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Press Release

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CBCC Continuing Efforts to Reduce Stormwater Sediment Reaching Coral Bay - Using New National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant Funds.

(Coral Bay, St John, VI, March 20, 2017) - The Coral Bay Community Council (CBCC) is pleased to announce the receipt of a \$68,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Coral Reef Conservation Fund and its funding partner, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). A public meeting to get the grant underway for the benefit of Coral Bay neighborhoods will be held Monday March 27th at 6:30 pm sharp at the Guy H. Benjamin Community Center - Room 6, in Coral Bay.

The purpose of the grant is to continue efforts to reduce muddy stormwater runoff and turbidity affecting Coral Bay marine habitats by constructing stormwater best management practices (BMPs) such as stabilization of dirt roads, vegetated swales, water bars and road paving in several neighborhoods in cooperation with local homeowners.

The grant commits CBCC to a one-to-one match of in-kind funds, including volunteer services, donations, and partner activities, for a project with a total effort of over \$134,000. Work will be accomplished during this next year.

A community meeting on the project is scheduled for Monday, March 27, 2017 at 6:30pm at the Guy Benjamin Community Center, Room 6, as part of CBCC's Forum series. Everyone is invited to attend, and especially those in the neighborhoods listed below that are eligible for projects under this grant. Other neighborhoods are eligible for advice that might lead to future grant funds work.

Previously a call went out to all Coral Bay neighborhoods concerned about their watershed's drainage -- to bring their problem and their willingness to help find and fund solutions to CBCC, so that the grant application would show their willingness to participate -- and make it possible to get the grant. These neighborhoods are on the list and eligible to participate in receiving the primary engineering expertise and assistance, if they are willing to take primary responsibility for installation costs of the Best Management Practices (BMPs): Johns Folly Shore Road, Harold's Way, Sugarbird Hill, Estates Zootenvaal and Eden, Gerda Marsh Road, Johnny Horn Trail, Calabash Boom road, Freeman's Ground, Flanagan's Passage

access road, and Various Near-Shore Parking Areas.

Other neighborhoods can also ask for design assistance in their watersheds and on their roads, and become eligible through this process for future financial grant assistance.

Conservation Goal

The Coral Bay Community Council's (CBCC's) conservation goal is to improve water quality by returning sediment runoff to natural levels and ensuring that all development proceeds in an environmentally friendly manner. Past and current efforts to address this issue include a previous similar grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) & National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a series of measures to minimize sedimentation. To date, CBCC has implemented aspects of 7 out of 11 objectives from the 2008 Watershed Management Plan (WMP) using EPA and NOAA grant funds and financial support from other partners.

Very significantly, CBCC's past EPA Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) and NOAA American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects demonstrated how new techniques could be used locally, including bio-retention basins, swales, and waterbars to direct water flow and effectively reduce sediment-laden runoff into Coral Bay and onto fragile coral reef habitat. While these efforts have demonstrated great progress towards sedimentation reduction, additional targeted watershed restoration actions are still needed and will yield more benefits. "Residents and homeowners continually ask us whether we can find more grant funds to proceed with these improvements and indicate a willingness to provide matching funds. Thus CBCC has sought and received several grants for this purpose. We encourage all neighborhoods with dirt roads and bad drainage practices to participate in improving our environment." Said Sharon Coldren, President. More information is available at www.CoralBayCommunityCouncil.org

CBCC has also received a \$74,000 grant from the VI Department of Planning and Natural Resources of federal EPA 319h funds for use in 2017 in similar projects. Another press release will cover this grant work. In combination, almost \$250,000 of stormwater management work will be undertaken in Coral Bay to protect the marine coral and seagrass habitats from damage from stormwater.

CBCC's office (across from the Coral Bay fire station) is open Monday-Friday from 8am to 5 pm. CBCC encourages people to make an appointment or stop by to discuss the project and volunteer to assist. People can also contact CBCC at 340-776-2099 or coralbaycommunitycouncil@hotmail.com.

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