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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Assessment of Historical and Cultural Heritage of Jost Van Dyke begins

Jost van Dykes, BVI

Historian and Lecturer of the H. Lavity Stout Community College (BVI), Mitch Kent visited Jost van Dyke on Saturday August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to conduct an assessment of historical and cultural interest on Jost van Dyke. This research is part of an ongoing project on Jost van Dyke which is seeking to address the paucity of information on the natural and historical heritage of Jost van Dyke. The project is being coordinated by the Jost van Dyke Preservation Society (JVDPS) and funded by the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP).

During the field research, Mitch Kent (accompanied by staff of the Preservation Society) visited the ruins of a fort, a turtle kraal pen (an underwater entrapment built to keep turtles and other seafood fresh for consumption), and a farmhouse, all dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In total, approximately a dozen heritage sites on the island were identified.

Kent also scoured the island's landscape for signs of human impact, making educated guesses about the past Amerindian, colonial and slave inhabitants of the island.

Kent is scheduled to visit Jost van Dyke again later this year to complete his assessment. At that time, he is expected to be accompanied by Sendrick Chinnery, an island resident and member of the Environmental (Island) Advisory Committee which has been established in order to facilitate the community's input on the project. Chinnery is also a previous student of Mitch Kent and successfully completed Kent's course on Virgin Islands history while enrolled at the H.Lavity Stoutt Community College. Chinnery's local knowledge of the island will be a valuable asset to the historical research.

Earlier this month, Kent visited John Cheneweth's archaeology survey at the John C. Lettsome site on Little Jost Van Dyke. He will also consult with Brian Bates, a professor at Longwood College who has been leading an on-going archaeology project of an Amerindian site on Jost Van Dyke's East End to ensure a complete review of the island. Kent also utilised some of the surveys completed during a National Parks

Kent's findings will be reflected in the Environmental Profile of Jost van Dyke which will be prepared by the Island Resources Foundation and distributed to Jost van Dyke residents and other members of the BVI community.

For more information about the project or the Jost van Dykes Preservation Society, visit [www.jvdgreen.org](http://www.jvdgreen.org) or [www.jvdps.org](http://www.jvdps.org) e-mail [projco@jvdps.org](mailto:projco@jvdps.org) or call 284-540-0861 or 284-540-7428.

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