

Round Bay, St. John – Managing Uses and conflicts

The US Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) has created the Round Bay User Management Plan to manage the increased use and maritime activity occurring in Round Bay, St. John. This document comprises inputs from the residents in Round Bay St John, and local boating interests both commercial and recreational.

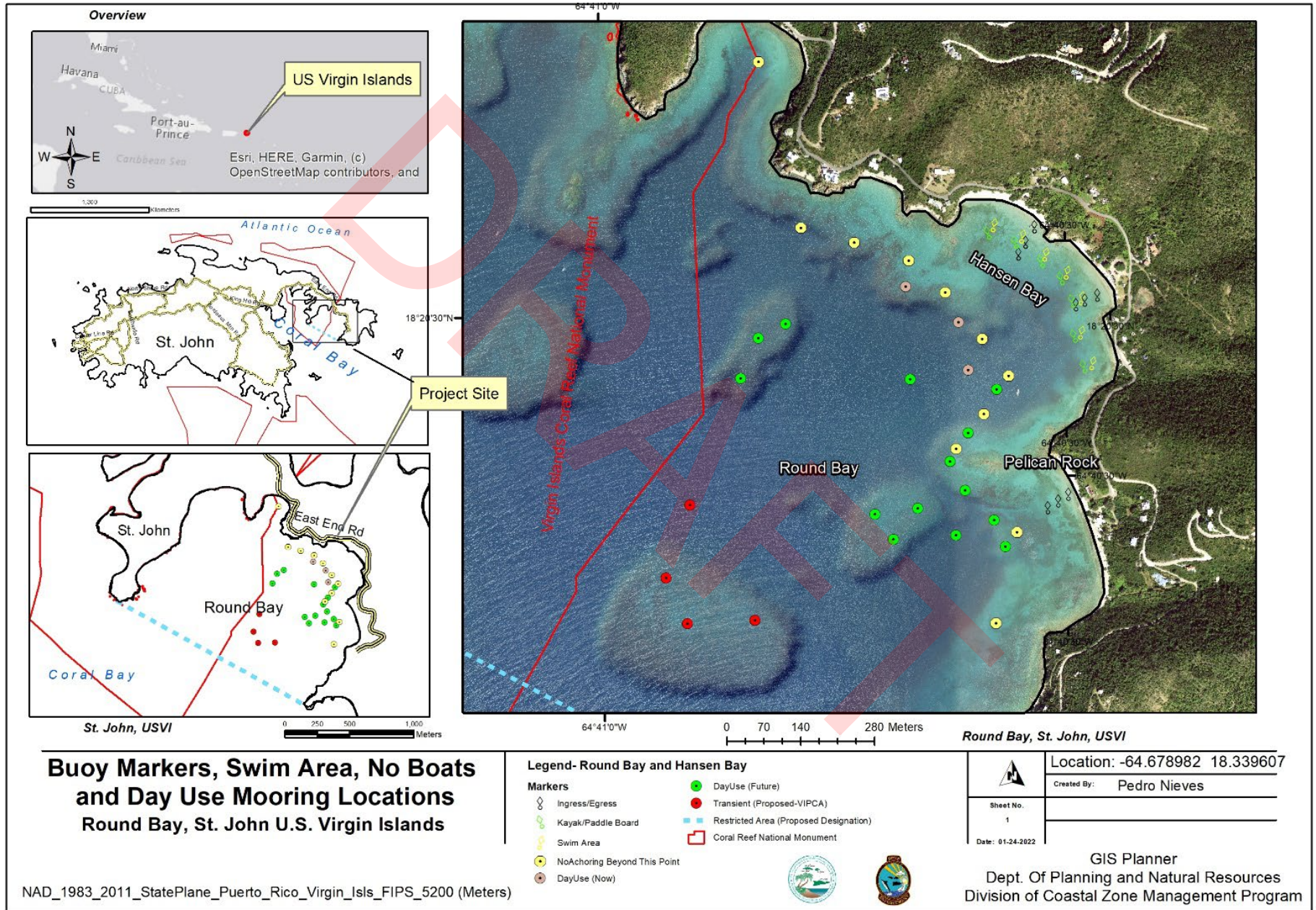
During the COVID-19 pandemic, Caribbean nations began closing their ports to outside visitors to curtail the spread of the virus. These boaters many of them flying a US flag were denied access to neighboring ports such as the British Virgin Islands, causing a surge in boaters seeking refuge in the USVI, particularly, Round Bay in St. John. As an example, the website MarineTraffic.com designated Round Bay as a “shelter port” for boaters seeking a beautiful and calm bay in close proximity to other islands.

As a result of that influx and subsequent increased usage, user conflicts have become an increasing challenge. Round Bay due to its location and characteristics offer an attractive offering to the recreational and commercial boating interests. The management plan is intended to provide a structured way that organizes uses and protects the integrity of the natural and cultural resources in the area whilst still addressing the public need for access to shoreline resources and in water activities.

This management plan will accommodate day use moorings, limited transient mooring, ingress/egress channels (⊗) to shore, and recreational areas for swimming (⊗) and non-motorized (⊗) activities within Round Bay. The day use moorings (⊙●) will be designated for boats less than and greater than 65ft in length (max length 80 ft) at strategic locations. Transient moorings (●) (limited to 4 days/3 nights) will also accommodate 4 vessels (2<65ft length and 2>65ft length) at locations further out from shore in strategic areas (Figure 1). Typical sand screws designed for sand substrate will be used to install moorings and buoys (Figure 2).

Round Bay is home to the Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument (VICRNM), (demarcated by the redline), a national historic wreck, healthy seagrass beds, and sand flats. All of which will greatly benefit from mooring installations and buoy signage that would regulate, protect, and mitigate the pressures and impacts of the increased boating and maritime activity.

Figure 1. Buoy Markers, Swim Area, No Boats and Day Use Mooring Locations










| Icon | Mooring type/color | Boat size | Distance from shore |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------|
|  | Ingress channel Markers/Black | Non-mooring | ~10-230 feet |
|  | Non-motorized Markers/Green | Non-mooring | ~150-160 feet |
|  | Swim Area Markers/Yellow | Non-mooring | ~150 feet |
|  | Signage Marker (No Boats/Anchoring) | Non-mooring | ~350 -690 feet |
|  | Day Use Mooring /Brown | Vessels <65ft | Varies |
|  | Future Day Use Moorings | To be decided (TBD) | Varies |
|  | Transient Mooring (Restricted to 4 days/3 nights) | 2 vessels <65ft 2 vessels >65ft | Varies |

Figure 2: Mooring and marker buoy installation equipment

