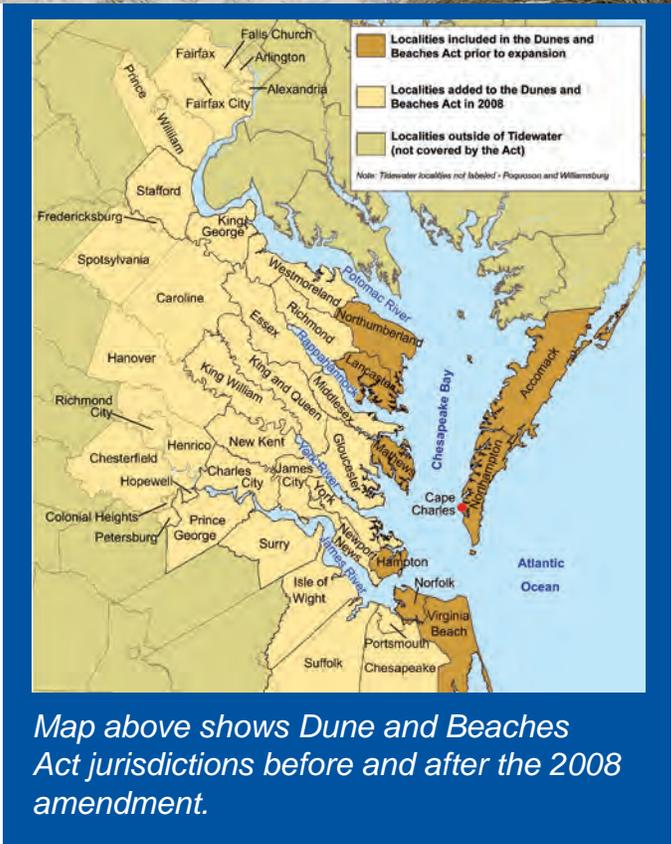




Surveying and Protecting Virginia's Dunes and Beaches

Beaches and dunes are our first natural defense against storms. They also provide critical habitat for a number of important plant and animal species, filter fresh water before it reaches salt or brackish water, and provide a buffer and wave energy absorption so that properties are protected from shoreline erosion. Inventorying and protecting these critical coastal resources has been a focus of the Virginia CZM Program during a 10-year partnership with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

Initially only nine localities were included in the Coastal Primary Sand Dune and Beach Act. Funding provided by the Virginia CZM Program for inventories of dunes and beaches confirmed these features existed in numerous other localities. Analysis showed that extensive dune and beach resources were unprotected, especially from the impacts of shoreline hardening structures such as rock revetments and wooden bulkheads. As a result of this Virginia CZM Program funded research, the 2008 General Assembly expanded coverage of the Act to all localities in the coastal zone. This added protection for approximately 1,300 estuarine beaches and dunes that encompass about 75 miles of shoreline along 24 additional counties and 14 cities. This expansion of the Act has resulted in significantly expanded beach and dune protection.



Virginia Coastal Zone
 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



This accomplishments fact sheet was originally produced by the Virginia CZM Program for a June 2012 event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the CZMA and to highlight the accomplishments made possible through this federal funding.

Dunes and Beaches Protection Results

- Collaborative effort with VIMS starting in 1998 to improve our knowledge of the Commonwealth's dune systems and improve management (total Virginia CZM grant funding of \$440,770)
- Development of a Chesapeake Bay Dune Classification System.
- Monitoring and research to determine how the physical and vegetative characteristics of Bay dunes and beaches change over time.
- Publication of "Chesapeake Bay Dune Systems: Evolution and Status", which includes an inventory of primary and secondary dunes in the localities included in the original Dunes Act, along with eight locality-specific dune inventories.
- Expansion of the dune and beach inventory beyond the original Dune Act localities.
- A risk assessment of secondary dune fields with recommendations for management.
- Analysis of the regulatory gap in dune and beach management, along with an outreach publication to communicate these findings to decision-makers.
- Expansion of the Dune and Beach Act to cover all coastal zone localities.

For more information on dune and beach science:
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Photo courtesy of VIMS.



Photo courtesy of VIMS.

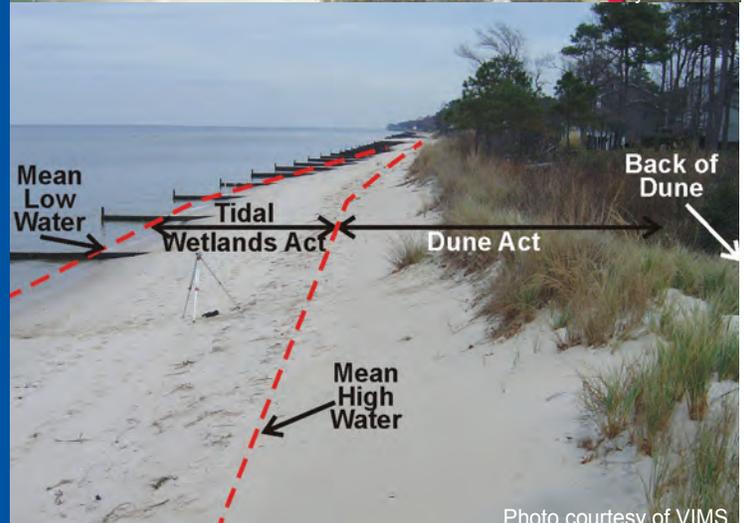


Photo courtesy of VIMS.