



## **Technical Assistance – Resilience Building Summary Report**

Wetlands Watch provided four flood resilience meetings/trainings for Planning District Commissions located in Virginia's Coastal Zone. The purpose of this technical assistance was to assist regional and local governments execute resilience planning and preparedness at the community level. Over the course of the grant period, this assistance became increasingly helpful to local and regional entities as the Northam Administration and the 2020 Virginia General Assembly's legislative session passed sweeping resilience related initiatives. The most critical of these initiatives included the required consideration of climate change across all Department of Environmental Quality's agency programs, the incorporation of climate change into both the Tidal Wetlands Act and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, the creation of a Virginia Coastal Master Plan, and Virginia's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which established a Community Flood Preparedness Fund. Wetlands Watch began tracking all these changes on a [VA Policy Updates](#) webpage, which helped local/regional staff monitor the regulatory/policy progress. The creation and upkeep of this webpage identified Wetlands Watch as an authority on the changes and illustrated the organization's ability to distill the many moving parts of these unprecedented resilience updates. This immense wave of policy related activity was a challenge for Wetlands Watch staff to stay informed about, which meant local and regional staff, given the well documented capacity limitations, were unable to keep up with the many moving parts and convoluted regulatory and statutory updates. The following is an account of the four resilience-related meetings Wetlands Watch conducted at the local/regional level over the course of the grant period.

### **December 8, 2020: George Washington Regional Commission's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan Meeting**

The George Washington Regional Commission requested a presentation on the resilience related legislation passed during the 2020 General Assembly legislative session. Wetlands Watch staff covered one issue in more detail, given the specific purpose of the group assembled. The issue covered more specifically was the legislation requiring the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act's amendment to include "coastal resilience and adaptation to sea-level rise and climate change" as one of the purposes of the Act.

### **December 18, 2020: Northern Virginia Regional Commission's Quarterly Coastal PDC Meeting**

The Northern Virginia Regional Commission requested a presentation on the resilience related legislation passed and policy implemented during the 2020 General Assembly legislative session. This presentation was general, included an overview of the various initiatives included on Wetlands Watch's VA Policy Updates page, and it included anecdotal information about possible barriers to local implementation.

## **April 23, 2021: Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) Building Resilience into Comprehensive Plans Workshop**

The Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission requested Wetlands Watch staff present a training on the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS) Program, in coordination with the PDC's participation in the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) program. This training was developed to advise local governments on how their comprehensive planning efforts could receive credits through the CRS Program, if the local governments participated in the CRS Program. The presentation included coverage of hazard mitigation plans, green infrastructure plans, threatened/endangered species assessments, sea level rise plans, repetitive flood loss area analyses, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act Resource Protection Area buffers, wetlands protection, and low density zoning programs.

## **July 13, 2021: Northern Neck Planning District Commission Quarterly Staff Meeting**

The Northern Neck Planning District Commission requested Wetlands Watch staff attend their quarterly staff meeting in person to walk through the many resilience related changes that occurred over the course of the last couple years. This presentation included those initiatives discussed above that occurred during this grant period, but it also extended beyond, including information about Northam priorities established at the start of the administration. Of particular note, this presentation also included new legislation from the 2021 General Assembly legislative session that requires the regulations governing septic systems account for climate change. This change in regulation will disproportionately affect the rural regions of Virginia's Coastal Zone, yet state outreach and engagement with these communities is limited, highlighting the value of funding technical assistance like that performed by Wetlands Watch staff.

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