

Promoting Ecotourism: Replacement of Virginia CZM-Funded Public Access Signage at Coastal PDC Sites

FY 19, Task 73.01

Final Report



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



This project was funded by the Northern Neck Planning District Commission and the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality through Grant # NA19NOS4190163 of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended.

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I. Introduction

The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (Virginia CZM) funded project, FY19 Task 73.01, Promoting Ecotourism: Replacement of Virginia CZM-Funded Public Access Signage at Coastal PDC Sites was funded through NOAA grant # NA19NOS4190163. The geographic area of impact includes the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC), which includes Accomack County and Northampton County; the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC), which includes Isle of Wight County, James City County, City of Newport News, City of Poquoson, and the City of Virginia Beach; the Northern Neck Planning District Commission (NNPDC), which includes Lancaster County and Northumberland County, and the Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (PlanRVA), which includes Charles City County. All of the above listed sites are located within U.S. Congressional Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. The project period of performance began on July 1, 2021 and ended on September 30, 2022 following two extensions for additional time to complete project deliverables. The grant funds were awarded to the NNPDC to pass through to participating PDC's for signage manufacturing and installation costs. Total funds awarded for this project were \$9,000. No administration costs were incurred to facilitate the completion of grant deliverables.

II. Project Summary

Virginia CZM has created close to 60 public access sites since the program began in 1986. These sites include kayak launches, boardwalks, observation decks, and conservation lands acquired with Virginia CZM funds. Each access site should be identified with an acknowledgement sign crediting the agencies and organizations that have provided support for site acquisition and/or development. Acknowledgement signs at public access sites are an important part of program visibility, demonstrating the value of publicly funded coastal management programs and how these programs provide increased public access to historically and ecologically significant coastal features. This project also addresses the need to improve program visibility as noted in NOAA's 2015 Section 312 evaluation of Virginia CZM.

Virginia CZM staff initially built an inventory of all public access and land acquisition sites funded by CZM/NOAA from 1987 to 2020. During the course of this project, Virginia CZM staff coordinated with staff from participating coastal PDC's to develop a list of priority sites where Virginia CZM signage is in need of replacement due to a lack of proper acknowledgement (accreditation language, logos, etc.), weathering, vandalism, etc. and determined with consultation from the PDC's the cost and scope of replacement. The inventory of priority sites is as follows and consisted of the replacement of nineteen (19) signs installed on existing site infrastructure without causing ground disturbance. In the A-NPDC region, a total of four (4) signs were replaced at the following Virginia CZM funded public access sites: Quinby Floating Dock, Willis Wharf Floating Dock, Chincoteague Floating Dock, and Wachapreague Floating Dock. In the HRPDC region, a total of seven (7) signs were replaced at the following Virginia CZM funded public access sites: Powhatan Creek Kayak Launch, Jones Creek Pier and Floating Dock, Carolanne Park (Elizabeth River Canoe Trail) Kayak Launch, King-Lincoln Park (beach nourishment), Riverview Farm Park & Trail (pier & trail), and Whitehouse Cove Pier. In the NNPDC region, a total of four (4) signs were replaced at the following Virginia CZM funded public access sites: Great Wicomico Fishing Pier and Windmill Point Canoe and Kayak Launch. In the PlanRVA region, a total of four (4) signs were replaced at the Virginia CZM funded public access site Wilcox Wharf at Lawrence Lewis Park.

The NNPDC was the grantee and project lead. NNPDC staff were tasked with soliciting replacement signage designs incorporating NOAA, Virginia CZM, PDC, and locality logos from the other PDC's participating in this effort (A-NPDC, HRPDC, and PlanRVA). Virginia CZM staff were tasked with providing background documentation of public access project history, design templates, project identification language, and other project-related information as requested to assist in this effort. NNPDC

and other PDC staff time was not included in this scope of work and Virginia CZM staff time (Program Manager Laura McKay, Coastal Planner Jeff Flood, and Coastal Outreach Coordinator Virginia Witmer) for this task is included in Virginia CZM Task 1.01 for FY21 and poses no cost allocation for this scope of work.

III. Deliverable: Replacement & Installation of CZM Signage as Prioritized by CZM & Coastal Planning District Commission Staff

NNPDC staff and Virginia CZM staff coordinated with HRPDC, A-NPDC, and PlanRVA staff to identify signage needs at each identified site within their respective regions. NNPDC hosted a meeting with HRPDC, A-NPDC, PlanRVA, and Virginia CZM staff to share and discuss potential signage designs. Each respective PDC were tasked with verifying replacement signage needs, gaining appropriate permissions from access site owners, collecting logos, font types, photos, and other sign components to assist with any design variations desired by access site owners. NNPDC staff compiled signage needs identified by participating PDC staff for each individual location and held a meeting with each participating PDC to finalize signage designs. Once reviewed and approved by NNPDC and Virginia CZM staff, each respective PDC were tasked with obtaining estimates from local firms, selecting a firm, and manufacturing the signs. Once the signs were manufactured, each participating PDC ensured the signs were installed using existing structures at each selected public access site in accordance with permissions given by access site owners. NNPDC staff and participating PDC staff have completed the manufacture and installation of nineteen (19) public access signs across Virginia's Coastal Zone. These signs will serve to bolster ecotourism in Virginia's Coastal Zone by providing information to visitors regarding public access amenities and showcasing local historic and ecological features. Photographs of all installed signs can be viewed in a [Google Drive folder](#). Photographs of signs installed at Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Park (PlanRVA), Windmill Point (NNPDC), Powhatan Creek Kayak Launch (HRPDC), and Wachapreague Floating Dock (A-NPDC) are included as representative samples below.

Figure 1. Interpretive sign at Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Park in Charles City County

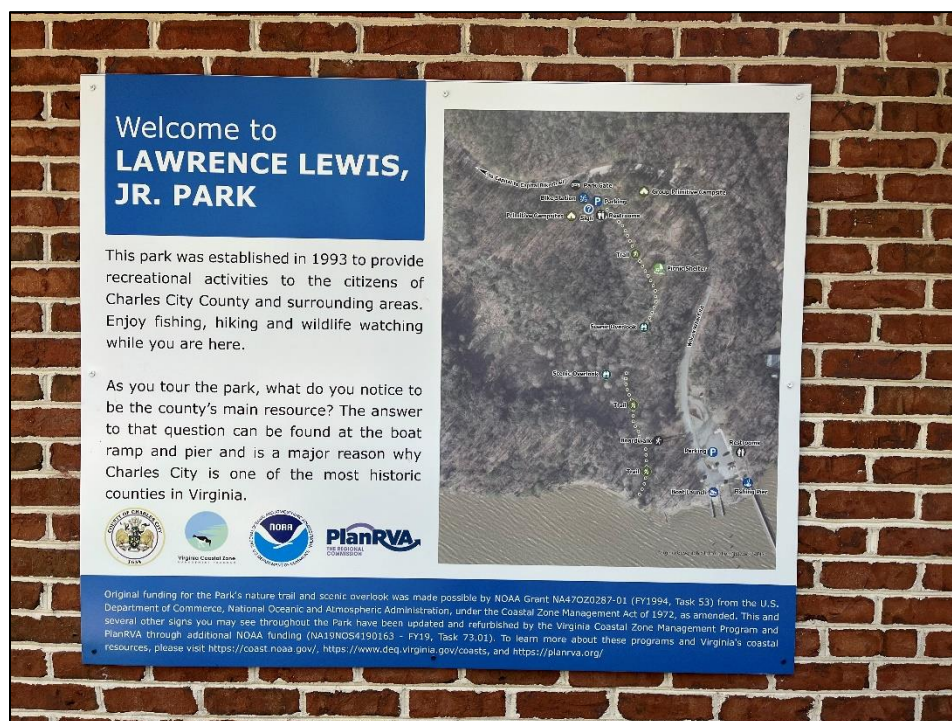


Figure 2. Accreditation sign at Windmill Point Canoe and Kayak Launch, Lancaster County

Photographs pending as of January 28, 2023 final product submittal deadline to NOAA

Figure 3. Accreditation sign at Powhatan Creek Kayak Launch, James City County

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Figure 4. Accreditation sign at Wachapreague Floating Dock, Accomack County



IV. Benefits Accrued

NNPDC staff tracked measurable benefits accrued from this project and previous grant products that have served as a foundation for this project. The initial funding of public access sites across Virginia's Coastal Zone has increased outdoor recreation and ecotourism opportunities that bolster support from visitors for coastal zone management programs that protect and promote coastal resources. The initial funding for the creation of the Northern Neck Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority has seen new public access sites developed in the NNPDC region. The initial funding of projects which developed the NNPDC region's first water trails has resulted in the expansion of the Northern Neck Water Trail Network and an inventory of existing and needed public access in the region. Additionally, the Coastal Virginia Ecotourism Alliance is implementing a plan to update and market the Northern Neck Water Trail Network to increase public access to the trail network and to create uniformity with water trails on the Eastern Shore, Middle Peninsula, and Lower Chickahominy River for inclusion in virginiawatertrails.org. The deliverables of this project have directly benefited from these previous Virginia CZM funded efforts and will benefit those continued efforts to promote outdoor recreation and ecotourism.