

FACT SHEET

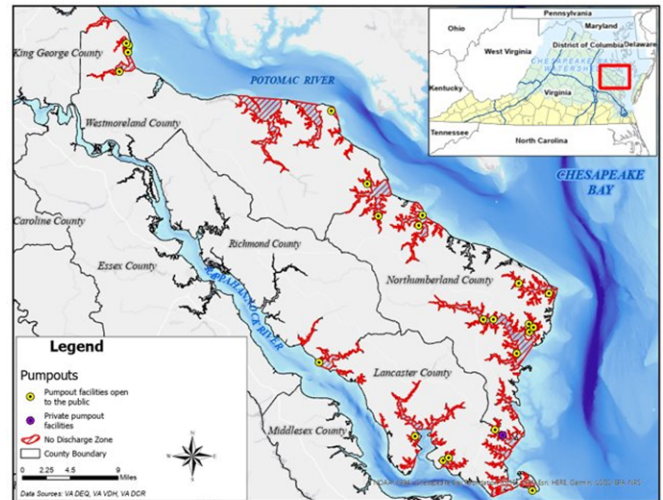
Overview

A *Vessel Sewage No-Discharge Zone (NDZ)* is a waterway where the discharge of both untreated and treated sewage from all vessels is prohibited. This Fact Sheet describes what that means for vessel operators and for vessel sewage pump-out facilities. It also provides information about why and how waterways are designated as NDZs.

Northern Neck Marine Vessel Sewage No-Discharge Zones

What is a vessel sewage No-Discharge Zone (NDZ)?

- Under the federal Clean Water Act, it is illegal to discharge untreated sewage into any U.S. waters within three nautical miles of the U.S. Coast. A Vessel Sewage No-Discharge Zone (NDZ) is a waterway where the discharge of both untreated *and* treated sewage from all vessels is prohibited.
- Within an NDZ, vessel operators must retain all sewage (untreated *and* treated) onboard. This includes sewage that has been treated to any degree with a Marine Sanitation Device (MSD).
- An NDZ does not apply to the discharge of gray water from showers or sinks.



Why are we proposing a NDZs for these waterbodies?

- Virginia House Bill 1774 (2009) and Virginia House Bill 1943 (2011) resolved that all tidal creeks be designated as NDZs premised on the improvement of impaired waters.
- Discharges of raw and partially treated sewage may introduce disease-causing microorganisms, nutrients, metals, and toxins to the marine environment. Accidentally ingesting contaminated water while boating or swimming can cause sickness in humans. Shellfish filter large quantities of water so even when shellfish are exposed to small amounts of sewage, consumption of those shellfish can make people ill.
- Chemicals used in MSD treatment systems and additives used in holding tanks can be harmful to marine life.
- Sewage may also contain organic matter and nutrients which impact water quality by reducing the amount of oxygen in the water that is needed for marine life.
- Vessel sewage is more concentrated than domestic sewage so it can have a disproportionately negative impact on water quality especially in sensitive areas like shellfish beds and recreational areas.
- A single discharge in a low flushing environment such as a marina, creek, or cove can be detected up to one square mile away.
- Shellfish beds, swimming areas and fishing areas may be closed because of sewage contamination.
- These waterbodies specifically were identified working with stakeholders including the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Northern Neck Planning District Commission and based upon review appear appropriate for this designation.

What waterbodies are proposed to be included in this NDZ application?

Antipoison Creek	Dymer Creek	Lancaster Creek (inc. Morattico)	Mulberry Creek (state park area)
Bonum Creek	Gardner Creek	Little Oyster & Windmill Point Creek	Nomini Creek & Currioman Bay
Carter Creek	Great Wicomico River & Ingram Bay	Little Wicomico River	Ragged Point
Cloverdale Creek	Greenvale Creek	Lower Machodoc Creek	Rosier Creek
Coan River & the Glebe	Indian Creek	Mattox Creek & Monroe Bay	Tabbs Creek
Cod Creek	Jackson Creek	Mosquito Creek	Windmill Point Resort
Corrotoman River	Judith Sound		Yeocomico River
Deep Creek (state park area)			
Dividing Creek			

What is the process for designating an NDZ?

- Local stakeholders and the state of Virginia work together to apply to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the designation.
- The application must demonstrate that an environmental need exists, that adequate vessel sewage pump-out facilities exist, and stakeholder support for the implementation of the NDZ.
- EPA reviews the application and seeks additional public comment before deciding to designate the NDZ.

What does an NDZ mean for vessel operators and marina owners operating within an NDZ?

- Any through-hull fitting valves capable of allowing a discharge of sewage from an MSD must be secured in a closed position.
- Portable toilets or Type 3 MSDs (holding tanks) can continue to be used in an NDZ if any valves capable of allowing discharge are secured in a closed position to prevent discharge.
- Treated and untreated sewage can be disposed of at an onshore pump-out facility or beyond three nautical miles from the U.S. coast.
- Sewage properly treated with an MSD Type 1 or Type 2 can be discharged outside of designated NDZs and beyond three nautical miles from the U.S. coast.
- Marinas within a designated NDZ are required by law to notify boat patrons leasing slips of the NDZ and display a sign indicating the area is an NDZ.

Are there already other NDZs in Virginia?

- Middlesex County: Broad Creek, Jackson Creek, and Fishing Bay
- Virginia Beach: Lynnhaven River
- Gloucester County: Sarah Creek and Perrin River
- Bedford, Pittsylvania, Franklin Counties: Smith Mountain Lake

How can I comment on the proposed NDZ?

- Comments must be made in writing and can be sent to:
- Comments must be received by
- Comments and questions during the public meeting are not official so please be sure to follow up with any written comments

For more information, please [visit DEQ's NDZ webpage](#) or contact Anne Schlegel at Anne.Schlegel@deq.virginia.gov.