

## Coastal GEMS Fact Sheet Template for Grantees

Please reply to: [Nick.Meade@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:Nick.Meade@deq.virginia.gov)

**Grant Year: 2008**

**Task Number: 93.02**

### **Description**

This dataset displays conservation and recreation lands, located within the Coastal Zone of Virginia, which have been identified as providing public access for recreational purposes. These lands are managed by state, local, federal, and some non-profit and private entities. These lands may be subject to certain access restrictions due to various management practices such as wildlife management, maintenance, staffing constraints, etc.

### **Status**

This dataset was derived in 2010 from the Conservation Lands Database, and based on an analysis of public access details in conserved lands source data. These data are managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage and periodically updated on Coastal GEMS.

### **Citation**

2010. Public Access Lands in the Virginia Coastal Zone. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage.

### **This data/tool can be directly accessible at:**

VA-DCR Conservation Lands GIS Download Page:

[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/cldownload.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/cldownload.shtml)

### **Contact Information** *(for the person who has created or manages the dataset)*

*Name – Title*

*Agency/Organization Name*

*Mailing Address*

*Phone Number*

*Fax Number*

*Email Address*

Neil Gunter, Conservation Lands Data Specialist  
Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage  
217 Governor Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

(P) 804-371-0161

(F) 804-371-2674

Neil.Gunter@dcr.virginia.gov

**Why should we care (about this resource)?**

Public Access Lands provide educational and recreational opportunities and aid in the protection and management of Virginia's natural resources. The "Public Access Lands in the Virginia Coastal Zone" map layer, attributes and metadata provide a repository of information on publicly accessible lands, as well as guidance on how to obtain more detailed information on specific lands. The map layer alone is the first of its kind in Virginia, and provides easy access to basic information about these lands.

**Links for more resource information:****VA-DCR Conservation Lands Database Information:**

[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/clinfo.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/clinfo.shtml)

**VA-DCR Conservation Lands GIS Download Page:**

[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/cldownload.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/cldownload.shtml)

**VA-DCR Land Conservation Data Explorer internet map service**

<http://www.vaconservedlands.org>

**How is this resource managed?**

The conservation lands in this dataset are administered by various state, local, federal, non-profit and private entities. Please contact the managing agency for more details regarding the management of a specific property.

**Links for more information on management of the resource:**

The *Landlink* field provides a hyperlink to the website of the management agency. Here a user should find more contact information and possibly more specific details about visitation and use.

**Why was this data created?**

This dataset was created to highlight conservation lands in Virginia that are accessible to the public. VA DCR updated the public access status of conservation lands via communication with conservation partners (i.e. specific land manager entities) and data updates via funding provided by the Virginia Coastal Zone Program and created the Public Access Lands dataset.

**Links to projects that funded this data:****How was this data created?**

Baseline public access information and property boundaries were originally derived from the Virginia Conservation Lands database. Public lands within the Coastal Zone of Virginia were selected and access status was confirmed directly with the management agency. The following designations were assigned; open, open with restrictions, by permission and closed. The designation "open with restrictions" was used with DCR and TNC managed natural areas and preserves. Those lands confirmed as "closed" to the public were excluded from the resulting data.

## Future Directions

The Public Access Data will be updated on a regular basis by the Virginia, DCR, and Division of Natural Heritage using the Conservation Lands database as the source.

## Frequently Asked Questions

- I don't see \_\_\_\_\_ property, why isn't it included?
  - The following list are some of the most common reasons a property may not be included (this is not comprehensive):
    - The access status may be *Closed* or unknown.
    - The property may not be part of the PAL parent database (VA DCR Conservation Lands database).
    - The property may be privately owned.
- What is "Open" access?
  - Property is managed to freely allow public access
  - Some conditions may apply, such as:
    - Entrance/Parking fees (ex. Va. State Parks)
    - Closed dusk to dawn.
- What is "Open with Restrictions" access?
  - Property is a State Natural Area Preserve or TNC Preserve and primarily managed to protect biodiversity.
  - Access to the property **MUST** be requested from the land manager or managing agency before visiting.
  - What are some of the Restrictions?
    - Preserves are subject to seasonal, temporary or indefinite closure for land management purposes.
    - Preserves often lack public access points like parking, trails or restrooms.
    - Activities on the Preserves are guided by strictly enforced rules.
- What is "By Permission" access?
  - Access to the property **MUST** be requested from the land manager or managing agency before visiting
  - Why do I need permission?
    - Many publicly accessible lands are managed intensively and may be subject to closure for certain periods to ensure the safety of the public and the wildlife these lands aim to protect.
- What is the Conservation Lands database?
  - Maintained by the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage, this database is a state-wide inventory of state, federal, local, and certain private and non-profit managed lands.
  - Used to track progress toward land conservation initiatives like Governor McDonnell's 400,000 acre land conservation initiative.

