



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Virginia Coastal Policy Team Meeting Summary

February 6, 2025

1111 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia

Virtual attendance was also available via Microsoft Teams

10:00am Welcome & Brief Introductions

10:10am Logistics & Meeting Goals

10:15am Section 309 Program Enhancement Background & Context

- Sect. 309 funding is meant to situate and ground strategic planning for state coastal programs. States complete this assessment in 5-year cycles to qualify for funding of \$500k that does not require match. Outcome from Strategy development needs to be a program change – something that encapsulates the change the coastal program is trying to make. For example: a change in authorities, statutes, regulations, procedures, guidance, planning; at the state or locality level.
- Virginia CZM staff are required to evaluate nine (9) Enhancement Areas (Coastal Hazards, Ocean Resources, Marine Debris, Cumulative & Secondary Impacts of Growth & Development, Wetlands, Special Area Management Planning, Aquaculture, Public Access, Energy & Government Facility Siting) via a NOAA Phase I Assessment template form and assign a priority to these categories (High, Medium, or Low). High priority Enhancement Areas must then undergo a Phase II Assessment, which may lead to the development of an associated funding Strategy. Phase II is similar to Phase I but involves more in-depth resource and management characterization. Ranking an Enhancement Area as High in Phase I means that this can be revisited later in the assessment cycle, even if a corresponding Strategy is not developed initially after the Phase II Assessment.
- Strategies would begin October 1, 2026, and end on September 30, 2030.
- Total Sect. 309 funding is shared across all the Strategies, so prioritizing topics is key to efficient allocation of resources.
- Considerations include:
 - Feasibility: how likely is it that we can achieve a program change in this area within five (5) years?
 - Importance of the Enhancement Area
 - Appropriateness - are we the group that should be addressing this (vs. e.g. General Assembly (GA))
 - Availability: applicability of other funding and/or match sources
- NOAA-OCM has also selected some Enhancement Areas as nationwide high priorities: Coastal Hazards and Wetlands. Vast majority of coastal programs will end up selecting these areas as High to be eligible to submit proposals for Projects of Special Merit (PSMs) related to those Strategies via a nationally competitive pool.

10:25am Section 309 Program Enhancement Draft Phase I Review & Discussion



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Virginia CZM staff presented draft Phase I Assessments to the audience and received feedback as summarized under each Enhancement Area below



Figure 1. CPT meeting attendees listen to Virginia CZM Program Manager Ryan Green give an overview of the Sect. 309 process.

Wetlands

- Virginia CZM staff ranked at High priority.
- Randy Owen (Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)): No policy currently for mitigating encroachment on submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), have met w/ the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to discuss Federal Mitigation Rule alignment w/ state mitigation rules.
- Rachael Peabody (Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC)): We should look into a SAV mitigation plan as a Virginia CZM-funded project.
- Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch): Climate change impacting SAV – extreme drought and rainfall.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Agree w/ need for SAV mitigation plan.
- Dave Norris (Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR)): DWR's Wetland Technical Team hasn't discussed SAV yet (for habitat restoration).
- Ben McFarlane (Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)): Virginia CZM has mentioned SAV under SAMP & Ocean Resources Phase I Assessments and Strategies in the past, but Wetlands appears to be the right fit this time.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): SAV could also fit under Coastal Hazards.

Coastal Hazards



- Virginia CZM staff ranked at High Priority.
- Ben McFarlane (HRPDC): I'll send Virginia CZM HRPDC Board resilience language regarding resilience in locality ordinances.
- Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch): Can we review other states' Coastal Hazards Assessments & Strategies?
- John Kuriawa (NOAA): Yes, Sasha Land (NOAA) can send New York to Virginia regional summary to Ryan so we can use in Phase II Assessments.
- Carolyn Heaps-Pecaro (Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)): Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan (VCRMP) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will sunset without recommendations having continued support – CPT should discuss how to continue coordination and collaboration.
- Will Isenberg (Virginia CZM): 20 VCRMP TAC recommendations would be good a fit for Sect. 309 or Sect. 306 funding.
- Ben McFarlane (HRPDC): We still don't have a resilient enforceable policy. This is an opportunity to think about participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) via state-wide flooding requirements for localities (currently only state-wide stormwater requirements).
- Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch): DCR's Floodplain Program doesn't have enforceable policy – this would be helpful.
- Rachael Peabody (MPPDC): Any new policy would have to reference existing law or regulation so need those first.
- Melanie Davenport (Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)): The Commonwealth's Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) could work on this – would be a program change for Virginia CZM.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Here's the typical sequence: 1) background work funded by Virginia CZM, 2) law enacted, 3) Virginia CZM policy based on new law.
- John Kuriawa (NOAA): An Executive Order (EO) from the Governor counts as a program change, just like VCRMP Executive Directive (ED) did for current Sect. 309 cycle. There is flexibility in what NOAA considers to be a program change. Most of the PDC resilience work qualifies.

Marine Debris

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as High priority.
- Rachael Peabody (MPPDC): DWR has new law waiving locality need to get abandoned and derelict vessel (ADV) titling – this streamlines the process.
- Will Isenberg (Virginia CZM): Clean Virginia Waterways (CVW) and Virginia CZM play a coordinative role.
- Virginia Witmer (Virginia CZM): We've shared model legislation from Virginia with other states for balloon bans – Pennsylvania is likely to be next to adopt.
- Christina Trapani (CVW): North Carolina too.
- Will Isenberg (Virginia CZM): Marine debris isn't a regional problem, it's everywhere and a high priority for citizens across the Coastal Zone. Sect. 309 funding helps Virginia CZM and partners engage at the regional level. An example of direct impacts to communities is funding for the installation of water bottle refill stations across coastal communities.
- Christina Trapani (CVW): CVW's transition from Farmville, Virginia (where previous CVW Executive Director Katie Register lived) to new headquarters in



Virginia Beach has improved efforts for beach cleanups. Also recently hired two (2) new staff for education/outreach and community partnerships.

- Will Isenberg (Virginia CZM): Recent state laws have empowered localities to pass laws to prevent marine debris, which help implement VMDRP policy recommendations.
- Elizabeth Andrews (University of Virginia (UVA)): Businesses have joined the effort too, sometimes it's as simple as just hanging a sign on the door "Did you remember your reuseable bags?"
- Virginia Witmer (Virginia CZM): Community-based social marketing (CBSM) can help overcome barriers to implementation. Messaging should also adapt to new audiences and to communicate to changes best practices over time.
- Ben McFarlane (HRPDC): This should be moved to Sect. 306 for implementation. There is also some state funding that could be leveraged.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): For long-standing Sect. 309 Strategies, at some point they mature from needing funding to promote new policies to simply needing to be implemented. Therefore, Marine Debris could transition from an Enhancement Area funded under Sect. 309 to an effort sustained via Sect. 306 program implementation funds. If ranked as a High Priority by the CPT, the Phase II work group can decide on whether to develop a Strategy or pursue continued funding under Sect. 306.

Public Access

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as Medium priority.
- Melanie Del Rosa (DCR): DCR is working to implement enhanced access for disabled individuals by improving trail surfaces and funding all-terrain motorized chairs. DWR is also acting on recommendations from Virginia Sea Grant (VASG)'s 2023 Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellow Clay Ferguson's effort to assess the threat of sea level rise (SLR) to DWR's assets. Proximity to state and local public access sites to nearby communities could also be assessed.
- Allison Tillett (DCR): A recent statistically weighted survey (part of the Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)) showed that the area from the Northern Neck down to the City of Poquoson lacked sufficient public access. Same for most of the Eastern Shore region. We could send Virginia CZM this data, but it's also easily accessible from VOP online materials.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): We can keep those locations in mind as priorities for Sect. 306A projects.

Cumulative & Secondary Impacts of Growth & Development (CSI)

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as Medium priority.
- Jeryl Phillips (Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)): Most data centers aren't in the Coastal Zone, but water usage from coastal waterbodies is.
- Brianna Heath (George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC)): So is transfer of water between water basins
- Sarah Stewart (Richmond Regional Planning District Commission (PlanRVA)): You're going to see more of this in the coastal zone going forward, including construction of new data centers.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Try to envision what a Sect. 309 Strategy would include to address data centers
- Elise Frazier (Virginia CZM): Currently there's a lot of GA legislation working to address water quality, which is why CZM ranked CSI as a Medium Priority.



- Rachael Peabody (MPPDC): What about solar?
- Elise (Virginia CZM): It's included in the Energy & Government Facility Siting Phase I Assessment, which also references the recent Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC) report.
- Kit Friedman (Crater Planning District Commission (CPDC)): Capacity for localities to meet total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) is strained by stormwater runoff caused by impervious surfaces associated with solar panels.
- Lisa Hull (NNPDC): Also declining groundwater levels are an issue before water withdrawal is taken into consideration.
- Elise Frazier (Virginia CZM): We do include references to recent regulations pertaining to solar and groundwater in the Phase I Assessment.
- Ben McFarlane (HRPDC): At the upcoming Environment Virginia Conference, we're putting together a "town hall" to discuss future-proofing of stormwater regulations. Using phosphorus loads as a result of more rainfall in the future as a proxy to model how stormwater regulations can be more comprehensive. Will work with DEQ on this.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Overhaul and streamlining of current stormwater regulations has been a priority for DEQ Director Mike Rolband. This could also be a Sect. 306 implementation project.
- Jeff Flood (Virginia CZM): During the previous Sect. 309 evaluation process, 3 out of 4 priority topics listed under the CSI Phase II Assessment were actually included in the Coastal Hazards Phase II Assessment and Strategy, demonstrating the flexibility that Virginia CZM has to ensure that as many needs as possible are met.

Special Area Management Planning (SAMP)

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as Medium priority.
- Joe Weber (DCR): our top priority, several locations needed in the Northern Virginia region.
- Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch): Skip over wetland migration corridors.
- Lucas Manweiler (Virginia CZM): We see a trend towards moving away from specific geographic locations.
- Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch): We could choose a specific spot as a SAMP pilot.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): We could include this concept under a Wetlands Strategy and leverage the Sentinel Landscapes program.
- Caitlin Verdu (Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF)): Sentinel Landscapes program is too new to coordinate with a SAMP Strategy so not yet ripe for a High Priority ranking due to the timing.
- Lucas Manweiler (Virginia CZM): Coastal Virginia Ecological Value Assessment (VEVA) and Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Plan updates are coming soon.
- Joe Weber (DCR): Lots of good work on land conservation has been done by the Lower Chickahominy Watershed Collaborative (LCWC).
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Need to rotate through priorities.

Ocean Resources

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as High priority.



- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Key question is whether we elect to continue an Ocean Resources Strategy for five (5) more years under Sect. 309 or move the effort to Sect. 306. I ask the CPT to at least rank Ocean Resources as a High priority in order to have a Phase II Assessment and additional discussions. A published Virginia Ocean Plan (later this year or in early 2026) will include recommended actions that could lead to policy changes. For example, Dominion Energy's not slowing down on Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) projects anytime soon and coordination on subsea cable locations is needed, especially with efforts to diversify where they're located after Hurricane Sandy.
- Ben McFarlane (HRPDC): SAV were included under Ocean Resources in past evaluation cycles. Pre-coordination on ocean uses is needed – a couple of examples include: USCG Captain of the Port for ship traffic, Joint Expedition Base Little Creek has expanded training operations, and increasing permitting activities by local wetlands boards (LWBs). The Environmental Impact Review (EIR) process is one way to head off conflicts, but there needs to be a process for the Virginia Maritime Association (VMA), Virginia Pilots Association (VPA), U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), HRPDC, and localities to engage in ocean planning and proactive conflict resolution.

Energy & Government Facility Siting

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as Medium priority.
- Ben McFarlane (HRPDC): Keeping as a Medium priority ranking is a good idea since a lot's been overtaken by events in the GA.
- Dr. Karinna Nunez (VIMS): We had proposed a Sect. 309 project idea related to solar – a solar facility siting feasibility tool, which takes into account impervious surfaces. Will allow consideration of parking lots and residential structures for solar panels vs. continuing to use agricultural lands.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): VIMS' project is a good idea, but likely a better fit under Sect. 306.

Aquaculture

- Virginia CZM staff ranked as Medium priority.
- Erin Reilly (Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia (CBNERR-VA)): Consider using aquaculture for restoration of SAV and oysters. Ribbed mussels also used as part of living shoreline projects.
- Amy Martin (DWR): Please note that there is one (1) freshwater hatchery owned and operated by DWR in the Coastal Zone.

12:00pm

Lunch (on your own)

1:00pm

Finish Sect. 309 Draft Phase I Review & Vote



Figure 2. CPT Priority Ranking of Enhancement Areas.

- Enhancement Area Rankings:
 - 1) Wetlands
 - 2) Coastal Hazards
 - 3) Ocean Resources
 - 4) Marine Debris
 - 5) CSI
 - 6) Public Access
 - 7) Energy & Government Facility Siting
 - 8) Aquaculture
 - 9) SAMP
- CSI not voted as High Priority, but interest from the group (Ben McFarlane (HRPDC) & Carolyn Heaps-Pecaro (DCR)) in increased attention, potential exploration with Coastal Hazards overlap (focus on addressing quantity of rainfall to promote water quality), consideration of Sect. 306 funding application.
- Joe Weber (DCR) and Ben McFarlane (HRPDC) supported use of rank choice voting for prioritizing Enhancement Areas in the next Sect. 309 Assessment cycle.
- John Kuriawa (NOAA) is reluctant to think that stormwater can fall into Coastal Hazards Strategy. Appendix D of NOAA Sect. 309 Guidance includes types of eligible work for each Enhancement Area – stormwater and septic are more associated with CSI, not Coastal Hazards. However, won't discourage Virginia CZM from trying to make the case that stormwater future-proofing should be included under Coastal Hazards.
- Volunteers for Phase II Assessment Work Groups:
 - Wetlands: Ben McFarlane (HRPDC), Dr. Karinna Nunez (VIMS), Erin Reilly (CBNERR-VA), Kit Friedman (CPDC), Jeryl Phillips (VIMS), Rachael Peabody (MPPDC), Randy Owen (VMRC), Dave Norris (DWR), Michelle Henicheck (DEQ), Joe Weber (DCR), Marissa Roland (DCR), Ava Lovain (DEQ)
 - Coastal Hazards: Ben McFarlane (HRPDC), Cameron Bruce (W&M), Dr. Karinna Nunez (VIMS), Kit Friedman (CPDC), Randy Owen (VMRC), Thomas Ruppert (W&M), Eli Podyma (PlanRVA), Brianna Heath (GWRC),



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Jeryl Phillips (VIMS), Rachael Peabody (MPPDC), Carolyn Heaps-Pecaro (DCR), Michelle Henicheck (DEQ), Kit Friedman (CPDC)

- Ocean Resources: Ben McFarlane (HRPDC), David Hawkins (Virginia Energy), Joe Grist (VMRC)
- Marine Debris: Christina Trapani (CVW), Donna Bilkovic (VIMS), Joe Grist (VMRC), Meghann Quinn (DEQ)

2:30pm

FY2025 Proposal Planning & Funding/Reprogramming Updates

- Dr. Donna Bilkovic (VIMS): FY2025 *Economic Benefits of Nature Based Solutions*
 - Candidate for Sect. 306 funding, VIMS has no issue with providing 1:1 match.
 - Previous research shows that the most important ecosystem service provided by marshes is storm risk (as ranked by the public), but more need to incorporate nature-based solutions at home-scale properties.
 - Proposal to develop storm damage probability model for properties using SCHISM models.
 - Additionally, a model for private property values at the parcel level. Assess storm damage costs now and in the future.
 - Proposal to highlight the work in rural Accomack County and urban City of Hampton – how damages and risk factors may vary across varying levels of coastal development.
 - Need to inform prioritization of marsh restoration and preservation.
 - FY2025 proposal will result in 1) storm damage probability model, 2) economic model of adaptation behavior, and 3) integrated predictions of adaptation response.
- Jeff Flood (Virginia CZM): FY2023, Task 10 (VMRC is grantee) *Virginia Dredged Material Beneficial Use Guidance Document*
 - Focus has shifted away from the creation of a regulatory guidance document to more of a compendium of technical resources due to breadth of the decision framework for potential projects.
 - VMRC's contactor, Anchor QEA, sent a draft of the technical resource document to 130+ stakeholders for review and feedback in late January. Ultimately it is meant to be a living document an iterative resource, updated with lessons learned from projects implemented. Jeff will send the CPT the final version of the document once completed and extend an invitation to participate in a community of practice for beneficial use of dredged material (BUDM), to be staffed by Virginia CZM.
- Ryan Green (Virginia CZM): Additional Funding Overview & Updates
 - Federal updates have put into question some previously intended reprogramming but currently proceeding as usual.
 - Discussion of project prioritization.
 - Small amounts from FY2023 likely reprogrammed towards existing tasks.

3:15pm

CPT Member Updates

- Virginia CZM (Lucas Manweiler & Ryan Green): We've received a Notice of Award for FY2025 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) non-competitive Capacity funding. Subaward contracts will be going out to DCR for a new data specialist position and to Old Dominion University (ODU) for the creation of a Virginia Coastal Wetland (Native) Plant Hub. Virginia CZM is also retooling the FY2024 VMRC position to



focus on habitat restoration, permitting capacity, and more streamlined coordination with Virginia CZM.

- DCR (Joe Weber): DCR has hired a new position, biodiversity specialist to process significant data backlog and potentially double data availability, 1/3 of data relevant to the Coastal Zone.
- CBNERR-VA (Erin Reilly & Cirse Gonzalez): NOAA sent a survey regarding tidal datum changes; Erin suggests that CPT all submits a response requesting guidance. Upcoming York River Watershed Symposium at VIMS in mid-May.
- GWRC (Brianna Heath): Hosting the next quarterly coastal PDC meeting for Virginia CZM on February 26 at GWRC offices in Fredericksburg, Virginia.
- VIMS (Jeryl Phillips): Working on a training module and will contact coastal PDCs – Jeryl to potentially present at upcoming quarterly coastal PDC meeting hosted by GWRC.
- DEQ Air Division (Ava Lovain): Regarding recently awarded Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), general outreach to public offices is underway, looking to receive input from Virginia residents, CPT to send link.
- CPDC (Kit Friedman): Started regional resilience plan with steering committee; using Virginia CZM funds to send locality staff to receive Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professionals (CBLP) certification and hoping to expand the partnership.
- DCR (Allison Tillett): VOP published in January, to be presented at upcoming conferences and hopefully to PDCs; high relevance to coastal flooding. Federal funds available to protect wetlands with associated public recreation – looking for potential locations/projects.
- Virginia Coastal Resilience Collaborative (Thomas Ruppert): Recently hired Cameron Bruce, formerly the Environmental Director for the Nansemond Indian Nation, as VCRC Assistant Director. New project with Chickahominy Indian Tribe to develop a native plant nursery.
- HRPDC (Ben McFarlane): Have developed resilient design standards for stormwater management, recommendations for their localities to adopt those standards.
- DEQ Leadership (Alex Samms): 190 signups for DEQ internship, will select 18-30 individuals.
- Virginia CZM (Will Isenberg): Virginia Marine Debris Summit will be March 18-20 in Norfolk.
- Virginia Energy (David Hawkins): In the process of submitting all final products for Virginia CZM FY2023, Task 73 *Aggregate Resource Mapping for Localities within the Middle Peninsula, Virginia* grant to Virginia Energy. Geologic Research Symposium on April 25 in Charlottesville.

4:00pm

Meeting Adjourned

Attendees (66)

In-Person:

Elizabeth Andrews (UVA)
April Bahen (Virginia CZM)
Sharon Baxter (DEQ)
Chip Boyles (GWRC)
Cameron Bruce (W&M)
Maura Christian (DEQ)

Melanie Davenport (DEQ)
Melanie Del Poza Pena (DCR)
Jennifer Farmer (MPPDC)
Jeff Flood (Virginia CZM)
Allyson Franz (DEQ)
Elise Frazier (Virginia CZM)
Kit Friedman (Crater PDC)



Virginia Coastal Zone
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Cirse Gonzalez (CBNERR-VA)
Ryan Green (Virginia CZM)
David Hawkins (Virginia Energy)
Brianna Heath (GWRC)
Lisa Hull (NNPDC)
Will Isenberg (Virginia CZM)
Daniel Johnson (VDEM)
Ava Lovain (DEQ)
Amy Martin (DWR)
Lucas Manweiler (Virginia CZM)
Ben McFarlane (HRPDC)
Dave Norris (DWR)
Dr. Karinna Nunez (VIMS)
Randy Owen (VMRC)
Rachael Peabody (MPPDC)
Jeryl Phillips (VIMS)
Eli Podyma (PlanRVA)
Meghann Quinn (DEQ)
Erin Reilly (CBNERR-VA)
Marissa Roland (DCR)
Thomas Ruppert (W&M)
Alex Samms (DEQ)
Hannah Schul (DWR)
Loren Small (Virginia Energy)
Sarah Stewart (PlanRVA)
Mary-Carson Stiff (Wetlands Watch)
Allison Tillet (DCR)
Lyle Varnell (VIMS)
Caitlin Verdu (DOF)
Katie Vugdalic (VDEM)
Joe Weber (DCR)
Virginia Witmer (Virginia CZM)

Julia Wellman (DEQ)

Virtual:

Rabita Banee (Virginia Energy)
Dr. Donna Bilkovic (VIMS)
Mary Bennett (DOF)
Brendan Burke (DHR)
Andrew Button (VMRC)
Rita Chandler (ANPDC)
Anne Doyle (ANPDC)
Sheri Dudis (ANPDC)
Joe Grist (VMRC)
Michelle Henicheck (DEQ)
Adam Kenyon (VMRC)
John Kuriawa (NOAA)
Sasha Land (NOAA)
Heather Mackey (DEQ)
Rebecca Murphy (NVRC)
Alicia Nelson (VMRC)
Taylor Parker (VDOT)
Danielle Recco (VIMS)
Gabriel Rosario (DCR)
Keith Tignor (VDACS)