

**SUMMARY OF THE
HAMPTON ROADS REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 at 10:00 A.M.
FORT MONROE, VA**

1. Summary of the August 7, 2025, Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee (REC)

The summary and attendance of the August 2025 meeting were included in the agenda. There were no edits.

2. Introduction to Fort Monroe

Mr. Scott Martin, CEO of the Fort Monroe Authority, shared his vision for the future of the fort by invoking examples of iconic spaces from around the world, including Central Park in New York City and the Sydney Opera House in Australia. Over the next 18 months, the Authority, in partnership with a design consultant, will be developing a Landscape Action Plan that will guide a range of improvements. The plan will include design elements, community spaces, and landscaping intended to welcome the public to the fort. These efforts will build on the new African American Landing Park that will open this fall. Mr. Martin emphasized the importance of honoring the history of the fort and embracing challenges such as sea level rise as they develop the plan and then seek federal support for implementation. Mr. Martin invited the Committee members to attend their Ted X Event on October 23, 2025.

Mr. Martin was asked if the Authority is still part of the conversation around designating the Chesapeake Bay as a National Recreation Area. He mentioned they are interested but also noted that federal support for the initiative has decreased.

3. Newport News Stormwater Master Planning

Ms. Kathie Angle and Mr. Chris Williams, with the City of Newport News Department of Engineering, presented an overview of the city's comprehensive stormwater master planning project, which includes three distinct yet interconnected citywide master plans for 1) stormwater management, 2) floodplain management, and 3) resilience. Using Community Flood Preparedness Funds from DCR, the city initiated the integrated multi-focused approach in 2022 with the help of several consultants, including GKY, Dewberry, ATCS, Cornwell, and The Miles Agency. The stormwater master planning initiative will characterize current and future stormwater risk, develop recommendations to improve stormwater management, and recommend policy and project solutions. The floodplain master planning will characterize current and future flood risk, develop recommendations for potential projects, and improve the city's CRS class. The resilience master planning will identify the most vulnerable areas to future coastal flooding and recommend policy and project solutions.

To support these planning efforts, the city has developed strategies for implementation, including education and outreach activities, policy and regulatory actions, and engineered and nature-based infrastructure improvement projects. The outreach efforts include public

meetings, awareness campaigns, and citizen flooding support initiatives, such as the Floodplain Assistance Program, Flood Ready Homes, and participation in the VA Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP). The policy solutions include implementing a 20% increase in the rainfall design standard and securing a Class 6 rating for CRS. The recommended projects include green urban spaces, stormwater parks, land conservation, as well as more engineered adaptation strategies. More information is available on [their website](#).

Ms. Angle and Mr. Williams were asked how close the city is to achieving a class 5 rating in the CRS. Ms. Angle replied that they are about halfway. She also noted that it is easier to go one class at a time.

There was also a question about the project ranking criteria, and which benefits were prioritized. Ms. Angle stated that projects that provide benefits in multiple categories rise to the top. The categories include social vulnerability, flood reduction, water quality improvement, cost, etc.

4. King Tide Community Science Initiatives

Ms. Stephanie Letourneau, the Catch the King Coordinator at Wetlands Watch, described the Catch the King Tide event and opportunities for volunteers to participate. [Catch the King](#) is an annual community science event in which local volunteers use the Sea Level Rise app to document flooding data during a “king tide” event, which is the highest tides of the year. This year’s event will take place over October 10-12. Training is available for Tide Captains and participants.

Ms. Alyssa Bucci, the Assistant Director for Living Infrastructure at Wetlands Watch, shared her research on Measure the Muck with Dr. Margie Mulholland’s lab at ODU. Her presentation was titled “Measuring the Muck while Catching the King: Nutrients and Enterococcus Bacteria in Tidal Floodwater.” Previous studies have shown that floodwater has consistently higher nutrient concentrations compared to estuarine waters, and more than 80% of floodwater samples exceed the recreational safe contact limit for Enterococcus.

Ms. Bucci is researching where the nutrients and bacteria are coming from and how the concentrations differ with different land uses. Her data is preliminary but is showing that nutrients and bacteria have greater concentrations in floodwater compared to the baseline. The loadings appear to be higher in the Lafayette River, which is predominantly residential, when compared to the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River, which is more industrial. They are collecting more data and are looking to find the reasons for the trends. Ms. Bucci explained some of the challenges with her study. Samples must be collected quickly since tidal flooding only lasts an hour or two. And there are some different results depending on how the baselines are established.

5. Regional Strategic Plan Exercise

Mr. Eric Walberg and Mr. Tho Tran, HRPDC, briefly introduced the process for the Regional Strategic Plan. A key element in the development of the plan is the identification of regional priorities. Mr. Walberg and Mr. Tran have been engaging a variety of stakeholders to better

understand their priorities. The exercise is designed to learn how stakeholders would invest in the future of Hampton Roads. Attendees had the opportunity to rank a broad range of regional issues across six topic areas: 1) Economy, 2) Visitor Appeal, 3) Housing and Community Development, 4) Resident Well-being, 5) Infrastructure, and 6) Natural Environment.

Staff were able to display the results in real time using Menti. The meeting attendees collectively ranked flooding, education, and water quality as the top priorities and private sector, regional marketing, and broadband as the lowest priorities. These rankings are quite different compared to the cumulative rankings that reflect all the stakeholder input that has been collected so far, including the regional commission members, young professionals' groups, and members of the public. The overall rankings have identified the road network, housing, education, and flooding at the top four priorities with public access, federal spending, and social equity at the low end of the list.

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee will be held virtually on October 2, 2025.