



# Culture and Heritage

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## Introduction

Diverse historic and cultural buildings, landmarks, places, and events collectively shape the Territory's heritage and are an integral part of the community's vision for the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). It is imperative that the physical resources which represent significant cultural and historic events, such as buildings and sites, are protected to educate, inform, and maintain the identity of the Territory for future generations. Culture and heritage resources are an integral part of the local landscape and quality of life in the Territory, and therefore, influence and contribute to the decisions made around the use of land and water. These decisions in particular must be guided by an awareness of how to best maintain and preserve the physical resources which symbolize the pivotal cultural and historic events that define this region.

The U.S. Virgin Islands Statewide Historic Preservation Plan (SHHP) is the Territory's primary document to guide the protection of its cultural and historical resources. It is the primary source of information for this chapter, unless otherwise noted.

## Important Historic and Cultural Themes

According to the SHHP, the major historic and cultural themes of the USVI reflect the shift from indigenous lifeways towards colonial experiments and rivalries; the implementation of Danish land-use patterning and agricultural exploitation; and the transport, enslavement, and formalized subjugation of large numbers of West Africans, culminating in the incorporation of the Virgin Islands into the United States in the early to mid-20th century.

### Pre-Historic

USVI prehistory spans from 2000 BC to AD 1500. The prehistoric period can be divided into three ages: Archaic Age, Early Ceramic Age, and Late Ceramic Age. The initial human settlement of the USVI, the Archaic Age, began around 1500 BC and included primarily hunter-gatherer-fisher populations. Archaic Age populations are primarily identified archaeologically by their lithic (stone) and shell toolkits.

Starting around 500 BC, the USVI was inhabited by Ceramic Age migrants with connections to South America. In contrast to earlier Archaic cultures, these new Ceramic Age travelers brought fully developed ceramic-making traditions to the islands. Between AD 500 and AD 600, the USVI was influenced by Late Ceramic Age cultures, which are characterized by distinct changes in ceramic styles and an increased dependence on root crop agriculture.

The first documented contact between indigenous populations of the USVI and Europeans occurred in St. Croix in 1493. Within 150 years of this initial contact, diseases, enslavement, and genocide would result in a drastic reduction in native populations, disrupting and nearly eliminating entire cultures.



*Sketched representation of what an early St. John settlement may have looked like (M. Stiles/National Park Service).*

## Historic

The USVI's historic period was strongly defined by competition between colonial powers. The islands have been ruled by the Spanish, English, French, Knights of Malta, and Danish, and today, the islands are a territory of the U.S. Each of these countries had an impact on the development of the islands, influencing language, food, education, religion, and architecture. The USVI's historic period was further defined by agricultural development, introduction of the slave trade, commercial development of the islands, and powerful accounts of uprisings and emancipation.

Spain first laid claim to St. Croix in the early 15th century, although colonization efforts in the region primarily focused primarily on Cuba, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico. No formal Spanish colonial settlements were established during that time, however colonizers from neighboring islands led slave-raids that rapidly decimated the native population of the Virgin Islands throughout the 16th century. A series of attempts at settlement were also made in the 17th century by the Dutch, English, French, and the Knights of Malta. The Dutch occupied portions of St. Croix, for example, until 1645 when English settlers regained control of the island. The English remained in control until 1650, when they were driven out by the Spanish, who were shortly after removed by the French. The French occupation of the islands is characterized primarily by diversified agriculture and deforestation. The French colonization eventually failed, and St. Croix was abandoned by the French in 1696 and reverted to wilderness until St. Croix was acquired by the Danish West Indian and Guinea Trading Company in 1733.



While initial attempts at Danish colonization of the Islands were unsuccessful, the first permanent Danish settlement was established on St. Thomas in 1672 and on St. John in 1718. When the Danes purchased St. Croix from the French in 1733, it completed their West Indian acquisitions, uniting the three islands for the first time. Remnants of early Danish settlement exist on all three islands, from the names of estates and major cities to the style of buildings. Immediately upon taking control of St. Croix, the Danish West India and Guinea Trading Company parceled out large oblong plots of land of approximately 150 acres for the large-scale cultivation of

primarily sugar and cotton. Plantation agriculture demanded a large supply of cheap labor, and quickly enslaved Africans became a cornerstone of the plantation economy.

Over 28,000 enslaved Africans of various tribes and nations were captured and brought to the USVI. Non-profit groups in the Territory have recently led initiatives to build a historical narrative for the thousands of Africans who entered the Territory during the Danish colonial rule. The Virgin Island Social History Associates organized the St. Croix African Roots Project (SCARP), creating a searchable online



database for residents of St. Croix between 1734-1917, including both slaves and free peoples. The [SCARP database](#) includes biographic and basic demographic data and is accessible to the public.

In response to exploitation and cruel treatment, slave revolts and resistance became an integral part of USVI's history, with the earliest known revolt taking place in St. John in 1733. In 1754, the Danish West India and Guinea Trading Company sold its assets in the Caribbean to the King of Denmark, bringing the islands formally under Danish control. Though the slave trade was formally abolished by Royal Ordinance in 1792, slavery persisted in the Danish West Indies into the 19<sup>th</sup> century until Peter von Scholten, Governor General of the Danish West Indies, made an emancipation degree on September 22, 1848. Frederiksted has long served as a benchmark for the emancipation movement in the Virgin Islands, which contributes to the town's nickname, "Freedom City." On October 1, 1878, a large portion of Fredriksted was burned during a five-day revolt against unjust labor laws, known today as "Fireburn." When the town was restored following the revolt, construction was heavily influenced by Victorian architecture, including the now iconic "gingerbread" features associated with house trim on the islands.

The demographic, economic, and political landscape of the USVI again transformed after the U.S. purchased St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas from Denmark on March 31, 1917. The U.S. Navy contributed to the development of

### Fyah Bun (Fireburn)

In 1848, Governor von Scholten issued an emancipation proclamation, however, the year before, the Danish government enacted rules that kept people enslaved by contract for another two years. Also in 1847, the government instituted a gradual emancipation plan that stated from that time forward, children born to enslaved labors were born free and all forms of slavery would cease entirely in 1859.

Because of the confusion and uncertainty around emancipation, lives of former slaves changed little. Many ex-slaves were hired at the plantations where they were formerly enslaved under one-year contracts without receiving food or care and for little money.

Each October 1 (Contract Day) workers were allowed to leave their plantations and enter into contracts with new plantation owners. In 1878, workers gathered in Frederiksted, St. Croix, to demand higher wages and better working conditions. The gathering turned into a riot that led to the burning of many buildings and plantations. The organization of the riot was first associated with three women: Mary Thomas, Matilda McBean, and Agnes Solomon, referred to as the Three Queens. A fourth woman, Susanna "Bottom Belly" Abramson, has also been recognized as one of the lead organizers.

Sources: Euell A. Nielsen, "The Fireburn Labor Riot, United States Virgin Islands (1878)," [blackpast.org](#) and Denise Lenhardt-Benoit, "St. Croix Remembers: The Fireburn Rebellion of 1878," [stthomassource.com](#)



*The Three Queens fountain in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, was unveiled in 2005. They carry in their hands: a lantern, a harvesting tool, and flambeaux (torch). The sculpture was made by American artist Richard Hallier (Horsley Witten Group).*

infrastructure throughout the Territory, focusing on education, police protection, public health, and transportation initiatives. The Territory continued to rely on agricultural production and sugar production, however economic depressions during World War I and II negatively impacted the Territory. Exploitation, high prices, and low wages in the world sugar market resulted in labor disputes and a



*BCB Steel Orchestra plays a harmonic rendition of the Black National Anthem (VIDE).*

depressed market. In 1963, sugar production in the Virgin Islands ceased entirely when the Bethlehem Sugar Factory shut down. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s, with the advent of tourism that residential, industrial, and commercial development became a key part of the landscape in the islands.

The diverse national origins of settlers of the USVI as well as migrations between islands have contributed to the unique character of the Territory as we know it today. Creolized traditions which define the Territory have advanced in many different forms, spanning the Afro-European cultural spectrum. For example, the styles of music which are present

in the USVI, including calypso, cariso, soca, reggae, and steel pan, are a prime example of the diverse history and culture that help to define the Territory. From the style of buildings to the names of locations, the history of the Virgin Islands is represented in many different ways (Cadaval, 1990).

## Historic and Cultural Preservation Roles and Responsibilities

The following entities and legislation are primarily responsible for the preservation of local historical resources and culture in the USVI.

### Statewide Historic Preservation Plan

The USVI Statewide Historic Preservation Plan (SHPP) is the Territory's primary guidance document which identifies critical issues that may impact the Territory's ability to protect cultural and historical resources for future generations. Updated every five years, the plan provides a roadmap for the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office (VISHPO) to safeguard the Territory's significant cultural resources. The most recent version of the plan was completed in 2016, though efforts are currently underway to update the plan.

### Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office

The Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office (VISHPO) is a division of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) and is supported programmatically by NPS. The VISHPO is a historic preservation program that was primarily created to



*Fort Christian at St. Thomas Harbor in Charlotte Amalie (Martin Lie, Trondheim, Norge/Norway/Wikimedia Commons).*





*Annaberg Sugar Plantation in St. John (National Park Service).*

implement federal and territorial historic preservation legislation and reduce the impacts of development on cultural sites and buildings. The VISHPO is responsible for reviewing projects prior to development, providing preservation guidance to developers, and conducting historic preservation outreach for the general public. In addition, the VISHPO is tasked with reviewing cultural resource management projects, maintaining the Virgin Islands Registry (VI Registry) of

Historic Buildings, Sites, and Places, managing archaeological collections, administering Historic Preservation Fund grants, and generally overseeing the historic preservation needs of the Territory. The VISHPO has the authority to temporarily list threatened archaeological sites on the VI Registry for a period of one year to allow time for investigation and provide consultation support. The VISHPO works closely with the St. Thomas-St. John Historic Preservation Commission and the St. Croix Historic Preservation Commission. Together, these organizations are responsible for monitoring Historic and Architectural Control Districts, providing tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, and delivering guidance regarding historic preservation throughout USVI.

#### Virgin Islands Registry of Historic Buildings, Sites, and Places

The VISHPO is responsible for overseeing the Virgin Islands Registry of Historic Buildings, Sites and Places, which includes both prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. According to the SHHP, it is updated as cultural resources are discovered through regulatory review, cultural resource surveys, and scholarly research. The Registry includes a reference library and architectural and archaeological collections that are available upon request.

#### Federal Legislation: National Historic Preservation Act

The most significant federal legislation for historic preservation in the Territory is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966. Section 101 of the NHPA established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a list of sites that have been deemed significant at local, state, and national levels. NRHP-listed sites are afforded a higher level of protection than non-NRHP sites from development, however being listed on the NRHP does not guarantee that a site or building will be preserved indefinitely. Section 106 of the NHPA ensures that federal projects do not inadvertently cause negative impacts to cultural resources.

#### Territorial Legislation: The Antiquities and Cultural Properties Act

The Antiquities and Cultural Properties Act of 1998 tasks the Government of the Virgin Islands (GVI) with protecting the Territory's cultural and archaeological resources and establishes the GVI's control over cultural properties and archaeological sites located on public lands, leased public lands, and territorial

waters. The Act also establishes the duties of the VI State Historic Preservation Officer (VISHPO). The Antiquities Act confirms the right of the VISHPO to comment on any government related undertaking that may impact sites eligible for listing on either the NRHP or VI Registry. The Antiquities Act empowers the VISHPO to temporarily list threatened archaeological sites on the VI Registry for a period of one year to allow for investigation and consultation. The Act also protects prehistoric, historic, and modern human burial sites from being disturbed without prior approval by VISHPO. In addition, the Act establishes the Virgin Islands' control of underwater cultural resources, created a permitting system for all archaeological research conducted within the Territory. The Act also makes it illegal to damage, destroy, or loot archaeological sites on private lands, conduct excavations without a VISHPO permit, or remove artifacts or collections from the territory without VISHPO permission.

### Historic and Architectural Control Districts

The Antiquities Act established the Historic and Architectural Control Districts of Charlotte Amalie, Frederiksted, Christiansted, and Cruz Bay. Management of properties within the historic districts is overseen by the Virgin Islands Historic Preservation Commission (VIHPC). The VIHPC meets monthly to provide guidance to landowners, review requests for change within the historic districts, and ensure that property owners abide by guidelines for maintaining historic and architectural integrity within the districts.

### VI Historic Preservation Commission

The management of the rules and regulations for properties within the Historic and Architectural Control Districts is overseen by the Virgin Islands Historic Preservation Commission (VIHPC). As a result, the VIHPC is effectively responsible for maintaining the architectural and historic integrity of the historic towns of the Virgin Islands.



*Charlotte Amalie, one of the four Historic and Architectural Control Districts in the USVI (Horsley Witten Group).*

### National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) plays an important role in protecting the cultural resources of the Territory by managing federal landholdings in USVI. The NPS is responsible for reviewing and providing permits for archaeological investigations conducted on federal land, as per the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. Across the Territory, the NPS has worked to increase public access to federal lands and encourage academic research of natural and cultural resources within the USVI.

### VI Department of Education

VI Department of Education 2020 Facility Master Plan was created with the intention of informing the proposal of modernized and new construction in U.S. Virgin Islands Public Schools over the long-term to provide inclusive learning environments for students. A major focus of the Plan was supporting the development of educational environments that recognize and uplift local culture and community. The Plan actualizes this goal by focusing on vernacular architecture and interior design, fostering learning



environments that are culturally representative and foster culture competence (VI Department of Education, 2020).

### VI Council on the Arts

The VI Council on the Arts (VICA) is an agency within DPNR. One of the primary goals of the VICA is to preserve the cultural heritage of the Territory for present and future generations through art. The VICA Annual Reports provide an opportunity for the agency to highlight initiatives which promote the preservation of culture and heritage on the islands, educating residents about the significance of these resources and increasing public support for their sustained preservation (VI Council on the Arts, 2021).

### VI Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums

The VI Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums is located within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources. The mission of the Division is to provide access to and preserve USVI culture and literary heritage, expand library services into the offices and homes of users through technology and electronic sources, enhance the quality of life of USVI citizens by increasing awareness and usage of available resources in USVI libraries, foster the ongoing professional development of library staff throughout the territory, identify and serve the needs of special populations, remain an energetic and relevant organization through continual improvement and ongoing dialog with users, continue to improve records management processes, increase records management and archives awareness by implementing government-wide records management liaisons, provide information and training for archival storage and records management, and work with designated agency liaisons in the training and education of archival storage, records management and emergency preparedness (VI DPNR, 2022).



*Charles Wesley Turnbull Regional Public Library in St. Thomas (VI DPNR).*

There are six library branches in the USVI overseen by the Division. These include the Athalie McFarlene Petersen Public Library (St. Croix), the Charles Wesley Turnbull Regional Public Library (St. Thomas), the Elaine Ione Sprauve Public Library (St. John), the Enid Maria Baa Library and Archives (St. Thomas), the Florence Augusta Williams Public Library (St. Croix), and the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (St. Croix) (U.S. Virgin Islands Public Library System, 2023). The USVI Territorial Archives are

held at the Enid Maria Baa Library on St. Thomas and the Florence Augusta Williams Library on St. Croix. Museums overseen by the Division include Fort Frederik and Fort Christian (VI DPNR, 2022).

### Local Organizations and Nonprofits

There are several non-profit organizations, community groups, and foundations working to increase community awareness and appreciation for historic and archaeological resources in the USVI. Their

combined efforts are critical to cultural preservation in the Territory. Some examples of these entities include:

- **Neighborhood organizations.** Neighborhood groups, such as We From Upstreet and We Savaneros, have encouraged and conducted preservation projects within their communities with the assistance and consultation of federal and local agency partners.
- **Historical organizations.** Both the St. Thomas Historical Trust and the St. John Historical Society have led initiatives to educate the public about the preservation of historic and archaeological sites, undertaken restoration projects, and promoted research on cultural resources. Similarly, the St. Croix Landmarks Society's has supported the preservation of the history and culture of St. Croix.
- **Friends' organizations.** The Friends of the Virgin Islands National Park, Friends of the East End Marine Park, Friends of Fort Frederik Museum, and Friends of Christiansted National Historic Site have all supported efforts to preserve cultural resources.
- **Foundations.** Foundations, such as the St. Croix Foundation, have supported community engagement and grant programs that support the rehabilitation of buildings and vacant lots within urban areas, many of which have included areas of particular cultural significance.
- **Nonprofit organizations.** Nonprofit organizations, such as Our Town Frederiksted, have led initiatives to support the preservation and restoration of monuments, buildings, and cultural landscapes.



Fort Frederik in St. Croix (Horsley Witten Group).

## Inventories

The following is an overview of several of the prominent inventories of prehistoric and historic cultural properties and archaeological sites in the Territory.

St. Croix

### *National Register of Historic Places*

The NRHP lists 41 properties in St. Croix, featured in the below table (National Park Service, n.d.).



**Table 1. National Register of Historic Places Listings for St. Croix.**

Aklis Archeological Site	Estate Judith's Fancy	Friedensfeld Midlands Moravian Church and Manse	River Archeological Site
Bethlehem Middle Works Historic District	Estate La Reine	Friedensthal Mission	Salt River Bay National Historic Site and Ecological Preserve
Christiansted Historic District	Estate Little Princess	Ft. Frederik of US Virgin Islands	Sion Hill
Christiansted National Historic Site	Estate Mount Victory	Great Pond Archeological Site	Slob Historic District
Coakley Bay Estate	Estate Prosperity	Green Kay	St. Georges Archeological Site
Columbus Landing Site	Estate Saint George Historic District	Hams Bluff Light	St. John's Episcopal Church
Danish West India and Guinea Company Warehouse	Estate St. John	La Grande Princesse School	Strawberry Hill Historic District
Diamond School	Fair Plain Archeological District	Little La Grange	Upper Salt River Archeological District
Estate Butler's Bay	Fairplain Historic and Archeological District	Lower Granard Archeological District	Whim
Estate Grove Place	Fort Frederik	Prosperity Archeological Site	
Estate Hogansborg	Frederiksted Historic District	Richmond Prison Detention and Workhouse	

*National Park Service*

On St. Croix, the NPS manages the Buck Island Reef National Monument, the Christiansted National Historic Site, and Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve. The Buck Island Reef National Monument includes over 1,900 acres of submerged and dry land. The park protects tropical dry forests, manchineel beach forest, pristine sand beaches, and rocky shores. In 2001, the park was named



the first Marine Protected Area, providing protection for all park resources. The park is home to several endangered and threatened species, including green, hawksbill, leatherback, and loggerhead sea turtles, as well as the St. Croix Ground Lizard. The Christiansted National Historic Site was established in 1952. Covering over seven acres, the park portrays the history of the Danish era occupation of the island. In 1992, Congress created the Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve. The 1,015-acre park includes some of the largest remaining mangrove forests in the USVI, as well as coral reefs and a submarine canyon (National Park Service, 2020).

### National Heritage Areas

National Heritage Areas (NHA) are sites designated by an Act of Congress that combine historic, cultural, and natural resources to form nationally important landscapes. There are only 56 National Heritage Areas in the U.S. including, as of January 5, 2023, the island of St. Croix and surrounding waters. The legislative effort to secure the NHA designation for St. Croix was led by Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett, though efforts to obtain this designation first started with former Congresswoman Donna M. Christensen in 2003. The VISHPO will be responsible for overseeing and administering NHA related programs and projects that recognize, protect, and enhance important heritage resource values in St. Croix. Of note, the NHA designation will provide federal funding to support the development of recreational and educational opportunities to educate youth about the heritage of St. Croix (Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett, 2023).

### St. John

#### National Register of Historic Places

The NRHP lists 26 places in St. John, featured in the below table (National Park Service, n.d.).

**Table 2. National Register of Historic Places Listings for St. John.**

Annaberg Historic District	Emmaus Moravian Church and Manse	Jossie Gut Historic District	Petroglyph Site
Brown Bay Plantation Historic District	Enighed	Lameshur Plantation	Reef Bay Great House Historic District
Catherineberg-Jockumsdahl-Herman Farm	Estate Beverhoudt	L'Esperance Historic District	Reef Bay Sugar Factory Historic District
Cinnamon Bay Plantation	Estate Carolina Sugar Plantation	Liever Marches Bay Historic District	Rustenberg Plantation South Historic District
Congo Cay Archeological District	Fortsberg	Lind Point Fort	Trunk Bay Sugar Factory
Cruz Bay Town Historic District	Hermitage Plantation Historic District	Mary Point Estate	
Dennis Bay Historic District	HMS Santa Monica	More Hill Historic District	

#### National Park Service

On St. John, the NPS is responsible for overseeing the management of the Virgin Islands National Park. The Virgin Islands National Park covers roughly two thirds of the island of St. John and was established in 1956. The park includes approximately 7,259 acres of dry land and 5,650 acres of adjacent submerged land. In 2001, the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument was added to protect an additional 12,708 acres of submerged land around St.





John. The park and monument provide protection to coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, and other marine ecosystems, in addition to protecting some of the last remaining native tropical dry rain forest in the Caribbean. In addition to supporting many diverse ecosystems, the park provides a home to several species that are federally listed as endangered or threatened. In 1976, the Virgin Islands National Park was designated as an International Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The park contains many diverse cultural resources, including prehistoric archeological sites, historic structures, and offshore shipwrecks (National Park Service, 2018).

## St. Thomas

### *National Register of Historic Places*

The NRHP lists 23 places in St. Thomas, featured in the below table (National Park Service, n.d.).

**Table 3. National Register of Historic Places Listings for St. Thomas.**

Bordeaux	Estate Neltjeberg	Hassel Island Historic District (Boundary Increase)	Skytsborg
Botany Bay Archeological District	Estate Niesky	Hull Bay Archeological District	St. Thomas Synagogue
Charlotte Amalie Historic District	Estate Perseverance	Krum Bay Archeological District	St. Thomas Synagogue-Beracha Veshalom Vegemiluth Hasadim
Estate Botany Bay	Fort Christian	Mafolie Great House	Tutu Plantation House
Estate Brewers Bay	Hamburg-America Shipping Line Administrative Offices	Magens Bay Archeological District	Venus Hill
Estate Hafensight	Hassel Island	New Herrnhut Moravian Church	

### *National Park Service*

On St. Thomas, the NPS is responsible for overseeing the management of a significant portion of Hassel Island. The NPS bought 128 acres of the island from the Paiewonski family in 1978, which had purchased the island in the 1930's to provide water for their distillery. The entire island comprises 135 acres and forms the western arm of St. Thomas Harbor, and has now been incorporated into the Virgin Islands National Park. The island contains a rich and diverse array of cultural elements which reflect the agricultural, colonial, maritime, and military history of St. Thomas (National Park Service, 1988).



*Fort Willoughby Garrison House on Hassel Island (Gruepig/Wikimedia Commons).*

## Threats to Resources

While the USVI community respects and recognizes the importance of preserving the culture and heritage of the Territory, historic preservation remains a challenge. Without deliberate and intentional planning, the traditional cultural and historical sites, places, and buildings which define the Virgin Islands may be at risk. Threats of particular concern include:

### Pressure from Development Activities

Archaeological and historic sites are threatened by various forms of development without VISHPO consultation. Growth in tourism and commercial development may negatively impact submerged cultural resources in particular, especially as bays and harbors are dredged to accommodate cruise ships or other marine-related industries. Resorts and residential complexes may also pose a threat to the Territory's undeveloped bays and coastal areas which contain historical sites. Rural development in previously remote areas of the Territory has already resulted in the loss of many archaeological resources and historic ruins in USVI. The concurrent demand for additional supporting infrastructure, such as communication, energy, and roads infrastructure, coupled with the increase in sprawl, also poses a threat to cultural resources in formerly rural landscapes. To mitigate potential negative impacts, it is imperative that developers undergo cultural resources surveys to preserve resources.

### Public Education

To some, the Territory's historic buildings may be perceived as neglected or dilapidated spaces. Public education regarding the significance of the Territory's cultural resources would help residents of USVI understand the value of preserving and/or rehabilitating historic sites and buildings. These stories must be told through public education resources which reach all sectors of the USVI population.

For example, the integrity of the Territory's archaeological sites has been diminished as landowners undertake house modifications that can damage or in some cases destroy cultural artifacts. Landowners should consider seeking guidance from the VISHPO to ensure that improvement projects support the preservation of the Territory's cultural and heritage resources.

### Natural Hazards

Because many significant cultural resources are located in low-lying areas near or on the coastline, these resources are constantly vulnerable to the impacts of erosion, flooding, and storm surges. Many of these impacts will only be exacerbated by climate change, such as more frequent and intense storms, increasing damage to and loss of archaeological sites.



*St. John recovers from Hurricane Irma in 2017 (US Department of Defense/Flickr).*

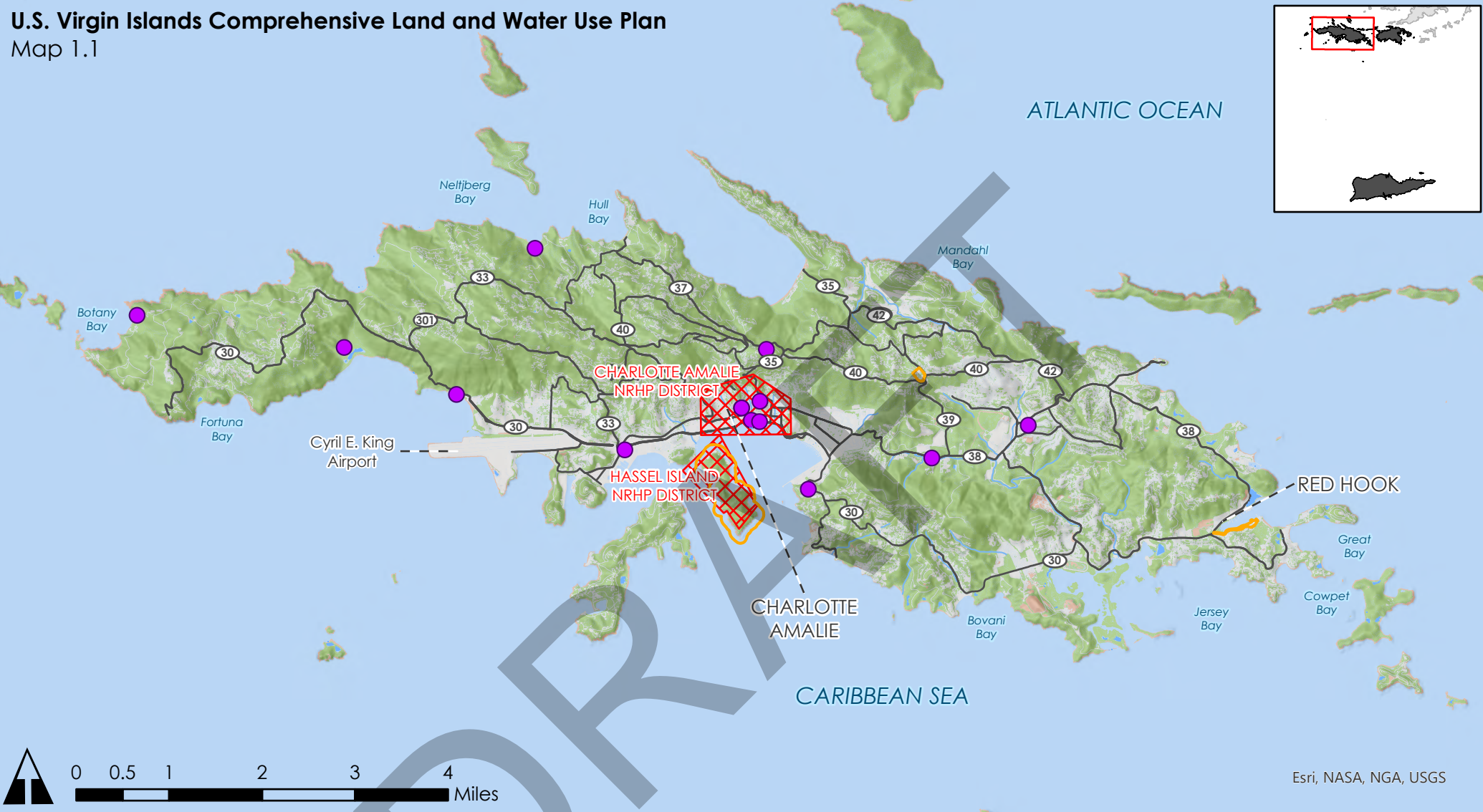
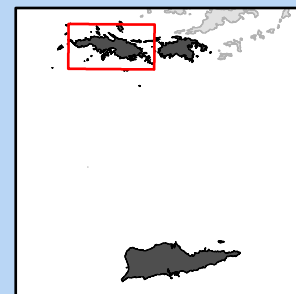
### Limited Capacity to Enforce Preservation Regulations

Like many other government agencies, the VISHPO struggles to fully enforce its enabling legislation and regulatory decisions due to a lack of funding, limited governmental support, and insufficient numbers of staff. Without sufficient resources, the Territory is severely limited in its ability to offer consultation and education services, in addition to enforcement.



# U.S. Virgin Islands Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan

Map 1.1



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

**Legend**

- Surface Water Bodies
- Guts
- National Park Service Land
- Major Roads

**Land Cover (2012)**



- Developed Land
- Barren Land
- Undeveloped Land

**National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Resources\***

- Buildings, Sites, and Structures
- Districts

\* Boundaries and locations of NRHP resources are approximate.

**Historic and Cultural Resources - St. Thomas**

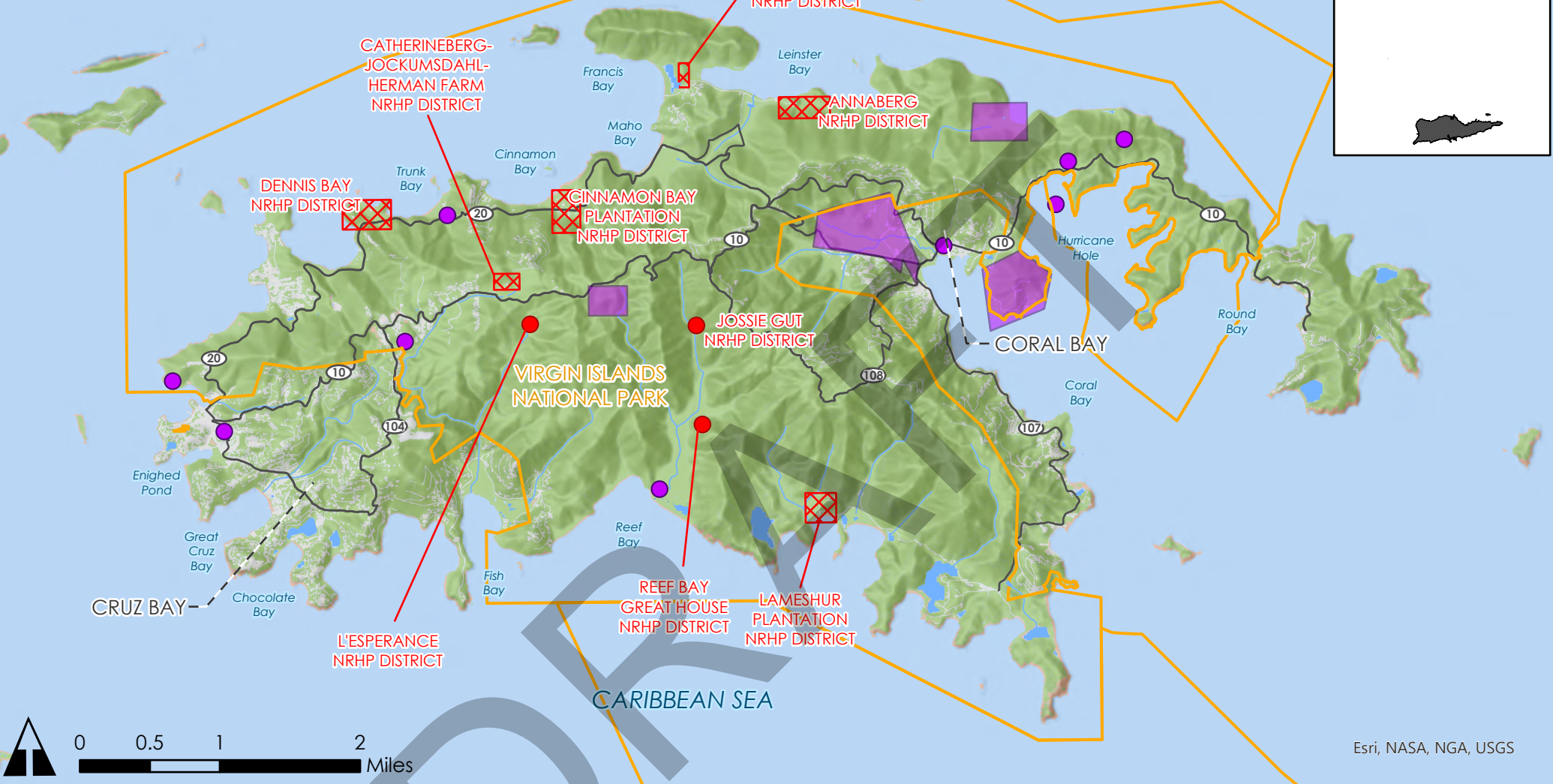
Date: 4/24/2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data, National Park Service, NOAA

Note: This map is for informational purposes only and is not suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

# U.S. Virgin Islands Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan

Map 1.2



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

## Legend

- Surface Water Bodies
- Guts
- Major Roads
- National Park Service Land
- Land Cover (2012)**
- Developed Land
- Barren Land
- Undeveloped Land

## National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Resources\*

- Buildings, Sites, and Structures
- Districts
- 

\* Boundaries and locations of NRHP resources are approximate.

## Historic and Cultural Resources - St. John

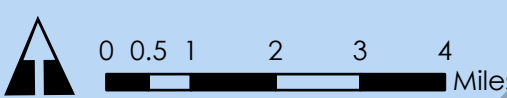
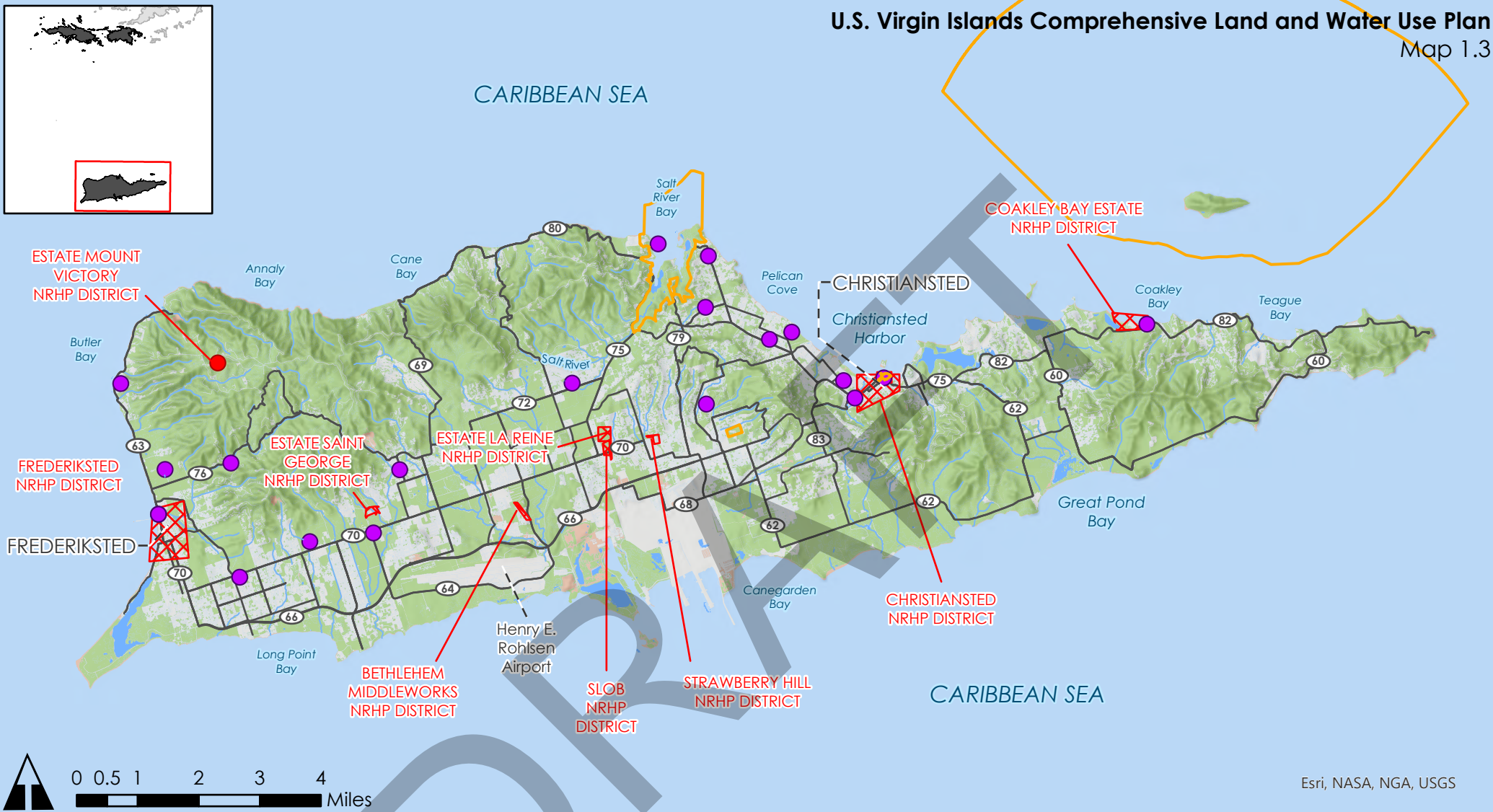
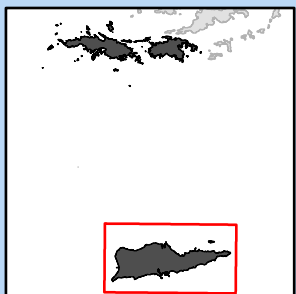


Date: 4/24/2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data, National Park Service, NOAA

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Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

- Legend**
- Surface Water Bodies
  - Guts
  - Major Roads
  - National Park Service Land
  - Land Cover (2012)**
  - Developed Land
  - Barren Land
  - Undeveloped Land

- National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Resources\***
- Buildings, Sites, and Structures
  - Districts

\* Boundaries and locations of NRHP resources are approximate.

**Historic and Cultural Resources - St. Croix**

Date: 4/24/2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OCHA Centre for Humanitarian Data, National Park Service, NOAA

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