

# FINAL REPORT

## Project Title: Migratory Bird Habitat Protection & Restoration, Addition to Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve, Northampton County, Virginia

Grant #: NA15NOS4190164 Task 9

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation – Division of  
Natural Heritage

Prepared by Rob Evans



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The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, or any of its subagencies.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) completed fee simple purchase of the Medlin tract, a 53.715-acre property in Northampton County, Virginia on September 10, 2018. The final executed deed for the tract designates the property to be “retained in perpetuity....for the conservation of its natural heritage resources” and specifies this property is an addition to the Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve and “will be retained and managed in perpetuity in a manner that furthers the maintenance, preservation, restorations, and management of its natural heritage resources consisting primarily of habitat conditions for migratory songbirds”.

This tract was purchased with \$264,807.00 in federal funds provided by this grant, representing 88.7% of the total purchase costs; remaining acquisition costs were provided by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF).

The tract is located near the southern end of the Delmarva Peninsula (the southern tip), an area that has long been recognized as a major stopover area for birds as they migrate south along the coast each fall. In the early 1990s, scientific research funded by Coastal Zone Management grants clearly documented the importance of the southern tip for bird migrations and proved it is a critical link in a habitat chain that stretches from northern Canada to South America. Accordingly, when the subject property is viewed through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program’s Geospatial and Educational Mapping System (Coastal GEMS), it intersects areas mapped as being of “international importance” as a coastal avian protection zone, and “very high” in the Virginia Ecological Value Assessment.

As an addition to the Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve, the property’s current agricultural fields will be restored to native vegetation, thereby increasing the amount of food, cover, and perching habitat available to migrating bird species. Doing so is a long-standing priority of DCR and other southern tip partner groups and agencies, and the tract will be added to the a network of protected lands in the immediate vicinity that include the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge, Mockhorn Wildlife Management Area, Kiptopeke State Park and various properties conserved by The Nature Conservancy .

An added benefit of this project is it will provide permanent protection to land adjacent to 0.6 mile of the Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail, a wheelchair accessible public trail. By virtue of the property’s location, trail users will have opportunities to enjoy this addition to Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve and view its transformation into vital bird habitat.

The Commonwealth of Virginia obtained a real-estate appraisal prepared by Kendall C. Bradley & Associates, Inc., completed on December 12, 2017, with a review conducted by Mr. Mark T. Shelton, MAI, of Hallmark Properties, Inc. Title work was completed by Bridge Trust Title Group of Virginia Beach, with title insurance issued on May 02, 2018. A Phase 1 environmental assessment and report and surveys were completed for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation by Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson. Property boundaries were posted by DCR’s operations steward Richard Ayers, and a funding acknowledgement sign was posted.

## PROJECT MAP & PHOTOS

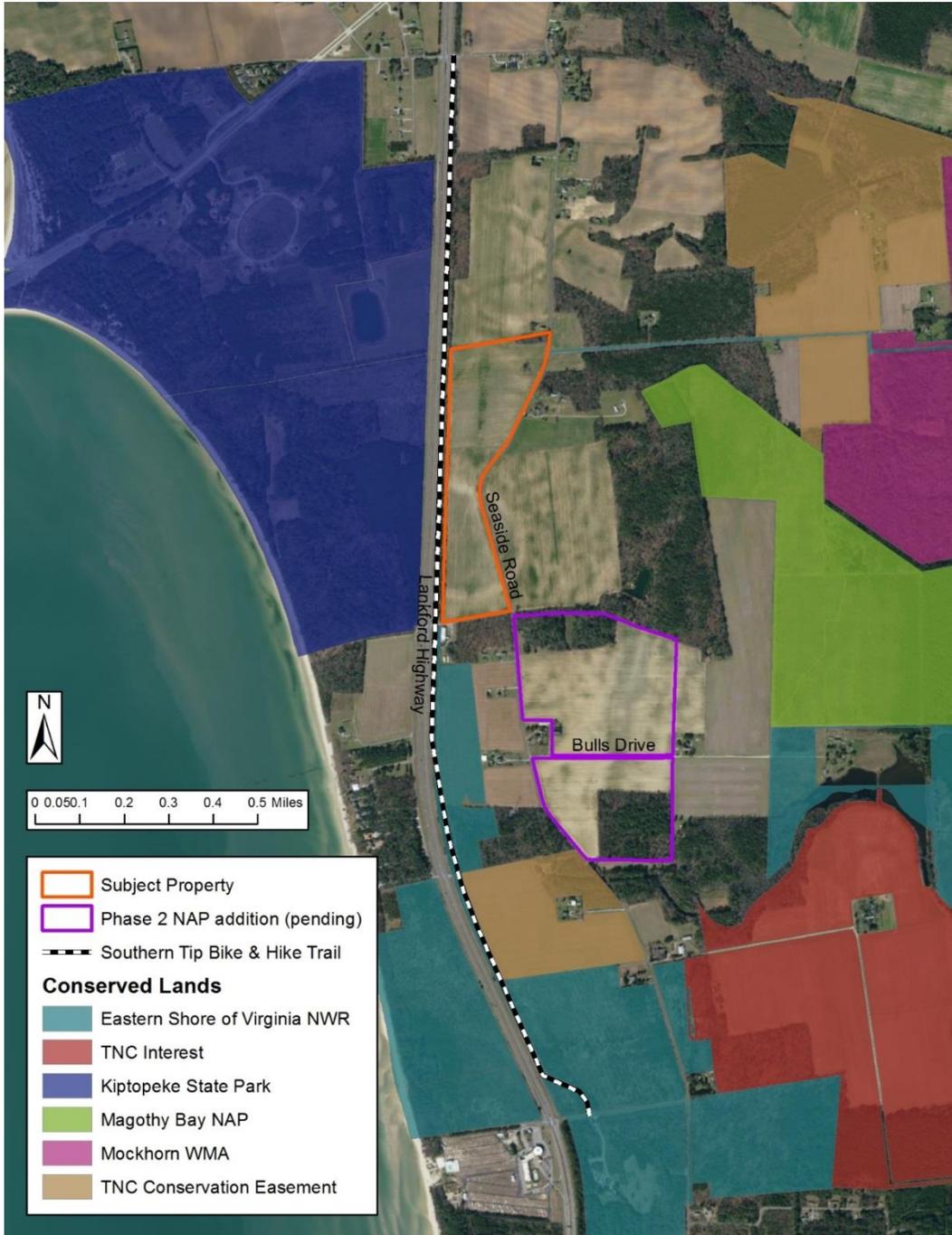


Figure 1: Location of the subject parcel showing proximity to other protected lands in the immediate vicinity, Northampton County, Virginia



Figure 2: View of subject parcel in current condition of active agricultural use.



Figure 3: Funding partners sign, located along the southwestern boundary of the subject tract.