

PRESS RELEASE

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Initiative To Replant 100 Seagrape Trees At Long Bay Continues

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The Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change is pleased to announce the continuation of the Seagrape Tree Replanting Initiative at Long Bay, Beef Island. On Saturday 15th March, Sunday 23rd March, and Saturday 29th March 2025, an additional 65 seagrape trees will be planted as part of efforts to restore the beach environment. This initiative, funded by Unite BVI and in collaboration with the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College Centre for Applied Marine Studies, aims to replant at least 100 seagrape trees to restore the historic seagrape treeline, which was heavily impacted by Hurricane Irma in 2017.

The seagrape trees are being named in honour of deceased Virgin Islanders from the Seventh and Eighth Districts who made significant contributions to community development, particularly in environmental protection, history and culture, education, farming, fishing, boat building, and other key aspects of socio-economic progress. This initiative seeks to celebrate and memorialise their invaluable legacy.

Dr. Ronald Smith-Berkeley, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change, highlighted the importance of the seagrape trees for both environmental and cultural reasons. "Seagrape trees are vital for protecting our beaches from future erosion caused by hurricanes and swells, providing important nesting habitat for sea turtles, and offering shade for beachgoers,"

Dr. Smith-Berkeley explained. "In addition to their environmental benefits, seagrape trees hold deep cultural significance, and we encourage the public to join us in this meaningful initiative."

The replanting effort began with the first 20 trees being planted at the launch event on Saturday 8th June 2024. The names of the first 58 trees have already been announced, and the public is now invited to submit nominations for the remaining 42 trees. Nominations should be made by completing an online form at bvi.gov.vg/environment or by contacting the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change at 468-2147.

Family members of honourees, local residents, and the general public are invited to participate in the planting sessions. High school students in 11th and 12th

grades are also encouraged to volunteer for community service hours, with up to 20 students allowed to register for each planting. Registration can be completed at bvi.gov.vg/environment.

Plantings will begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude by 10:00 a.m., with participants asked to gather at the roundabout area at the centre of the beach by 7:45 a.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring water in reusable bottles and wear long sleeves, closed shoes, and gloves to ensure a safe and comfortable experience.

The Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change is dedicated to protecting the Virgin Islands' environment, promoting sustainable practices, and preserving the Territory's natural resources for future generations. Through this and other initiatives, the Ministry works to address the challenges of climate change while fostering environmental stewardship and community resilience.

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