



NATIONAL PARKS TRUST OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation
NOVEMBER 20 – 27 2011 • ROAD TOWN, TORTOLA • BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 25, 2011

A Grand 50-Year Anniversary Celebration for The National Parks Trust of the Virgin Islands

Road Town, Tortola, Virgin Islands (UK) – In commemoration of 50 years of achievement and conservation, the National Parks Trust (NPT) is hosting a week-long celebration and fundraiser. Events open on November 20th with a formal ceremony followed by the ninth Annual Flower Show at the J.R. O’Neal Botanic Gardens. Activities continue throughout the week, with various educational programmes and exhibits during the day, and music and entertainment at night. The festivities will continue with the opening of the NPT Village at the Queen Elizabeth II National Park, and include an Interfaith Service on the evening of Wednesday, 24th. On the weekend, the celebration will culminate in a grand finale Jazz and Blues Concert Series featuring: world-renowned artist, John Legend, and the legendary voice of UB40, Ali Campbell, along with local and other international artists.

The National Parks Trust is mandated under the National Parks Act of 2006 (NPT 2006) with preserving the territory’s valuable natural resources. From its start fifty years ago, thanks to the philanthropy of Laurance Rockefeller and the foresight of J.R. O’Neal, the Trust has grown exponentially. Today it manages twenty-one designated national parks and more than seventy protected dive sites. It also manages a biodiversity Conservation Programme which seeks to conserve the fragile biodiversity of these islands from ridge to reef.

The NPT’s reforestation initiative developed into an annual Arbour Day celebration which has revitalized the territory’s natural landscape through the planting of hundreds of mahogany and cedar trees. For the first time ever, Arbour Day will be celebrated at the QE II Park during the observation of the 50th Anniversary celebrations on Friday, November 25th. Schoolchildren and the general public will participate in tree planting at the park.

“We are proud of the Trust’s extraordinary efforts which have safeguarded the vital natural resources of nature’s secret paradise,” says NPT Director, Joseph Smith Abbott. These efforts have resulted in the restoration of the flamingo population of Anegada, increasing its number from 18 to almost 200 magnificent birds. The NPT together with the Fort Worth and Dallas Zoos are actively involved in the restoration of the indigenous Anegada Rock Iguana population. To protect the BVI’s underwater paradise, a Moorings/Reef Protection Programme, was implemented by the NPT with the assistance of the then Dive Operators Association in 1992.

During the celebration week, the NPT encourages the public to experience the BVI’s natural and historical treasures: the remnant of Caribbean forest at Sage Mountain and Gorda Peak National Parks; the plant life at the J.R. O’Neal Botanic Gardens; the atmospheric ruins at Copper Mine Point; the majestic boulders at the iconic Baths; and the lonely wreck of the HMS Rhone. From snorkeling and cave-diving to hiking and sightseeing, the National Parks of the Virgin Islands offer a wide range of places to visit.

“As the Trust celebrates its 50th Anniversary, we look forward with great eagerness to the enhancement of the Queen Elizabeth II National Park, as one of the territory’s premier green spaces which residents and visitors of all ages can enjoy,” says Mr. Smith-Abbott. Through the support of the Government of the British Virgin Islands and private donations from around the globe, the NPT can ensure the continued protection of the territory’s natural and historical resources. All funds raised during the celebration week will be used to support these efforts.

For more information about the National Parks Trust and the 50 Year Celebration, please visit:
<http://bvnationalparkstrust.org>.

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

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| SUN. 20 NOV 2011 | FLOWER SHOW J.R. O'Neal Botanic Gardens |
| 12:30p – 5:30p | Opening of the 50th Anniversary Week-long celebrations Floral competition, demonstrations and music & entertainment |
| WED. 23 NOV 2011 | OPENING, EDUCATION & ENTERTAINMENT Queen Elizabeth II National Park Pre-School |
| 10:00 a – 12:00 p | High Schools |
| 2:00 p – 5:00 p | Interfaith Service |
| 5:00 p – 8:00 p | Gospel Night - Local Groups |
| THURS. 24 NOV 2011 | EDUCATION & ENTERTAINMENT Queen Elizabeth II National Park |
| 2:00 p – 5:00 p | College Students and General Public |
| 5:00 p – 8:00 p | Reggae & Calypso Night - Local Groups |
| FRI. 25 NOV 2011 | ARBOR DAY & ENTERTAINMENT Queen Elizabeth II National Park |
| 10:00a – 12:00 p | Tree Planting Ceremony with all Schools |
| 5:00 p – 8:00 p | Jazz & R&B Night - Local Groups |
| SAT. 26 NOV 2011 | CONCERT SERIES Queen Elizabeth II National Park |
| 2:00 p – 10:45 p | International Artists Headliner: UB40/Ali Campbell |
| SUN. 27 NOV 2011 | CONCERT SERIES & CLOSING CEREMONY Queen Elizabeth II National Park |
| 2:00 p – 10:45 p | International Artists Headliner: JOHN LEGEND |

For more information and updates about the National Parks Trust and the 50 Year Celebration, please visit:
<http://bvinationalparkstrust.org>.

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