

MEDIA RELEASE



The Red Hook Community Alliance, a non-profit 501C3 organization is proud to announce that they have been awarded a Gulf of Mexico Community-based Restoration Partnership grant for the Red Hook Salt Pond Restoration Project.

This Gulf of Mexico Foundation grant is funded by the NOAA Community-based Restoration Program and the US EPA Gulf of Mexico Program. The US EPA Gulf of Mexico Program “Gulf Ecological Management Sites” (GEMS) Program is an effective model of networking and cooperation across political borders. NOAA and the US EPA have interests in the ecological health of the US Territories of the Caribbean as well as the Gulf of Mexico.

Andrea King, President of the Red Hook Community Alliance (RHCA) saw this grant as an ideal opportunity to fund the Red Hook Salt Pond Restoration, a project the RHCA has had on its agenda for many years. “The Red Hook Salt Pond has suffered extreme degradation over many years due to human abuses that have been allowed to occur. This grant will allow us to improve the ponds condition and to protect for the future. Marine and plant life at the pond should improve dramatically once this project is undertaken”.

The RHCA was instrumental in getting the marine sanctuary and wildlife refuge designation of the Red Hook Salt Pond by the VI Department of Planning and Natural Resources approximately 5 years ago.

The RHCA is partnering with the VI Division of Fish and Wildlife on this project. Total grant funding awarded is \$22, 134.00. Matching funds and in-kind services have been donated by East End Plaza and Island Roads Corporation. Volunteers from RHCA, The Environmental Rangers, The JR. Ecology Club and Rotary East will assist with the project. Denise Rennis, Wetlands Expert from The Wetlands and Coastal Research Firm of South Carolina will be the primary consultant on this project.

The project’s scope will consist of initial water quality testing, cleaning, reforestation of mangroves and indigenous plant species, creation of a nature trail, boardwalk and viewing platform construction and educational signage.

The Restoration project will begin in July of 2006 and continue through July of 2007. Any person or organization who wishes to volunteer their services for this project is encouraged to contact Andrea King at 344-2143 or by e-mailing betterislands@rhca.vi