

April 29, 2022

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022**

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B.1.A. SECTION 312 EVALUATION PROGRESS

Virginia's most recent evaluation began in the fall of 2014 with the Virginia CZM Program responding to 36 evaluation questions regarding administration of the program, protection of coastal habitat, coastal hazards and sea level rise, coastal water quality, coastal-dependent uses, public access, governmental coordination, and descriptions of major achievements and challenges. NOAA then conducted an online survey of Virginia CZM stakeholders and partners, and in May 2015 conducted interviews of key partners on identified target areas. A public meeting was held on May 12, 2015.

Stakeholders interviewed by the NOAA team described the program as *partner-oriented* and *having effective partnerships with local communities and regional and non-profit groups*. "Flexible to meet the needs of locals" and "inclusionary" were some of the ways stakeholders expressed partnership demonstrated by Virginia CZM.

The three target areas identified by the NOAA team to evaluate the Virginia CZM Program were: 1) Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and increasing Public Access, 2) Ocean Planning, and 3) Coastal Resilience. Preliminary accomplishments and recommendations identified by NOAA in each target area are as follows:

Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and Increasing Public Access

Accomplishment: The Public Access Authorities are providing a new tool for public access acquisition and management through a local policy framework enabled by state legislation.

Accomplishment: The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program's place-based restoration efforts have been highly successful, leveraging significant funding from partners and resulting in "on the ground" coastal habitat improvements.

Progress This Period (October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022):

In January 2022 work began on acquiring forested acreage in Accomack County. FY 19 and FY20 Task 9 CZM grants matched with VA Land Conservation grants to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources will protect 740 acres that will facilitate marsh migration, support resiliency and provide critical wildlife habitat. Work is also continuing to secure a 123-acre site in Northampton County on the Bayside. See Section A reports Task 9 in FY19, FY20, and FY21.

The effort on Sustainable Ecotourism was continued in the FY20-22 Focal Area on Resilience with an added emphasis on ensuring the resiliency of the ecotourism industry and its infrastructure. See Section A report for FY21 Task 72.

Program visibility was also included in this focal area, ensuring that acknowledgement signs for projects that VA CZM has funded over the years are still in place, and updated as needed. Work continued through this period on these efforts with a project completed by the Virginia

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) to update signage at Chippokes State Park, particularly with regard to pre-colonial era Tribal history. Five (5) new interpretive signs were installed at the Park in January 2022 (FY18, Task 73.01). CZM also granted a project to NNPDC to replace nineteen (19) interpretive signs at locations where the original signs funded by CZM are damaged or missing (FY19, Task 73.01).

A major project to construct three, two-panel kiosks at three locations on the Virginia Beach boardwalk highlighting marine debris, what's in the ocean and "shifting sands and rising seas" is complete. (See FY18, Task 74). Work to replace and improve signage at the New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserve in Mathews County (FY19, Task 73.02) is also nearly complete. All signs bear the Virginia CZM and NOAA logos and credit language.

Ocean Planning

Accomplishment: The VA CZMP's leadership in regional ocean planning has brought together diverse stakeholders to plan for the location of future offshore facilities while minimizing user conflicts and impacts to coastal resources.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the VA CZMP to continue its leadership role in regional ocean planning and to plan for how the work will move forward over the next five years, including continued emphasis on ways to diversify and leverage funding.

Progress This Period (October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022): The CZM Program Manager continued to lead several ocean planning efforts for the Mid-Atlantic. She continued to serve on the MARCO Management Board participating in the monthly meetings, writing and editing MARCO News articles, web pages and other documents. Materials developed by the MARCO Management Board and staff are available on the MARCO website at <http://midatlanticocean.org/>.

She also participated in the quarterly MACO meetings and developed a presentation for the May 5-6 Mid-Atlantic Ocean Forum designed to gauge interest in creating an Ocean Conservation Work Group. The Virginia CZM Program Manager completed work on a grant to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to develop an offshore wind siting tool (see FY 19, Task 94.02 Section A report). This grant has now led to TNC receiving a follow-up "Convergence Accelerator grant" from NSF and the CZM Manager is serving on the Advisory Board for that project. The Phase I grant provided funds for TNC and Rutgers to integrate climate change impacts and future projections for fish, wind and other data into the tool. The Team will be proposing a Phase II grant to NSF in June 2022. The CZM Program Manager also began development of the Virginia Ocean Plan in October 2021 by creating an ocean planning committee, a draft outline of the plan, and a stakeholder communication plan (see FY21 Task 1.01). She also continued to lead the Marine Debris Work Group and MARCO's Ocean Mapping & Data Team. Links to documents produced by those two groups are also in the FY21 Task 1.01 Section A report for this period.

The Marine Debris Work Group continued work on its \$149k grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program to expand Virginia's balloon release reduction social marketing campaign to the entire Mid-Atlantic region. Work focused on preparations to launch the full campaign in March 2022 following the pilot campaign in October 2021. Monitoring of balloon debris picked up again this period after a slow down due to COVID. Data from these monitoring efforts were added to the MARCO Ocean Data Portal under the Water Quality theme.

Coastal Resilience

Accomplishment: The VA CZMP's leadership in coastal resilience has enhanced the capacity of local partners for adaptation planning and promoted the use of living shoreline approaches to enhance community and ecological resilience.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends that the VA CZMP further define the program's "niche" as it relates to coastal resilience.

Progress This Period (October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022): The Virginia CZM Program continued to support the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan (VCRMP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Subcommittees. Work during this reporting cycle focused on completing Phase 1 of the VCRMP. Program staff and manager worked to finalize recommendations from the Federal Installation Partnerships, Finance, and Studies, Research and Best Practices Subcommittees. The [Phase 1 CRMP is located here](#). With the passage of [SB 551](#) on April 11, 2022, work will resume on Phase II of the CRMP with support from program staff and manager.

Technical Assistance grants to the eight coastal Planning District Commissions (PDCs) included the second year (FY21) of the three-year Resiliency Focal Area (RFA), which provides targeted funding to support PDC resiliency efforts. For more information on work related to this, see the progress reports for FY21, Tasks 41 – 48.

Additional resilience work is detailed in the progress reports for FY21, Tasks 91.01, 91.02 and 91.03. Task 91.01 was revised in January 2022 to focus on considering resilience for the habitat-related subset of narrative enforceable policies. Specifically, Task 91.01 will study the potential to develop an in lieu fee program for impacts to habitats such as subaqueous vegetation, shallow water habitats, non-vegetated wetlands, coastal habitats for protected species, and surface waters with raw water intakes that affect anadromous fish. Task 91.02 covers work done to score, implement, and hold resiliency action workshops for the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT), whereas Task 91.03 covers trainings, coordination, and evaluations related to FEMA's Community Rating System and the roll out of "Risk Rating 2.0."

Planning for a 2022 Program Evaluation

Progress This Period (October 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022): During this period, the Virginia CZM program worked on the NOAA's Section 312 evaluation survey throughout November and

delivered a 53 page response to NOAA in December 2021. Virginia CZM met virtually with NOAA staff in March 2022 to plan the in-person evaluation. The CZM Manager updated the stakeholders list that was included in the December 2021 survey response and sent emails to all stakeholders on the updated list alerting them that they would be receiving a survey from NOAA. The dates of August 1-4, 2022 were set for the next Program Evaluation and the meeting with Director Rolband was scheduled for Aug 4, 2022 at 10:30am.