For Immediate Release
Contact: Valerie Peters
blueflagusvi@gmail.com
Phone: 340 344 8446

Blue Flag and VI Clean Coast Eco-Certifications working together

St. Thomas, VI, November 4, 2022 —The VI Conservation Society (VICS) along with the USVI Hotel & Tourism Association (HTA) are pleased to announce that, after the extensive annual review process, three beaches have once again been awarded the Blue Flag status by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). Blue Flag is an exclusive eco-label promoting sustainable tourism and awarded to beaches and marinas worldwide who meet the established criteria of the program.

The three beaches receiving this coveted certification are: on St. Thomas-- Emerald Beach Resort at Lindbergh bay, The Ritz Carlton Resort beach at Great Bay; Tamarind Reef Resort at Green Cay Beach on St. Croix. The Blue Flag certification is based on compliance with 32 criteria including environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management, and safety and services. The program serves to encourage authorities and managers to provide beaches and marinas with a certain level of environmental quality, cleanliness, and safety standards for local populations and tourists.

The Blue Flag Program aims to improve the environmental quality of beaches and marinas and works towards the sustainable management of coastal areas in a holistic way. It is a system that does not curtail recreation and tourism in the coastal area but rather helps manage it through a wide range of subjects, activities and users that have direct and indirect interactions with the coastal environment.

The process of acquiring Blue Flag certification involves both monetary and manpower investment. The Department of Tourism has been a key supporter and we thank them for their contribution to this effort. Key agencies including the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (CZM, EP), CORE, Department of Tourism, VI Waste Management Authority, Department of Education, St Croix Environmental Association, University of the Virgin Islands – VIMAS & VIEPSCOR, Virgin Islands Professional Charter Association (VIPCA), the Hotel and Tourism Association (HTA) and the EPA, provided the staffing to serve on the Blue Flag Jury who reviewed the beaches' applications.

This past season each of the Blue Flag locations eliminated Styrofoam from their Food and Beverage outlets and have all been certified VI Clean Coasts - The VI Clean Coasts (VICC) Eco-Certification Initiative helps businesses of the USVI improve their environmental footprint. VICC can help by developing ways to make your business more eco-friendly and providing seed funding to implement recommended changes. To find out more visit - https://viconservationsociety.org/programs/vi-clean-coasts/

According Valerie Peters – VICS Executive Director "We are thrilled to continue our partnership with VICC and congratulate the participants for their accomplishment and their commitment to preserving our natural resources."

The flags will be raised on all three beaches on December 1, 2022. We encourage residents and visitors to join us in recognizing these locations for their hard work and dedication to implementing sound environmentally sustainable tourism practices.

We encourage additional beach and marina management organizations to engage in sustainable management of coastal resources and sign up by November 20, 2021. For additional information visit viconservationsociety.org/programs/blue-flag-usvi/ or contact blueflagusvi@gmail.com.