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Trust for Virgin Islands Lands Receives Donation of Conservation Easement *Local St. Thomas Family Protects Important Gut in Magens Bay Watershed*

Charlotte Amalie, VI March 21, 2022 – The Trust for Virgin Islands Lands (TVIL) announced today the final steps of a conservation easement donation for an important piece of Estate Misgunst have been completed and the land is now permanently protected. The Davis Family, longtime residents of the Estate Misgunst neighborhood, donated a conservation easement over 4.5 acres of undeveloped forest including a portion of the upper reaches of a significant gut draining into Magens Bay on the Northside of St. Thomas.

“ We feel this is a precious spot that should be left as green space for generations to come to enjoy the quiet and beauty without threat of future development. It feels good to know I was able to commit to keeping it green in my lifetime,” said Conn Davis, Sr. “We are seeing territory wide sprawl. Once something is paved over, it rarely goes back to green space. We wanted to see this valley remain in its natural state and a conservation easement assures that will be the case.”

TVIL, a Virgin Islands land trust recognized under the IRS tax code as an organization qualified to receive conservation easement donations, was pleased to work with the Davis 'to achieve their family and conservation goals for the land. “Maintaining natural forest cover along our guts is critical to protection of nearshore water quality and health of our coral reefs, and this gift will contribute to that effort. TVIL is grateful to partner with the Davis Family to protect this parcel of land as a permanent benefit to the ecological health of the U.S. Virgin Islands and its waters,” said Sarah Haynes-Brin, TVIL’s President.

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement that allows a landowner to maintain ownership of their land while donating the development rights for the property. The value of the donation is tax deductible as a charitable gift. Landowners can sell or pass the land to heirs, and protections stay in place even if the land is inherited or sold.

Conservation easements allow some continued use of the land by the owner, depending on each individual circumstance, including the ability to farm the land or to set aside specific portions of a parcel for residential use. The easement agreement runs with the land and permanently protects the conservation values of the green space, cultivated land or forest.

“It is a good feeling to know you are doing something to protect the watershed of Magens Bay. We wanted to see this land remain green in perpetuity and a conservation easement to TVIL was the perfect way to do that,” said Davis.

The [Trust for Virgin Islands Lands \(TVIL\)](#) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in the U.S. Virgin Islands and governed by a volunteer board of trustees. TVIL’s mission is to conserve and steward tracts of agricultural and natural landscapes that are identified for their scenic beauty, ecological diversity, historical value and cultural significance.

TVIL has protected one hundred and seventy-eight (178) acres of important land on the islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and VI outlying cays through donations of conservation easements, outright donations of land or purchase of critical parcels for preservation. In addition to the Misgunst parcel, TVIL’s most recent land acquisitions include the donation of Mingo Cay in the channel between St. Thomas and St. John and the donation of a parcel of land in the Carolina watershed on St. John.

TVIL announced in August of 2021 that it had achieved nationally recognized accreditation as a land trust by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, having demonstrated its commitment to sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship. TVIL is one of 1,281 active land trusts across the United States according to the Land Trust Alliance.

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