

# Northern Neck Planning District Commission Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program Technical Assistance Grant FY 16, Task 45 Final Report



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Northern Neck Planning District Commission, Virginia Coastal Zone Management  
Program Technical Assistance Grant FY 16, Task 45  
Final Report

Table of Contents

I.	Coastal Management Support	page 1
II.	Local Planning Coordination and Training	page 3
III.	Richmond County Water Trail Map	page 4
IV.	Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant House Elevation Program	page 5
V.	Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority	page 6
VI.	Watermen’s Heritage Tourism Training	page 7
VII.	Virginia Oyster Trail	page 7
VIII.	Assign-a-Highway Program	page 8
IX.	Benefits Accrued from Previous VACZM Grants	page 8

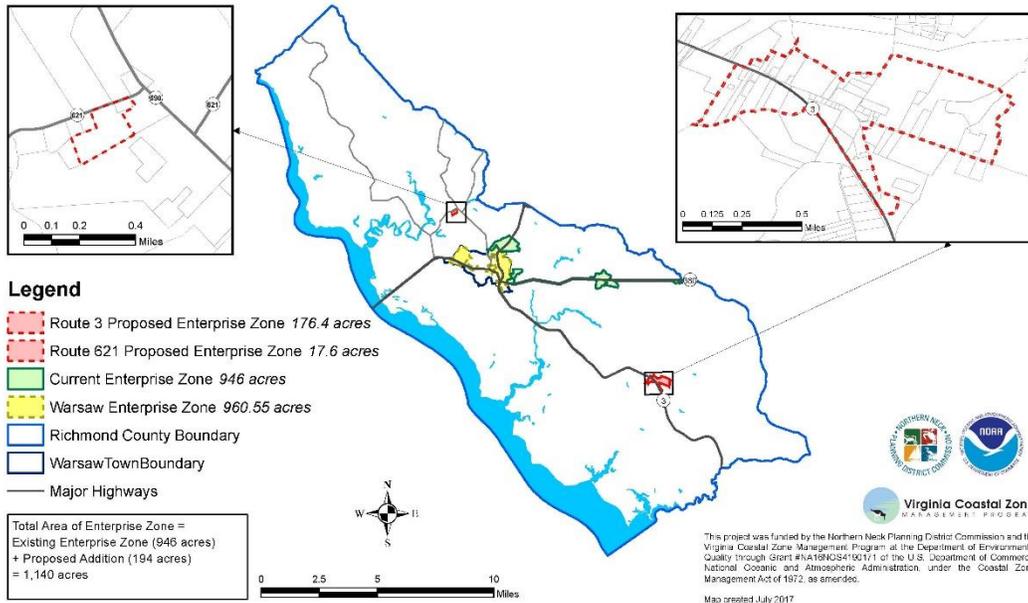
# I. Coastal Management Support

NNPDC staff provided continuing support to the four counties and five towns of the Northern Neck as well as the Northern Neck Land Conservancy, Friends of the Rappahannock and the Northern Neck Master Gardeners Shoreline Evaluation Program. Products of this support include environmental impact assessments for the Warsaw and Callao Downtown Revitalizations. GIS analysis and mapping products were supplied for the Colonial Beach, Warsaw, Callao and White Stone Downtown Revitalization Projects. Digital GIS mapping updates were conducted for Richmond County's Enterprise Zone, the Town of Montross Comprehensive Plan, and Westmoreland County's Voting Districts. Additionally, GIS analysis and mapping products were supplied to the Northern Neck Master Gardeners Shoreline Evaluation and Northern Neck Septic Pump-out Programs. Examples of these products are attached and additional products of this coastal management support are available upon request.

The benefits of this continuing support range in their effects and include the identification and mitigation of environmental impacts of those projects reviewed where construction is being undertaken; such as the Warsaw and Callao Downtown Revitalizations. Other benefits include ensuring the accuracy and completeness of local zoning, enterprise zone, and voting district data. Additionally, benefits to erosion and sediment control and nutrient management of the Northern Neck's waterways through continued support of the Northern Neck Master Gardeners Shoreline Evaluation Program. Countless other unquantifiable benefits result from the regional coastal management support provided to Northern Neck localities and environmental organizations.

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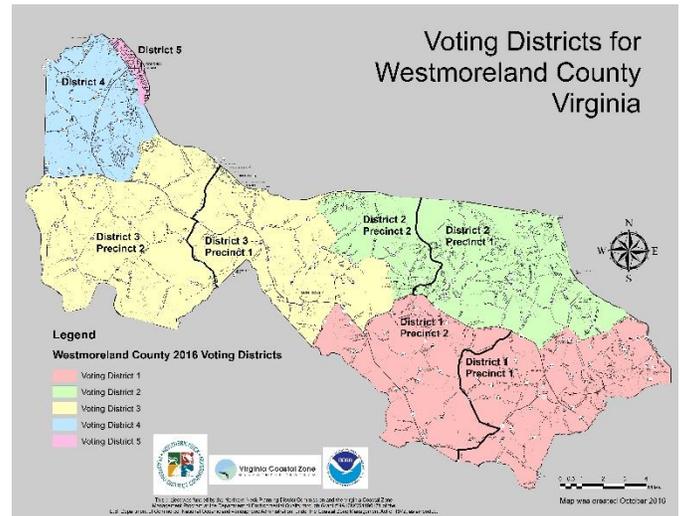
Map #1 Richmond County Enterprise Zone  
Current and Proposed Boundaries



Town of Montross 2017 Comprehensive Plan  
National Wetlands Inventory Wetlands



Voting Districts for  
Westmoreland County  
Virginia



Shoreline Assessment Aerial with Fetch: 716 Buzzards Point Road, Reedville



Shoreline Assessment Soils: 716 Buzzards Point Road, Reedville



## II. Local Planning Coordination and Training

NNPDC staff continued to provide coordination of coastal planning efforts and training opportunities to its member localities. NNPDC staff conducted quarterly Land Use Administrators and Coastal Managers meetings to coordinate planning efforts and to provide training to local Administrators and staff. Trainings and meetings topics aimed to adhere to a continuing theme of concern to coastal communities, resiliency and the protection of coastal resources.

The first local coordination meeting was held on January 20, 2017 and was conducted with staff from the Department of Environmental Quality's Office of Water Supply. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the five-year update to the Northern Neck Regional Water Supply Plan. The history of groundwater concerns in the region were discussed and DEQ staff outlined current efforts to curb groundwater withdrawal rates. DEQ staff and regional stakeholders discussed the region's Water Supply Plan including population projections, water demand projections, projected deficits, alternatives and outstanding compliance items. The process and format of the Water Supply Plan five-year update were discussed and a timeline for completing the update was developed. DEQ staff also provided an overview of the State Water Resources Plan findings and reviewed regional cumulative impact analysis results.

Another local coordination meeting, held on February 27, 2017, was conducted in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss an update to the Northern Neck Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Regional stakeholders, including local planning staff, local administrators, coastal managers and local emergency management staff, conducted a hazard identification and risk assessment with partners from Dewberry. The risk assessment included a detailed hazard prioritization, discussion of mitigation goals and strategies, outlined data needs, and established stakeholder responsibilities. A timeline for completing the Hazard Mitigation Plan update was developed and schedule for future meetings was established.

A third local coordination and training meeting was conducted on May 30, 2017 with staff from the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Dewberry. The session aimed to develop a hazard mitigation strategy for the purpose of updating the Northern Neck Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Regional stakeholders conducted a hazard vulnerability review which included discussions regarding flood risk, repetitive loss, coastal erosion risk, and various other hazard risks facing the region. Discussions culminated with the establishment of a five-year hazard mitigation strategy complete with mitigation goals and strategies for each locality. A plan for outreach and community participation was developed and National Flood Insurance Program surveys were distributed for each locality.

A final local coordination and training meeting, conducted on August 17, 2017, focused on coastal resiliency and hazard mitigation in coastal communities. The meeting was conducted in collaboration with Wetlands Watch and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Wetlands Watch staff introduced the [Adapt VA](#) website and provided a presentation of the site's capabilities. Local planning staff and land use administrators discussed the advantages of the site in coastal resiliency and hazard mitigation planning. Wetlands Watch staff fielded questions and received input on the site's functionality and value for localities. The session concluded with local planning staff and land use administrators discussing how the site could be used in the implementation of mitigation goals and strategies developed in the Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

### III. Richmond County Water Trail Map and Interpretive Guide

The Northern Neck has an extensive interpretive water trail network which serves recreational boating and fishing in the region. An ongoing effort has been underway to expand this network to further incorporate it into the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and highlight the Indigenous Cultural Landscape. NNPDC staff collaborated with Richmond County administrative staff, Friends of the Rappahannock and staff of the Rappahannock Valley National Wildlife Refuge to determine feasible candidates for a new water trail in Richmond County. Totuskey Creek was identified as having rich historical and cultural attributes along with diverse and unique flora and fauna. Those attributes, as well as direct public access made Totuskey Creek an ideal location for a new water trail.

Friends of the Rappahannock and staff of the Rappahannock Valley Wildlife Refuge had expansive knowledge of the area and were exceedingly familiar with the attributes of Totuskey Creek. NNPDC staff reached out to researchers at St. Mary's College of Maryland, who conducted research and developed the report *Defining the Rappahannock Indigenous Cultural Landscape* for the National Park Service, The Chesapeake Conservancy and the Rappahannock Tribe of Virginia. The report and discussions with researchers unveiled a rich and unique indigenous cultural landscape in the area of Totuskey Creek. NNPDC staff also contacted the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, whose knowledge and expertise revealed a diverse and unique ecosystem surrounding Totuskey Creek.

NNPDC staff coordinated a field trip along the entire length to Totuskey Creek with staff from Friends of the Rappahannock and the Rappahannock Valley Wildlife Refuge. The trip allowed NNPDC staff to locate and catalog channel markers, landmarks, and wildlife. Boating the length of the creek provided an opportunity to best plan out the trail route and to create multiple segments at varying degrees of difficulty for recreational paddling. Coordination with VDGIF allowed NNPDC staff to precisely identify waterfowl and aquatic species along Totuskey Creek and the locations where they are most likely to be encountered for angling and birding. Discussions with St. Mary's College researchers allowed NNPDC staff to incorporate into the interpretive guide the rich and unique indigenous cultural landscape with historical stories and accounts. The history at the mouth of Totuskey Creek provided a narrative for integrating the water trail into the Captain John Smith Trail.

The Totuskey Creek Water Trail begins at the Totuskey Creek picnic area and launch ramp off of Route 3 in Richmond County. Multiple segments can be traversed with the novice-intermediate segment heading northeast toward the headwaters. This segment, a loop of up to 6 miles, features an undeveloped and pristine landscape with wide open marshlands and calm waters. This segment presents the best opportunities for encountering wildlife and the most leisurely paddling experience. The intermediate-advanced segment heads southeast toward the mouth of Totuskey Creek. This segment, a loop of up to 9 miles, features easily navigable sheltered waters. This segment provides views of historic structures and a wealth of historical and cultural interpretive features.

The Totuskey Creek Water Trail can be found at the Northern Neck Tourism's webpage under [Parks, Nature and Water Trails](#).

## IV. Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant House Elevation Program

The Northern Neck Planning District Commission has assisted Lancaster County and Northumberland County in the administration of several home elevations funded by FEMA, with additional funding, when required, by VDEM and/or the property owners.



The projects included one mitigation reconstruction in Northumberland County, two elevations in Northumberland County, and six elevations in Lancaster County. Two new grants have been awarded in 2017 to elevate one home in Richmond County and one in Northumberland County.



*Above: Two of the homes in the Lewisetta area of Northumberland during a storm and after elevation. All living quarters are in the upper sections of the structures, with the lower sections designed to allow the free flow of floodwaters through engineered vents, causing no water damage to the buildings.*

From October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017, the Planning District Commission worked with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to provide FEMA with any necessary additional documentation required for their review of grant applications. Applications were submitted to elevate 13 homes in the Northern Neck. Two of the homes were awarded a grant on September 14, 2017, and the Northern Neck Planning District Commission began preliminary work to issue an RFP for professional engineering services to design the new foundations. The total grant amount to elevate the two homes was \$407,325.

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## V. Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority

The Northern Neck Planning District Commission promotes and conducts marketing for the Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority. The Northern Neck Economic Development Plan outlines the importance of ecotourism in the region's economic development strategy. As such, the NNCBPAA plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the local public, as well as visitors, have access to the natural beauty of the region's waterways and are able to fully experience the culture of coastal living.

NNPDC staff continues to promote the NNCBPAA through marketing on the [Northern Neck Planning District Commission](#) website and the [Northern Neck Tourism](#) website. This marketing serves the twofold purpose of informing the public of the importance of public access to ecotourism and economic growth and provides an avenue for the public to participate through land donation. NNPDC staff oversaw the donation of a parcel of land to the Public Access Authority.

The parcel of land is situated in Lancaster County along Windmill Point Road and features access to Little Oyster Creek and the Chesapeake Bay. The parcel can be described as 2.12 acres of undeveloped land which is roughly 70 percent forested and 30 percent marshland. The parcel features water access on either side of the peninsula, along the road frontage overlooking Little Oyster Creek and along the back of the parcel overlooking Oyster Creek. The donation presents an excellent opportunity for public access development, as well as an opportunity for wetland conservation.



*Above: map of the donation to the Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority*

## VI. Watermen’s Heritage Tourism Training

The Watermen’s Heritage Tourism Training program was in a planning phase this grant year. One presentation was held in October 2017 (Westmoreland State Park) and two workshops are scheduled for January 2018 (Mathews) and February 2018 (Kilmarnock). Topics ranged from how watermen can contribute to the visitor experience in Virginia’s coastal communities to specific tourism information regarding the Northern Neck and how watermen might partner with businesses and museums to promote on-water heritage tourism.



Above: one slide from a 14-slide deck that comprised the presentation.

## VII. Virginia Oyster Trail

NNPDC staff participated on the Management Team of the Virginia Oyster Trail and attended Management Team Meetings in February 2017 in Williamsburg and in Virginia Beach in April 2017. Discussions centered on sustainability, and the positive impacts the marketing and branding of the Trail was having on the Virginia Oyster industry, most of which is sold out-of-state. The challenge with the Virginia Oyster Trail is to draw attention to the coastal communities where oysters are raised or grow in the wild, and to encourage experiential tourism to those sites that tell the story of the Virginia Oyster. In support of Virginia Oyster Trail implementation, the NNPDC staff also administered a grant from the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services which focused on website development, the White Boot blog, and enrollment. The trail website is [virginiaoystertrail.com](http://virginiaoystertrail.com).



## VIII. Assign-a-Highway Program

The Northern Neck Planning District Commission administers a regional Assign-a-Highway Program which is responsible for keeping the region's roadways and waterways free of litter and debris. The program was established in 2007 and continues to keep the Northern Neck pristine and offer probationers an opportunity for diversion through community service. District courts in Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland Counties participate in the program.

In this last fiscal year, the Assign-a-Highway Program was responsible for litter clean-up on Northern Neck roadways which resulted in nearly 17 tons of litter and debris being removed, this represents a cost savings of over \$25,000 over that time span. In addition to regular roadway clean-up, the Program is responsible for annual event clean-up and litter management. During this fiscal year, the Program operated during seasonal events in Warsaw and Kilmarnock. The Program also organizes special clean-up events, this fiscal year the Program was responsible for a community clean-up event in Lancaster County where residents were offered an opportunity to dispose of junk and debris on their properties. The event yielded 11 thirty-yard dumpsters of junk and debris from properties situated in close proximity to waterways. The Assign-a-Highway Program participated in an additional event which was focused on waterway clean-up. The Program participated in the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup in collaboration with Clean Virginia Waterways. The event took place on the Potomac River at Westmoreland State Park and resulted in over 100 pounds of debris being cleaned from approximately ¼ mile of shoreline.

Information on the Northern Neck Assign-a-Highway Program, special events and data can be found at on the [Northern Neck PDC](#) website.

## IX. Benefits Accrued from Previous VACZM Grants

NNPDC staff tracked measurable benefits accrued from previous grant products that have served as a foundation for additional projects. NNPDC staff continue to track measurable benefits accrued from previous VACZM grant products that have served as a foundation for additional projects. The initial funding of projects which developed the region's first water trails has resulted in the expansion of the Northern Neck Water Trail Network and a plan to update the network for greater inclusion of the region's indigenous cultural landscape in the interpretive narrative of the trails. Another benefit has been the genesis of a collaboration between the Eastern Shore and the Middle Peninsula to create a Virginia Coastal Water Trail Network along with a mobile platform with geolocation functionality. Other benefits include the establishment of a Living Shoreline Initiative and the plans to establish a complementary stakeholder group to help promote the use of living shorelines. Collaboration with Friends of the Rappahannock and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has yielded educational materials on living shorelines and permitting procedures. These materials can be made available upon request. Additional benefits include an article in *The Local Scoop* magazine titled "Rivers, Forests, Wildlife" which emphasizes the region's natural resources as one of its greatest assets. The article can be found at <https://www.localscoopmagazine.com/outdoors/rivers-forests-wildlife/>.

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