



Virginia Wetlands Report



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Spring 2009

VIMS Advisory Support: Updates for 2009

We are making some changes to the Center for Coastal Resources Management's advisory support of the Commonwealth's tidal shorelines management programs. Starting in January 2009, there will be a new format for the permit reports, a new approach to tracking wetland board decisions, and enhanced guidance on the incomplete application review process.

Permit Report Changes

In response to concerns raised by a number of localities about the costs of reproducing hard copies of the online reports, we will reformat the reports to drop the color photograph of the site. Instead we will continue to provide links to available photos from our permit report website. This will allow local board members

and staff access to all available photos for project review purposes, but reduce the size and complexity of the written report. The display of project information and impact data will also be reformatted to be more concise and easier to use.

We will also delete the "Board Report Form" usually found at the end of our reports. This means a shorter report, and no need to print the form, fill it out and return to VIMS. We will gather this information in a new way as noted below.

Tracking Wetlands Board Decisions

Information on the decisions Wetlands Boards make is critical to tracking the performance of the Commonwealth's management program. The information is important to VIMS as input to the design of our training programs for agents, contractors and the public. We have decided to replace the form previously used with a personal call to each board's staff immediately after scheduled public hearings. A few simple questions will be asked to determine what decisions were made on permits under review. Hopefully, this approach will make it quite easy for staffers to provide the information, and it will allow us to gather the necessary information for our database. In general we will be interested in whether the board approved an application as submitted or required modifications or special conditions.

Incomplete Application Checklist and Guidance

The incomplete application notifications have been well received and have led to a great improvement in the quality of application information. We have made some revisions to the notification form that we use to identify incomplete, missing or inconsistent information in a submitted application. The revised form provides more detail regarding the missing information and provides a hotlink to a new online resource for assistance (http://ccrm.vims.edu/permits_web/CompleteJPAInstructions.html). Using the link will take you to our website with more information and tutorials on how critical sections of the application should be completed. Following this guidance will facilitate the review and permitting process.

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Beaches and Dunes in Virginia
Thursday, February 12, 2009
at VIMS
See inside for information & registration!**

**Also
Tidal Wetlands News & Events**

Shifting Sands: Beaches and Dunes in Virginia

Sand is seemingly abundant. Yet natural forces and human decisions act to limit sand availability. Natural sand features, beaches and dunes, are part of a shoreline system that can extend from uplands and eroding banks out to sand bars in nearshore shallow waters. Beaches and dunes are part of a continuum along the shoreline affecting and affected by things happening up-drift and down-drift in the waterway. Beaches and dunes are critical natural systems that provide important benefits by acting as a natural buffer to erosion from wind and wave energy and providing unique habitat. Choices that result in loss of sand resources and impacts to beaches and dunes can adversely affect these services.

The Coastal Primary Sand Dune Protection Act (the Act) was passed in 1980. Originally, eight localities were chosen for inclusion in the Act: the counties of Accomack, Northampton, Mathews, Lancaster, and Northumberland, and the cities of Virginia Beach, Norfolk, and Hampton.

A VIMS study, initiated in 1998, was originally focused only on an inventory of secondary dunes, but expanded over time to include an inventory of beaches and primary dunes throughout the Tidewater region of Virginia (http://web.vims.edu/physical/research/shoreline/docs/dune_report/dune_evolution_status.pdf). The multi-year study was conducted with funding support from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. Among the findings of the study was the presence of beach and dune

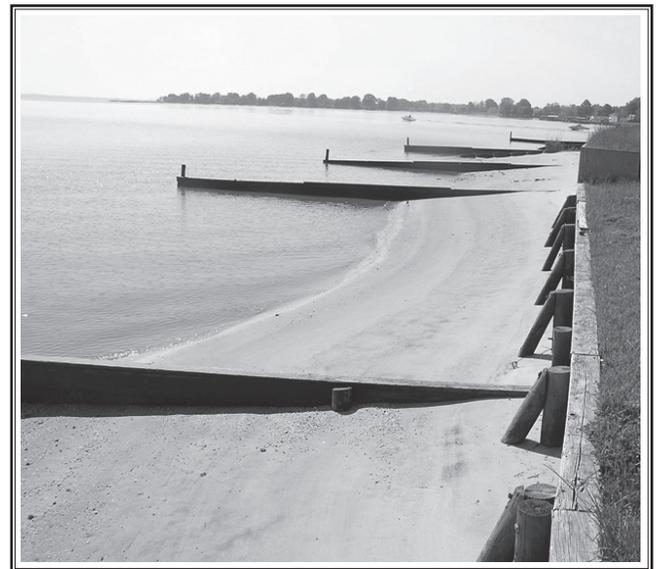
resources in localities that were not listed in the 1980 Act. Virginia's dunes and beaches are not only found along the Atlantic coastlines, but are scattered throughout the lower Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Initial beach surveys found beaches in at least 24 localities, 16 in addition to the original 8 authorized to implement the Act. This meant that impacts to beaches located outside of the localities authorized to manage beach resources occurred without public interest review and environmental assessments.

In 2008, the General Assembly modified the Act to remove the list of eight localities and expand the Act to all localities in the Tidewater region of Virginia. The improved understanding of the status of Virginia's beaches and dunes and their ecosystem services provided by the VIMS study served as rationale for the changes to the Act. Now that all localities are enabled to manage the use of beaches and dunes, Virginia can have a more comprehensive approach to these important elements of the shoreline system.

VIMS is developing proposed revisions to the Coastal Primary Sand Dunes/ Beaches Guidelines to incorporate our new scientific understanding of beaches and dunes. The revisions will have an integrated guidance perspective presenting decision-making criteria based on ecosystem services provided across the shoreline, from uplands to the waterway, and along the shore from updrift sand sources to downdrift beaches.



Virginia has Ocean beaches...



...and Bay/ River beaches.

WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Shifting Sands: Beaches and Dunes in Virginia

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Watermen's Hall Lobby & Auditorium

Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, VA



8:00 am - 9:00 am Registration

9:00 am - 3:00 pm Workshop

Workshop Web Site: ccrm.vims.edu/Spring2009

A workshop will be held at VIMS for local government staff, advisory board members, marine contractors, permitting agents, environmental consultants, and anyone else interested in beaches and dunes in the Commonwealth. Speakers include VIMS scientists and State regulatory staff.

The planned sessions will provide information that is useful both in understanding sandy shorelines and in making decisions regarding these important and dynamic resources. Topics to be covered include:

Planned Workshop Topics

- The history of beach and dune management in Virginia
- Recent studies of beach and dune distribution
- New regulations expanding beach and dune jurisdiction
- Basic beach and dune science
- Ecosystem services provided by beaches and dunes
- Preferred management options and new guidelines

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Registration - \$25 (includes lunch).

Deadline for payment & registration: February 5, 2009

If paying by VISA/MasterCard please email (dawnf@vims.edu) or fax (804-684-7179) registration form AND call Dawn at 804-684-7380 with credit card information.

Make checks payable to: VIMS Tidal Wetlands Workshop
Please mail: Tidal Wetlands Workshop/CCRM
P.O. Box 1346
Gloucester Point, VA 23062

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, please contact:

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Tidal Wetlands News & Events

Coastal GEOTOOLS 2009, March 2-5, 2009, Myrtle Beach, SC. The theme for 2009 is "Building the Digital Coast", a new initiative that provides easy access to organized and relevant data, tools, and technical training. Sponsored by NOAA. <http://www.csc.noaa.gov/geotools/>

20th Annual Environment Virginia, March 31-April 2, 2009, Lexington, VA. Join over 700 environmental leaders in celebrating the 20th anniversary of this symposium. The conference brings together the public and private sectors to manage our natural resources for a sustainable future and foster economic prosperity. <http://www.environmentva.org>

National Mitigation & Ecosystem Banking Conference, May 5-8, 2009. Salt Lake City, UT. <http://www.mitigationbankingconference.com>

VIMS Marine Science Day, May 30, 2009. VIMS' annual open house is a fun-filled event for the whole family. Join us in Gloucester Point for exhibits, children's activities, seining on the York River, lab tours, seafood cooking demonstrations, mini-lectures, and much more. All activities are free, as is parking. The event proceeds rain or shine. <http://www.vims.edu/public/marinescienceday/index.php>

Wetland Connections, June 22-26, Madison, WI. Society of Wetland Scientists Annual Meeting. Wetland Connections is a deliberately broad and inclusive theme for the 2009 conference. Keep your connections current by attending the 2009 meeting and participating in one or more of the activities of the conference. http://www.sws.org/2009_meeting/index.mgi

Updated Joint Permit Application (JPA), The Norfolk District Corps of Engineers, Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission have issued a revised version of the Standard Joint Permit Application (JPA). <http://www.nao.usace.army.mil/technical%20services/Regulatory%20branch/JPA.asp>

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