

April 30, 2024

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from October 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024**

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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 \(October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024\):](#)

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 October 2023 – March 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 has discussed providing a federal consistency training to participants in the Ocean Planning process, which the OEIR manager was interested in doing. This still needs to be scheduled but likely will occur in the next performance period.

Virginia CZM is currently discussing ways to further this recommendation in tandem with making progress on a geographic location description. These two tasks are particularly relevant to the ongoing 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 October 2023 – March 2024 period:

During this performance period Virginia CZM made progress on this recommendation in several ways. First, CZM held the first meeting for the Virginia Ocean Planning Team in 2023 on October 18, 2023. During this meeting, 16 individuals attended in person and virtually, in addition to 5 DEQ, 5 Virginia CZM, and 2 UVA-IEN representatives. The aim of the meeting was to renew the Ocean Plan development process after a year hiatus. During both group discussion and on project boards throughout the room, participant input was solicited on the draft plan goals, needs, and timeline. Stakeholders emphasized the need for more definition of the scope, both geographically and topically. The need for workgroups to dive deeper into the plan content was also raised. The meeting summary can be [accessed here](#).

After that meeting and throughout much of the reporting period, CZM met regularly with UVA-IEN and worked to design an inclusive stakeholder process and identify stakeholders to serve on the Steering Committee and six workgroups as a part of that process. Extensive outreach was conducted resulting in 12 Steering Committee members and 64 individuals serving on workgroups (4 are on the Steering Committee). The six workgroups include: Sustainability & Conservation; Fishing & Aquaculture; Cultural & Historic Resources & Non-Consumptive Recreation; Transportation, Navigation, & Security; Seafloor Resources; and Energy & Infrastructure. A meeting of the overall Virginia Ocean Planning Team was held on March 14, 2024 to provide updates on the scope of the plan and kick off the first meeting of the six different workgroups, which were held concurrently. More than 60 individuals attended in addition to 5 Virginia CZM and 3 UVA-IEN staff. Future workgroup meetings are being scheduled and will occur in the coming months.

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 October 2023 – March 2024 period

Technical Assistance (TA) grants to the eight (8) coastal Planning District Commissions (PDCs) included the first year (FY23) of the new three-year Resiliency Focal Area (RFA; FY23-25) which provides targeted funding to support 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. Fight the Flood is an example of how this funding can be applied by a PDC.

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 FY22. 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 Planning District to address research needs outlined in the Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan. Additionally, FY22 Task 71 (DCR/VIMS), which aims to document species of conservation interest occurrences and identify areas where their habitats are resilient to climate change (e.g., can migrate), was extended to be completed in May 2024. For more information on this work, see the progress reports for FY22 Task 71 and 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 will identify 5 working waterfronts within their region that are suffering from flooding. These sites are being assessed for water management flooding challenges and associated cost estimates will be prepared with enough detail for entry 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. Additional trainings carried over from FY22 Task 91.03 also occurred during this reporting period and the final product due in May 2024. FY23 Task 91.04 is working 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 in progress and will result in 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.

Finally, resilience topics were covered during this year's Coastal Partner's Workshop, which was held November 16-17 in Richmond, VA. Panelists shared experiences developing resilience tools such as Fight the Flood, RAFT, and the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional's certification program. As a part of the panel discussion, panelists shared insights on what it might take to scale up or transport these

resilience tools, noting the value of doing research and understanding the needs of project stakeholders and taking the time that it takes to appropriately build and adapt resilience tools.

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 October 2023 – March 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. Originally this was developed as a 2-year single grant proposal, however following the prioritization of funding needs for Inflation Reduction Act non-competitive funds by the Coastal Policy Team, it was evident that this project needed to be funded by another source of funding. Virginia CZM worked with FOR to split the project into two 1-year proposals for CZMA annual Section 306 funding. Ultimately, since that required match, which FOR could not provide, the project is put on hold while other funding opportunities are identified. Virginia CZM expects this effort to continue and is working on developing a partnership between a CZM network partner to work with FOR while also evaluating the best path for funding this work.