

SALT RIVER BAY

A WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE SITE

Located on the north central coast of St. Croix, US Virgin Islands this watershed is home to the Salt River Bay National Historic Park and Ecological Preserve and the Salt River Bay Territorial Marine Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary. The watershed drains to vitally important ecosystems of mangroves, estuary, and coral reefs. The newest Watershed Partnership Initiative Site, Salt River Bay was selected by the USCRTF to become a priority site in 2023.



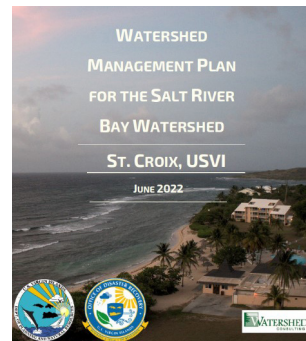
Salt River Bay watershed area

Desired outcomes by 2035

-  Increase safe recreation via improved water quality and community perception of water quality
-  Improved recovery and resilience of mangrove ecosystems
-  Increase watershed literacy of Salt River residents, farmers, agencies, businesses, and users of the bay
-  Maintain or improve 2025 levels of species richness and ecosystem functions in the surrounding coral reef

Needs

-  Waste tracers to determine septic and vessel discharge issues
-  Sediment transport studies
-  Green infrastructure demonstration projects
-  Environmental literacy baseline surveys
-  Stream restoration plans
-  Current coral reef reproductive health and functional diversity report
-  Coral reef water quality impacts report



Watershed management plan est. 2022



Mangroves in the bay

Economic Benefits

Annual protection value* provided by the reefs in St. Croix, USVI



\$31.4M in economic activity







278 people



\$26.5M in protected infrastructure

*Adjusted to 2025 USD; (Storlazzi et al., 2019)

Threats

-  Residential development
-  Old, poorly-maintained, likely inefficient septic systems
-  Likely human waste discharge from vessels
-  Water bodies impaired due to low dissolved oxygen, high enterococcus bacteria, high nitrogen, low transparency/clarity, and high turbidity (from 2022 reporting).



A pristine beach in Salt River Bay



Learn more about Salt River Bay by scanning this QR code!