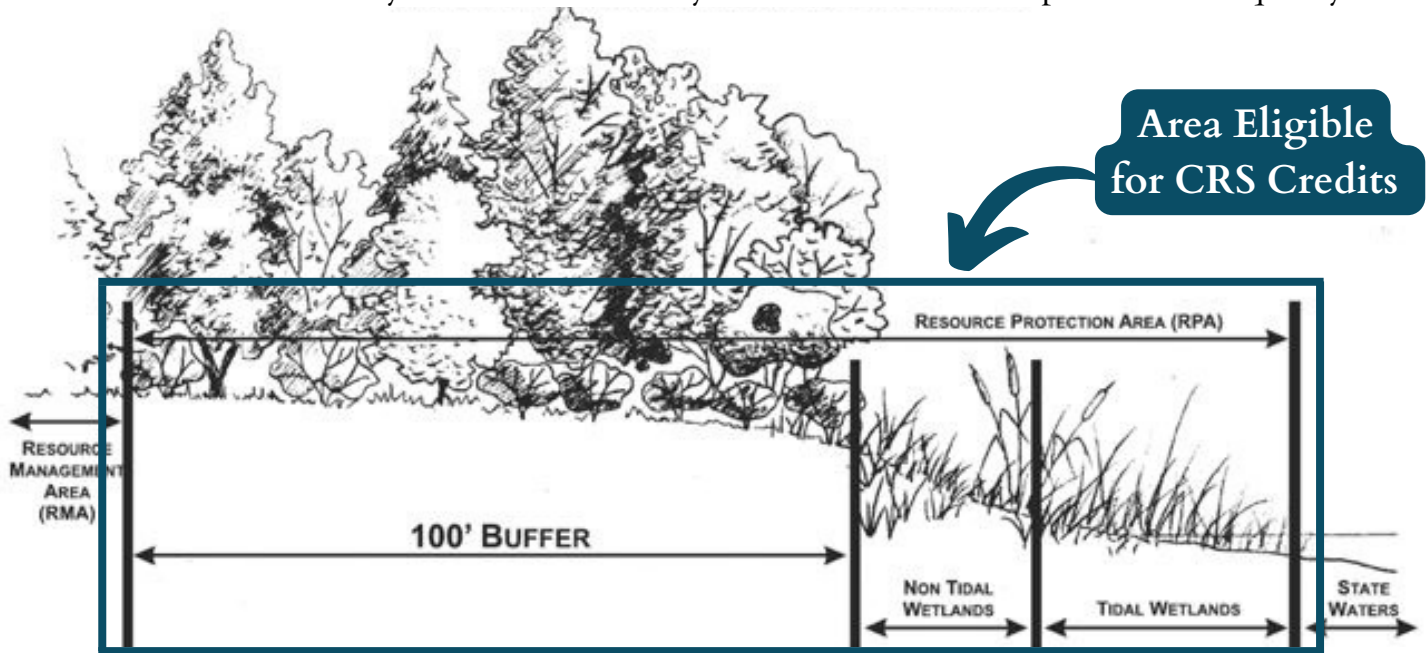


CRS Credits for Chesapeake Bay Act Buffers & Wetlands in Virginia Fact Sheet

Background

Localities participating in the Community Rating System (CRS) Program can earn CRS credits for preserving open space areas in high risk flood zones, also called Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs).

In Virginia, localities can earn credits for undeveloped land located within Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act's Resource Protection Areas (RPAs). These areas include the 100-foot buffer, non-tidal wetlands, tidal wetlands, & any other areas a locality identifies as critical to protect water quality.



What Earns CRS Credit

The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act & the Tidal Wetlands Act regulate activities within the RPA buffer. CRS credits are generally only available when buffers are free from all development & impervious surfaces; however, some encroachments are considered permissible.

Creditable

- Water dependent development
- Road or driveway
- Flood control or stormwater management
- Water wells
- Passive recreation
- Historic preservation & archaeological activities

Not Creditable

- Structures
- Intensely Developed Areas (IDAs)
- Permitted encroachment into the buffer area (by right development)

Localities interested in pursuing CRS open space credits for protecting the RPAs should remember the following:

- Localities must enforce the development restrictions of the RPAs
- Less development/exemptions in the RPAs = more CRS credits
- Exemptions granted for land disturbing activities in the RPAs must be tracked & documented
- If any portion of RPA on a parcel is not creditable, the entire area of RPA is not eligible for CRS credit

CRS Credits for Chesapeake Bay Act Buffers & Wetlands in Virginia Fact Sheet

CRS Credit Documentation

Localities must prepare the following documentation to earn CRS credits for RPA buffers:

1. Provide a copy of the local ordinance outlining Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act standards*
2. Prove proper enforcement of the RPA buffer protection requirements
3. Create a GIS map that shows the high risk flood zones & RPA land eligible for CRS credits
4. Create a parcel list of all open space lands (Excel). The map & list must correspond to each other. The list must include the parcel owner, land use designation, & acreage of each parcel.

**Local governments may adopt ordinances that go above and beyond the requirements included in the CBPA. An example of this includes expanding the 100-foot buffer to a larger area.*

VA communities earning CRS credits for RPAs

Accomack County
City of Alexandria
Town of Ashland
James City County
Gloucester County
Stafford County

CRS Credit Calculation

$$\text{Calculation for Open Space Credit} = \frac{\text{Acres of Protected Open Space}}{\text{Total Acreage of SFHA}}$$

Resources

Natural Floodplain Functions

Form: Gloucester Example

CRS credit documentation proving the undeveloped wetlands are being preserved in their natural state & eligible for extra CRS credit.



Explore the [AdaptVa Map Viewer](#) to locate areas where buffers are providing protection against flood waters

A locality can strengthen its ordinance language related to CBPA Resource Protection Areas to safeguard CRS credits for shoreline buffers for the future. Example of ordinance language:

"{Locality name} is enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS), a voluntary program where annual flood insurance premium discounts are earned for actions that reduce flood in the community. A significant portion of potential discounts are eligible for prohibiting impervious surfaces in the RPA. Encroachments granted for land disturbances in the RPA reduce the annual flood insurance premium discounts available to all policyholders."

This fact sheet, Task 91.03, was funded by the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program at the Department of Environmental Quality through Grant FY21 # NA21NOS419 of the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended.

