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St. John Land Conservancy Expansion Appoints New Executive Director



Alisha Kauffman (St. John Land Conservancy Photo)

The St. John Land Conservancy (SJLC or Conservancy) is proud to announce the beginning of a new phase for its organization as it welcomes community involvement at many different levels — in particular, with the appointment of its first staff person, Alisha Kauffman, as the new part-time executive director.

The Conservancy was formed in 2011 to protect threatened natural lands on the island, especially Haulover and the historic East End. At the time, parcels in the Haulover area of significant natural and historic value, including the north and south beaches, and the land connecting them, went up for sale and were being considered for condo development (20+ units).

The Conservancy endeavors to forever preserve and protect not only the natural beauty of the Haulover and East End area but also the significant history and cultural meaning of the area. Sailing, fishing and maritime commerce

were a vital part of life for the early East End settlers. For hundreds of years, small boats were hauled across this narrow, low-land isthmus between two sides of St. John, greatly shortening what would be a much longer journey around the tip of East End to get to fishing on the north side and for trade with Tortola and elsewhere.

Kauffman has lived on St. John since 2014. Originally from Dayton, Ohio, she grew up in a family of naturalists and conservationists. She studied at the University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, where she majored in environmental science. Before joining the St. John Land Conservancy, Kauffman volunteered numerous hours for a variety of nonprofit groups in Ohio as well as on St. John and helped raise funds for many charities.

Combining her fundraising, marketing and management skills to oversee a group of local volunteers, Kauffman, along with others, created SJLC's largest and most successful community fundraiser, the annual Chili Cook-Off and Music Festival in Coral Bay (the 4th annual cook-off was postponed this year due to COVID-19).



Haulover North (St. John Land Conservancy Photo)

Alisha Kauffman accepted the part-time position in May 2020 after serving on the Conservancy's board of directors for four years and as a tireless volunteer. She was chair of three committees (nominating, development, and Chili Cook-Off), and she served on both the marketing/communications and search committees. Essentially, she already knew everything about the Conservancy from the inside.

Kauffman is ideally suited for helping SJLC with integrating new people into the organization, including future

leadership positions plus a great deal else, so she will be very busy! Though she is only paid for 10 hours per week as executive director, she has continued to work several times that amount of time as a volunteer. She is excited to help coordinate the work of the board and of the volunteers; as she puts it:

“I am passionate about creating an environment within St. John Land Conservancy that is welcoming to everyone and open for all to explore. I am looking for an opportunity to educate and learn from all those that support the conservation of land on St. John.”



Haulover Trail (St. John Land Conservancy Photo)

Rafael Muilenburg, SJLC's president, is enthusiastic about Kauffman's role and her experience, which has made her uniquely qualified for the position, commenting, "We at SJLC were extremely lucky to be able to hire our first executive director from within the group, given that she knows the organization's work so thoroughly and can hit the ground running in all respects. Raf also notes that "Alisha is an amazing self-starter and has already been able to greatly increase our potential by keeping us all focused on our goals and coordinated. We are

thrilled, and we look forward to welcoming in many more people to the group with her help, as volunteers and future leaders."

For those who are interested in volunteer opportunities, below is the St. John Land Conservancy's list of areas where assistance is needed:

Helping with organizing and selling T-shirts that the Conservancy already has and other merchandise, preferably, people with some retail experience (The Conservancy needs several people for this).

Helping with online store for Conservancy merchandise that is being developed, including setup and filling/mailing orders

Helping with social media: creating and sending content to the Conservancy, including photos, videos and text that it can post

Helping with beach cleanups. The Conservancy has done several of them at Haulover in past years, and it is planning to support/facilitate certain community recycling efforts in the near future.

Helping with events like the annual Chili Cook-Off and Music Festival, and other planned events as soon as COVI-19 abates enough

Helping with fundraising and grant writing

People with boats to help in various capacities, including fundraising and R&D

The Conservancy needs more people to be part of an existing informal advisory group that will help set priorities and other matters. People should let the Conservancy know specifically if they are interested in that so it can include those people in the updates the SJLC sends.

Leaders who will help SJLC with networking, fundraising, development and marketing who have great ideas on how to help the organization move forward

New ideas are particularly welcome. People who are self-starters and go-getters are needed.

The Conservancy is growing fast, and it is looking forward to getting more people involved. If interested in being a volunteer or to offer help of any kind, please email SJLCvolunteers@gmail.com and let the Conservancy know how you would like to help.

SJLC is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) Virgin Islands corporation dedicated to the protection of lands of important historic, scenic and natural beauty on St. John, USVI, for the enjoyment of the public, forever.

For more information or to make a contribution, go to the SJLC website:

<http://www.stjohnlandconservancy.org/>

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