

**VIRGINIA COASTAL ZONE: MANAGING LAND AND WATER USE  
CONFLICTS WITHIN A MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL  
REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

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As many Virginia coastal communities transition from less rural to more suburban, conflicts between waterfront property owners, watermen, boaters, marinas, recreational fishermen, sportsmen, the aquaculture industries, and others seeking usage rights and privileges to the Commonwealth's water resources have become common. The historical balance between working waterfronts and residential development is evolving to entirely residential waterfront. Infrastructure to support working waterfronts and the economic opportunity it provides is disappearing.

Public policies that once served as management tools for near shore land, public water bodies, and water use rights/privileges appear to be outdated, inadequate and/or incapable of acknowledging multi-jurisdictional regulatory overlap within the area commonly referred to as the riparian zone. Many governmental bodies have jurisdictional oversight within the riparian zone, little exercise or recognize the breadth of enabled authority or jurisdiction.

This presentation will discuss the facilitated planning process and resulting public policy dialog generated by the York River Use Conflict Policy Recommendation Roundtable. The Roundtable is composed of local elected officials, government administrators, local planners, waterfront property owners, recreational users, working watermen, representatives from the aquaculture industry and others. The Roundtable was established to identify and determine the issues, conflicts and governance schema that are affecting local government's ability to make the most of their waterfronts.

The Roundtable first utilized a collection of GIS data to reveal spatial and temporal use conflicts within a designated study reach. The GIS analysis included historic, current, and possible future uses and characteristics of the land side and water side of the study reach. Secondly, the Roundtable developed and approved a dictionary of use conflict concepts and terms to facilitate effective communication between stakeholders. Next the Roundtable explored how various governments are enabled, what regulatory areas each have, and how various units of governments manage and mitigate conflicts. The results of this analysis were incorporated into a Google Earth and Google Sketch project to render a 3-Dimensional dynamic landscape and jurisdictional area. Jurisdictions are user activated or "clicked" and overlain as a transparent 3-dimensional regulatory "blanket" atop the topography. Roundtable members can add and delete man-made uses and click URLs to learn more about associated

regulations and jurisdictions. Views can be rotated 360 degrees on all axes, just as Google Earth maps can be tilted and rotated to view landscape features.

Next, the Roundtable worked to “frame” use conflicts from various perspectives. Utilizing an “issue framing” approach empowered each conflict group to articulate their use conflict perspective and thus kept the dialog focused on positive discussion. Once perspectives were agreed upon, roundtable members were posed the more difficult question “What should local government specifically do about your issue or perspective?”

The current step in the project is to determine what tools local government has available to address the results from the question of “What should local government specifically do about your issue or perspective?”

Lastly, the Roundtable will prepare a public policy report suggesting various public policy management scenarios that better manage use conflict within a multi-jurisdictional regulatory framework.

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