

October 31, 2023

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from April 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023**

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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 - September 30 2023):

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 – September 2023 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 new program manager met several times with the OEIR manager to better understand the program's challenges and goals, and with CPT members who have participated in the development of narrative enforceable policies. DEQ organized federal consistency training with NOAA Office for Coastal Management for state agency reviewers on July 19, 2023. This training was at no cost to reviewers or DEQ. Virginia CZM is currently discussing ways to further this recommendation in tandem with making progress on identifying a geographic location description and will have more to report during the next progress period.

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 – September 2023 period:

During this performance period Virginia CZM made progress on this recommendation in several ways. First, CZM identified and executed a contract (FY22 Task 92.05) with a new subrecipient, UVA Institute for Engagement and Negotiation (IEN), to replace the Virginia Coastal Policy Center (VCPC) that was dissolved in March 2023. Virginia CZM was able to reprogram the remaining funding from VCPC and develop a contract with IEN to facilitate ongoing meetings of the Ocean Planning Committee, facilitate at least one public meeting, and develop a “strawman” draft of a Virginia Ocean Plan (VOP). The goal of this strawman plan will be to develop a document that state and federal government leadership can react to, and to develop areas of consensus where actual policy outcomes can be successful.

Additionally, Virginia CZM began reaching out to stakeholders and individuals who have worked on the VOP outline to date, as well as expanding to include additional stakeholders, to formalize a list of partners in this process. The first meeting for the Virginia Ocean Plan process in 2023 is scheduled for October 18, 2023, and progress from that meeting and more will be reporting in the next progress period.

Additional work in this area was completed in this progress period through contracts with subrecipients include ongoing fisheries stakeholder engagement (FY21-FY22 Task 92.02) and Sea Turtle & Marine Mammal Conservation Planning (FY21-22 Task 92.03), details of which can be found in Section A under each task.

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 – September 2023 period

Technical Assistance (TA) grants to the eight (8) coastal Planning District Commissions (PDCs) included the third year (FY22) 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 FY22, 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. Fight the Flood is an example of how this funding can be applied by a PDC.

FY22 Tasks 71-73 are also a part of the three-year RFA, and details on this work are in the respective progress reports for FY22. Task 71 (DCR/VIMS) aims to document species of conservation interest occurrences and identify areas where their habitats are resilient to climate change (e.g., can migrate) in order to inform conservation and restoration policies and actions. Task 72 (ANPDC) works to improve ecotourism opportunities, resources, and trainings to help protect economic resiliency and support

keeping conservation lands open. Under Task 73 (MPPDC/VIMS), a whitepaper explored elements and issues needed for the development of next generation shoreline plans and develop a pilot medium energy example shoreline plan on property owned by the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority (MPCBPAA) adjacent to the Captain Sinclair's Recreation Area in Gloucester County. FY21, Task 73 was extended to end on September 30, 2023 in order to change the geographic location of the high energy shoreline pilot design to a more favorable location at the New Point Comfort Natural Area Preserve. The exploratory whitepaper and shoreline design were completed in September of 2023 and final products are anticipated to be received by Virginia CZM in November of 2023. The FY22 and FY21 projects complement each other by providing a suite of shoreline management options across different geographic areas within the same region as well as across different wave energy environments.

Additional resilience work is detailed in the progress reports for FY22, Tasks 91.01, 91.02 and 91.03. Task 91.01 (VCPC) studied 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 91.01 was completed with final products received and approved by Virginia CZM in May of 2023. Task 91.02 (VCPC) covered work done to score, implement, and hold resiliency action workshops for the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT), whereas Task 91.03 (Wetlands Watch) covered trainings, coordination, and evaluations related to FEMA's Community Rating System and the roll out of "Risk Rating 2.0." Task 91.02 was completed in June of 2023 with final products received and approved by Virginia CZM in July of 2023. Task 91.03 was completed in September of 2023 with final products anticipated by November 2023.

Finally, the theme for this year's Coastal Partner's Workshop is expanding work beyond its original scope, which aligns with this recommendation. Outcomes from that workshop will be discussed in next year's report.

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 – September 2023 period:

During this reporting period, Virginia CZM began work on a Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) campaign for the installation of living shorelines. Virginia CZM began sharing the recommendation with groups working on living shorelines, like the Living Shoreline Collaborative. Through these discussions, Virginia CZM learned of the work that the Chesapeake Bay Program coordinated to develop a CBSM campaign for living shorelines and native buffer vegetation called "[Bay Protectors for Shoreline Management](#)" (hereafter, "Bay Protectors"). In the five steps of a CBSM strategy development and implementation, this strategy marks the end of step 3 where a strategy is developed using the barriers and benefits research conducted throughout the Chesapeake Bay. Step 4 is to pilot this strategy. Virginia CZM coordinated with 15-20 different organizations to gauge interest in both piloting the Bay Protectors campaign, and the coordination of a coastal zone-wide campaign. A meeting was held with representatives from these organizations on September 6, and it was decided that the Virginia adoption of the campaign will focus on both living shorelines and native buffer vegetation, the campaign should

be adaptable to existing campaigns, and that existing partnerships should be leveraged. In follow-up discussions, Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR) surfaced as the willing organization for the piloting stage. Virginia CZM, FOR and their partners including the Department of Conservation and Recreation Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service (DCR-SEAS) and the NOAA Chesapeake Bay office, have met twice to discuss a project design for the piloting of this strategy. Currently a proposal for a pilot campaign that would run 2 years is being drafted.