

Documentarians making educational video about V.I.'s first marine park

By **NANCY COLE**

Saturday, May 10th 2003



Ralf Meyer and Karen Anspacher-Meyer of Green Fire Productions collect footage for a documentary on the East End Marine Park on St. Croix. Daily News Photo by CRISTIAN SIMESCU

ST. CROIX - Telling the story of the territory's first marine park is a challenge that two Oregon videographers currently are tackling.

Karen Anspacher-Meyer and Ralf Meyer, co-founders of Portland, Ore.-based Green Fire Productions, are wrapping up an eight-week stay on St. Croix. They expect to leave with more than 50 hours of video footage about the new East End Marine Park, and they plan to complete by year-end the production of a 20-minute educational video about the park.

Using federal grant money, the nonprofit video production company was hired by the V.I. Department of Planning and Natural Resources' Coastal Zone Management Division through the University of the Virgin Islands' Research and Public Service component.

Green Fire was established in 1989, Anspacher-Meyer said, "with the idea of producing documentaries on conservation issues that would educate people, raise their level of awareness and persuade them of the importance of taking action to protect important ecosystems."

Green Fire's work on St. Croix falls well within those parameters, she said. The goal is to produce a video targeted at residents throughout the Virgin Islands that will build public awareness of the value of marine resources and the need to protect and restore them for the long-term benefit of everyone.

"The end product should be a portrait of Crucian life that shows how important the marine environment really is," Anspacher-Meyer said.

Meyer, the production company's creative director, said the video footage ranges from underwater pictures of the marine environment to interviews with dozens of St. Croix residents and community leaders.

"People are very well-spoken and well-informed," he said, and all have a clear understanding that the quality of life on St. Croix depends on a healthy environment - including a healthy, intact coral reef ecosystem.

"People want to see this first marine park be a success," Anspacher-Meyer said.

Green Fire will edit its video footage in Portland, where Crucian music and the voice of a Crucian narrator will be added. The completed video will air on local television, Anspacher-Meyer said, and videocassette copies will be available for use by schools, clubs, environmental groups, housing communities and hotel associations.

Ansano, a St. Thomas-based firm that has partnered with Green Fire on several projects in the Pacific, also has been hired to prepare a marine science education outreach plan for the East End Marine Park, Anspacher-Meyer said.

For more information about Green Fire Productions, visit their Web site at:
www.greenfireproductions.org.

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