



Coral Bay Community Council

October 2014 Annual News



Protecting Coral Bay for 11 Years and Moving Forward

The Coral Bay Community Council (CBCC) has had another very active year, and has grown into a substantial nonprofit community organization, serving environmental, planning, youth, and other social and public infrastructure objectives. CBCC is *"For People who love Coral Bay."*

With about 400 members and many more in the community offering their volunteer help, CBCC is able to undertake a broad range of projects for Coral Bay. CBCC's base of financial support from your dues and donations and fundraisers has grown to over \$44K in a year. CBCC also encourages Planned Giving and Business Memberships. Last December, CBCC held its first Bizarre Bazaar – a successful fundraising event promoting local crafts, fun and food. This year's Bazaar will be December 13th.

Typically, for every dollar CBCC spends, there is at least another dollar of in-kind services volunteered. CBCC has two paid staff: Patricia Reed and Sean

Richardson working on our various projects.



With the continued leadership of its volunteer President and board members, CBCC has expanded the range of environmental and community projects that can be accomplished.

Thanks to everyone in Coral Bay for your volunteer activism and financial support.

Let's work together to make our second decade even more valuable to the community and nature.

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Coral Bay Watershed Management Project

This project is grassroots-led, with professional and monetary assistance from government agencies.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN:

CBCC has just completed a 1:1 matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Coral Reef Conservation Fund to update aspects of the 2008 Watershed Management Plan and include more robust water quality improvement measures, with a focus on prevention of sediment & other stormwater contaminants reaching critical marine habitats (mangroves, seagrass and coral reef habitats) with endangered turtles and corals.

The ongoing process of engaging residents and Public Works in properly maintaining stormwater drainage into ghuts and the bay to reduce erosion, and repairing and retrofitting 30 years of improper construction practices will continue.

CBCC was represented this year in numerous USVI environmental meetings, including the Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership. NOAA & EPA staff have visited Coral Bay and the US Army Corps will soon visit. We are often asked to share our work in stormwater management and the expertise we have gained.

Additionally, CBCC received two grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fill in more elements of identified watershed planning needs— Solid

Waste Management (\$90,000) and Water and Wastewater Resources (\$182,100).



SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT: A plan outlining options for managing solid waste in an integrated manner in Coral Bay will be produced, emphasizing the three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle). The project will include soil testing that will yield a human health and ecological risk assessment to determine if the current open "leaking" dumpsters are posing any hazard to Coral Bay's water resources. This project will provide the reports needed to expedite (and locate funding for) the removal of the dumpsters from the mangrove shoreline

and building of a good reuse, recycle, and household waste disposal/transfer center in Coral Bay. Our partners include the VI Waste Management Authority and the Island Green Living Association.

WATER AND WASTEWATER RESOURCES: The project will outline existing and future options for safe potable water supply and wastewater treatment that will respect the environment.

MARINE DEBRIS REMOVAL: CBCC has received \$90,000 in NOAA grant funds to remove derelict vessels in Coral Harbor and clean up marine debris along shorelines, in mangroves and in the boat mooring areas. CBCC has committed to providing in-kind services for a total project value of nearly \$140,000.

Check out our CBCC Website -
www.CoralBayCommunityCouncil.org
Lots of useful information for you.

Thank You! Jean Vance
our volunteer webmaster

Please Make a Tax Deductible Donation

CBCC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and relies on your assistance, both in time and financially. Please give generously so we can be even more ambitious in our scope of work. Thank you!

Planning: American Institute of Architects Community Vision Report

COMMUNITY VISION AND PLANNING:

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Sustainable Design

Team Program report was released in 2014 based on the May 2013 planning workshop which drew over 140 participants. See more info at <http://www.coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/AIA.htm>. This effort has created a renewed interest in community interaction and planning that bodes well for the next community involvement steps, such as developing a short vision statement, and setting priorities. CBCC held follow-up community meetings February



& March 2014, and these community planning efforts will continue to be hosted by CBCC.

COMMUNITY VISION SURVEY: In May 2013, CBCC conducted a survey about Coral Bay's community vision and values. It showed strong consensus (90% and above) about the core values that should underpin Coral Bay's vision for the future, including environmental protection. Despite a strong desire for little change, people do want to see improvements, such as resolving trash and

dumpster issues for a visibly cleaner environment everywhere in Coral Bay, adding a gas station, improving roads, adding recreational facilities and more. The conclusions and report can be accessed at <http://sdrv.ms/13Tvo4K> and at the CBCC website.

Surveys were also conducted in spring 2014 about community water and wastewater practices and needs.



Coral Bay Proposed Marina Developments

COULD IT HAPPEN?: Most Coral Bay residents and landowners were amazed at the huge size of the proposed Summers End Marina on the "Island Blues" side of the bay: 145 slips (49 for megayachts) taking up 28 acres in the harbor. The "unintended consequences" and negative impact to the community tourism business, plus the damage to the flourishing marine seagrass and mangroves habitat for fish, sea turtles, baby sharks and corals spurred strong public opposition to the local CZM permitting, including from CBCC, in detailed analyses and comments.

The permit was nevertheless approved on October 1st, 2014, with no modifications at all, although this is only the first step in final project approval. The community opposition is strong and there is a request for central coordination from CBCC going forward. Environmental analyses, engaging actively in the federal Army Corps permitting process (which coordinates NOAA, EPA and other federal agency concerns about marine habitat, water quality, and appropriate uses of "waters of the U.S."), and other appeals processes are being explored.

With another marina proposal on the horizon behind the fire station, these issues - and finding a solution to providing desired marine services vs. turning the bay into a boat parking garage (while impairing the environment) - need to be dealt with. If you want to support this effort, please provide CBCC with general support and/or send a special donation check with "Save Coral Bay" in the memo line. You can also use PayPal on our homepage. Keep up to date with these important planning concerns at www.coralbaycommunitycouncil.org

On the Ground: Learning Spaces, Parks, and Infrastructure

GUY H. BENJAMIN SCHOOL SUPPORT:

Despite all the local efforts, the government decided to close Guy H. Benjamin School. CBCC is now working to encourage the government to open it as a community facility with meeting space and an adult learning center in the form of a public computer center initially. More ideas are encouraged.

WETLANDS: In Phase 2 of this protection process, volunteer parents fenced and created a toddler's park under the big Sam-Sam shade tree.

CLEANUPS: Thanks to all the volunteers and the Coral Bay Yacht Club members who always come out for the shoreline and roadside cleanups!

BASKETBALL COURT: The Rotary Club of St. John has undertaken the leadership to



raise funds and will soon complete refurbishment of the Coral Bay Basketball Court which is night lit and will provide a great spot for

local recreation by people of all ages. There will be lines and nets for volley ball and Pickleball too.

INFRASTRUCTURE: CBCC has ongoing work with government, agencies and other involved parties to:

- *Relocate the Main Dumpsters out of the mangroves to a new Recycling Center site,
- *Repair the Agriculture Center Building
- *Encourage pedestrian walkways and nature trails for locals and tourists,
- *Preserve and showcase historic sites,
- *Add recreational areas,
- *Upgrade roads & other public infrastructure.

Communications, Office Resources and CBCC Financials

COMMUNICATIONS: CBCC members receive several emails each month about news and upcoming events. It is the major way we share news, and "call" for volunteers, participation and donations. We also maintain a list of other people in the community whom we can contact and include in public issues and activities. **Like us on Facebook—Coral Bay Community Council**

CBCC continues to encourage real planning processes for Coral Bay and all the Virgin Islands that focus on capacity and infrastructure planning that will serve both people and the natural environment.

OFFICE: Stop by CBCC's office across from Skinny Legs and see the resources our members support.

FINANCIALS: CBCC's annual detailed financial reports are available at: <http://www.coralbaycommunitycouncil.org/Board-of-Directors.htm>