VIMS Shoreline Permit Application Report # 03-0921

APPLICANT:
CITY OF CHESAPEAKE
Locality: CITY OF CHESAPEAKE
Immediate Waterway: Hodges Creek
Watershed: LOWER JAMES RIVER (TIDAL)
Purpose: Road Construction, Improve Drainage
Application Type: Wetlands, Subaqueous
Site Inspection: 12/4/03
Report Date: 1/6/04

Type of Activity
Proposed Extent

General Fill (ft²) 9332
Impact Brackish Water Mixed Community (Type XII) (ft²) 9332
Fill Brackish Water Mixed Community (Type XII) (ft²) 9332
Riprap (ft) 50
Impact Brackish Water Mixed Community (Type XII) (ft²) 433
Impact Subaqueous Bottom (ft²) 514

Total Impacts (ft²) 10279
Total Impacts (Wetlands) 9765
Total Impacts (Subaqueous) 514
Total Impacts (Beach/Dune) 0
Total Fill (ft²) 9332

Project Location

City of Chesapeake
NOTE
The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) recognizes that the regulatory process considers all aspects of a particular project, including socioeconomic factors. This report, however, only addresses marine environmental concerns.

Findings & Recommendations:

We have reviewed this proposal from a marine environmental perspective and it is our opinion that the adverse impacts resulting the construction of the temporary access road include approximately 9,200 square feet of tidal brackish marsh vegetation including common reed (Phragmites australis) and smooth cordgrass (Spartina alterniflora). During a site visit conducted December 4, 2003 it appeared that the majority of the impacted vegetation consisted of Phragmites within a drainage swale that extended parallel to the railbed before the access road filled this area. Although sometimes considered a nuisance species by the general public, Phragmites is a native species that can help comprise a healthy and diverse marsh plant community. In addition, recent studies indicate that Phragmites can provide suitable habitat for nesting birds and small mammals.

The City of Chesapeake is requesting through this application that the previously permitted, temporary access road now remain in place permanently to provide maintenance access for the stormwater culvert pipes. It is our opinion that should future maintenance of the culverts be required, impacts to the existing marsh associated with accessing the culverts would be temporary in nature and is the environmentally favored option compared to the permanent loss of tidal wetlands as proposed. Therefore, we recommend that the access road be removed as originally proposed and permitted.

David L. O’Brien
Marine Scientist
Hydrologic units represent smaller, isolated watersheds defined by topography and flow direction. These units can be thought of as insulated ecosystems or landscapes within which resources can be managed at a larger scale. The cumulative impact of a project to resources within a hydrologic unit may be significantly greater than the impact to the larger watershed above.
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Permit Site Study Area

Hodges Creek
City of Chesapeake

Project site

Locality boundaries

Tidal Marsh Inventory - TMI
- Arrow Arum-Pickerelweed
- Big Cordgrass
- Black Needlerush
- Brackish Water Mixed
- Cattail
- Freshwater Mixed
- Reed Grass
- Saltbush
- Saltmeadow
- Saltmarsh Cordgrass
- Yellow Pond Lily

Roads
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

Intertidal flat
- Open water

0 0.25 0.5 Miles
To Wetlands Board / VMRC: Please indicate Wetlands Board / VMRC action on this sheet and return to VIMS

Application Number: 03-0921
Name: City of Chesapeake
Locality: City of Chesapeake
Waterway: Hodges Creek

Please check here if this application was approved as proposed

Complete the form below if the application was modified.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>PROPOSED</th>
<th>PERMITTED</th>
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Please specify required modifications:
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Thomas A. Barnard, Director