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Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Center for Coastal Resources Management

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Virginia Wetlands Report



From the Wetlands Advisory Group Director:

Welcome to the “new and improved” Virginia Wetlands Report. As you can see, we’ve changed the look of our newsletter. But the difference is more than just the aesthetics. The upgrades we’ve made will keep you better informed about the ongoing work by the Wetlands Advisory Program as we share with you our current scientific understanding of the near-shore environment; information necessary for you as citizens to make the most informed decisions on activities that affect Virginia’s tidal shoreline. We hope to use the newsletter to announce upcoming educational opportunities and workshops, both outside of the Institute and those hosted by VIMS.



Wetlands Advisory Group (Clockwise from lower left): Karen Duhring, Todd Herbert, David O’Brien, Julie Bradshaw, Pam Mason, and Molly Roggero

Center for Coastal Resources Management

Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Integrated Coastal & Shoreline Management Guidance

Integrated coastal zone management is a generally accepted and long touted concept to promote the best decisions regarding the coast. The concept is simple in theory; a continuous and adaptive decision-making process that supports sustainable use, and protection of coastal and marine resources. The reality is very messy. Success requires not only an integrated approach to environmental management programs, but also the incorporation of social and economic issues. The disconnect between current management practices and the concept of integrated coastal zone management is exemplified by the disjoint management of coastal resources that promotes partially informed decision-making.

Virginia is battling the challenge of implementing integrated coastal management and working to change the current trend toward environmental degradation. The effects of direct, secondary and cumulative impacts have had significant adverse impacts on water quality and aquatic resources. One major factor which contributes to the problem is the compartmentalized approach to management decisions wherein a myriad of different decision-makers seek to make the best decisions regarding each media (air, water, land), in every jurisdiction (state-owned subaqueous lands, state and locally managed wetlands, privately held uplands) using varied authorities (local ordinances, state legislation, federal legislation, regional agreements). It has become increasingly apparent that in order to reduce the cumulative and secondary impacts of activities within the multiple jurisdictions and multiple management programs affecting the littoral and riparian zones, better coordination and integration of policies and practices is necessary. For Virginia’s shorelines, it may be possible to address the gap of the jurisdictional limitations of the various management programs by providing enhanced technical guidance to promote integrated management decision-making.

“It has become increasingly apparent that in order to reduce the cumulative and secondary impacts of activities... better coordination and integration of policies and practices is necessary.”

CCRM is developing a technical guidance document that goes beyond the jurisdictional bounds of any one regulatory program to address shorelines as an ecosystem. The document will be comprised of a set of rationale for decision-making that includes all of the described habitats and a literature review on the current state of the science on the ecological functions of the various shoreline and near-shore habitats. As possible and appropriate, the guidance will consider and incorporate socio-economic issues.

Living Shoreline Demonstration Projects

Longwood University Foundation & Partners (VIMS, NOAA Restoration Center, NNPDC, NNSWCD, VCU, Burke Environmental Assoc. LLC) www.longwood.edu/realproperty/hsf.htm

Design and restore lost habitat on the Lower Machodoc Creek in Westmoreland County, Virginia. The project will result in an inventory of the existing shoreline, identify potential locations for a variety of living shoreline treatments, provide workshops and educational seminars on living shoreline designs for local residents, and design and permit a living shorelines project at Hull Springs Farm.

The Hermitage Foundation & Partners (ERP, NOAA Restoration Center, City of Norfolk, Algonquin Garden Club, Harborfront Garden Club, Bio-Eco Club of Norfolk Christian High School) www.hermitagefoundation.org/index.asp

Design and create a native wetland and riparian buffer living shoreline along the Lafayette River, in Norfolk, Virginia, that will stabilize the historic eroding property and restore wildlife habitat. The volunteer driven project will create 5,625 sf of tidal wetlands, restore 6,375 sf of wetlands and replant 11,653 sf of riparian buffer. It is located at a highly visible site and will act as a model for environmental education, teaching visitors the importance of preserving wetland habitat and finding alternatives to hardened shorelines.

Reedville Fishermen's Museum & Partners (Bethany U.M. Church, Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship, VIMS, VA Native Plant Society, Northern Neck Master Gardeners, Greenshore Solutions) www.rfmuseum.org/index.html

This community education, volunteer driven project includes restoring wetland and riparian habitats to provide a living museum. It includes tidal and non-tidal wetland habitat restoration, invasive species control, and riparian forest enhancement for improved habitat and water quality functions. Museum docents will provide tours to teach ways to protect the shoreline without the use of revetments and bulkheads and choose appropriate plants for shoreline landscaping.

Recognizing Opportunities to Minimize Impacts Using Living Shorelines

If you attended the VIMS Tidal Wetlands Workshop in June 2005, then you may remember a presentation titled "Case Studies in Living Shorelines." The information presented last summer included a working definition of a "living shoreline treatment" and provided case study examples, including beach nourishment, planted marshes, fiber logs, sills and marsh toe revetments.

The public demand for additional information and technical support for Living Shorelines has grown steadily since this presentation. Citizens and regulatory agencies alike are keenly interested, but they need more specific information about how to advocate and implement the Living Shoreline approach.

Also, various opinions and impressions have developed about what exactly constitutes a "living" shoreline treatment for erosion control. Permitting issues have been raised and presented as potential obstacles, especially when the regulatory decisions of one jurisdiction require impacts to another.



Marsh Sills at Wilton Creek, Middlesex County, VA

The Center for Coastal Resources Management continues to track and evaluate Living Shoreline case studies, such as three recently funded public demonstration projects (see inset on left). Technical definitions and design criteria for various Living Shoreline approaches have been updated and site suitability and targeting models are under development.

The second VIMS presentation on Living Shorelines in March 2006 will present some of this information and continue to explore the various impressions and viewpoints about the subject. The Living Shoreline initiative provides an opportunity for various parties involved with shoreline management in Virginia to consider actions and decisions based on a holistic view of the ecological conditions present, instead of within piecemeal jurisdictions. Improving the ability to recognize Living Shoreline opportunities will support the objective of minimizing impacts to the entire shoreline ecosystem.

For more information on living shorelines or to report interesting case studies, contact Karen Duhring at (804) 684-7159 or email karend@vims.edu.



WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Avoid - Minimize - Compensate Through Integrated Shoreline Management

Friday, March 10, 2006

**University Center, Tidewater A
College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA**

8:30 am - 9:30 am Registration and Coffee

9:30 am - 4:00 pm Workshop Program

<http://ccrm.vims.edu/spring2006>

Please join us for a day-long discussion of several timely issues of great importance including: **Integrated Guidance for Shoreline Management, Living Shorelines (with definitions, clarifications and more case studies), and a panel discussion regarding the new VMRC Wetland Mitigation/Compensation Guidelines.** Please refer to the brief description of the Integrated Guidance and the Living Shoreline presentations included in this newsletter. Details and registration materials can be found at our website <http://ccrm.vims.edu/spring2006>. Directions to the College can be found at http://www.wm.edu/about/directions_maps.php.

Following lunch, the workshop's afternoon session will include an opportunity for you to ask specific questions of a

5-6 member panel regarding wetland compensation alternatives. Moderated by VIMS staff, the audience will ask relative questions of the panel comprised of VMRC staff, a local government attorney, staff from a locality that has established an in-lieu-fee account, staff from a locality with an interest in creating a wetland bank, and an operator of a commercially operated tidal wetlands bank. We hope this format will help share what other localities have done with respect to moving toward a tidal wetland no-net-loss policy. We are working hard to provide you with a valuable workshop experience so please mark your calendars and plan to join us on March 10th. We hope to see you in Williamsburg!

David O'Brien, Wetlands Advisory Group Director

Registration

Name	_____
Affiliation	_____
Address	_____
Phone	_____
Fax	_____
Email	_____

Registration - \$25 (includes lunch). Please make checks payable to: **VIMS Tidal Wetlands Workshop**
If paying by VISA/Mastercard or onsite, please call Dawn at (804) 684-7380 or email dawnf@vims.edu

Deadline for payment & registration: March 3, 2006

Please mail form and registration to
Tidal Wetlands Workshop/CCRM
P.O. Box 1346
Gloucester Pt., VA 23062

Tidal Wetlands News & Events

The *Virginia Wetlands Report* is a biannual publication of the Wetlands Program at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science of the College of William and Mary. To subscribe to this newsletter (hardcopy or e-newsletter), please contact:

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Wetlands Board Discussion Forum Launched. The CCRM hosted forum is structured to allow Wetlands Board members and local government staff from across coastal Virginia to exchange questions, ideas, or general comments regarding their experiences in tidal wetlands regulation. For more information visit http://ccrm.vims.edu/wetlands_forum/wetlands_forum_letter.html

Environment Virginia 2006. April 18-20, 2006, Lexington, VA. Linking Economic & Environmental Health. For more information visit <http://www.environmentva.org/>

VIMS Marine Science Day. May 20, 2006, Gloucester Point, VA. The event will take place on VIMS' main campus in Gloucester Point, rain or shine. Parking and admission are free. Visitors will be able to examine high-tech science equipment, tour a laboratory, observe aquatic animals in the York River, and discover the importance of wetlands in VIMS' Teaching Marsh. For more information, please call (804) 684-7846 or see more at: <http://www.vims.edu/events/>.

Restoring Virginia's Wetlands - A Citizen's Toolkit. This new publication by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay provides useful information to Virginia's landowners on the status of wetlands, various options for wetlands use and management, current regulatory protection as well as voluntary efforts, and technical and financial resources for protection, enhancement, restoration and creation projects. An electronic version of the manual may be downloaded at no cost from the Alliance and DEQ web sites <http://www.acb-online.org/project.cfm?vid=239> or <http://www.deq.state.va.us/wetlands/volrestor.html>.

General Assembly Watch. The Virginia Conservation Network tracks environmental legislation, develops regulations, and provides opportunities for the public to participate in the public decision-making process. To learn more, visit http://www.vcnva.org/white_papers/index.php. In addition, the Virginia General Assembly Legislative Information System tracks activities of importance to environmental decision-makers. Find out more at: <http://leg1.state.va.us/lis.htm>

GCA Wetlands Scholarship. The Garden Club of America provides an award in Coastal Wetland Studies. The award is a one year scholarship for graduate studies in coastal wetlands and carries a stipend of \$5,000 to support field based research. For more information, see http://ccrm.vims.edu/garden_club.html.

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