

September 30, 2024

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from April 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024**

	Page
SECTION B.1.A: Section 312 Evaluation Progress	2

B.1.A. SECTION 312 EVALUATION PROGRESS

Virginia's most recent evaluation began in December 2021 with the Virginia CZM Program sending a 53-page response 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 conducted an online survey of Virginia CZM stakeholders and partners. An online evaluation was conducted on August 1-4, 2022, which included a virtual public meeting on August 1, 2022. The evaluation team included John Kuriawa and Carrie Hall of NOAA and Ashley Norton of the Delaware Coastal Program.

A final summary of Section 312 progress for the period of June 2015 to June 2022 was completed and sent to NOAA in October 2022. The final NOAA Evaluation was published in June of 2023 and was published on the Virginia CZM Website [here](#). While completed after publication of the evaluation, Virginia CZM coordinated a field trip that brought NOAA staff together with community partners at several project sites in the Middle Peninsula, Hampton Roads, and the Eastern Shore.

In the final evaluation, NOAA identified recommendations for the Virginia CZM Program in the following areas: 1) Program Administration, 2) Ocean Planning, and 3) Community and Ecosystem Resilience. Each recommendation will be discussed below.

Progress This Period (April 1, 2024- September 30, 2024):

Program Administration

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Virginia Coastal Program to work with the NOAA Office for Coastal Management to educate federal license and permit applicants and agencies regarding the Coastal Zone Management Act federal consistency requirements and the application of the state's narrative enforceable policies to proposed federal actions.

During the April 1, 2024- September 30, 2024 period:

Federal Consistency is managed by the [Office of Environmental Review](#), which is partially funded by Virginia CZM/NOAA. Virginia CZM and the Coastal Policy Team are forums for addressing this recommendation and the CZM program manager continued meeting with the OEIR manager to better understand the program's challenges and goals. While no additional federal consistency trainings were organized during the performance period, the CZM manager did coordinate with the Midatlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) to reconvene a semi-regular meeting of states discussing federal consistency concerns including consistency determinations and geographic location descriptions. A similar federal consistency focused meeting with Coastal States Organization is also being coordinated, as is a repository of federal consistency documentations that will allow coastal programs to review materials collected and submitted to the repository by other states.

Virginia CZM is currently discussing ways to further this recommendation in tandem with making progress on a geographic location description and updating enforceable policies through the ocean planning process described in the next section.

Ocean Planning

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Virginia Coastal Program in its efforts to develop a state ocean plan, or otherwise continue to address ocean policy and planning issues for Virginia in ways that integrate the interests of different ocean users in a sustainable fashion and contain enforceable policies consistent with the state's interests.

During the April 1, 2024- September 30, 2024 period:

During the previous performance period Virginia CZM developed a steering committee and six different workgroups. The six workgroups include: Sustainability & Conservation; Fishing & Aquaculture; Cultural & Historic Resources & Non-Consumptive Recreation; Transportation, Navigation, & Security; Seafloor Resources; and Energy & Infrastructure. During the performance period the team facilitated 16 meetings in total of the six Virginia Ocean Plan workgroups. During those meetings the workgroups helped develop materials to inform the plan including potential recommendations for the plan. The team is now working to finalize recommendations with each workgroup and begin to develop a draft plan.

On August 15, a Virginia Ocean Plan Community Open Forum was held at the Virginia Aquarium in Virginia Beach. This event was established to educate the public on the Virginia Ocean Plan, be available to answer questions, and gather input on the public's interests, concerns, and priorities as it relates to the ocean. Over 50 people were in attendance in addition to numerous stakeholders and partners. Input was gathered during the meeting and many attendees remarked that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about this and recognize the need for this planning process.

Additional work in this area was completed in this progress period through contracts with subrecipients including ongoing fisheries stakeholder engagement (Ongoing Task 92.02) and stranding response support (Ongoing Task 49), and specific projects including Ocean Fisheries Data Development (FY23 92.03), Sea Turtle & Marine Mammal Conservation Planning (FY21-22 Task 92.03), and Large Mammal Stranding Response MOU (FY23 92.01). Details of these projects can be found in Section A under each task's progress report.

Community and Ecosystem Resilience

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Virginia Coastal Program to (a) continue to support coastal planning district commissions and communities in their efforts to build resilience and take advantage of new federal funding; and (b) look for opportunities to support expanding successful regional initiatives statewide such as Fight the Flood and First Floor Elevations.

During the April 1, 2024- September 30, 2024 period

Technical Assistance (TA) grants to the eight (8) coastal Planning District Commissions (PDCs) continued during the second half of the first year (FY23) of the new three-year Resiliency Focal Area (RFA; FY23-25). This funding continues to provide capacity support for PDC resiliency efforts. For more information on work related to this, see the progress reports for FY23, Tasks 41 – 48. These TA grants allow PDC's to identify programs that are most effective within their own region and provide funding to them. This funding also allows PDC's to more directly engage with the state Coastal Resilience Master Plan (CRMP) process including participating in the TAC and working groups.

FY23 Tasks 71-73 are also a part of the three-year resiliency focal area, and details on this work are in the respective progress reports for FY23. Task 71 (VIMS) is working to 1) update the shoreline inventory and *expand* the features surveyed based on locality needs; 2) update the Shoreline Management Model to include new data inputs and new advanced model approaches; 3) map marsh migration corridors to assist with marsh conservation and restoration decisions under multiple sea level rise scenarios; and 4) develop and implement a community-science web application for citizens, local government, and PDC staff, where they can share information to more accurately and efficiently maintain current shoreline conditions in Virginia. Task 72 (DCR) works to build on the work from FY20-22 Task 71 in identifying conservation priorities. Specifically, it intends to identify lands in need of additional protection and that enhance protection of existing protected areas. Under Task 73 (Virginia Energy), Virginia Energy is mapping aggregate material resources (i.e., sand, gravel) in the Middle Peninsula region to address research needs outlined in the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. A FY24 effort will do the same work in the Northern Neck. Additionally, FY22 Task 71 (DCR/VIMS), which documents species of conservation interest occurrences and identify areas where their habitats are resilient to climate change (e.g., can migrate) was completed and results were presented to the CPT on September 30, 2024. For more information on this work, see the Final Product for FY22 Task 71 and progress reports for FY23 Tasks 71-73.

Additional resilience work is detailed in the progress reports for FY23, Tasks 91.01, 91.02, 91.03, and 91.04. Under Task 91.01 (MPPDC) each PDC has identified 5 working waterfronts within their region that are suffering from flooding. These sites were assessed for water management flooding challenges and associated cost estimates were prepared. Next, they will be entered into the Virginia Coastal Resiliency Master Plan (VCRMP) database for future funding consideration.

Task 91.02 (UVA-IEN) supported work to organize and facilitate the Implementation Team meetings for Petersburg and Hopewell under the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT). Task 91.03 (Wetlands Watch) covered trainings, coordination, and evaluations related to FEMA's Community Rating System. FY23 Task 91.04 is concluding work to develop a model policy for Virginia communities (with a focus on coastal communities) wishing to adopt a "Review, Assess, and Document" or "RAD" policy as part of their floodplain management programs. Finally, FY23 Task 10 is nearing completion of a guidance document and decision-making framework to assist localities and other users in evaluating viability of and pursuing beneficial reuse of dredge materials for projects where it is appropriate. This effort will be critical both in assisting the USACE in meeting their BU dredge materials goals, and supporting local governments that are increasingly required to take on dredging responsibilities to maintain navigation in small tributaries where the USACE is no longer dredging.

With the 309 needs assessment process beginning the focus on resilience will continue as the program evaluates what should be prioritized for future 309 funding.

Community and Ecosystem Resilience #2

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the Virginia Coastal Program to develop a social marketing campaign to support living shorelines.

During the April 1, 2024- September 30, 2024 period:

During this reporting period, Virginia CZM continued work to support a viable pilot for a Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) campaign promoting the installation of living shorelines. Using the research from the Chesapeake Bay Program's strategy development of a CBSM campaign for living shorelines and native buffer vegetation called "[Bay Protectors for Shoreline Management](#)," Virginia CZM worked with the Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR) to develop a pilot campaign. This project was pitched for several available funding possibilities but at this point has not been identified as a priority by the CPT in their scoring. We will continue to investigate the best path forward for accomplishing this recommendation.