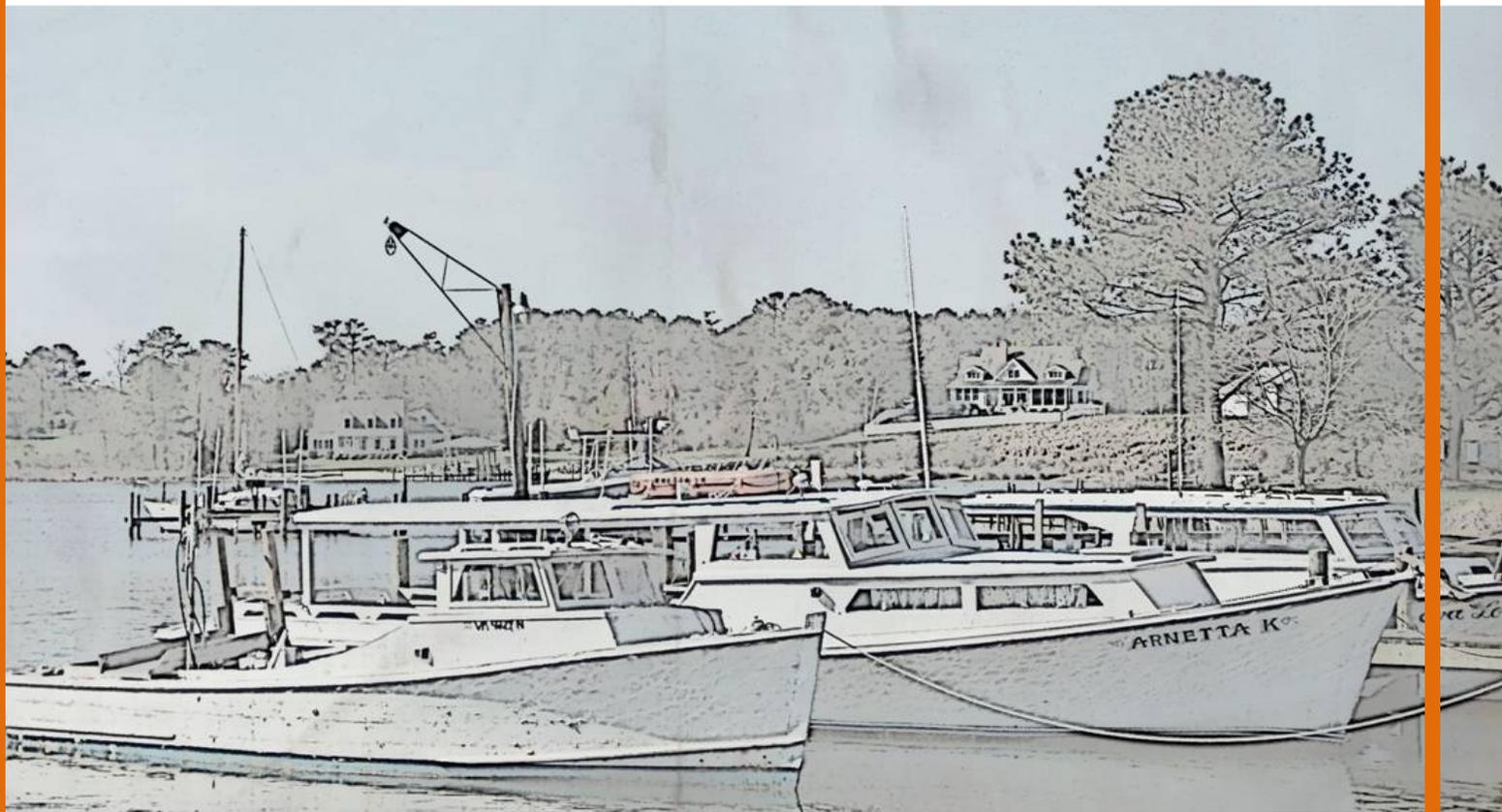


Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission Coastal Resources Technical Assistance Program



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Table of Contents

Product #1: Coastal Management & Policy Support.....	3
Product #2: Local Planning Coordination	4
Product #3: Living Shorelines Native Plant Public Education Display.....	4
Product #4: MP CBPAA Work Plan & Support.....	5
Product #5: Benefits Accrued From Prior CZM Grants.....	6

I. Coastal Management and Policy Support

As Virginia continues to respond to the EPA mandate to address Chesapeake Bay water quality impairments, Federal and State regulations continue to slow and redirect growth away from the rural waterfront. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan; expansion of the Eastern Virginia groundwater Management area across the Middle Peninsula; tidal and non tidal wetland regulations; Federal Flood Insurance reform; overall refocusing of federal and state funding away from rural public infrastructure; and continued loss of rural coastal population, are providing new stressors on local government's ability to fund critical services and programs. MPPDC staff will provide research services for many of these and other unanticipated policy issue areas.

The MPPDC Coastal Technical Assistance Program provides and supports both analysis and policy assessment using a variety of approaches to assist and improve local and regional planning efforts. The nine local governments of the Middle Peninsula Planning District rely upon MPPDC for ongoing analysis and policy support for emerging issues. Technical policy assistance will include review of environmental assessments, intergovernmental review, and site visits and research to assess coastal issues. In as much as possible, the MPPDC will recommend alternative approaches to proposed projects when needed to reduce and/or mitigate any potential foreseen impacts to associated coastal resources.

MPPDC continued to provide coastal management support and training and workshop opportunities to local government elected officials, local planning staff, and planning district commission staff. Many of this year's efforts focused on shoreline protection and restoration and storm water and groundwater management. Stormwater management continues to be a high priority topic of discussion for Middle Peninsula localities as they struggle to meet the demands of changing regulations while working under continuous budget restraints.

Example of Coastal Management Support

Stormwater management

Stormwater management assistance provided research on how Federal and State water regulations impact local governments as well as local small businesses and citizens. The Middle Peninsula falls under layers of Federal and State regulations as they pertain to stormwater and this has an effect on planning and/or development of projects in the region. The MPPDC has worked with local elected officials and administrations to try to create a unified position on the topic of stormwater across the Middle Peninsula, Northern Neck and Eastern Shore of Virginia. The final product of this stormwater research was a report prepared by William & Mary Law School's Virginia Coastal Policy Center for Delegate M. Keith Hodges, 98th District and published on the MPPDC website.

Link: [http://www.mppdc.com/articles/reports/W&M Stormwater 1611 RED.pdf](http://www.mppdc.com/articles/reports/W&M_Stormwater_1611_RED.pdf)

The study focuses on the difficulty that local governments have in interpreting and enacting the stormwater management and erosion and sediment control programs under existing law; this confusion persists under the new bill, HB1250/SB673. Even more seasoned local experts share this opinion, several of whom found the new bill unclear and its differences from the existing law difficult to both understand and administer. Some said the issue is due to a lack of consistency among the stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act programs, noting that there are differing standards among them. The technical requirements of implementing these programs are yet another source of confusion. In particular, many of those interviewed cited the energy balance equation as an example of the confusing, highly technical nature of the stormwater elements of the programs. Some suggested reinstating the old erosion and sediment control MS19 standards, which were less confusing. Others pointed out that these older standards were less protective of water quality

II. Local Planning Coordination

The MPPDC will host monthly and quarterly meetings as a forum and information exchange between the local planning staff, local government administrators and local government appointed committees. This forum provides for coordination of coastal local planning efforts, specialized training opportunities and the impetus for leadership in progressive coastal zone planning techniques. Forums, training and meeting activities will serve as a conduit for information exchange to various user groups about state/federal initiatives and to solicit input from each locality on state/federal initiatives. Coordination will occur at the local level for administrators and planners (monthly, bi monthly and quarterly), and other appropriate committees as necessary.

MPPDC staff continued to convene meetings with local government planners and administrators as well as bi-monthly meetings of the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (PAA) to discuss ongoing and new issues related to coastal zone management.

Example of Local Planning Coordination

Due to budget restraints the Three Rivers Health District (TRHD) was reducing the delivery of public health services across the Middle Peninsula. The policy question that emerged is; what is the nexus between the funding from State and Local sources and the services received by local residents? This is important because the TRHD was asking several of the local rural counties to contribute additional funding while at the same time cutting the services, programs, and staff time available to residents (asking Counties to pay more for less). MPPDC staff worked with Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to understand how they operate financially and how that affects the services provided. Through this month's long dialogue it was discovered that the General Assembly approved funding formula originated in the 1980's and was based on real

estate values for that time (based on outdated information). MPPDC staff then facilitated improved communication between TRHD and the member Counties on funding and services provided in the Middle Peninsula.

III. Living Shorelines Native Plants Public Education Display

MPPDC staff will research scientific literature for native Virginia species that can provide enhanced nitrogen uptake and shoreline stabilization to be included in a list of recommended plants for living shorelines in the Middle Peninsula. The information will be included in the Living Shorelines and Native Landscapes Public Education displays housed at the MPCBPAA's Captain Sinclair Landing Site.

MPPDC staff consulted with Jim Perry, Professor of Marine Science Biological studies VIMS, Molly Mitchell and Wes Hudson, PHD students VIMS about standing literature for Virginia native coastal plants and trees and the nitrogen uptake potential. MPPDC staff also consulted with Bland Crowder Executive Director for Flora of Virginia Projects. According to Jim Perry current scientific research cannot identify a discernible difference in the uptake of nitrogen by native plants and research in the scientific community needs to continue to identify specific native plants that optimize nitrogen uptake.

Link to Native Plants public handout on the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority website:

<http://www.virginiacoastalaccess.net/documents/NativePlantsHandout.pdf>

IV. MP CBPAA Work Plan & Support

Middlesex County is considering adopting a memorandum of understanding between the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority to oversee and manage specific public access sites as well as to propose new public access policy for the betterment of public access management across the county. This effort will assist Middlesex County with research and the development of new policies and procedures to advance forward public access planning and management. Final deliverable will be a compendium of recommendations, policies, and actions.

MPPDC staff facilitated the use of two VCU Graduate Students to assess and inventory 16 public access sites recommended by Middlesex County for study. Inventory work evaluated each site for use, expansion, and management options. Both students completed site assessments, existing conditions reports, and an executive summary for each of the sites. This information will be used by Middlesex County, with the help of a VCU graduate student completing his final capstone

project for his Masters of Urban and Regional planning, to create a Public Access Vision Plan the county can use to better manage and maintain the public water access sites in the county. Middlesex County, MPPDC staff and the VCU Graduate Student are currently gathering public input for the formation of the plan with neighborhood forum meetings being held in early November and a public meeting regarding all public access in the county scheduled for November 29th. The Middlesex County Public Access Vision Plan will be completed by May of 2017. This plan is being constructed as a pilot program to address a recommendation from the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authorities' (MPCBPAA) Public Access Master Plan. Recommendation 5: Member local governments should provide guidance to the PAA regarding priority public access needs at the local level.

The MPCBPAA Public access master plan can be found at the following link:

https://issuu.com/middlepeninsulaplanningdistrictcomm1/docs/paa_master_plan_final_report

1. Recommendations are on page 109
2. A copy of the Executive Summary created by VCU student Darrin Lee can be found in Appendix J, Page 352

V. Benefits accrued from Prior Coastal Zone Management Funding

Over the past years, funding through Virginia Coastal Zone Management has made it possible for Middle Peninsula's rural localities to progressively examine coastal zone issues and formulate solutions conducive to growth and sustainability in the region. Compilation of prior benefits accrued through prior CZM funding will show the significant strides made possible, and demonstrate the ongoing necessity of the program to Middle Peninsula localities.

MPPDC looking to leverage Blue and Green assets within the rural Coastal area of Virginia has provided additional enhancements to the work of the Rappahannock River Basin Commission looking for ways to utilize forest cover as creditable BMB for nitrogen and phosphorus removal.