

VIRGIN ISLANDS RESOURCE CONSERVATION
& DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC.

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2004

Prepared by:
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Revised March 2004

**VIRGIN ISLANDS
RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL, INC.**

LOGO



VISION

Balancing Growth and Development with a Quality Environment.

MISSION

To enhance the quality of life for the people of the Virgin Islands Resource Conservation and Development Area through the conservation of natural and cultural resources and the stimulation of growth and development.

FOREWORD

The VI RC&D view this annual business plan as an extension of its Area Plan. The goals and objectives are taken from and referenced to the Area Plan to allow for tracking of long term progress toward attaining area goals. The annual business plan specifically identifies twenty-eight (28) action items (projects) that will be carried out this fiscal year to help reach our area goals. In addition, there are twelve (12) ongoing projects from previous years that will be completed at the end of fiscal year 2004. Approximately 20 or 80% of the new projects will also be completed by the end fiscal year 2004. Specific details involved in carrying out these action items (projects) are identified in the work plan for each project located in the project files.

MEMBERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

May Adams Cornwall - President (St. Croix)
Algem Petersen - Vice President (St. Thomas)
David Howlett - Treasurer (St. Croix)
Dr. Louis Petersen, Jr. - Secretary (St. Thomas)
Charles Deyalsingh - VI Conservation District (St. John)
Angela Ramos-Michael - Member (St. Thomas)
Errol Chichester – Member (St. Croix)

ST. CROIX RC&D ISLAND COMMITTEE

Errol Chichester – Chairperson
May Adams Cornwall - Vice Chairperson
David Howlett - Secretary

ST. THOMAS RC&D ISLAND COMMITTEE

Dr. Louis Petersen, Jr. - Chairperson
Angela Ramos-Michael - Vice Chairperson
Algem Petersen - Secretary

USDA-NRCS STAFF

Julie Wright – RC&D Coordinator
Faye Williams – Secretary
Rudy O'Reilly, Jr. – District Conservationist
Guillermo Melendez – Soil Conservationist

STANDING COMMITTEES

Membership – Angela Ramos-Michael, Sherla Jeffers, Algem Petersen

Public Relations/Publicity – Charles Deyalsingh, David Howlett, Geraldine Smith

AD-HOC COMMITTEES

By-Laws

Nominating

COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Build committee membership
- Direct project measures/ideas to the committee
- Attend meetings
- Assist in presentation to the Board

GOAL 1: PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AS A VIABLE INDUSTRY

OBJECTIVE 1: Support activities that inform producers and consumers regarding productivity and marketability of agricultural products. (Area Plan Reference 1b)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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OBJECTIVE 2: Inform producers of federal and territorial assistance programs. (Area Plan Reference 1c)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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|---|--------------|-------|-------|----|---------------------------|
| 1. Participate in the annual Agriculture and Food Fair on St. Croix by having an information display on VI RC&D and the NRCS Programs | RC&D
NRCS | 1/04 | 2/04 | FW | Completed |
| 2. Participate in the annual Agriculture and Food Fair on St. Thomas by having an information display on RC&D and NRCS Programs. | RC&D
NRCS | 10/03 | 11/03 | | Cancelled due to flooding |

OBJECTIVE 3: Educate producers regarding the use of alternative and sustainable environmentally friendly practices. (Area Plan Reference 1e)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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|--|-------------------------|-------|-------|----------------|--|
| 1. Secure 319 funds to assist farmers in implementing best management practices (Torres) | RC&D, FSA
VICD, NRCS | 04/01 | 09/04 | JW
TJ
RO | Funds secured for Phase I of Est. Bethlehem Watershed WQ Project in the amount of \$112,965.60 in June 2001. |
| 2. Partner with Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi to sponsor a residential program for young farmers from the USVI. | ASU, FS | 10/02 | 08/04 | LP | \$50,000 secured through USDA-FS, soliciting youths |

GOAL 2: ENHANCE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase community involvement. (Area Plan Reference 2b)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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|--|-------------|-------|-------|----------|--|
| 1. Purchase foundation center resource materials for St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John RC&D Districts. | | 10/03 | 06/04 | FW | |
| 2. Establish a Grant Resource Library at the University of the Virgin Islands – Library | RC&D
UVI | 12/02 | 09/04 | JW
FW | |

OBJECTIVE 2: Teach decision making skills to youth and adults. (Area Plan Reference 2c)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE THE CONSERVATION OF OUR CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

OBJECTIVE 1: Promote the implementation of pollution prevention practices and behaviors. (Area Plan Reference 3b)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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|---|--------------------------|-------|-------|----------|---|
| 1. Work with CZM and DPNR to administer \$50,000 in funding for NPS BMP design & installation at the St. Croix East End Marine Park | DPNR
RC&D | 06/02 | 02/05 | BR
JW | Funding secured. Contract being executed. |
| 2. Work with CZM and DPNR, administer \$40,000 in funding for best management practices in the Fish Bay Watershed on St. John. | DPNR
RC&D | 10/99 | 09/04 | BR
JW | Task IV to be completed. |
| 3. Secure 319 funding to assist the VI Department of Agriculture with their cost share match on the Bethlehem old Works Reservoir EWP Project | RC&D/NRCS
DOA
DPNR | 02/03 | 12/03 | | Project completed. Awaiting \$35,175 in 319 funding to reimburse NRCS |

OBJECTIVE 2: Assist in the protection of areas of particular concerns, environmentally sensitive areas and native habitats. (Area Plan Reference 3c)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
1. To clean, vegetate, and restore to its natural beauty Creque Dam on the west end of St. Croix	WAPA Sojourner Sisters NRCS	08/03	09/05	MC	Project on hold
2. Secure funding to assist with education & outreach For new rules and regulations for the St. Croix East End Marine Park.	RC&D DPNR	02/03	04/05	JW	CZM developing rules & regs in-house. RC&D to assist in Sign contest, public outreach

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase education activities. (3e)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
1. Obtain 319 funding and work with the NPS Committee to hold a territory wide Non-Point Source Pollution Conference.	RC&D, UVI DPNR, EPA NPS Committee	02/03	12/03	FW	Completed
2. Secure Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Program fund to expand the Plant Materials Technology Demonstration Plot by incorporating a nature trail.	RC&D, NRCS CES, AES, DOA, U&CFC	04/01	12/03	OD SP	Secured funding of \$10,000 Project completed except for species signs & brochure
3. Secure additional funding through the Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Program to purchase environmental educational material for public and private schools.	U&CF UVI RC&D	04/03	04/04	FW	\$5,825.00 Funding secured, materials purchased & being distributed.

OBJECTIVE 4: Promote Virgin Islands beautification activities. (Area Plan Reference 3g)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
1. Produce wood sign bases with youth vocational program to affix plot numbers to homes for emergency and repair services.	WAPA, FS EMS, USPS, PD, DPNR	10/02	02/05	MC	project on-going
2. Secure funding through the Urban & Community Forestry Assistance Program to develop an urban management plan to enhance the long-term aesthetics and usefulness of the parking area at the UVI-St. Thomas Sports and Fitness Center	UVI RC&D U&CF	04/03	09/04	LP	Secured funding in the amount of \$6,825.00. Project on-going.

GOAL 5: ENCOURAGE DIVERSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

OBJECTIVE 1: Assist in the establishment and expansion of businesses that market local products. (Area Plan Reference 5a)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
1. Secure funding through the USDA Forest Service to sponsor artisans and RC&D Council members to the 9 th Caribbean Urban Forestry Conference in St. John, US Virgin Islands.	USDA-FS	01/04	06/04	FW JW	Submitted funding proposal to USFS
2. Provide a learning and networking experience for local woodturners to showcase their forest-based Products (travel to National Woodturners Conf., July 22-26, 2004.	USDA-FS	10/03	08/04	FW	Funding secured in the amount of \$11,056.

GOAL 6: IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VI RC&D COUNCIL.

OBJECTIVE 1: Secure support from foundations and other funding sources. (Area Plan Reference 6a)

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
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OBJECTIVE 2: Improve leadership capability. (Area Plan Reference 6b)

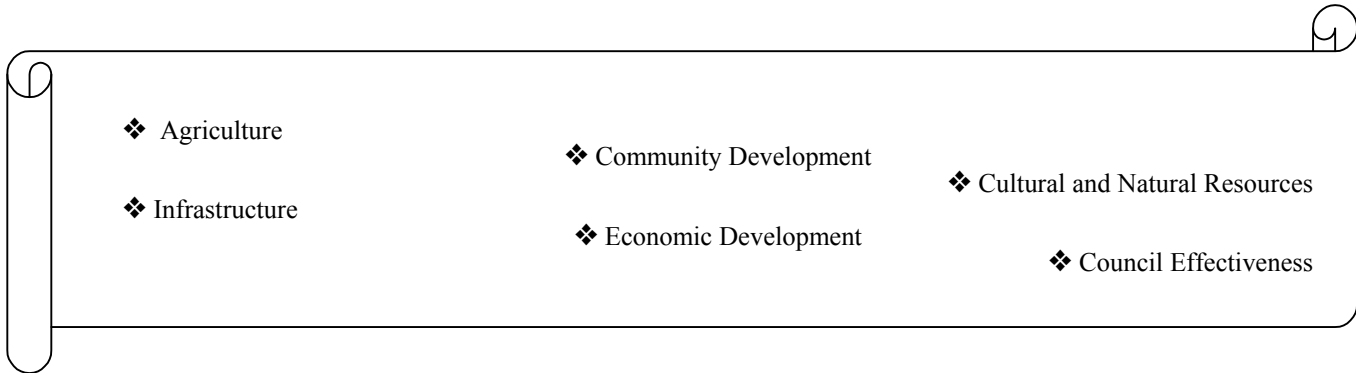
ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
1. Secure funds for a Council members to participate In Capacity Building Training	RC&D NRCS	10/02	06/04	JW	Request for project extension submitted to NRCS
2. Secure funding to establish a VI RC&D Web Page	RC&D FS	11/02	03/04	JW	Completed
3. Publish an Annual Accomplishment Report for fiscal years 2003-2004.	RC&D	10/03	09/04	DH	

OBJECTIVE 3: Expand the membership of the RC&D Council

ACTION ITEMS	PARTNERS	START	END	PROJ MGR	REMARKS
1. Recruit at least five (5) new members to the VI RC&D Council, Inc.		10/03	09/04		
2. Plan and organize the FY 2003 VI RC&D Business Meeting.		10/03	03/04		Completed

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES SIX RC&D RESOURCE AREAS

This section provides a “birds-eye view” of the Virgin Islands economic and social conditions. In considering the economic and social conditions, we examine six areas of concern. The six (6) areas of concern are:



AGRICULTURE

The agriculture industry of the VI has declined to the point of almost nonexistence. The VI imports approximately 90 percent of the meats, dairy products, fruits and vegetables, and spices that are marketed in local stores. Some of the fruits and vegetables, and spices that are grown locally include avocados, bananas, coconuts, grapefruits, limes and lemons, mangoes, oranges, papayas, pineapples, passion fruits, plantains, thyme, rosemary, basil, and sage. These are primarily produced in small orchards and in gardens for home consumption. In addition, land that was once used for agrarian purposes is increasingly being utilized for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. This in turn limits our potential to be more agriculturally and economically competitive and self-sustaining.

It is evident that the capabilities exist for the VI to become more self-provisioning and increase its exporting capacity. Products such as fresh vegetables, fruits, beef, and pork could be exportable. Beef is the only agricultural product presently being exported. There is a pressing need to upgrade marketing methods and systems for the VI agricultural industry. It is important for VI farmers and local agricultural personnel to come together to develop a formidable marketing cooperative.

In considering the inherent “cost of doing business,” top dollars must be received for VI grown products due to:

- Costly land prices
- Importation of agricultural inputs
- Water for irrigation
- Transportation and labor costs

Since farmers have difficulty competing with certain import prices, marketing and distribution are key components to success in territorial, other Caribbean, and stateside markets. Likewise, agriculture preserves open space. The necessity for “green belts” cannot be overstated (because of the inherent scarcity of land). The maintenance of green open space contributes significantly, though indirectly, to the Virgin Islands’ quality of life as well as the tourism industry.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

There are many rural communities in the VI that are in need of additional development. Many of these communities are without structure (whether it be infrastructure, social, or organizational) due to a lack of empowerment and/or organized participation by the residents. Hence, the need exists to build the capacity for community self-determination, decision-making participation, and authority that supports rural values through active cooperation between community groups and public agencies.

CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Virgin Islands has a rich culture that is attributable to the many different nationalities of the people that have inhabited these islands. Traces of the diversity of early inhabitants can still be seen in the architecture of the islands' structures and numerous historical sites, including the 114 sugar mills on the island of St. Croix, forts, churches, greathouses, etc. Archaeological remains continue to be discovered and studied.

Besides these cultural resources, the Virgin Islands have a wide array of natural resources that include numerous endangered and threatened species. In order to protect these species, a variety of approaches are used, such as national parks, refuges, areas of particular concerns, laws and regulations. These must be further developed and enforced in order to achieve their maximum effectiveness in protecting our resources.

Sensitivity training and education of conservation values are vital in the preservation of the remaining VI resources. The islands' communities need to develop tools, programs and projects that support the preservation of Virgin Islands culture, resources, and values such as respect for the Earth and one another, and a strategy for self-sufficiency/sustainability.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The lack of proper maintenance of the public infrastructure by the VI government and residents alike has opened the way for the following acts:

- destruction in public facilities,
- violence in our communities,
- inadequate health care facilities and basic services;
- high rate of dropouts and retention in our schools; and
- inefficient public transit system.

A majority of low-income housing communities fail to provide safe and healthy environments. Structural repairs, weatherization, improved utilities, recreational facilities, and sanitary disposal systems are needed.

The lack of adequate health care facilities and services make it difficult for VI residents and visitors to obtain adequate medical treatment. General health care is available, but only to those with the ability to pay for services up front. The majority of health care providers in the VI do not accept many other types of medical insurance other than the government-sponsored carrier. Additionally, a lack of skilled personnel and the inability to provide routine medical testing and procedures, and health care present a serious social problem.

Quality education is a necessity to prepare our youth for the future. Public schools in the Virgin Islands are overcrowded and understaffed. The Department of Education is currently insufficiently funded and cannot enhance its curriculum. Private schools, on the other hand, are available only for those who can afford to pay the high tuition costs.

The transportation problems have increased tremendously over the last decade. There is persistent traffic congestion in urban areas. Increased air transportation service is needed for the people of the VI. There is a need for the VI

government to better sustain and expand its infrastructure to provide for residents, industry, and visitors alike.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic well-being of the residents depend on the public and private sectors working together to help stimulate the local economy. To combat its high unemployment rate, VI residents need to make themselves marketable for available and future business opportunities. Businesses and local agencies need to develop programs that will encourage entrepreneurships.

Marketable skills have to be nurtured. Hence, the opportunity arises to have a coordinated effort between public and private sectors to initiate programs that will enhance economic development for residents of the VI.

COUNCIL EFFECTIVENESS

Educating the community about the RC&D program and its benefits is at the heart of all our challenges. This component is the backbone or fundamental objective of each RC&D Committee and project. The priority is educating the public regarding an RC&D's purpose and providing opportunities for the enhancement of the quality of life for residents within the VI RC&D Area while stimulating economic growth and development. Creative ways to reach the audience with accurate, focused information must be developed and utilized. Strategies should include working with sponsors and the media, facilitating the educational network, and creating information and resource sharing forums.

DECLARATION OF ADOPTION & APPROVAL OF PLAN

“The Virgin Islands RC&D Council, Inc. agrees that the VI RC&D program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age of Discrimination Act of 1075 and in accordance with the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture – (7CFR-15, Subparts A&B) which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial (or technical) assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.”

The Virgin Islands RC&D Council, Inc. agrees that the signing of this document constitutes an agreement to comply with federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free work place, and responsibilities for non-procurement, suspension, and disbarment , and state review.

The Virgin Islands RC&D Council, Inc. hereby adopts the VI RC&D 3-year Business Plan and agrees to effectively use the assistance provided by the United States Department of Agriculture to realize the goals and objectives outlined herein.

The Virgin Islands RC&D Council, Inc. of the U.S. Virgin Islands

By: _____
President

Date: _____

Attest: _____
Council Secretary

This action authorized at an official meeting of the Virgin Islands RC&D Council, Inc. on this _____ day of _____, 2004

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Approved by: _____
Caribbean Area Director

Date: _____