

CHAPTER 7.6 VIRGINIA COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

A. Description of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program

Virginia's coastal zone encompasses all of Virginia's Atlantic coast watershed as well as parts of the Chesapeake Bay and Albemarle/Pamlico Estuary watersheds. This coastal zone area, also known as Tidewater, Virginia, includes 29 counties, 15 cities and 42 towns as well as all waters within and out to the three-mile Territorial Sea boundary.

The Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program was established in 1986 to protect and enhance Virginia's coastal resources. Virginia CZM is a network of state agencies and Tidewater local governments and the CZM laws and policies they implement. Through this network, the program manages sand dunes, wetlands, underwater lands, fisheries, point and nonpoint source air and water pollution, shoreline sanitation and a variety of other areas of particular concern such as coastal wildlife habitats and public access, waterfront redevelopment and underwater historic sites. See www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/Laws.Regulations.Guidance.aspx for more details about the laws and policies that define the program.

Executive Order No. 35 signed by Governor Terry McAuliffe in June 2014, continuing the Virginia CZM Program, directs all state agencies "to carry out their legally established duties consistent with this Program in a manner that promotes coordination among all government agencies." It is through this coordination that the Virginia CZM Program has been able to achieve great strides in achieving its goals and objectives." See

www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/Laws.Regulations.Guidance.aspx for a list of the goals and go to www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/DescriptionBoundary/Goals.aspx to see what the program has accomplished toward reaching these goals.

Core regulatory agencies in the Virginia CZM Program network include the Marine Resources Commission (VMRC), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). Other agencies assisting with the Program include the Department of Historic Resources (DHR), Department of Forestry (DOF), Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). DEQ serves as the lead agency for Virginia's networked CZM Program and helps agencies and localities to develop and implement coordinated coastal policies.

By virtue of having a federally approved coastal zone management Program, Virginia also has the authority to require that federal actions within the coastal zone be consistent with Virginia's CZM Program. Environmental impact review staff at DEQ review federal actions in the coastal zone for consistency with Virginia's CZM Program laws and policies.

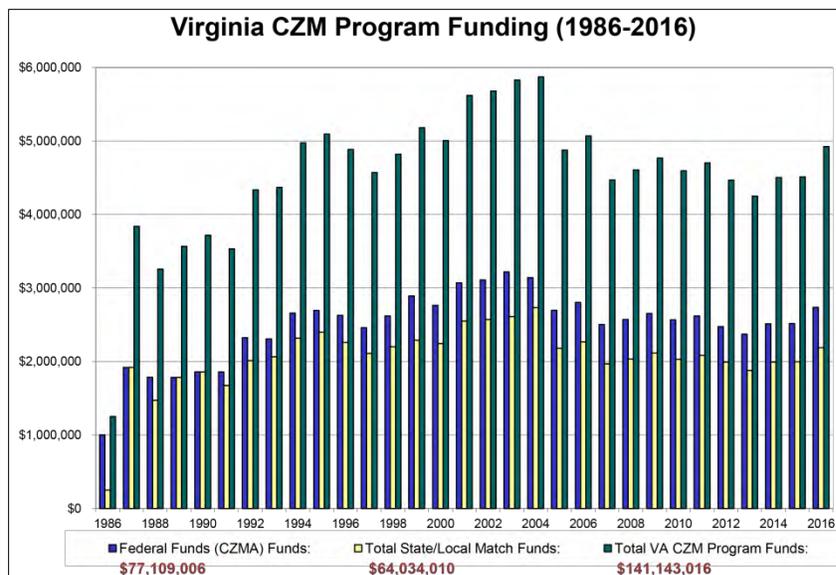


B. Coastal Zone Management Act Funding Received by Virginia

In addition to providing a forum for development and coordination of cross-cutting coastal issues, the Virginia CZM Program provides grant assistance to state agencies and local governments. Having a federally approved coastal zone management program qualifies Virginia to receive just under \$3 million per year in federal funds under a formula allocation based on miles of shoreline and coastal zone population. The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) allocates these funds under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). These grant funds are 50% matched by Virginia's state agencies and local governments.

Since 1986, Virginia has received just over \$77 million dollars in federal CZMA funds, matched by over \$64 million in state and local funds, including match from the Virginia Water Quality Improvement Fund which finances nutrient reduction strategies being

developed for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries – specifically design and installation of nutrient reduction technology at Chesapeake Bay watershed publicly owned wastewater treatment plants. These funds are used to implement the Virginia CZM Program and to carry out a broad scope of state and local projects in the areas of coastal technical assistance, enforcement, environmental management, habitat monitoring and restoration, land acquisition, local government planning and comprehensive plans, public access planning and construction, public education, shoreline management, special area management planning, wetlands surveys and policy, and water quality monitoring/protection and improvements. For more information about the federal CZMA funding Virginia receives, how this funding is dispersed and the results of this funding visit www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/Funds,Initiatives,Projects.aspx.



Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program Initiatives Benefiting Water Quality

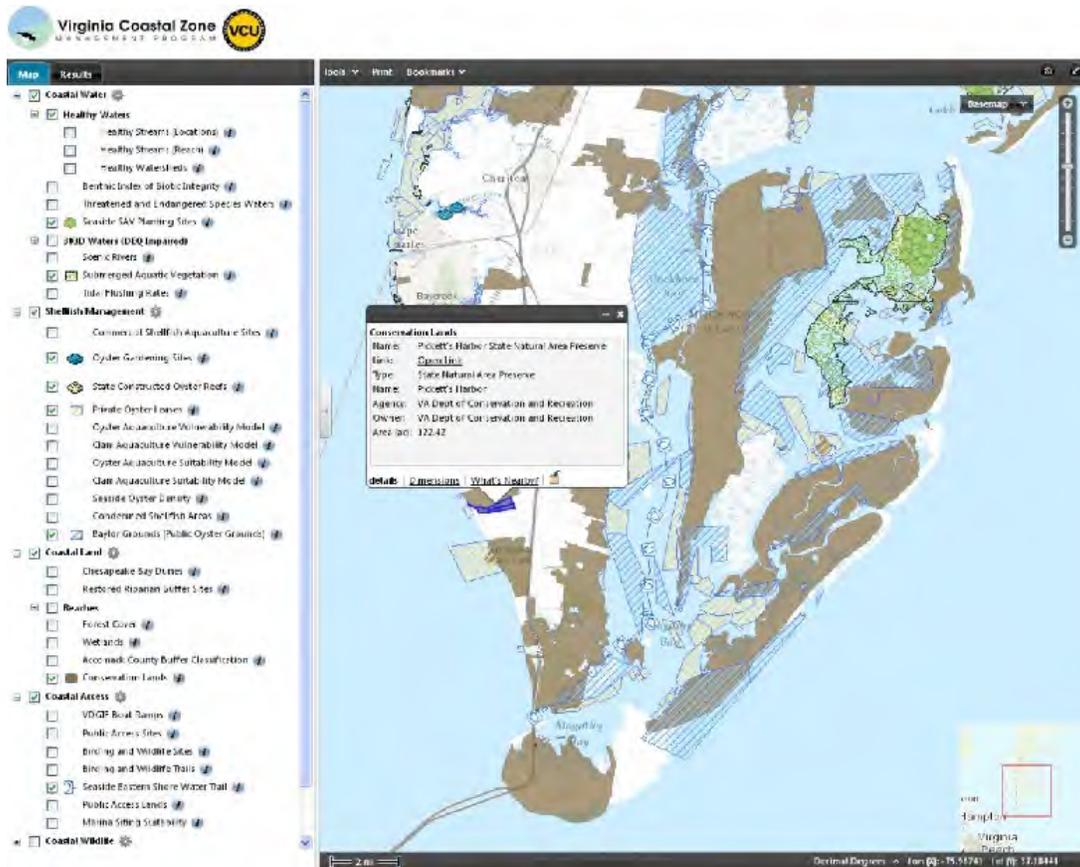
Several initiatives exemplify the Virginia CZM Program's unique opportunity to fund and support projects that protect the Commonwealth's coastal resources, while encouraging intergovernmental coordination and partnerships with a broad constituency. Highlighted below are Virginia CZM Program initiatives that address water quality and focus on education, monitoring and restoration of living resources to improve water quality in Virginia's coastal waters.

1. Virginia CZM Program GIS-Mapping Efforts: Coastal GEMS and Coastal VEVA

A. Virginia Coastal GEMS

In February 2007, the Virginia CZM Program launched "Coastal GEMS" (Coastal Geospatial and Educational Mapping System) found at www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CoastalGEMSGeospatialData.aspx. Coastal GEMS integrates and provides access to a wide range of coastal resource data, fact sheets, relevant

projects, regulatory information, and important Web links. Coastal GEMS is a robust, one-stop, data gateway for federal, state, and local government decision makers. It facilitates data sharing among governments, NGOs, and the general public and promotes standards for environmental data management within the region. Coastal GEMS allows its users to explore and describe patterns and relationships among water and land ecosystem elements across broad (i.e., landscape-level) spatial scales.



The development of Coastal GEMS was a large-scale, multi-partner effort to create a “vision” or map of the ecologically and economically significant aquatic (marine and freshwater) and terrestrial resources found within Virginia’s Coastal Zone. Although spatially displayed data for aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems are becoming more and more accessible through the Internet, often these data are sequestered in different agencies’ and organizations’ websites and are not joined into one central application to allow all users equal and efficient access. The vision was to build this type of access. Seeing the resources in one big picture could simplify the task of connecting local land use planning decisions to state and federal water use policies. A stronger understanding of how activities on the land and in the water affect one another would enable everyone to better protect and manage coastal resources in a logical and sustainable fashion - something critically needed in light of today’s increasing development pressures.

The data which are being incorporated into Coastal GEMS have been the result of collaborative discussions and data-sharing efforts between many state and local agencies with a vested interest in Virginia’s coastal zone and the Virginia CZM Program will continue to explore opportunities to include additional data layers from partner agencies as they are developed. The Virginia CZM Program has also funded many data development projects which are represented in Coastal GEMS data layers.

The availability of adequate coastal resource data is essential to improving decision-making at the state and local level. By mapping the best remaining blue and green infrastructure in coastal Virginia, the Virginia CZM Program's Coastal GEMS website provides an easy-to-access, visual reference for localities where vital coastal resources are located. The Virginia CZM Program continues to work closely with the Center for Environmental Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, Worldview Solutions, Inc. and all its data-sharing partners to enhance the interface, tools, data, and information within Coastal GEMS. Coastal GEMS is now a dynamic Internet mapping application with aerial imagery, reference data layers such as roads and streams, and over 80 data layers of land and water coastal resources, models and examples for conservation planning. Unique selection tools allow you to generate tables of coastal resource information for a selected area and mapping tools allow you to easily investigate and navigate through the coastal zone and create maps that can be exported or printed for further use and analysis.

The divisions of state and local management of Virginia's coastal resources are complex and difficult for the general public to understand. In addition to the mapping component of Coastal GEMS, the Virginia CZM Program created "fact sheets" for each data layer to break down the complexity of coastal resource management. The fact sheets provide brief information and links to in-depth information on:

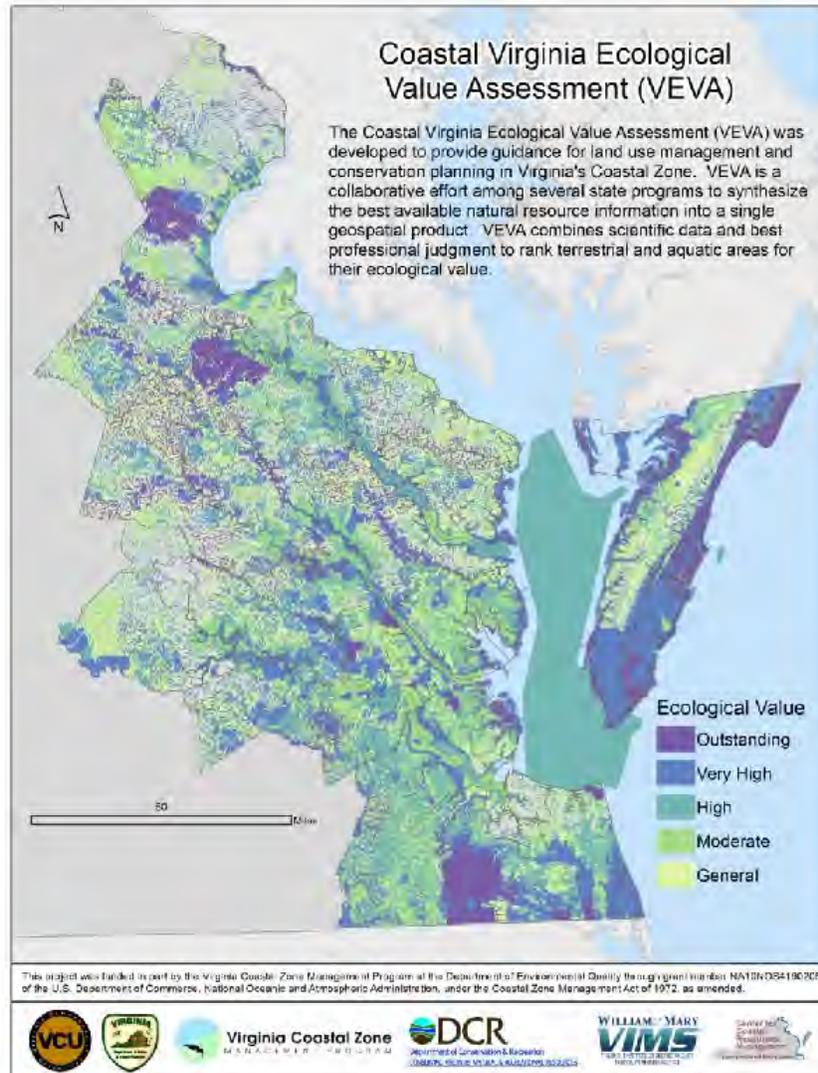
- The value of the resource (ecological, economic, and social).
- Management of the resource (at local, state, and federal levels).
- Why and how the data was developed.
- How to directly download the data or who to contact to obtain the dataset.
- Future directions if the data is associated with a long-term funded project.
- Frequently asked questions received from the general public.

The Virginia CZM Program released an improved version 2 of Coastal GEMS in 2008 and in 2013 released version 3 with additional basemaps, improved cartography, user markup and search features, and improved browser compatibility. A version 4 of Coastal GEMS is currently in the works incorporating updates that will allow users to display VBMP imagery and additional basemaps, load map services from outside sources, and view 3D visualizations of elevation and sea level rise data within Virginia's coastal zone. Version 4 updates will also include the addition of map stories to Coastal GEMS with focuses on data such as Coastal VEVA, SAV, oysters, and land conservation, as well as a new Coastal GEMS landing page with information about the Coastal GEMS application, data and partners, and links to map stories. CZM staff created and implemented a Coastal GEMS training program for state agencies, local governments, and conservation organizations including: a presentation about Coastal GEMS and why/how it was created, a live demo of Coastal GEMS which is tailored to the specific needs of the audience, and a handout with info about Coastal GEMS and the data layers available. Info regarding GEMS training was posted to GEMS website and publicized to CZM partners. The CZM Program also plans to develop a secondary education curriculum and has presented on the use Coastal GEMS in an educational context at the Virginia Environmental Education Conference.

For more information on Coastal GEMS and to see a full list of geospatial data available, please visit www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CoastalGEMSGeospatialData.aspx or contact Nick Meade at (804) 698-4297 or Nick.Meade@deq.virginia.gov.

B. Coastal VEVA

Many years ago, the Virginia CZM Program envisioned a comprehensive planning tool that would streamline use of all state natural resource information into a single data set facilitating regional and local land-use management and conservation planning in the coastal zone. A collaborative effort led and funded by Virginia CZM culminated in FY 2010 (Task 11). This effort included key natural resource agencies and resulted in the Coastal Virginia Ecological Value Assessment (VEVA). Coastal VEVA integrates elements of more than 40 different data sets funded by the Virginia CZM Program alone, totaling approximately \$1.3M.



Research and data collection that ultimately became the foundation for VEVA began in 1988 with CZM funded conservation planning in Virginia's Lower Peninsula (FY 1988 Task 13.b). Following this effort and throughout the 1990's, CZM funded natural heritage inventories in Virginia Beach, the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine region and Northampton County as well as an interstate study of the Neotropical Migratory songbird corridor in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.

The idea of creating a synthesis of the multitude of this and other contributing state natural resource data layers was brought up at a 2001 Coastal Partners Workshop. Participants agreed that the Virginia CZM Program should create a map of the best remaining coastal lands and waters, in other words the best remaining "green" and "blue" infrastructure. In response, the Virginia CZM Program crafted a Section 309 strategy beginning in FY 2003 that focused on data collection and data synthesis. Grants were awarded to DCR/Natural Heritage for priority conservation areas, to VCU for in-stream assessments, and to VIMS for blue infrastructure maps. In 2008 work began on synthesizing the blue and green infrastructure layers. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation – Division of Natural Heritage (DCR-DNH), and Virginia Commonwealth University – Center for Environmental Studies (VCU-CES) collaborated to combine conservation information and priorities into a unified dataset of priority conservation areas. While the PCA assessed priorities on land, incorporating both stream and watershed health, it did not include all ecologically valuable regions within Virginia's tidal waters. Coastal VEVA builds on the PCA and incorporates an

assessment of estuarine natural resources recognizing that ecological value of Virginia's coastal lands and waters are inextricably linked—with land use decisions on the upland ultimately affecting water quality and habitat health in receiving waters. The estuarine component was produced by VIMS College of William and Mary Center for Coastal Resource Management through a series of grants. Coastal VEVA is defined as lands, aquatic resources and surface waters identified as important for conservation of Virginia's wildlife, plants, and aquatic and natural communities. The identified lands, aquatic resources and waters can be used to prioritize areas for preservation, protection or specific management action.

An update to Coastal VEVA is currently in the works through Virginia CZM Program funding to DCR-DNH, DGIF, and VCU CES. DCR-DNH is updating their Virginia Natural Landscape Assessment using the 2011 NLCD and DGIF is updating their Priority Wildlife Diversity Conservation Areas synthesis (including updates to their Tiered Species Habitat, Anadromous Fish Use Waters, and Unique Terrestrial and Aquatic Areas datasets). Once the updates from DCR and DGIF are complete, VCU CES will compile all of the data that make up the Coastal VEVA synthesis (including the DCR-DNH and DGIF datasets as well as additional data layers from VCU and VIMS that have been updated since VEVA was originally created) and run the VEVA model update.

To view an interactive version of the Coastal VEVA data layer as well as an informative fact sheet (complete with links to download the data layer and its various inputs from our partners), visit the Virginia CZM's web mapping application Coastal GEMS at www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CoastalGEMSGeospatialData.aspx. For more information contact Nick Meade at (804) 698-4297 or Nick.Meade@deq.virginia.gov

2. Virginia Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Program

In 2001, Virginia became the sixth state to receive full approval of its *Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program* from NOAA and EPA. Development of the program was initiated in the fall of 1992 in response to Section 6217 of the Coastal Zone Management Act Reauthorization Amendments of 1990. Section 6217 of the Act requires that states with an approved coastal zone management program, develop a Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program. The statute is meant to restore and protect coastal water quality through the application of economically achievable "best management practices" implemented through enforceable state policies and mechanisms. The federal government defines state enforceable policies and mechanisms as state and local regulatory controls and/or non-regulatory incentive programs combined with state enforcement authority.

There are 56 management measures contained in the *Guidance Specifying Management Measures for Sources of Nonpoint Pollution in Coastal Waters*, a comprehensive technical document issued by EPA on methods to abate and control nonpoint pollution in coastal areas. The chapters include management measures in the following areas: agriculture, forestry, urban areas, marinas and recreational boating, and hydromodification (channelization and channel modification, dams and streambank and shoreline erosion). This document is available at www.epa.gov/owow/nps/MMGI/.

In order to gain approval of its Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, Virginia was required to show that:

- 1) State programs include appropriate management measures (defined in the above guidance) to control NPS pollution;
- 2) The state has a means of implementing the management measures, and;
- 3) The state has sufficient statutory authority and enforcement capabilities to ensure implementation of management measures to reduce NPS pollution impacts on coastal resources.

With approval of its Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, Virginia remains eligible for full funding under the Coastal Zone Management Act and Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

Following are some of the projects that contributed to the approval of Virginia's Program:

- A series of workshops on the proper use of irrigation systems and development of informational material on irrigation best management practices;
- Development of a web-enabled database for use by local government to track erosion & sediment control activities; development of a model local stormwater ordinance; and an economic evaluation of incorporating BMPs into site design;
- Development of shore lands planning protocol for use by local governments to enhance planning capabilities for areas adjacent to shore lands;
- A statistical analysis of the impact of channelization activities and dams in Tidewater Virginia on in-stream & riparian habitat;
- A plasticulture guidebook for local government and farmers recommending practices to protect water quality for operations using plastic mulch;
- Development of the Virginia Clean Marina Program to provide technical assistance to marinas and recreational boaters.

See the most recent Virginia Nonpoint Source Management Plan annual report to EPA here. <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/Water/NonpointSource/NPSAnnualReports/2016%20Virginia%20NPS%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

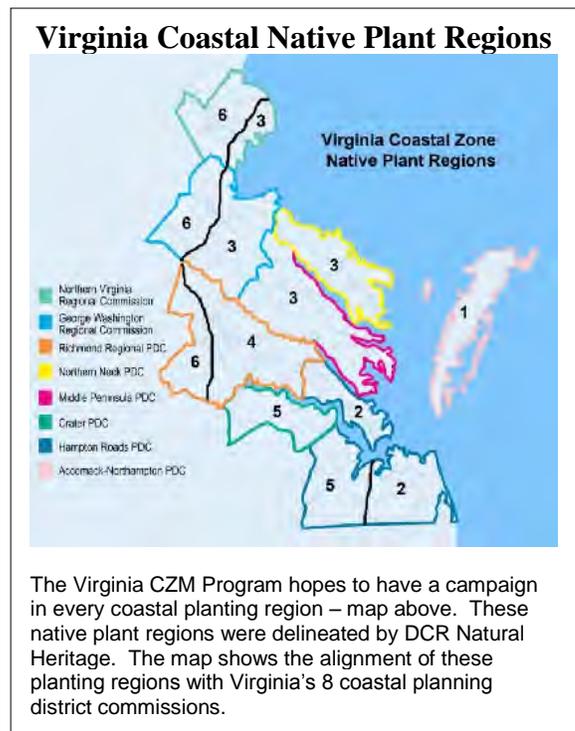
Virginia’s Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program is facilitated by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program and implemented by CZM agency partners such as the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (MRC), Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) along with local and regional governments from eight coastal planning districts.

With no current appropriation to fund the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, Virginia is addressing non-point pollution issues in the coastal zone through the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Healthy Waters program, providing support and technical assistance to local and regional government water quality protection, green infrastructure and sustainable shoreline planning projects.

For more information, contact Beth Polak, Coastal Planner at the Virginia CZM Program, 804-698-4260 or Todd Janeski, 804-371-8984 Healthy Waters Program Manager.

3. Increasing the Availability and Use of Virginia Native Plants

In spring 2009, the Virginia CZM Program and its partners launched the *Plant ES Natives* campaign on Virginia’s Eastern Shore using proven social marketing tools and techniques with a focus on increasing the use of Virginia native plants for their habitat, water quality and many other values. The campaign has been a model for additional regional campaigns funded by the Virginia CZM Program on the Northern Neck – *Plant NNK Natives*, in Northern Virginia – *Plant NoVA Natives* and a campaign being developed in the George Washington Regional Commission area – *Plant Central Rapp Natives*. A strategic plan was completed to increase native plant use and vegetative cover in the Hampton Roads in early 2016. Components of the *Plant ES Natives Campaign* strategy - such as a regional plant guide (based on the *Flora of Virginia* published in December 2012 - <http://floraofvirginia.org/>), - have been easily transferrable to address barriers common in all the regions to planting



natives. Regional native plant guides are now available for Northern Virginia, Northern Neck, Eastern Shore, Southeast Virginia (including Hampton Roads) and one is under development for the Central Rappahannock. A regional guide for the Richmond area is planned in 2017. Many of the same organizations are participating on the regional campaign steering teams, including planning district commission and local government staff, state agency staff, local chapters of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Although the Virginia CZM Program's federal CZMA funding must be spent in Virginia's coastal zone, the efforts the program and its partners have generated interest in western areas of the state (a regional native plant guide is also available for the northern Piedmont), and presented an opportunity for the program to encourage and support state-wide coordination and collaboration on native plant marketing. In 2011, the Virginia CZM Program reached out to other state and regional focused partners engaged in native plant marketing efforts and initiated the **Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership** (VNPMP). The goal of the VNPMP is to *identify opportunities to collaborate and partner on Virginia native plant communication and marketing efforts and form a cohesive and coordinated strategy to encourage the use of native plants coastal zone wide for their many benefits and help meet Virginia's habitat restoration and water quality goals, specifically TMDL goals.*

One of the goals prioritized by the VNPMP members was support for the development of a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) Program to create a network of certified professionals who will be better stormwater partners and environmental stewards. This program was piloted in the fall of 2016 in Virginia, Maryland and DC, and will be available across the watershed in 2017. For more information, visit <http://cblpro.org/about-cblp/>.

For more information visit

www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/NativePlants.aspx :

Virginia Witmer, Outreach Coordinator, Virginia CZM Program – 804.698.4320 or

Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov

4. Virginia Coastal Needs Assessments and Strategies

Section 309 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) establishes a match-free coastal zone enhancement grants program to encourage coastal states to develop new enforceable policies. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) awards CZMA funds and requires that coastal states assess changes, progress and new issues in the nine areas below every five years.

1. Wetlands
2. coastal hazards
3. public access
4. marine debris
5. cumulative and secondary impacts
6. special area management planning (SAMPs)
7. ocean resources
8. energy and government facility siting
9. aquaculture

After completion of a draft assessment, the Virginia CZM Program's Coastal Policy Team (CPT) meets to review and prioritize (high, medium or low priority) the nine assessment areas for the next five years of work and to develop strategies to address the priority areas. During the reporting period, the 2011-2015 Coastal Enhancement Strategies were completed, the 2015 Assessment was completed, and projects

were begun to address the 2016-2020 Strategies. All of the projects undertaken to implement the strategies have either direct or indirect impacts to water quality.

A. Virginia's 2010 Coastal Needs Assessment and FY2011 - FY2015 Strategies

Based on needs identified in the 309 assessment process and Coastal Policy Team discussion, the Virginia CZM Program focused its efforts on the following assessment areas and issues between 2011 and 2015.

- Cumulative and Secondary Impacts of Growth and Development (CSI)
 - Working Waterfronts
 - Living Shoreline Policies
 - Local Shoreline Plans
 - Water Quality: Urban, Transitional and Rural Areas
- Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs)
 - Seaside SAMP
- Ocean Resources
 - Ocean Planning
 - Marine Mammal Mapping
 - Marine Debris

B. Virginia's 2015 Coastal Needs Assessment and FY2016 - FY2020 Strategies

The Virginia CZM Program is focusing its efforts on the following assessment areas and issues between 2016 and 2020.

- Coastal Hazards
 - Shoreline Plan and Policy Development
 - Community Resiliency Plans
- Cumulative and Secondary Impacts
 - Chickahominy River: Leveraging Economic Benefits of Land Conservation
 - Working Waterfronts
- Ocean Resources
 - Stakeholder Coordination
 - Sand Management
 - Ocean Data Collection/Synthesis or Tools
 - Marine Debris

The Coastal Needs Assessment and Strategies portion of the Virginia CZM Program website provides detailed information on the Section 309 process as well as links to the 2011-15 and 2016-2020 documents. Pages 6 - 21 of the 2016-2020 Assessment and Strategies document provide a summary of accomplishments from the 2011-2015 Strategies.

www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/Funds,Initiatives,Projects/CoastalNeedsAssessment/CoastalNeedsAssessmentFY20112016.aspx

C. Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan

The Virginia CZM Program's Ocean Resources Strategy resulted in the development of the **Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan** – published in December of 2014. Virginia became the first state on the east coast to have a plan in place to address marine debris. The plan charts a course to reduce the amount of trash and marine debris from land-based and water-based sources in Virginia - for ecological, social and economic benefits - through: leadership, prevention, interception, innovation and removal. The complete plan and a summary publication are downloadable on the Virginia CZM Program website at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/MarineDebris.aspx>. In March 2016, Virginia CZM Program funded and collaborated with its partners to conduct the 2nd Virginia Marine Debris Summit, including Clean Virginia Waterways of Longwood University, Virginia Institute of Marine Science - Sea Grant and Virginia Clean Marina Program, Virginia Aquarium, Keep Norfolk Beautiful, and the NOAA Marine Debris Program. The goal of the Summit was to bring together federal, state and local resource managers, scientists, community educators, non-profit members, citizens, and representatives of industry and commerce to share knowledge, evaluate progress, and craft next steps in the Virginia Marine Debris Reduction Plan. Among the ideas discussed were ways to integrate litter/trash programs with existing programs, like the MS4 permit process and the Chesapeake Bay cleanup efforts.

Having a Marine Debris Reduction Plan in place also will help Virginia meet one of its goals as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO). One of MARCO's water quality issues of concern is marine debris. Read more about Virginia's role and work with MARCO at www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/OceanPlanning/VirginiaOceanPlanning.aspx.

The Virginia CZM Program worked with the other Mid-Atlantic states to form the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean in 2009 (www.midatlanticocean.org) and joined with states, federal agencies and tribes to form the Mid-Atlantic Regional Planning Body in April 2013; www.boem.gov/Environmental-Stewardship/Mid-Atlantic-Regional-Planning-Body/index.aspx. In December 2016, the Mid-Atlantic RPB's "**Mid-Atlantic Ocean Action Plan**" was certified by the National Ocean Council - one of the nation's first two regional ocean plans in the U.S. The plan covers the ocean from Virginia to New York out to the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone. Its two main goals are to promote a healthy ocean ecosystem and sustainable human uses. Actions in the plan focus on better coordination and collaboration among federal agencies, states and tribes and the use of raw and synthesized data in the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal (<http://portal.midatlanticocean.org>). The plan can be viewed at <http://www.boem.gov/Draft-MidA-Regional-Ocean-Action-Plan/>.



For more information contact Laura McKay, Virginia CZM Program Manager – 804.698.4323 or Laura.McKay@deq.virginia.gov

5. Coastal Planning District Commissions

Virginia's eight coastal planning district commissions (PDCs) play an integral role in the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program. (See [What is a "planning district commission"](#)) and all eight coastal PDCs meet quarterly with Virginia CZM staff. In addition, each PDC holds quarterly meetings for its local coastal resource managers. Coastal PDCs provide an important link between the state agencies and 87 localities that constitute Virginia's network of coastal resource managers. A representative from each PDC serves on the [Virginia CZM Program's Coastal Policy Team](#) and all eight coastal PDCs meet quarterly with Virginia CZM staff. In addition, each PDC holds quarterly meetings for its local coastal resource managers.

- [Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission](#)
- [Crater Planning District Commission](#)
- [Hampton Roads Planning District Commission](#)
- [Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission](#)
- [Northern Neck Planning District Commission](#)
- [Northern Virginia Regional Commission](#)
- [George Washington Regional Commission](#)
- [Richmond Regional Planning District Commission](#)

The Virginia CZM Program supports each coastal PDC with an annual technical assistance grant and has provided assistance for a variety of regional and local coastal resource management projects sponsored by the PDCs.

With this funding support, Virginia's coastal PDCs have been instrumental in the planning and implementation of key water quality projects including:

Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

A. Southern Accomack County Ground Water Summit

The *Southern Accomack County Ground Water Summit* focused on communities within southern Accomack County including the towns of Onancock, Onley, Accomac, Wachapreague, Melfa, Keller, Painter, and Belle Haven. Presentations were made summarizing specific ground water conditions to different stakeholder groups including town and county governments and planning commissions, private citizens, and businesses.

The summit provided information on how past environments on the Eastern Shore have influenced public ground water supply with specific descriptions concerning Chesapeake Bay bolide impact, the southward progradation of the Susquehanna River and the Delmarva Peninsula and the influence of Carolina Bays on ground water. Additional explanation was given of past environments and how they affect water quality, resulting in high iron in some areas, sulfur smell in other areas, and hard carbonate waters, all on the Eastern Shore. The presentations gave insight into most issues surrounding the region's sole source aquifers.

George Washington Regional Commission

A. Caroline County BMP Assessment, Tracking and Monitoring System

In partnership with University of Mary Washington, GWRC enhanced Caroline County's very basic BMP tracking system to provide more efficient organization of BMP site information, including map coordinates and BMP locations, site and property owner contact information, maintenance agreements, approved site plans and schematic drawings. The improved database enables the County to record and track the status of BMP inspections required under the Virginia Storm Water Management regulations and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act to ensure that they are functioning as intended. The County can also more efficiently perform assessments of the existing conditions of these BMPs and determine which are in need of remedial action to restore their original water quality improvement design efficiencies.

B. Regional VSMP/Construction General Permit Roundtable

GWRC Storm Water Managers Technical Committee and Rappahannock River Basin Commission hosted a regional roundtable for local government staff to discuss the successes, problems and concerns with implementing Virginia's recently adopted VSMP and the revised Construction General Permits. In July of 2014 all localities were required to either adopt a VSMP (not optional for MS4 localities) or have the State take control of the local storm water program. The "rural" localities needed to indicate their desire to opt-in to the VSMP program by July 1 if they chose to operate the VSMP themselves. The Commonwealth's Construction General Permit was revised significantly as well. As with any new statewide program, there are many issues that need to be addressed as implementation is underway. The objective of the forum was to bring forth a better understanding of the complexities, issues and challenges that face the public and private sector in addressing storm water runoff in the Basin and to explore how the current mechanisms of the state's storm water programs operate. The summit attracted over 75 participants and concluded with the recommendation that the GWRC/RRBC Technical Committees continue to discuss and develop recommendations for improving the coordination and implementation of storm water programs within the Rappahannock Basin.