

# KEEPING OUR COASTLINES CLEAN

A U.S. Virgin Islands  
Marine Debris Curriculum







Old City Mangrove Lagoon, St. James, and Compass Point  
Marine Reserves and Wildlife Sanctuaries

# SOLUTIONS



# Links to the Next Generation Science Standards, Quick Reference Guide

Curricula by Sub-Section		Middle School						High School					Sci & Engineering Practices
		ESS 3-1	ESS 3-2	ESS 3-3	ESS 3-4	ETS 1-1	ETS 1-2	ESS 3-1	ESS 3-3	ESS 3-4	ETS 1-1	ETS 1-2	
<b>Composition &amp; Abundance</b>	Beach Box Exploration			✓									✓
	Investigating Oceanic Garbage Patches			✓					✓				✓
	A Degrading Experience			✓					✓				✓
<b>Sources &amp; Transportation</b>	Watershed Walk	✓		✓				✓					✓
	Sources of Microplastics: Microbeads			✓									✓
<b>Impacts</b>	Entanglement Problems			✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
	Natural Disasters and Marine Debris		✓	✓	✓			✓					✓
<b>Solutions</b>	Linked Beach-Ghut Clean Ups	✓		✓					✓				✓
	Mitigating Microplastics			✓					✓				✓
	Upcycling Plastic Bags					✓	✓				✓	✓	
	Making Connections Through Art			✓					✓				✓

# SPOTLIGHT

## U.S. Virgin Islands Public School Students Work with University of the Virgin Islands Masters of Marine & Environmental Science Students to Reduce Marine Debris

The “Keepin’ It Clean in 2017” was a U.S. Virgin Islands teacher-inspired project that paired University of the Virgin Islands (UVI) Masters in Marine & Environmental Science (MMES) students, territorial educators, and more than 1,275 4th-8th grade students from the Bertha C. Boschulte Middle School and Lockhart Elementary School, funded by a grant to UVI from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Marine Debris Program.

The goal of the program was to promote environmental stewardship and marine debris prevention through a home and school recycling program, with partners from the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA) and Terracycle, a stateside company that recycles and upcycles materials into products that can be reused, like shoes and benches. Recycled items were shipped to the mainland because the U.S. Virgin Islands does not have a comprehensive recycling program. Cans were collected and recycled through an incentive program provided by VIWMA.

Together, students recycled over 2,500 plastic water bottles, 1,300 plastic bags, and 900 aluminum cans during the three-week program. “A project like this is unusual in public schools and we were so thrilled to partner with UVI to make this happen. The students took ownership and exerted great energy into the recycling project. It was refreshing to see them light up about this initiative to preserve the health and



Students from Lockhart Elementary School participate in the “Keepin’ It Clean in 2017” Community Transfer Project (Photo credit: Topaze Lake).

beauty of our island’s ecosystem,” said Ms. Juelis M. Hodge, Assistant Principal at Lockhart Elementary School and participating educator.

Through this project, students created educational posters and public service announcement videos to encourage their peers, teachers, and families to participate in the collection of recyclable materials and to promote the reduction of marine debris in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Making a difference starts with teaching the next generation. These kids will go home and share with their parents what they’re learning in school. It starts small, but it can lead to big changes,” says UVI MMES student, Vernita Smith, who participated in the project.

To thank students and teachers for helping to make a positive difference in the community, a ceremony was held to give participants reusable grocery tote bags, in addition to other reusable items donated by the Virgin Islands Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, so they could reduce their consumption of single-use plastics.

Like these students, you too can become part of the solution! Help your students to rethink, reuse, and reduce the plastic, single-use items in their lives. Empower them to see that small changes in our daily lives can lead to big changes for the U.S. Virgin Islands.