a catalyst for positive change in the Territory through initiatives committed primarily to youth, learning, family support and the environment. In the aftermath of hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, CFVI served as the Territory's primary philanthropic organization receiving and distributing funds to support hurricane relief efforts. As a result of this, the Foundation was in a position to provide significant funding for efforts directly related to the natural disasters that had occurred.

New opportunities for CFVI's funding of environmental efforts were supported by Cruzan Rum in their creation of the Island Spirit Fund to assist with disaster relief efforts in the U.S. Virgin Islands and across the United States. CFVI was selected as one of the recipients of disbursements from the Island Spirit Fund and was, in turn, able to provide grants to local entities to support a variety of efforts specifically

focused on environmental/marine recovery. Projects included native tree cultivation and distribution, coastal hurricane debris removal, and recycling education and materials.

Other grants made by CFVI with special attention to enhance green living in an island setting included grants for coastal clean-up and debris removal; coral reef mapping for restoration, conservation and mitigation efforts; and replacement of damaged mooring buoys to improve marine resilience to storm effects. A total of approximately \$700,000 was awarded by CFVI in these environmental grants.

At CFVI, we are committed to helping preserve our beautiful Virgin Islands as we continue building forward to a better tomorrow.

Biography: Dee Baecher-Brown has been president of the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands (CFVI) since 1996, and has worked in program development and not-for-profit management throughout her professional career.

FRIENDS OF VI NATIONAL PARK: PROTECT, PRESERVE, CONNECT

By Todd Sampsell, President, Friends of VI National Park

Since 1988, Friends of Virgin Islands National Park has served as the official philanthropic partner to Virgin Islands National Park, and since its establishment in 2001, Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument. The Friends supports environmental education, natural resource protection, cultural preservation and scientific research. We serve as an advocate for our national park, especially important in a time when public lands are often undervalued, environmental threats are mounting and the importance of private philanthropy is at an all-time high.

The Friends priorities focus on three main areas – Protect natural resources, Preserve cultural resources and Connect visitors to the park and the park to the community. Our protection efforts include research and monitoring that helps over 2,000 hatchling sea turtles make it to the sea each year and restoration of important ecosystems like mangroves and coral reefs. We maintain all 27 miles of hiking trails and clean up the park's beautiful beaches. Currently we are working to help the park boost their focus on sustainability through increased recycling, use of solar and other environmental protection practices. Our preservation focuses on restoration of ancient ruins and support for the park's archaeology program. Our connection efforts include amenities to improve visitor experiences and lessen environmental impacts while providing environmental education for local children and adults.

We look forward to partnering with Island Green and other entities on an event to officially mark the territory's ban on toxic sunscreen and celebrate "Earth Month" when we can gather again.

Biography:

Todd Sampsell joined the Friends as President in 2019 with more than two decades of conservation and non-profit management experience.



VI-EPSCoR

By Dr. Kim Waddell

The current grant of Virgin Islands Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (VI-EPSCoR) addresses the implications of climate change for island social-ecological systems. In the Virgin Islands, nearshore marine ecosystems, especially coral reefs, are vulnerable to both land- and water-based human activities and oceanographic-climatic disturbances. To address this vulnerability, VI-EPSCoR focuses on developing local research capacity to improve both management and stewardship of these ecosystems.

Among our different research areas, the primary goal of our coral reef research program is to integrate physical, biological and human factors that influence the health and function of our marine environment. The research outputs can then inform the natural resource management decisions in the territory that protect our marine resources.

A timely example of that is the work of Dr. Marilyn Brandt and her students who have been studying the sources and mechanisms of coral disease transmission. She and her students have learned much about the complex interactions between environmental stressors such as higher sea temperatures and land based pollutants with the corals. This work has prepared Brandt and her colleagues to tackle the latest threat – a new rapidly spreading dis-

ease identified as “Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease.” Brandt’s lab identified the disease early in its emergence in the US Virgin Islands and has drawn upon an active network of other university colleagues to develop a multipronged research response to understand, predict and potentially control this

and other diseases that are challenging our coral reef ecosystems. We are proud of this work and see it as yet another example of Virgin Islanders working together to sustain the health of our amazing marine ecosystem that we all cherish here in the USVI.



Biography: Dr. Kim Waddell is the Director for VI-EPSCoR—a National Science Foundation-supported research capacity building program based at the University of the Virgin Islands. He is also the Project Lead for a FEMA-funded Hazard Mitigation and Resilience Plan Update for the US Virgin Islands. He received his Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from the University of South Carolina and his B.A. in Environmental Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

WHAT HAPPENS ON ST. JOHN DOES NOT STAY ON ST. JOHN INSTEAD IT “SAILS ACROSS THE SEA TO CHANGE THE WORLD”

By Superintendent Nigel Fields

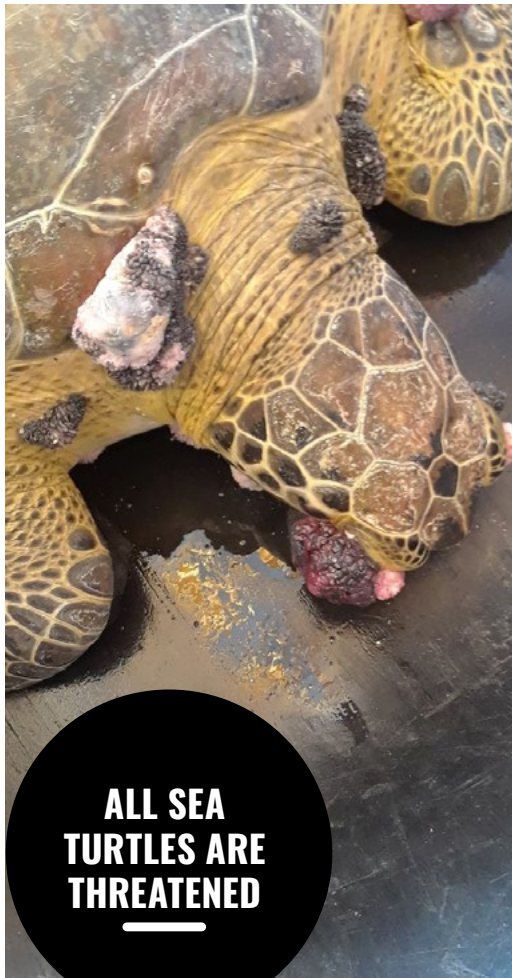


St. John is an unusually generative place. Stories of good things that happen here have a way of traveling across the seas. Recently while participating in a National Park Service meeting in Charleston, I heard how our park hurricane recovery efforts on St. John influenced other think-

ers, leaders and executive managers in the park system. As Virgin Island National Park completes the planning for replacement of the Biosphere (our old science offices), archaeology laboratory, employee housing and other infrastructure, the word is spreading about our emphasis on sustainability and resilience. It was personally rewarding to learn that what we’re doing on St. John has helped moved the needle on NPS approaches to recovery efforts for other parks.

In working with many local partners such as the Friends of Virgin Islands National Park, Island Green Living and the University of the Virgin Islands, we deliberately aim to build for our future fully aware of the changing realities within the Caribbean. Energy, clean water, walkability, wellness and a sense of discovery are design principles shaping our redevelopment plans. We’re in the early stages but already colleagues in natural disaster prone areas are beginning to challenge –and in many cases—improve their recovery planning efforts. This makes sense for the environment and for our economy. Unlike the infamous, often quoted phrase regarding Las Vegas, what happens on St. John indeed does not stay on St. John. Instead it sails across the sea to change the world.

Biography: Nigel Fields was appointed Superintendent for Virgin Islands National Park in 2018 and has been with the National Park Service since 2011. Prior, he spent 15 years as an Environmental Health Scientist at the Environmental Protection Agency, including serving as the Regional Science Program Director within the Office of Research and Development.



Biography: Paul D. Jobsis, Ph.D. is Acting Director of the Center for Marine & Environmental Studies, Associate Professor of Biology, & Research Administrator III for University of the Virgin Islands College of Science and Mathematics



FIBROPAPILLOMATOSIS: A NEW THREAT TO SEA TURTLES IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

By Dr. Paul Jobsis, University of the Virgin Islands

Sea turtles are one of the most majestic and charismatic marine animals found in the Virgin Islands. Observing their gentle nature and graceful swimming is often the highlight of the day for locals and visitors to these beautiful islands. While all sea turtles populations are threatened or critically endangered, green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) juveniles are often seen in the tranquil bays of St John, St Thomas, and St Croix. The recovery of this species from decades of over-exploitation has been slow, but steady increases have been seen for the past 30 years.

Their population recovery still faces many challenges: boat strikes, illegal poaching, legal harvest in the BVI, and ingesting plastics to name a few. Recently a debilitating disease has been documented in the Virgin Islands: fibropapillomatosis. This disease is caused by a herpes virus, related to the virus that causes warts in humans. But unlike warts, the tumors caused by the fibropapilloma virus can be lethal to turtles. The tumors start as small bumps around the animal's eyes, mouth, and flippers, and can grow to the point where they limit the animal's ability to see, eat and swim. Rarely seen in the Virgin Islands before 2017, infected animals are now commonly observed in bays with significant turtle populations.

Coral World technicians and the Sea Turtle Assistance and Rescue (STAR) team now often respond to calls about "sick" turtles. Unfortunately, there is little that they can do to treat the disease. It is thought that the virus may be transmitted by a small marine leech and perhaps following the severe storms of 2017 some turtles traveled to bays known to have infected turtles in nearby Culebra or Puerto Rico. Researchers at the University of the Virgin Islands are documenting the occurrence and hope to find treatments that could reduce the number of infected turtles.

ISLAND GREEN'S REPORT

Island Green Living has initiated multiple projects and made great progress over the last year. Here are some of the highlights:

1. Awarded an EPA grant to expand sustainable construction and demolition materials diversion management through education and training beginning in Fall 2020. The project engages all three islands and partners with government agencies including Public Works and Waste Management.
2. Spearheaded marathon aluminum can crushing operation with the help of volunteers and shipped 440,000 cans to Puerto Rico for recycling. Secured complimentary transport via Stevenson Formel Freight Services and locals Michael Marsh and Bloomberg's Steve DeBlasio lent their equipment and manpower.
3. Efforts to preserve marine life, coral and human health through education about toxic sunscreen was instrumental in the passage of a bill banning sunscreen containing the "Toxic 3 Os" which went into effect March 30, 2020.
4. Island Green reopened the Resource Depot in Summer 2019, which had been closed due to storm damage. Since its inception in 2012, the ReSource Depot has kept nearly 300,000 lbs. of reusable items out of the landfill.
5. Sponsorship of Giffth Hill School's composting programming whereby students are engaged/instructed and can then take part in demos to teach other students.
6. Establishment of arrangement whereby Giffth Hill students use community service hours toward Island Green can collection/crushing.
7. Capstone project with Iowa State University EARTH Program to launch USVI Zero Waste Composting Pilot Program on St. John in cooperation with VI Waste Management Authority. Funded through a CFVI grant with the remainder of capital coming from Dana & Martha Robes and Harith Wickrema. The aim is to keep a vital resource – vegetative debris – from filling the territory's already overflowing landfills while cutting the island's carbon footprint. Earned Clinton Global Initiative Call to Action designation.
8. Launch of Solarize St. John with a Town Hall in January 2019 and a \$100,000 donor grant from Brad and Juli Camrud.
9. DPNR issued a building permit allowing us to proceed with hurricane damaged repairs to our SLC building.
10. Collaborating with Friends of the VI National Park on a joint Earth Day celebration/education event in 2020. Also working with several other conservation organizations on an event to mark the complete ban on toxic sunscreen in USVI. We hope to reschedule these later in the year when it is safe to gather.
11. Secured food waste composting at the Clinton Global Initiative's June 2019 Hurricane Recovery conference in coordination with Iowa State University Earth Program at Giffth Hill.

BAN THE BURN

NO to Unhealthy Air Curtain Incineration of Hurricane Debris

News Flash
There will be
no Burning in St. John,
confirmed.
St. Croix and St. Thomas
unconfirmed.

Air curtain incineration causes harmful pollution that aggravates respiratory and other illnesses and destroys rich, compostable green matter that is crucial to nourishing our ravaged islands.
Air curtain incineration is especially harmful in hot and humid conditions.
Our health and the wellbeing of our islands are at grave risk.

Join Island Green Living Association & Support GREEN Hurricane Recovery Options

Chipping, mulching and composting and
salvaging precious woods like Mahogany for local artisans and woodworkers.

Sign our petition helping Governor Mapp to Ban the Burn and learn about alternatives
Visit: www.islandgreenliving.org

EAST ISLAND GREEN VICS

12. Instrumental in securing Town Hall by Delegate Plasket to get community input and reconsider 60-year retained user agreement to Caneel Bay resort management company. Board member brought to light environmental issues to be considered in any new agreement.


13. Submitted letter to EPA voicing strong opposition to opening new landfills without municipal recycling and composting programs that will keep valuable materials out of our landfills. (US Virgin Island's RCRA Subtitle D MSWLF Permit Program.)

14. Educated and provided data & research to the legislature for consideration when reviewing bans on Styrofoam as well as single-use containers of toiletry amenities at hotels & villas.

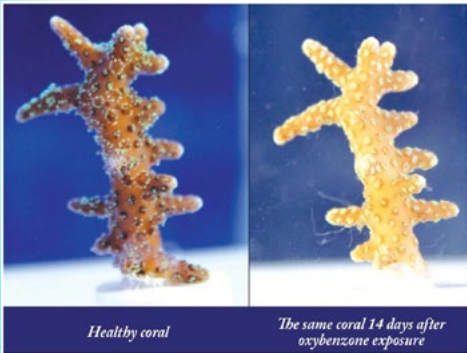
15. Beginning stages of work to mandate minimum of 60% vehicles imported to be electric, solar powered electric charging stations, and possible legislation to eliminate the road tax on imported electric vehicles as an incentive.

**PROTECT YOUR HEALTH,
CORAL & MARINE LIFE**

USE MINERAL SUNSCREEN, RASHGUARDS & HATS



Coral Can Recover Once Chemicals are Out of the Water
**Scientific Evidence Shows Chemicals Such As Oxybenzone Are Deadly To Coral
Known Carcinogens & Cause Hormonal Changes in Humans**



Healthy coral *The same coral 14 days after oxybenzone exposure*

Use only coral-safe mineral sunscreen with zinc oxide & titanium dioxide
There are **260+** safe mineral sunscreens available.
Visit www.islandgreenliving.org for link

Let's give CORAL a fighting chance

This has been a team effort. Thanks to many supporters including support from:



Zero Waste Initiatives: Rethink ■ Reduce ■ Reuse ■ Recycle



On left from top down: Donald Schnell, Avril Francis, Senate President Novelle Francis Jr., Pamela Richardson.
On right from top down: Harith Wickrema, Senator Myron Jackson, Park Superintendent Nigel Fields, Jacqueline Modeste Blyden, Senator Marvin Blyden

AS ALWAYS, WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR DONORS, VOLUNTEERS, STAFF, BOARD MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY IN GENERAL FOR THEIR COMMITMENT, PASSION AND SUPPORT OF PRESERVING OUR ENVIRONMENT AND HELPING TO KEEP OUR ISLANDS GREEN.

CGI AND THE CLINTON FOUNDATION'S ENVIRONMENTAL & RESILIENCE INITIATIVES IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

By Lissy DeSantis, CEO, Clinton Global Initiative



The CGI Action Network on Post-Disaster Recovery is a network of over 700 organizations committed to advancing response, recovery, and resiliency efforts across the Caribbean region. First and foremost on our mind is the need to address climate change and the increased power

and frequency of storms that islands across the Caribbean face. Addressing underlying challenges and vulnerabilities is so critical to being prepared for what the future brings.

The CGI Action Network has launched a number of Commitments to Action to meet needs across the U.S. Virgin Islands. These range from commitments by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands to provide solar energy to sites like the Queen Louise Home for

Children on St. Croix to those from FarmPod, an organization dedicated to installing aquaponic food production systems that are sustainable, climate smart, and scalable. And other creative commitments like that from the Virgin Islands Conservation Society, which is addressing the impacts of climate change by empowering the next generation of students to become climate literate and lead solutions in their communities.

Together, this network is making great strides toward a brighter future. We know climate change is real, and we know that we need to act now. Change starts with leaders who are committed to action and the Clinton Foundation is here to support partners like Island Green Living who are taking up that mantle!

Biography: Lissena DeSantis is the Chief Executive Officer of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), where she oversees execution of the CGI Action Network's proven model of convening leaders and taking action on global challenges. Before joining CGI in 2012, Lissena worked at the Open Society Foundations in New York City and Physicians for Human Rights in Nairobi, Kenya. She holds a bachelor's in history from Yale University. Development.

WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO HELP END PLASTIC POLLUTION

By Judith Enck

Founder Beyond Plastic

Former Administrator --EPA Region 2

The fight against plastic pollution can seem insurmountable but you really can make a difference. Here are highlights of what you can do TODAY to spread the word.

Talk to a local business

Take note of whether local establishments use disposable plastic such as straws, takeout containers, bags, etc. Ask them to consider switching to earth-friendly alternatives. They'll know their loyal customers welcome the elimination of plastic. Bring your own reusable bags, cups, etc. to help do your part.

Spend an hour... on social media!

Commit an hour – or whatever you can spare – to liking and sharing posts, articles, and videos that'll do the world good on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Algorithms prioritize posts from friends over organizations – so the messenger really does matter.

Start following Beyond Plastics and like-minded organizations. Then like, comment and share posts. Extra points for tagging others, asking people to share and adding hashtags such as #PlanetOrPlastic #BeyondPlastics #RefuseSingleUse #PlasticFreeOceans #BanTheBag #LastStraw

Write a Letter to the Editor of your local paper

Be sure to make your letter relevant to the paper, do a ruthless edit, present FACTS and make a call to action. Urge decision-makers to do something specific. Including their names is a surefire way to catch their attention.



Start a local or state campaign to pass our Plastics Trifecta Bill!

Schedule a meeting with your local representatives and ask them to introduce our Plastic Trifecta Bill that eliminates plastic bags, polystyrene foam and straws (except upon request).

See www.beyondplastic.org for more.

Biography: Judith Enck served as the Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Region 2 including the USVI. She is the founder of Beyond Plastics, an initiative that works with community leaders and trains college students to engage on plastic pollution issues. www.beyondplastic.org



Kat Bodish, Kelly Lawson, Anthony Novelli

MEET OUR TEAM!

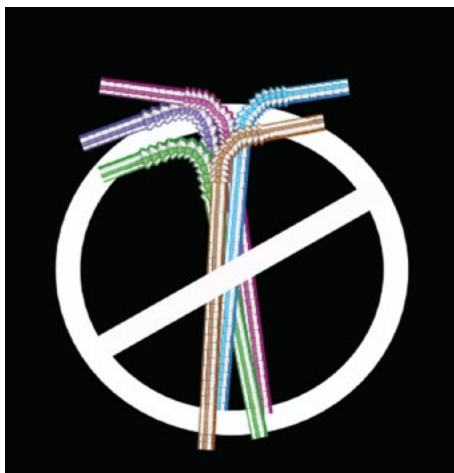
In addition to our amazing volunteers, dedicated board and generous donors & members, Island Green Living Association is fortunate to have a talented staff devoted to preserving St. John. Both Executive Director Kelly Lawson and Operations Manager Anthony Novelli joined us in 2019 and have made great strides in moving our mission forward. Kathleen (Kat) A. Bodish recently joined the organization as ReSource Depot Manager.

Before coming on board, Anthony worked with Caribbean Solar Company on St. John. He relocated to the island after graduating from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Biology. Anthony fell in love with the natural beauty of St. John but was bothered by the amount of waste being created so vowed to be part of the solution.

Prior to joining Island Green, Kelly spent more than six years expanding recycling and green initiatives with for-profit, government and non-profit entities. Early in her career, she worked as an Environmental Educator with Keep Austin Beautiful. Kelly holds a Bachelor of Science in Geography from Texas State University, with specification in Resource and Environmental Management.

Kat, a former pharmaceutical executive, has a long and impressive background working with conservation, sustainability and other non-profits on a volunteer and paid basis. She brings her considerable operations and management experience to her position with Island Green.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING



WE ARE PROUD OF THE “GREEN BILLS” PASSED AND SIGNED INTO USVI LAW OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS INCLUDING THOSE BANNING:

- disposable plastic shopping bags
- disposable plastic straws & stirrers
- toxic chemical-based sunscreen that damages our coral, marine life and health

Still, disposable plastic bags continue to litter our beaches, hiking trails and roadways. The ban on chemical sunscreen containing oxybenzone, octinoxate and octocrylene went into effect March 30, yet some store shelves are still stocked with toxic sunscreen. Whether due to negligence or ignorance of our laws, this must stop.

If you want a cleaner and more sustainable territory, we challenge you to speak up when you witness issues. Be a Green Ambassador and tell the store manager, restaurant hostess or bar manager that you say NO to the pollution and waste their establishments are causing by flouting our laws. If enough customers make it clear that we are watching and we care, we can make a change.

Thanks to the governor and senators for these green laws.



Thanks to the governor and senators for these green laws.



SOLARIZE ST. JOHN CAPTURES MORE THAN SOLAR RAYS

IGNITING PASSION FOR RENEWABLES



From left, Don Moreland, Karen Hauer, Brad Camrud and Kenneth Haldin

Solarize St. John launched in January 2019. A year later the results are in: the future of solar power and battery storage is bright on the island. To kick off the campaign, the lead architects and donors, Brad and Julie Camrud, installed not only solar panels but also Tesla batteries.

Ken Haldin spearheaded Solarize St. John's boots-on-the-ground marketing campaign along with Solar Crowdforce Founder Donald Moreland. Ken also led the Plastic Free St. John campaign, both on a voluntary basis.

Solarize St. John uses a hybrid between a traditional Solarize program (i.e., bulk, cooperative purchasing among many property owners rather than individual purchasing to lower costs) coupled with support stemming from a generous donation of \$100,000 to seed the initiative in 2019. It was created to advance renewable energy towards an off-the-grid island one day.

"I wanted to see solar installation promoted as broadly as possible on St. John," said donor Brad Camrud, who is the single largest contributor to Island Green, a St. John homeowner and long-time user and supporter of solar energy. "In the next phase, devising methods to further expand to both low- and moderate-income homes, businesses and non-profits will be part of our

approach."

More than 100 signed up for a free solar evaluation and to date, 22 residents have installed solar energy and/or battery storage systems (or soon will) through the program's value-added grant-and-installer contract process.

Inspired by Brad and Julie's continued generosity to Island Green Living and Ken Haldin's passion to increase renewable energy usage on St. John, Island Green President Harith Wickrema also installed high efficiency

solar panels and Tesla batteries. (Brad and Harith did not use grant funding for their systems.)

Solarize St. John's campaign generated an economic impact of close to \$650,000 with local solar installers. This is in addition to the main objective of improved energy resiliency and meaningful reductions in CO2 emissions for decades to come.

The following was provided to Green Digest by Solarize St. John:

Solar energy: 121.17 kW producing 200,000+ kWh of clean energy annually.

Battery storage: 293.8 kWh, adding resiliency when WAPA power goes down.

CO2 avoided: 261,500 pounds annually, equal to 3,877+ trees cleaning the air.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION – SHOP THE RESOURCE DEPOT FIRST!

Before you make that trip to St. Thomas or purchase online, please check out Island Green's ReSource Depot - St. John's only non-profit thrift store. We have a variety of salvaged construction materials, furniture, electronics, appliances and household goods. Inventory changes weekly so check back frequently. You can preview select inventory on www.IslandGreenLiving.org and on Facebook. If you are looking for something specific, get on our wish list and be notified when a match comes in.

To date, we've kept more than 300,000 lbs. of valuable materials out of our over-burdened landfills.

We accept donations! Please don't toss your salvageable items – bring them to the ReSource Depot. It is a win-win-win – good for the environment, good for your neighbors and sales support Island Green's sustainability efforts!



RESOURCE DEPOT

Currently we are open Wednesday - Saturdays from 9 am – 2 pm but please call to confirm hours – and you can peruse our inventory anytime online. We are also looking for volunteers to help operate the shop and prepare inventory.

Call us at 340-473-7870.

The ReSource Depot is located behind Viterna on Giffit Hill Road just off Centerline.



Senator Blyden, Harith Wickrema and Senator Sarauw

LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST LIONFISH

BY: FRANK CUMMINGS, C.O.R.E FOUNDATION PRESIDENT

Lionfish are considered by NOAA to be among the top 15 species that will negatively affect global biodiversity. The C.O.R.E. Foundation is a non-profit based in the U.S. Virgin Islands that is made up of marine steward volunteers who tirelessly police the coral reefs and shallow waters of the territory for lionfish, an invasive non-native predator.

Lionfish have no natural predators in the Atlantic or the Caribbean, causing them to grow larger and in much higher population densities than in their natural habitat (South Pacific and Indian Oceans).

They eat 70+ native species of fish and crustaceans and studies have shown that one lionfish can reduce the number of affected populations by up to 80% within

five weeks of establishing a hunting area. This is devastating because these native species are vital to maintaining the coral reef and a healthy marine environment.

Multiple scientific studies and on-site histories since 2009 have proven a well-organized culling effort can keep designated areas free from the invasive lionfish's negative impact. Interestingly, although lionfish have venomous spines, they can

Lionfish are considered by NOAA to be among the top 15 species that will negatively affect global biodiversity.



be eaten safely if prepared properly and are quite tasty.

Biography: Frank Cummings is President of the C.O.R.E. Foundation: www.corevi.org. He began his efforts with the organization in 2012 as the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the island of St. John and later became the Education and Outreach Director for the Foundation as a whole. In 2017 Frank was awarded the prestigious "Environmental Champion Award" from the EPA for his work with the lionfish invasion.

GREEN VILLA PROGRAM ENCOURAGES & RECOGNIZES ECO RESPONSIBLE VISIT WWW.ISLANDGREENLIVING.ORG FOR FURTHER DETAILS!



big rock cottage

St. John loves our visitors! However with hundreds of thousands of guests staying in an estimated 1,000 villa rental properties every year, it is vital that environmental responsibility becomes a priority for both owners and visitors. If we don't protect our natural resources, it will not only hurt us environmentally but will negatively impact tourism, a major economic driver.

Island Green's "Green Villa" Membership Program aims to encourage and recognize villas that incorporate sustainability into their design, operation and maintenance. Villas can earn from three to five stars. If a villa does not qualify, Island Green will provide assistance in helping them achieve certification. The island will benefit directly as villas become more environmentally responsible and foster eco-consciousness in their guests.



Left to right: Jim Kriner volunteer; Anthony Novelli; Shikima Jones; Cid Hamling, owner of Connections; Michael Marsh; Doug White



Left to right: Michael Marsh, Island Green Executive Director Kelly Lawson, board president's son Neil, and board members Dr. David Minner, Curtis Penn and Akhil Deshwal

YES WE CAN!

BY ANTHONY NOVELLI,
ISLAND GREEN OPERATIONS
MANAGER

With a batch of 300,000 crushed cans recently setting sail for Puerto Rico this September, Island Green Living Association has recycled nearly 800,000 aluminum cans, breathing new life into this valuable resource while keeping it out of our overflowing landfills. Our aluminum recycling program currently operates as a drop-off facility centrally located on Giffit Hill Rd just off Centerline on St. John. We also have a few bins that we monitor outside Connections in Cruz Bay, so those without cars and the restaurants in town can easily leave cans for recycling.

Once the cans are brought to our yard, they are sorted to remove any plastics and trash from the aluminum recycling stream; they are then loaded into our compacting machine. The crushing process is handled largely by volunteers who have

donated hundreds of hours to the program. Our volunteers include both locals and tourists and have been pivotal to our success.

Around 650 cans can be compacted into a block of one cubic foot; these blocks are then stacked onto a pallet into a larger bale. Over 30,000 compacted cans can fit on one pallet. Once enough pallets are ready to make a full shipment, they head to IFCO Recycling in Puerto Rico. IFCO then sells the metal to recyclers in the continental USA. Aluminum

can be recycled infinitely, which reduces the need to mine for virgin resources. Aluminum is one of the only materials in the waste stream that more than pays for its own recycling and nearly 75 percent of all aluminum ever produced is still in use. Uncollected cans take up to 500 years to decompose, so it is vital to keep them out of our overburdened landfills.

The aluminum cans were shipped off for recycling with the help of businesses such as Stevenson Formel Freight Services, which donated use of the M/V Norma H II to transport the pallets to Puerto Rico on its return trip. Local Michael Marsh came ready with his truck and crane and Dr. David Minner, Island Green board member, helped load the bales. Steve DeBlasio, on the island as part of Bloomberg's community support efforts, has also assisted. They all volunteered their equipment and manpower.

FOOD “WASTE” FROM CLINTON’S USVI RECOVERY EVENT ENRICHES ISLAND SOIL THANKS TO ISLAND GREEN & IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY EARTH PROGRAM AT GIFFT HILL



Left to Right: Island Green President Harith Wickrema; Senate President Novelle E. Francis, Jr.; EARTH program students; Commissioner of Agriculture Positive T.A. Nelson; Dr. David Minner of Iowa State University EARTH Program at Giffit Hill on St. John; and Mathayom Vacharat of St. John Catering.

With the Clinton Foundation in the USVI for their CGI Action Network on Post-Disaster Recovery in 2019, organizers reached out to coordinate composting of food waste with Island Green in partnership with the Iowa State University EARTH Program at Giffit Hill on St. John, which is run by Island Green board member Dr. David Minner.

“The Clinton Foundation has been a powerful force in assisting the USVI in our recovery. It is fitting that through composting, they are also enriching our soil,” said Island Green President Harith Wickrema. “It sets an excellent example. Nearly 60% of our waste is compostable and close to 20% is recyclable. It is critical that zero waste initiatives such as composting of food waste

are expanded in the territory, making us more resilient while combating carbon emissions and climate change.”

The Iowa State University EARTH Program runs a school and community garden that donates fresh garden produce to local food kitchens and depends on compost to enrich the soil. The organic waste from the CGI conference was combined with spent grain brewer’s waste from the Tap Room and with vegetable scraps and coffee grounds collected from seven additional St. John restaurants.



Carlyn Lawrence, VIWMA pictured with Backyard Composting Workshop winner, Anthony Novelli and Ken Mills, Head of Giffit Hill School



Dr. David Minner provides instruction during Backyard Composting Workshop

TIPS FROM THE EPA HOW TO COMPOST AT HOME

Compost is organic material that can be added to soil to help plants grow. Food scraps and yard waste together currently make up more than 28 percent of what we throw away and should be composted instead. Making compost keeps these materials out of landfills where they take up space and release methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Below are steps for creating a compost pile. Helpful tools include pitchforks, square-point shovels or machetes, and water hoses with a spray head. Regular mixing or turning of the compost and some water will help maintain the compost.

Backyard Composting

- Select a dry, shady spot near a water source for your compost pile or bin.
- Add brown and green materials as they are collected, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.
- Moisten dry materials as they are added.
- Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.
- Optional: Cover top of compost with a tarp to keep it moist. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months to two years.

EAST'S PLASTIC RECYCLING PROGRAM



The Plastic Recycling Campaign launched by nonprofit EAST (Environmental Association of St. Thomas and St. John) has made great strides in keeping recyclable plastics from polluting St. Thomas's parks, waterways and streets and out of our overflowing landfills. Since its inception in September 2017, approximately 69 tons of plastic and later aluminum cans have been collected on St. Thomas in partnership with Virgin Islands Conservation Society and Plaza Extra Tutu supermarket. Although the recycling program has been temporary halted due to COVID-19 concerns, EAST plans revive it when it is safe to do so.

"We can't do it alone and are very appreciative of Plaza Extra Tutu and our volunteers for their help," said **Jason Budsan, EAST president**, an avid environmentalist who was born and raised on St. Thomas. "Working with other groups such as We Grow Food Inc, the VI Green Team, Mendez Recycling, local schools and our wonderful volunteers, we have done what was said could not be done."

For more information on EAST, visit <http://eastvi.org/plaza-extra-tutu-plastic-recycling-campaign/> or <http://eastvi.org/>

SAY NO TO SINGLE USE PLASTICS!



BY KELLY
LAWSON, ISLAND
GREEN
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

The data on single-use "throw away" plastics can be rather dire and overwhelming. Some studies have even predicted

there will be more pieces of plastic in our oceans than fish by the year 2050! This is a product that was originally created to address food safety concerns -- and which has largely made the modern world possible and "convenient." Yet it has turned into a monster of a pollution problem for current and future generations to solve. There are many factors that are beyond our individual control and we will inevitably use plastic in our lives, but our power as individuals to affect change should not be underestimated. Here are a few simple tips to help you get started with your single-use plastic-free life:

- Bring your own reusable bag to retail and grocery stores. It is the law in the USVI!
- Compost organic food waste at home – it reduces the need for trash bags while keeping these valuable nutrients out of the landfill.
- Bring your own to-go container for restaurant leftovers.
- Bring your own cup to bars and restaurants rather than taking single use items.
- If you don't have access to safe drinking water at home, refill water jugs at water re-fill stations in your town.
- Buy a reusable water bottle instead of buying single-use plastic bottles.
- If you must have a straw, carry a reusable one along with a spork.
- Shop in bulk. There are a growing number of bulk food stores across the nation carrying everything from grains and flours to personal care products. Bring your own reusable containers.
- Shop thrift stores. Consider buying used before purchasing new and reduce plastic packaging. Before you buy, ask do I need it or do I want it.
- Replace plastic film at home with reusable beeswax wraps.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE CARIBBEAN

By Mark Lichtenstein

I started working in the Caribbean (BVI, Central America, Puerto Rico, and USVI) in 2009 focusing on the solid waste management crisis experienced across the entire region. It became crystal-clear to me that for effective and sustainable management of discarded materials –through waste reduction and recycling – these island communities could not do it alone. The aftermath of the 2017 hurricanes and recent Puerto Rico earthquakes reinforce the need for a regional approach to the management of discarded materials, and on broader issues of climate change adaptation and sustainability.

I directly engage with organizations based on St. John (Island Green), Tortola (GreenVI), and Vieques (ViequesLove). These organizations and the people on the ground on all these islands, as well as elsewhere in the region, are crafting transformative and entrepreneurial initiatives. They are envisioning next-generation, regenerative communities—communities others around the world can learn from. We can't do this in isolation. To that end, a memorandum of understanding, laying out a template for inter-island

cooperation on sustainability initiatives is in the works.



Stay tuned.

Biography: Mark Lichtenstein is an Island Green board member and has more than three decades of waste management experience, including with disasters. He currently serves as Chief of Staff, Chief Sustainability Officer, and teaches sustainability and regenerative strategies at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). He served eight terms as President/CEO of the National Recycling Coalition. Mark also co-founded and facilitated the Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands Recycling Partnerships.

GIFFT HILL SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY IN FULFILLING ITS MISSION

By Ken Mills, Head of School at Gifft Hill School



Gifft Hill School's (GHS) mission is based on three main pillars: academic rigor, experiential learning, and compassionate community. For GHS to deliver on our mission, we partner with many organizations. Our Farm-to-Table (FtT) program is an

example of the importance of partnerships. Through the FtT program, GHS students learn to grow fruits and vegetables, prepare healthy dishes, and improve their understanding of food security. The FtT program incorporates science and English, art and math, and Caribbean culture in every grade. The program culminates in the Virgin Islands Cultural Dinner which is planned, prepared, and presented by GHS students. Guests at the dinner come from a cross-section of the

territory.

Island Green Living (IGL) and Iowa State University (ISU) are important partners with GHS on this project – and many others. For example, both IGL and ISU support our robust composting program. Recently, GHS, IGL, and ISU worked together to present a Composting Seminar for island residents. Gifft Hill School is grateful for the support it receives from its partners. In addition to IGL and ISU, we partner with Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park, Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, and the St. John Community Foundation. By working with our partners, GHS helps to develop the next generation of stewards for our island communities.

Biography: Ken Mills is the Head of School at Gifft Hill School, St. John, USVI. Before moving to St. John, Ken served as the head of the upper school at Ransom Everglades in Miami, FL. Prior he had a long tenure at The Lawrenceville School in New Jersey. Ken is committed to developing place-based, experiential curricula, and building healthy communities by addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

PRIVATE CITIZEN SEEKS TO HOLD CANEEL BAY LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTAMINATION



When the hurricanes hit in 2017, Caneel Bay Resort on St. John was among the properties left ravaged in their aftermath. However as debate swirled about who would be responsible for cleaning up the hurricane damaged property and ultimately operating the restored resort, details began

to emerge about destruction much more insidious at the world-renowned and beloved resort: environmental contamination that had been going on for years.

St. John home owner and attorney David DiGiacomo is determined to rectify the situation. In late September he sent a Notice of Intent to File Suit to CBI Acquisitions, LLC, operators of Caneel Bay Resort, and the National Park Service as owner of the property.

Three separate reports were prepared by engineers in

2012, 2014 and again in 2017 and all indicated significant concerns about the existence of hazardous chemicals and waste. Nonetheless according to DiGiacomo “The National Park Service failed to hold the various operators of Caneel accountable for their activities in spite of being aware of the contamination of the property.” It is particularly disturbing considering the lengths philanthropist and conservationist Laurance Rockefeller, who donated the property, went to in order to ensure Caneel Bay’s protection.

DiGiacomo is hopeful that a lawsuit will not be necessary and that an agreement can be reached between all parties which results in a clean-up of the Caneel site in a safe way that uses science and follows all applicable federal and territory laws, respecting the environment, history, and cultural artifacts at Caneel.

Although DiGiacomo serves on the boards of Island Green and Friends of the VI National Park, he has taken these legal steps as a private citizen with no organized group affiliation.

ECO-SCHOOLS USVI: WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By Pamela New, Eco-Schools USVI

BY ANDREW RUTNIK, CHAIRMAN,
FRIENDS OF VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL

Eco-Schools empowers students to engage in their environment by providing the opportunity to actively protect it through place- and problem-based learning. The program engages students through active STEAM learning and leadership while creating healthy learning environments, establishing schools as models for community resilience and sustainability. Participating schools in the territory include Giffit Hill School on St. John; Charlotte Amalie High School, Ivanna Eudora Kean High School and Virgin Islands Montessori School & International Academy on St. Thomas; and St. Croix Central High School, St. Croix Educational Complex High School and St. Croix Career & Technical High School on St. Croix.

Eco-Schools network supports environmental outreach educators and promotes public-private sector partnerships to support education for sustainable development and sustainable community leaders. It Takes a Village:

- Eco-Schools USVI functions under the 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, Virgin Islands Conservation Society, Inc.

- Eco-Schools is recognized by UNESCO and UNEP as a model initiative for Education for Sustainable Development
- We welcome collaboration with the Community, other environmental organizations, and experts in relevant fields.

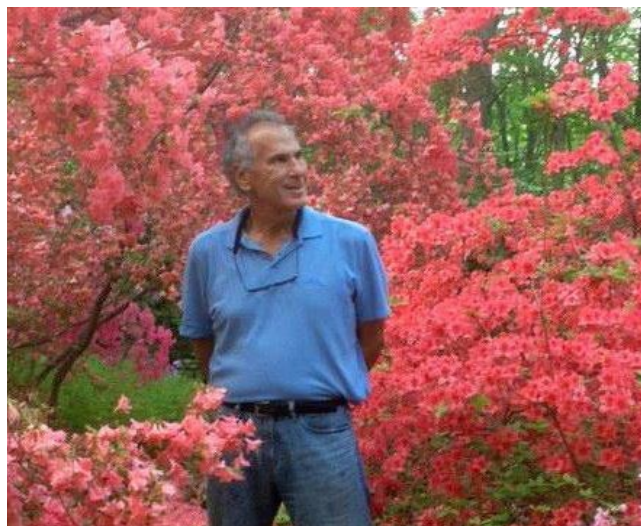
For more information please contact Pamela New at vi.ecoschool@gmail.com, (340)-642-3639

Biography: St Thomas has been Pamela New’s beloved adopted home since 1995 and she and her husband have raised their USVI born twins on the island. She ran a non-profit arts company for children with disabilities, taught at UVI for 9.5 years and has worked as Coordinator at Eco-Schools USVI since May 2019.



I Andy and Joy Stillman have played a vital role in helping Island Green flourish. For years they both not only supported us financially, but with their intellectual acumen and relationships as well. I loved our many dinners both at my home and elsewhere and was simply shocked to hear the very sad news of Andy's passing. In considering who could do justice in a tribute, I thought someone who had known Andy and Joy for much longer would be best. Hence I asked Andy Rutnik to share a memorial. Joy, please accept our deeply felt condolences on behalf of Island Green."

Harith Wickrema,
Island Green President



TRIBUTE TO ANDY STILLMAN

BY ANDREW RUTNIK, CHAIRMAN,
FRIENDS OF VIRGIN ISLANDS
NATIONAL PARK

R When you pass beyond this world, there is a tail of illumination that stretches far behind, filled with a life for all to remember and share. The tears are for the living, a way to fill our cups of sorrow. The fond memories are many and our love is released to all who listen.

Andy was a fellow member on the Friends of the Park Board, and I speak for all when I say he will be missed. His dedication was an inspiration to us all. He loved all parks and had the view that they were sacred places where people could experience

the outdoors, historical and cultural sites that educate and inspire, fresh air, clean water, and open sky. He loved speeding along St John's roads on his bike, inhaling all the sweet smells, the challenging hills, and then hyper-speeding down them. It was his love of parks that made him such a strong and ardent advocate for the Friends' Kids in the Park programs. Andy believed that if children are introduced to the Park at an early age, they will understand the need to protect, preserve and connect to their Park, inspiring them to become the stewards of its future.

It is not easy saying goodbye to such a person, nor are they easy to replace. Andy left a loving family, and an equally compassionate partner in Joy. Both volunteered and supported many local non-profits and community service

projects, although they never sought notoriety for their philanthropy, they gave generously. So, to Andy, good friend, fellow traveler, namesake, your life and successes will always be there in that tail of

illumination, your legacy now and forever will be of a good man, husband, father, and grandfather, and friend to all.

On behalf of the Friends of the

Park Board, President Todd Sampsell, staff, and the many benefactors of your years of community service, we wish to offer our sincere condolences to Andy's family, wife Joy, daughters and granddaughter, during this time of sudden loss.



Biography: As a 50-year resident of St John, Andy Rutnik has been very involved in the community. He currently serves on the boards of two St. John nonprofits: the Giffit Hill School and the Friends of the VI National Park, the latter as Chairman. He also served on the Public Services Commission. Andy owns and operates Guavaberry Farms Inc., a real estate development & sales company. He has a wife, Janet, three children and four grandchildren.

SHOUT OUT TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We are so thankful to the litany of volunteers who help Island Green every day. From visitors to our island who spend time during their precious vacations to lend a hand, to those in our community who dedicate their time and services regularly -- we could not do it without you!

Our sincere appreciation to each and every person who volunteers their time, intellectual acumen, sweat equity and more. We love your green spirit!



Governor Bryan, Harith Wickrema, David DiGiacomo, Friends of V1 National Park Board President Todd Sampsell



Ken Mills Hess of School Giffit Hill School; Laura Dunlap, Giffit Hill teacher; Dr. David Minner; Harith Wickrema; David DiGiacomo, with school children



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

We are so grateful for our wonderful donors, grant providers and financial contributors without whom Island Green could not do all that we do! A special thank you to our major contributors:

\$95,000+ Brad & Juli Camrud Community Foundation of VI Environmental Protection Agency Harith Wickrema	\$25,000 - \$50,000 David & Rhonda McCay John Reny Dana & Martha Robes St. John Community Foundation	\$10,000 – \$24,999 Ralph & Cindy Antolino Deluca Charitable Giving Fund Ruth Doan Gallows Point Resort Miles & Susan Stair Andrew & Joy Stillman Creative Planning Foundation
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The Above is a Partial List of Our Recent Benefactors

THANK YOU TO OUR MANY GENEROUS PARTNERS

We are grateful to our business partners who have contributed outright and/or in goods and services to help us rebuild our ReSource Depot building and continue our recycling, chipping and composting programs.

Adam Cook, St. Jan Botanica Michael Marsh – Trucking Steve Hill, Paradise Lumber Kim Gennaro, PWGC Paul W. Grosser, PWGC Crowley Logistics Sustainable Generation Gore-Tex Boyson Inc. Fernando Micheletti - Plumbing Steve DeBlasio, VITEMA Stevenson Formel Freight Services	Chris Meyer, Meyer Electric & Solar, LLC Kevin & Maya Schnell, Caribbean Solar Company The Dennis Family, St. John Repair Shop, LLC Dwight's Towing Services Scott Tanner, Boats and Homes Brent Lynn, Backed Up VI Waste Management Authority VI Department of Public Works VITEMA Don Blumenthal, Quality Program Services, LLC Tropical Shipping Vermeer
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We invite all professionals and businesses to join our Green Business Council and extend your support to Island Green and our efforts to make our world greener!

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Left to right: Adam Cook, David McCay, Sumayah Bryan, First Lady Bryan, Rhonda McCay, Governor Bryan Jr., Ruth Doan, Akhil Deshwal, Kimberly Rodriguez, Kevin Rodriguez, Miles Stair, Erica Yob, John Yob

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Please consider becoming part of Island Green Living Association. Your membership dues contribute to the preservation of the natural beauty of St. John and our sister islands. Won't you join for just \$30 per year?

We need your help to educate the community on the importance of sustainable living. Island Green's initiatives include waste reduction, composting, recycling, and ocean conservation. Island Green is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions, including membership dues, are tax deductible.

Please join by visiting www.islandgreenliving.org/members/ or call 340-473-7870; email: info@islandgreenliving.org

Thank you!



Pictured left to right: David McCay, Debbie Schnell, Donald Schnell, Sheraine Spivey, Senator Blyden, Rhonda McCay, Miles Stair, Susan Stair, Akhil Deshwal, Joy Stillman, Ralph Antolino, Marisa Antolino, Cindy Antolino, Andy Stillman, Harith Wickrema.



THANK YOU BRITTANY WEICKERT OF SALTY FLAMINGO DESIGN!

Island Green owes a debt of gratitude to Brittany Weickert for her generosity in volunteering to design our Green Digest. We truly could not have done it without you, Brittany!

Salty Flamingo Design specializes in creating user-friendly websites, graphic design and branding. Her work is outstanding and better still - she's a local! Brittany came to St. John with All Hands & Hearts and spent about eight months living in a tent as a volunteer. She fell in love with this island that she now calls home - and is especially passionate about keeping it green. Brittany is a talented and dedicated designer who works with small businesses to curate beautiful & strategic designs to complement the businesses they work so hard to build.

Check her out at www.saltyflamingodesign.com

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