

April 27, 2018

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from October 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018**

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B.1.A. SECTION 312 EVALUATION PROGRESS

Virginia's most recent evaluation began in the fall of 2014 with the Virginia CZM Program responding 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 then conducted an online survey of Virginia CZM stakeholders and partners, and in May 2015 conducted interviews of key partners on identified target areas. A public meeting was held on May 12, 2015.

Stakeholders interviewed by the NOAA team described the program as *partner-oriented* and *having effective partnerships with local communities and regional and non-profit groups*. "Flexible to meet the needs of locals" and "inclusionary" were some of the ways stakeholders expressed partnership demonstrated by Virginia CZM.

The three target areas identified by the NOAA team to evaluate the Virginia CZM Program were: 1) Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and increasing Public Access, 2) Ocean Planning, and 3) Coastal Resilience. Preliminary accomplishments and recommendations identified by NOAA in each target area are as follows:

Restoring and Protecting Coastal Habitats and Increasing Public Access

Accomplishment: The Public Access Authorities are providing a new tool for public access acquisition and management through a local policy framework enabled by state legislation.

Accomplishment: The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program's place-based restoration efforts have been highly successful, leveraging significant funding from partners and resulting in "on the ground" coastal habitat improvements.

Progress This Period (Oct 2017 – Mar 2018): VA CZMP initiated a new three-year focal area (FY 2017-19) to be implemented by state agencies and Planning District Commissions - Promoting Sustainable Coastal Industries: Shellfish Aquaculture and Ecotourism. Working with two of coastal Virginia's economic strengths, aquaculture and tourism, the VA CZMP is supporting projects that will help boost the shellfish aquaculture and ecotourism industries through research, planning and visual tool development. Working with a variety of stakeholders, grantees are looking at current industry conditions throughout the coastal zone as well as within specific areas to determine ways to improve, expand and create industry as well as public access opportunities. Program visibility is also included since this is a critical time for Congress and the public to understand the value of CZM funds. Ensuring that acknowledgement signs for projects that VA CZMP has funded over the years are still in place, and updated as needed, is critical to program visibility and is the subject of this focal area. The FY17 grants are underway as Tasks 71-84. These tasks will continue into 2018.

The Virginia CZM Program is also working on three land acquisition projects on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Northampton County using FY15, 16 and 17 funds. One site's 306A documentation is currently being reviewed by NOAA. Staff at DCR is working on 306A documentation for the other two sites. All three sites would both protect migratory songbird habitat and provide public access for bird and other wildlife viewing as well as protect adjacent water quality.

Ocean Planning

Accomplishment: The VA CZMP's leadership in regional ocean planning has brought together diverse stakeholders to plan for the location of future offshore facilities while minimizing user conflicts and impacts to coastal resources.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management encourages the VA CZMP to continue its leadership role in regional ocean planning and to plan for how the work will move forward over the next five years, including continued emphasis on ways to diversify and leverage funding.

Progress This Period (October 2017 – March 2018): The CZM Program Manager has continued her leadership role as the State Co-lead for the Mid-Atlantic RPB as of Jan 1 2017 along with NOAA as the temporary federal lead and a Tribal lead. These duties involve steering the direction of the RPB, planning and conducting monthly co-leads' calls as well as monthly calls with the full RPB and in-person full RPB and public meetings. An in-person RPB public meeting was planned for January 2018 but was canceled due to the federal government shut down. The meeting was replaced with a February public webinar in which several decisions were made to allow work groups to continue with the work they presented. In advance of that meeting, the Virginia CZM Manager organized preparation and compiled a semi-annual report of progress on all actions in the OAP as well as work plans for the January - July 2018 period. The Virginia CZM Manager continues to lead or co-lead 5 of the 7 work groups that have been created to implement the OAP. These include: Ecologically Rich Areas, Mapping Species Shifts, Ocean Acidification, Marine Debris and the Ocean Mapping Data Team which guides development of the Mid-Atlantic Ocean Data Portal.

Various federal grant funding opportunities have been sought including inclusion of ERA work in the FY17 Virginia CZM grant application and expansion of Virginia's balloon release social marketing campaign through the NOAA Marine Debris Program. We are still awaiting notification from NOAA on the results of that competition. The FY17 ERA project has begun and is focusing on development of fact sheets describing the 5 components of ERAs (productivity, biodiversity, abundance, rarity and vulnerability), what data layers are available to best describe that component, and what the data gaps and limitations are. There will also be a 6th fact sheet describing ERAs generally. For FY18 CZM is proposing a grant to The Nature Conservancy to look at ways to animate species data to depict seasonal and longer time period shifts in species locations. They would also work on further development of a tool being developed to allow users to "classify" and "overlay" data layers.

The VA CZM Manager continued to serve as the Virginia representative on MARCO's Management Board. At the October Board meeting in Monmouth NJ, discussions focused on regional priorities for projects dealing with climate change and back-up plans should the Executive Order for the National Ocean Policy be revoked or changed significantly. An ERA Workshop was held November 2 2017 in Crownesville MD at which attendees expressed interest in testing the feasibility of a developing a tool to classify and overlay data layers in order to gain a better understanding of Ecologically Rich Areas. Also a November 8 workshop was held in Virginia Beach to solicit input from non-consumptive recreation users. Summaries of these workshops are posted on the MARCO website at <http://midatlanticocean.org/resources/>.

Coastal Resilience

Accomplishment: The VA CZMP's leadership in coastal resilience has enhanced the capacity of local partners for adaptation planning and promoted the use of living shoreline approaches to enhance community and ecological resilience.

Recommendation: The NOAA Office for Coastal Management recommends that the VA CZMP further define the program's "niche" as it relates to coastal resilience.

The Virginia CZM Program addressed this recommendation by focusing its efforts to build coastal resilience into two key areas identified in the Section 309 Coastal Hazards Strategy. The Strategy targets community resiliency (the built environment) and shoreline resiliency (natural and nature-based features). Projects funded through the Strategy should ultimately lead to new enforceable policies that advance coastal resiliency in these two areas. Resilience-building projects are also being funded through the Virginia CZM Program's Focal Area.

The first year of the Strategy (October 2016 to September 2017) focused on acquiring the data necessary to develop local shoreline management plans, and on providing training for shoreline contractors and local government officials responsible for shoreline management decisions. Two regional projects designed to improve community resilience in Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads were also completed.

Progress this period (October 2017 to September 2018) includes more work to promote better shoreline management and the use of living shorelines, but also two community resilience projects. The first is designed to promote local adoption or expansion of the community rating system under the national flood insurance program, while the second will provide coastal communities with a tool to comprehensively evaluate their current resiliency efforts.

Coastal resilience projects developed during this reporting period and proposed for next year (October 2018 to September 2019) include the following:

- evaluating living shoreline performance
- refining the shoreline management model and running new analyses
- supporting regional adaptation planning in Northern Virginia
- analyzing first floor elevations in Hampton Roads

- developing a Tidal Shoreline Policies Handbook
- shoreline management training for local officials
- shoreline evolution analyses, evaluating localities for Community Rating System participation
- promoting the beneficial use of dredged material

B.1.B. SECTION 312 METRICS

Will be reported on in the Fall of 2018.