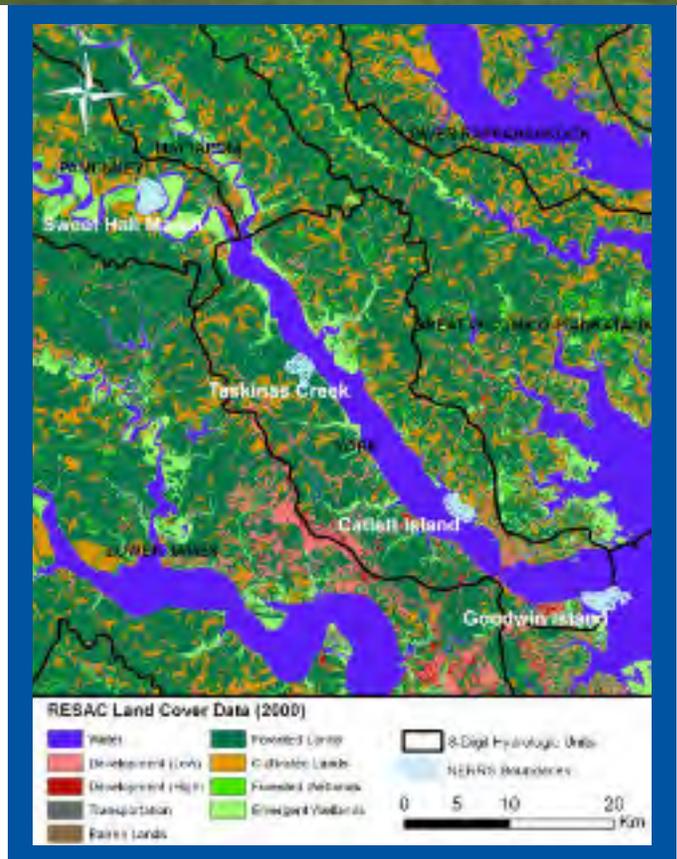


Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

To preserve a network of reserves that represent the diversity of coastal ecosystems found within the York River estuary and its principal tidal tributaries and manage these reserves to support informed management of coastal resources.

Designated in 1991, the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (CBNERR or Reserve) is one of 28 protected areas that make up the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) established to promote informed management of the Nation's estuaries and coastal habitats. CBNERR is administered as a partnership between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Reserve is managed on a daily basis by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). The Reserve's and Institute's missions are closely aligned through interdisciplinary research in coastal ocean and estuarine science, education of students and citizens, and by providing advisory service to policy makers, industry, and the public. As the nation's largest estuary, Chesapeake Bay contains a diverse collection of habitats and salinity regimes. In order to incorporate the diversity of habitats in the southern Chesapeake Bay subregion, CBNERR established a multi-component system along the salinity gradient of the York River estuary. Reserve components include Sweet Hall Marsh, Taskinas Creek, Catlett Islands and the Goodwin Islands (map at right).



Chesapeake Bay
 National Estuarine
 Research Reserve
 in Virginia



NOAA's Estuarine Reserves Division and the Reserves develop timely action plans that provide an overall vision and direction for the reserve system and articulates how the strengths of the reserve system will be applied to address the challenges facing coastal resource management, advancing estuarine research, and educating current and future generations.

As the nation's largest estuary, Chesapeake Bay contains a diverse collection of habitats and salinity regimes. In order to incorporate the diversity of habitats in the southern Chesapeake Bay subregion, CBNERR established a multi-component system along the salinity gradient of the York River estuary. The Reserve's four components are: (1) Sweet Hall Marsh (443 ha; 1094 ac), an extensive tidal freshwater-oligohaline marsh ecosystem located in the Pamunkey River, one of two major tributaries of the York River; (2) Taskinas Creek (433 ha; 1070 ac), containing non-tidal feeder streams that drain oak-hickory forests, maple-gum-ash swamps and freshwater marshes which transition into tidal oligo and mesohaline salt marshes; (3) the Catlett Islands (220 ha; 542 ac), consisting of multiple parallel ridges of forested wetland hammocks, maritime-forest uplands, and emergent mesohaline salt marshes; and (4) the Goodwin Islands (148 ha; 366 ac), an archipelago of polyhaline salt-marsh islands surrounded by inter-tidal flats, extensive submerged aquatic vegetation beds, and shallow open estuarine waters near the mouth of the York River.

To fulfill its mission, the Reserve advances scientific understanding of watershed and estuarine systems, conducts education and training programs, conserves coastal resources and provides advisory service. The Reserve's mission complements the three-part mission of the VIMS to conduct interdisciplinary research in coastal ocean and estuarine science, educate students and citizens, and provide advisory service to policy makers, industry, and the public.

The CBNERR has developed four focus areas that address national, regional and local issues. Cutting across specific program boundaries, issue focus areas allow the Reserve to address key management concerns in a more integrated and comprehensive manner. Primary focus areas directing Reserve programs that provide direct support for coastal resource management include:

- Functions and linkages of land-margin ecosystems;
- Ecosystem vulnerability to climate and human-induced stressors;
- Water quality and aquatic stressors; and
- Integrated ocean observing systems.

For more about the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia:

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National Estuarine Research Reserve System