

October 30, 2019

**Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Semiannual Section B.1 Report on Section 312 Evaluation and Metrics
For the Period from April 1, 2019 – September 30, 2019**

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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 (April - September 2019):

The Virginia CZM Program wrapped up its 12-year effort to restore eelgrass and reintroduce bay scallops on the Seaside of the Eastern Shore. See this period's Section C report. The program also served as the grantee for NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office funds (\$575,000) to restore oyster reefs in the Lynnhaven River.

The Virginia CZM Program completed a FY16 grant for acquisition of about 102 acres (the Spady tract) on the Eastern Shore on April 29, 2019. This is an addition to the Magothy Bay Natural Area Preserve. The program is also working on additional land acquisition projects on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Northampton County and the lower Chickahominy (likely in Charles City County) using FY 17, 18 and 19 funds. This Eastern Shore acquisition will provide additional migratory songbird habitat and public access for bird and other wildlife viewing as well as protect adjacent water quality.

VA CZMP initiated a three-year focal area in October 2017 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 (see Section A report for Tasks 71-75). 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 one of the subjects of this focal area. The FY18 grants are finishing up and FY19 grants, the last year of this 3 year effort began on October 1, 2019. The Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission through its CZM technical assistance grant (see Section A report for FY18 Task 41) continued to seek adoption of a Water Access Authority however, the County Boards of Supervisors have decided not pursue this action. This focal area also includes protection of vulnerable natural and community coastal resources through Tasks 82-84 (see Section A report for progress on these tasks).

FY17 funds (about \$20k) that had been allocated for updated signage have been reprogrammed to restore a public access walkway on the Seaside of VA's Eastern Shore that was constructed with CZM funds in 2004. 306A documentation was submitted to NOAA and approved during this period.

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 (April - September 2019): The CZM Program Manager continued to lead ocean planning efforts for the Mid-Atlantic. The Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean (MACO) was officially established with the Virginia CZM Manager serving as its first Chair through June 30, 2019, completing her two-year term, which began as the former Regional Planning Body's State Co-lead. Under her leadership, guiding documents for the structure of MACO and the Roles and Responsibilities of its chair, steering committee, work groups and members were established and are available on MARCO's website, which hosts pages for MACO. MACO was established as a committee of the states-led MARCO. The MACO Steering Committee consists

of 8 members: 3 state seats including the Chair which will always be a state person; 3 federal seats – currently held by NOAA, BOEM and ACOE; one Tribal seat currently held by the Shinnecock; and one Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council seat.

Throughout this period, the Virginia CZM Program Manager continued to lead efforts to develop data on species shifts (see Section A report for FY18 Task 94.02). She also continued to lead the Marine Debris Reduction Work Group and MARCO's Ocean Mapping & Data Team.

The Marine Debris Work Group continued work on its \$149k grant from the NOAA Marine Debris Program to expand Virginia's balloon release reduction social marketing campaign to the entire Mid-Atlantic region. Monitoring of balloon debris was conducted in each state during the spring of 2019. The work group also created and disseminated an attitudinal survey on balloon releases.

The VA CZM Manager continued to serve as the Virginia representative on MARCO's Management Board. Materials developed by MARCO are available 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.

Progress This Period (April - September 2019): The Virginia CZM Program continued to address this recommendation by focusing its efforts on building 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 for the second year (October 2017 to September 2018) included more work to promote better shoreline management and the use of living shorelines, but also two community resilience projects. The first was 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.

Progress for the third year (October 2018 to September 2019) included 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
- developing a database of potential resilience-building projects

Coastal resilience projects currently underway for October 2019 to September 2020 include:

- evaluating the impacts of flooding on road network access in coastal Virginia
- living shoreline contractor training and shoreline erosion analysis
- refining the RAFT (Resilience and Adaptation Feasibility Tool) for broader implementation
- enhancing and promoting a coastal resilience project proposal database for Virginia
- expanding the use of natural and nature-based infrastructure to enhance coastal resiliency
- living shoreline sea level resiliency: performance and adaptive management
- regional collaboration to build community resiliency in Northern Virginia
- coastal hazard vulnerability assessment for Hampton Roads