

March 31, 2025

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from October 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025**

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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 (October 1, 2024- March 31, 2025):

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.

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 training were organized during the performance period, the CZM and OEIR manager continued coordinating with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) on a semi-regular meeting of states discussing federal consistency concerns including consistency determinations and geographic location descriptions.

Additionally Virginia CZM setup meetings with staff from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to review their enforceable policies and make connections between those policies and requests for reporting on how VDACS implemented them for Section B.2 progress reporting. Similarly CZM staff continued to review staff contacts for all agencies with enforceable policies to ensure that contacts are active and understand the relationship between their agencies and the Virginia CZM program and the CZMA.

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 previous performance period Virginia CZM facilitated 16 meetings of the six different Virginia Ocean Plan 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 current performance period, the team facilitated numerous meetings and review periods, all with the goal of finalizing the six workgroups' recommendations. This resulted in forty-three (43) total recommendations for the Steering Committee to review and approve. Given the breadth of the recommendations, two Steering Committee meetings were held to review and discuss the recommendations. Upon completion of this performance period, the Steering Committee is moving into the consensus approval process.

On October 23, following the successful Virginia Ocean Plan Community Open Forum in August, a virtual Community Open Forum was held. The goal was to provide stakeholders and the public with an additional opportunity to learn about the development of the Plan and to engage in conversation with Virginia CZM staff. This on-line format had the added advantage of enhancing the accessibility of input to the Plan by those unable to attend the in-person forum. Eleven people were in attendance. 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), Section 10 Habitat Management Plan Development for Sturgeon (FY24 92.01), Sea Turtle & Marine Mammal Conservation Planning (FY22 Task 92.03), and Marine Mammal Stranding Response MOU and Resource Development (FY23 92.01, FY24 Task 11). 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.

Technical Assistance (TA) grants to the eight (8) coastal Planning District Commissions (PDCs) continued in this second year (FY24) of the second 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 FY24, 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 allowed PDC's to more directly engage with the state Coastal Resilience Master Plan (CRMP) process including participating in the TAC and subcommittees.

FY24 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 Northern Neck region to address research needs outlined in the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. The prior year focused on the Middle Peninsula and the final year in FY25 will focus on the Eastern Shore.

Additional resilience work is detailed in the progress reports for FY24, Tasks 91.01, 91.02, 91.03, and FY23 Tasks 10 and 91.04. Under Task 91.01 (MPPDC) work to establish a public financing approach is underway that local governments can use. Specifically, a finance district master planning protocol and model ordinance will be developed in addition to planning and financial analysis that will support the development of a finance district ordinance to support coastal resilience and dredging activities at Broad Creek (Middlesex County).

Task 91.02 (UVA-IEN) supported work to conduct the scoring process for three Hampton Roads localities 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 technical document 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.

Additional work during this period involved the extensive process of conducting the Phase I and Phase II Coastal Hazards needs assessments and strategy development. As of the close of this reporting period, the Coastal Policy Team elected Coastal Hazards as a top priority. Following that, two meetings were held with over 20 participants each, where management priorities were identified and a draft Coastal Hazards strategy was developed.

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.

In the previous reporting periods, Virginia CZM worked with partners to support a viable pilot for a Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM) campaign promoting the installation of living shorelines. This pilot was envisioned 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](#)." Although previous proposals to the CPT for this pilot were not prioritized for funding, we continue to investigate the best path forward for accomplishing this recommendation.