

Public Access: Plans & Construction



Photo courtesy of Virginia Coastal Program, DEQ

Boardwalk at Kiptopeke State Park



Photo courtesy of Virginia Coastal Program, DEQ

Hawk Observatory at Kiptopeke State Park

Kiptopeke State Park Boardwalk and Hawk Observatory

This project provided for the construction of handicapped-accessible elevated boardwalks, observation areas, a beach bathhouse and interpretive exhibits, while ensuring the protection of the coastal forest and dune system on the southern tip of Virginia's Eastern Shore.

Three elevated boardwalks, approximately 1,450 linear feet, provide environmentally safe access from the high bluffs of the park to the shore of the Chesapeake Bay. They are designed with an elevation drop of 40-50 feet. The boardwalks cross approximately 150 yards over a dune and dune grass system, their zigs and zags deftly avoiding rare plants. Two of the boardwalks are designed to be handicapped-accessible. These boardwalks help protect over 80 acres of coastal dune system, and provide birdwatchers access to a coastal forest important to migratory neotropical songbirds and birds of prey.

As a result of this project, excellent access facilities were provided from the picnic area and natural area to the shore of the Bay. The structures provide viewing areas of the Bay and interpretive signage, thus enhancing the experience of the park visitor. They also prevent the bank erosion and dune destruction which would have occurred if the public had made its own way to the beach.

The handicapped-accessible hawk observatory is also extremely popular, and not only used by the general public, but also during the migration season for scientific study and during special educational events.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Contact: John Davy, 804.786.1119

April 1994

1992 Task 21



Public Access: Plans & Construction



Photo courtesy of Virginia Coastal Program, DEQ

Cape Charles Jetty Pier

The Jetty Pier, located in the Town of Cape Charles on the lower, bayside of the Eastern Shore, is a timber walkway constructed on concrete footings along an existing riprap and fill jetty. Historically, the rock jetty had been used by the railroad to park sleeping cars at night, so the passengers could hear the waves as they slept. In more recent years, the riprap jetty was used by the public for water access, which was especially dangerous when the rocks were wet and slippery. The jetty now provides safe public access for fishing and viewing the Chesapeake Bay.

A subsequent Coastal Program grant provided for enhancements to the area immediately surrounding the pier. Electricity was brought out to the pier and turn-of-the-century lamp posts were installed along both sides of the walkway. In addition, play equipment was installed on the beach adjacent to the pier, and plants native to the Bay were located near the pier's entrance. A third grant was awarded to expand upon the native species planting. An attempt was made to reestablish dune grasses and screen an adjacent sewage treatment building.

Town of Cape Charles

Contact: Jeannie Lewis Butler, Virginia Coastal Program,
804.698.4333

Jetty Pier Completed in 1994

1992 Task 52, 1993 Task 53, 1994 Task 2.6



Dune Crossovers for Public Access in the Town of Cape Charles

This project funded the construction of two dune crossovers for public beach access in the Town of Cape Charles on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The two crossovers are handicapped-accessible and include a deck platform overlooking the Chesapeake Bay. These crossovers eliminate the need for foot traffic to cross directly over the dune. The former foot paths will be blocked with snow fences to protect the dune from further deterioration, and revegetated with dune grasses. This project also included the construction of an information kiosk.

Northampton County

Contact: Tim Hayes, 757.687.0477

February 1997

1994 Task 68



Photo courtesy of Northampton County

A previously man-made path, which will be revegetated, runs parallel to one of the Town's new dune crossovers.

Public Access: Plans & Construction

Town of Wachapreague Harbor Improvements

This project provided for construction of an environmentally compatible public boat ramp and parking facilities in a new commercial and recreational harbor in the Town of Wachapreague. Not only has the provision of a boat ramp provided public recreational access to the coastal bays and estuaries on the Atlantic side of the Eastern Shore, but it has also aided in the revitalization of a deteriorating commercial waterfront. The town's harbor provides a dock, piers, slips, and sanitary and electrical services.

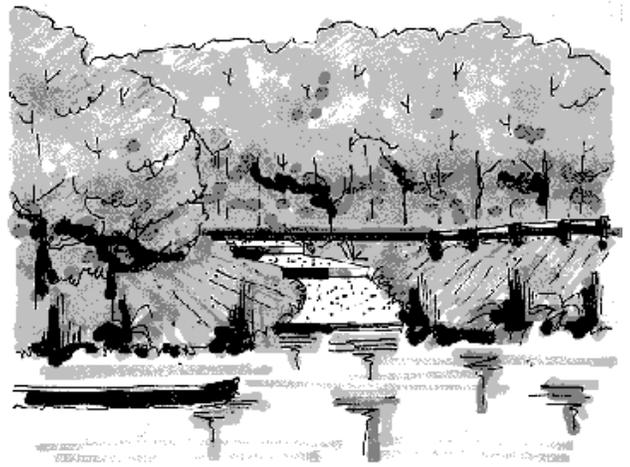
The boat ramp is an eighty-foot long, 30-foot wide, concrete ramp with the capacity to launch two vessels simultaneously. A five-foot wide pier was constructed adjacent to the boat ramp to ease launching. A 120-foot bulkhead was constructed on the southern edge of the boat ramp to prevent sedimentation of the ramp. Lastly, a 4,800-square-foot parking lot was constructed with pervious surface materials that will prevent stormwater runoff to coastal waters.

A kiosk, signage and displays were also funded in order to provide information on the harbor, fishing and boating regulations, surrounding natural areas, and conservation practices.

Town of Wachapreague
Contact: F.L. Wallace, Mayor, 757.787.8668
August 1995
1993 Task 66



Photo courtesy of Town of Wachapreague



Public Access & Visual Assessment of the North Landing River

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the North Landing River and its tributaries for potential public access opportunities and to identify important visual components of the waterway. This study was conducted in response to a growing demand for additional access to water and natural environments in Virginia Beach. In providing public access on the North Landing River, it is important to consider both active and passive recreation opportunities which are appropriate to the sustainability of the site.

This report identifies the resources of the region and makes recommendations for maintaining and enhancing the public access and visual components of the North Landing River and its tributaries. Areas which are subject to visual intrusion are described by river reach. The study identifies specific locations and proposes specific projects which could provide a more comprehensive approach to public access, and also identifies opportunities for implementation, potential cooperative initiatives, and funding options.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Contact: John Davy, 804.786.1119
March 1994
1994 Task 28



See Also: Land Acquisition, page 37:
*Alton's Creek: City of Virginia Beach/North Landing River
Natural Area Preserve*

Public Access: Plans & Construction

North Landing River Area Preserve/Alton's Creek Boardwalk

This project provides pedestrian access from an interior parking area across alternating sections of upland forest and swamp to a viewing deck/canoe launch on Alton's Creek. It also permits canoeists and kayakers to further explore the 10,000 acres of this preserve via the channels of Alton's Creek. A total of 895-feet of boardwalk--three swamp crossings, an observation spur, and viewing deck/canoe launch--was constructed. The boardwalks skim just 12 - 15 inches above the surface of the swamp. The low, open construction is visually unobtrusive, and permits the visitor to explore these wetlands with as few barriers as possible. This design is also an advantage to visitors carrying canoes or kayaks to the launch area.

All of the lumber used for this project was recycled plastic, which provides a number of advantages in this environment: 1) rot resistance (product is guaranteed for 50 years against rot; 2) resistance to the growth of algae, i.e. less slippery than wood in moist conditions; 3) no preservative leachate CCA (chromium, copper, and arsenic); 4) resistance to vandalism by carving or spray painting; 5) a very quiet walking surface as compared to wood. Because recycled plastic lumber is considerably less rigid than conventional wood lumber, this project was "overbuilt" to compensate. Posts (4" X 4") were driven with a sledge hammer at intervals of approximately 5' - 6' in every direction. Two (2" X 8") crosspieces were through-bolted to each pair of posts. The decking was constructed of 2" X 6" lumber. Fasteners were 1/2" carriage bolts of varying lengths, and galvanized nails. Because plastic lumber is difficult to nail, a nail gun was used to fasten decking to stringers.

*Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Contact: Larry Smith, 804.371.6205
August 1996
1994 Task 28*



*See Also: Land Aquisition, page 37:
Alton's Creek: City of Virginia Beach*



Photo courtesy of DCR

North Landing Preserve/Alton's Creek Boardwalk -
completed



Photo courtesy of DCR

North Landing Preserve/Alton's Creek Boardwalk -
under construction

Elizabeth River Nature & Canoe Trail

The Elizabeth River Nature and Canoe Trail offers one mile of walking and two miles of paddling through tidal and freshwater marshes. Highlighting the unique natural and cultural history of the headwaters of the Elizabeth River, the interpretive trail is located in the Carolanne Farm Neighborhood Park, one of the last remaining undeveloped natural areas in a heavily populated area of Virginia Beach. Funding was provided for the design and construction of the trail and canoe launch. A 56-page interpretive trail guide was also published. Numerous volunteers from the adjoining community assisted in the construction of the trail and launch site. Future plans for the trail include construction of a waterfowl observation platform, designation as a part of the City's Scenic Waterway System, and restoration of tidal wetlands and forested buffers adjoining the trail site.

*City of Virginia Beach
Contact: Clay Bernick, Environmental Management Center,
757.427.4621
June 1995
1993 Task 65*

❖

West Neck Creek Nature & Canoe Trail

This project funded the design and construction of an interpretative nature and canoe trail in West Neck Creek District Park, an undeveloped city park in Virginia Beach. This park is located in a rural area of the city on West Neck Creek, which empties into the North Landing River. This project complements and forms a portion of a larger passive recreational park currently being planned by the City for an adjoining area. A trail guide was produced which highlights the unique ecological setting of the trail. Future plans for the trail include developing increased interpretive opportunities in conjunction with the nearby North Landing River Natural Area Preserve.

*City of Virginia Beach
Contact: Clay Bernick,
Environmental Management Center, 757.427.4621
September 1996
1994 Task 65*

❖

Public Access: Plans & Construction



Photo courtesy of City of Newport News

View of a portion of the Riverview Farm Park trail flanked on either side by a meadow of wildflowers.

King Lincoln Park Beach Replenishment

King Lincoln Beach is located on the Hampton Roads Waterfront of King Lincoln Park in Newport News. The beach before replenishment was too steep, narrow and rocky to accommodate large numbers of people for swimming and other water-related activities. Coastal Program funds were spent on delivery, placement, screening and stabilization of beach sand. This project created a wider beach with a veneer of high quality beach sand, the creation of low dunes to prevent erosion of the park area, native dune planting to stabilize the dunes, and opportunity for park interpreters to explain to the adjacent residents the workings of a tidal beach. The dunes and beach have stabilized and the dune grasses have been growing quickly.

*City of Newport News,
Contact: Kristine Hall, Department of Planning &
Development, 804.247.8761
December 1995
1994 Task 60*



Riverview Farm Park Boardwalk

In order to enhance public access to the waterfront at Riverview Farm Park, the City of Newport News, extended an interpretive trail funded in 1991 (Task 61) with a 275-foot boardwalk over a saltwater marsh, terminating at a platform overlooking the James River. The boardwalk has greatly enhanced the interpretive features of the trail by increasing the visitor's view of a saltmarsh habitat, and a narrow sand-spit buffering the marsh from the River, helping to demonstrate the delicate ecological balance of the site. It also provides a beautiful panoramic view of the River. An interpretive plan for the park was also developed as part of the city's 1991 grant which includes outdoor and indoor exhibits, an interpretive center and nature programs, and interpretive signage. Other plans for the 300 acre park include an athletic and picnic areas, and a working farm. Archaeological digs will also be conducted on the site of Warwick Town, a historical site in the park.

The boardwalk receives frequent use from visitors to the Park. A wildflower meadow has also been planted along part of the interpretive trail entering the boardwalk.

*City of Newport News
Contact: Michael Poplawski,
Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, 757.926.8451
March 1993, September 1994
1991 Task 61, 1993 Task 60*



Photo courtesy of City of Newport News

View of Riverview Farm Park boardwalk offering a panoramic view of a saltwater marsh habitat and the James River.

Public Access: Plans & Construction

Monkey Bottom Wetland Walkway

An elevated wetland walkway and observation platform were constructed at the man-made Monkey Bottom wetland located at the city's visitor information center at Willoughby Bay. The walkway and observation platform provide safe, convenient public access to the largest man-made wetland in the city of Norfolk, extending 100 feet into the wetland. Interpretive signage on the platform describes the construction of the wetlands by the Navy in 1985, and the importance of the Monkey Bottom wetland as a nursery and foraging area to many species of fish and birds. This project demonstrated a successful partnership between the city, the U.S. Navy, the Department of Environmental Quality, NOAA, the Norfolk Wetlands Board, the Willoughby Civic League, and the Cape Henry Audubon Society.

City of Norfolk

*Contact: Lee Rosenberg, 804.757.4373
November 1993, Dedicated Spring 1994
1991 Task 62*



City of Portsmouth Waterfront Access Study

This study focuses on how to reconnect the people of Portsmouth with the waterfront. The study examined existing and proposed land uses to determine the opportunities and constraints to public access planning. The report concludes with recommendations and strategies to improve shoreline access, and has been adopted by the City Council as a component of the city's comprehensive plan. The plan is also being used by several citizen groups as a guide to develop and improve access to several properties along the waterfront.

City of Portsmouth

*Contact: Jocelyn Terry Adumuah, 757.393.8836
November 1995
1993 Task 67*



photo courtesy of City of Norfolk

Monkey Bottom Wetland Walkway

Jones Creek Boat Ramp

The Jones Creek Boat Ramp is a double-wide, handicapped-accessible ramp, located on Jones Creek, a small tributary of the James River, in Carrollton, Isle of Wight County. The Creek provides access to the lower southwestern shore of the River. The lower reaches of Jones Creek are used by watermen of the region as well as area boaters from Isle of Wight County and the surrounding region of South-eastern Virginia. Approximately 43 parking units are available for vehicles and trailers.

Isle of Wight County

*Contact: Alan Nogiec, Public Recreational Facilities
Authority, 757.357.2217
December 1995
1992 Task 56*



*See Also: Land Aquisition, page 37:
Jones Creek: Isle of Wight*



Photo courtesy of Isle of Wight County

Jones Creek Boat Ramp

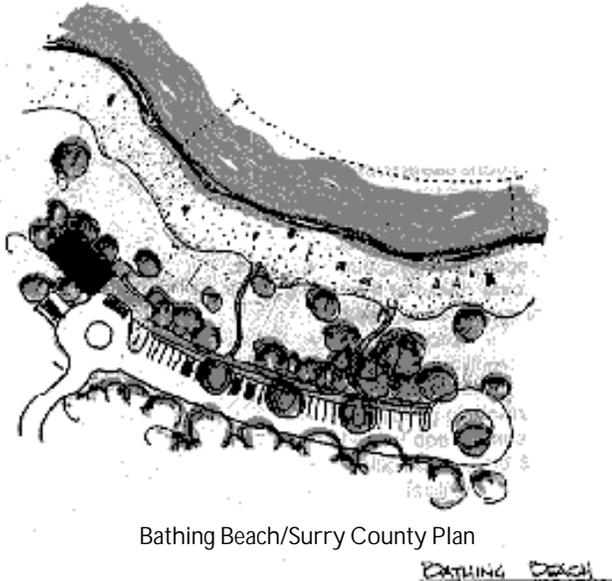
Public Access: Plans & Construction

Surry County Watershed Access & Recreation Plan

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) identify, inventory, and evaluate critical environmental areas, historic and archaeological sites along the James River and its tributaries for public access development, and map these areas, designating potential recreational land uses; and 2) prepare an outdoor recreational access corridor study that can be incorporated into a recreational component of Surry County's Comprehensive Plan.

The **Surry County Waterfront Access and Recreation Plan** contains maps showing a public outdoor recreational access corridor along the James River, and provides a context within which future decisions about waterfront recreational activities and facilities can be made. The Plan serves as a guide to minimize the potential effects of development on these environmentally sensitive areas.

Surry County
Contact: Angela Hopkins,
Planning Department, 757.294.5210
March 1993
1991 Task 69

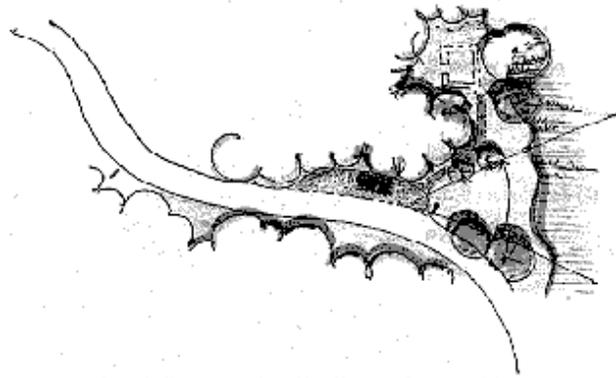


Bathing Beach/Surry County Plan

Powhatan Creek Access Area

This project provided an access area for small, nonmotorized boats, including an access beach, launch trail, and parking area planted with native trees. The area is located at the Route 31 bridge crossing the Powhatan Creek. This is the county's only public access to the James River. It was constructed by the city with assistance from several volunteer groups.

James City County
Contact: Marvin Sowers, 757.253.6685
December 1994
1993 Task 7.2



Scenic/Interpretive Site/Surry County Plan

Crabbing Pier Extension

An existing crabbing pier located in Bennetts Creek Park, City of Suffolk, was extended by 120 linear feet. Bennetts Creek is a tributary of the Nansemond River. This pier extension is handicapped-accessible and provides upgraded shoreline access to the citizens of the City of Suffolk.

City of Suffolk
Contact: 757.925.6485
October 1991
1990 Task 64



Public Access: Plans & Construction



Photo courtesy of Virginia Coastal Program, DEQ

Wilcox Wharf Public Fishing Pier

Wilcox Wharf, a 285-foot public fishing pier on the James River, is located in the Lawrence E. Lewis, Jr. Park in Charles City County. The pier serves as a wildlife observation point on the river, particularly for the James River Bald Eagle population. Before construction of the pier, public access of this type did not exist along the 33 miles of James River shoreline in Charles City County. Lewis Park also includes woodland habitat, scenic overlooks, a picnic area and restroom facilities.

*Charles City County
Contact: John Bragg, Department of Parks
& Recreation, 804.829.9217
May 1992, Lewis Park Dedicated in July 1993
1991 Task 53*



Photo courtesy of Virginia Coastal Program, DEQ

Lewis Park Walkway and Scenic Overlook

The Lawrence E. Lewis, Jr. Park is Charles City County's newest park. The park is regularly used by the residents of Charles City, Prince George and New Kent counties, as well as the City of Richmond, and other surrounding localities. The park includes a 285-foot fishing pier, two parking lots, restrooms, an access road, a picnic site and a scenic overlook of the James River. Construction of a handicapped-accessible walkway and overlook was completed in 1995. Interpretive signage describing key historical and environmental features was added to the park.

*Charles City County
Contact: John Bragg, Department of Parks
& Recreation, 804.829.9217
December 1995
1994 Task 53*



Public Access: Plans & Construction

Mayo's Island Public Access Plan

This project evaluated the potential for providing public access to Mayo's Island for open space and recreation use. Mayo's Island has the potential to become a hub and focal point for Richmond's downtown riverfront. It also has the potential to become a more desirable habitat for wildlife. Its size, location, and access offers opportunities for both active and passive uses, combined with modest economic development. The island is currently under private ownership. Options for direct acquisition of the island by purchase or donation, land exchange, lease or joint development are discussed.

City of Richmond
Contact: Ray Sutton, 804.780.5695
July 1996
1994 Task 64



Shoreline Public Access Study

During this pilot study, DCR identified three model passive access sites, unused publicly-owned parcels of waterfront property, and explored the opportunities and required procedures for converting these sites into small recreational access areas. These sites, Hallieford Public Landing and Peary Public Landing in Mathews County and Bray's Point Landing in Gloucester County, include beach and swimming access, pier and bank fishing, and natural areas.

The study also includes an initial inventory and screening of small publicly-owned parcels of land in the Middle Peninsula which have little or no site improvements, and show potential for providing beach and swimming access, pier or bank fishing, or natural area access. This study serves as a planning model for localities considering public access improvements to small publicly-owned parcels.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Contact: John Davy, 804.786.1119
March 1992
1990 Task 22



Photo courtesy of JHR Associates

Aerial view of Mayo's Island

Dragon Run Public Access Plan

This plan includes maps of potential public access sites, a description of these sites, an estimated cost of acquisition of each site, and potential funding options for local government purchase. Management strategies are also proposed. This plan is part of a larger management plan for the Dragon Run watershed.

Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
Contact: Jim Uzel, 804.758.2311
October 1993
1992 Task 58



Occoquan Riverfront Boardwalk

The Town of Occoquan, founded in 1734, is located along the southern bank of the Occoquan River near the Potomac River in Prince William County. The town undertook a study to improve pedestrian access to the town's historic waterfront through construction of an Occoquan Riverfront Boardwalk. The boardwalk would enhance the historic ambiance of the town and allow residents and tourists alike to stroll along the shore for approximately 1500 feet past small shops and historic buildings on their way to the Occoquan Museum. The study included preliminary engineering with analysis of existing bulkheads, materials to be used and cost estimates.

Town of Occoquan
Contact: James Barnes, 703.491.1918
August 1995
1993 Task 68



Public Access: Plans & Construction

Upper Reaches Canoe Access Guide of Middlesex, King and Queen, Gloucester, and Mathews Counties

The tidal rivers, bays and streams of the Middle Peninsula have been more heavily utilized for recreational and educational activities than the numerous upper reaches of creeks and streams. This laminated canoe access guide can be clipped to the side of a canoe. It not only provides maps detailing access points for canoes, but also interpretive information about the upper reaches of rivers and creeks in the Middle Peninsula. Each of the 12 laminated sheets contains interpretive highlights of a single stream segment, including: Beaverdam Reservoir, Burnt Mill Creek, Hoskins Creek, Garden Creek, Pamunkey River, Rigby Island, West Island, Wilton Creek, Parrotts Creek, Poropotenk River, Occupacia Creek, and Mattaponi River. Additional sheets may be added in the future.

Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

Contact: Jim Uzel, 804.758.2311

December 1992

1991 Task 59, 1992 Task 58 (updated)



Page from the Upper Reaches Canoe Access Guide:
The areas numbered on the map indicate points of interest along the waterway. Each point of interest is described in greater detail on the back of the map.

Potomac River Public Access Plan

This plan provides information on more than 150 existing, planned, and potential public access sites along 140 miles of Northern Virginia's Potomac River shoreline. The corridor is analyzed in 18 segments and includes detailed maps and summaries of the shoreline. The plan also analyzes the potential alignment of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, one of only 19 designations in the United States. Detailed maps and summaries also exist for the proposed trail alignment.

Northern Virginia Planning District Commission

Contact: Doug Pickford, 703.642.0700

October 1995

1994 Task 63

