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News of the Coast (December 2022)

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News of the Coast: December 2022



In November, VCPC and the Student Environmental and Animal Law Society co-hosted a Careers in Environmental Law panel. Panelists included W&M Law alums Andrew Larkin from NOAA, Kristen Sadtler from Virginia DEQ, Anna Killius from the James River Association, and Clay Kulesza from AquaLaw. The lively event showcased a diverse array of environmental law and policy careers and offered the opportunity for current students to engage with alumni.

Practicum 1 Wrap Up

Our Practicum I students have completed another successful semester! We were fortunate to have numerous guest speakers in class, including Melanie Davenport

(pictured) and Dave Davis from VA DEQ; mediator and consensus builder Mark Rubin, Esq.; Dr. Molly Mitchell of VIMS; and Dr. Sarah Stafford, chair of the W&M Economics Department.



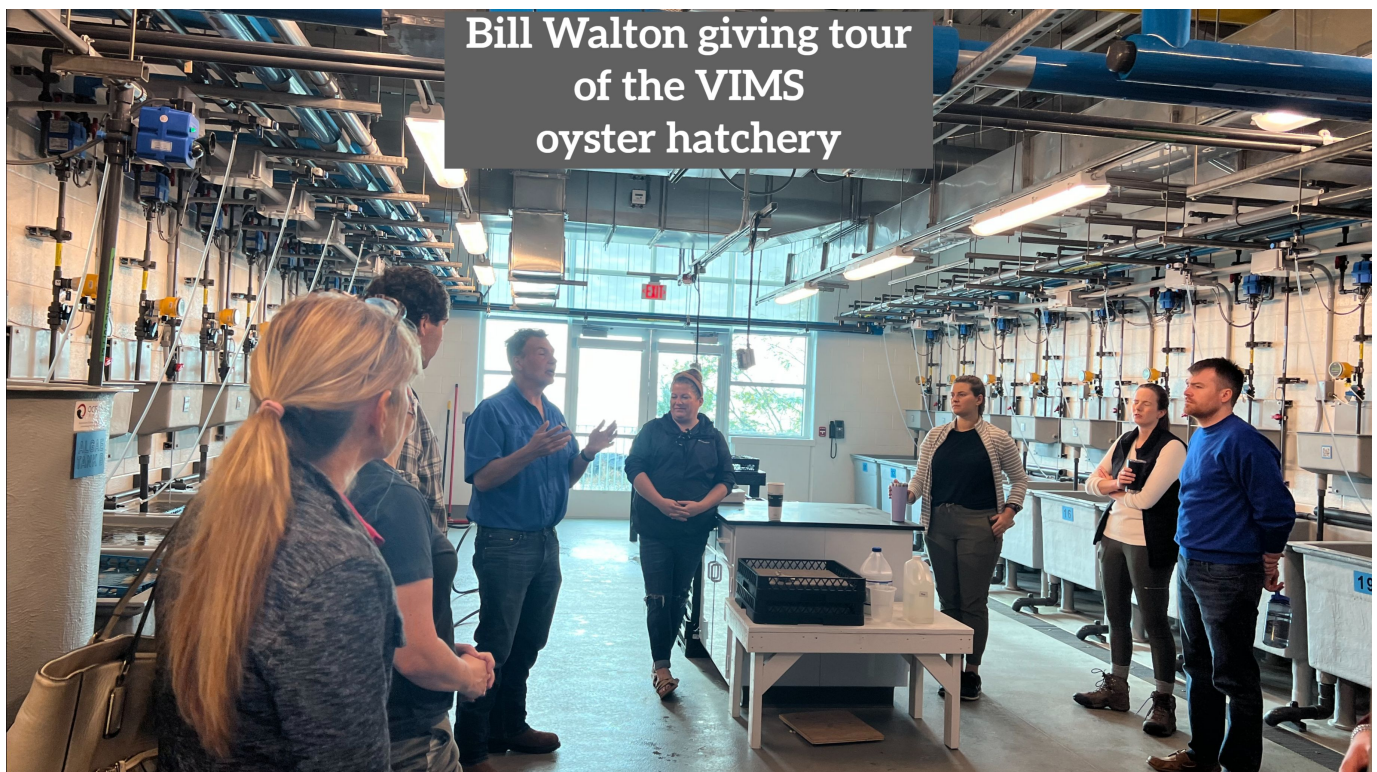
Throughout the semester, student teams - including two students from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and a graduate Public Policy student, as well as law students - have conducted stakeholder engagement, research, and analysis to advise on emerging issues facing Virginia's coastal communities. A team of students working pursuant to a grant from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management program researched the Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund and investigated the potential expansion of an in-lieu fee program as a mitigation method for various habitat impacts in Virginia. Another student team also worked under a grant from the Coastal Zone Management program to help with development of Virginia's first Ocean Plan by conducting supportive research and stakeholder engagement. As part of an interdisciplinary partnership coordinated by Virginia Sea Grant, a third student team researched laws and regulatory schemes implicated by innovative design and construction on shorelines subject to inundation. In partnership with Dr. Molly Mitchell of VIMS, who mapped critical infrastructure vulnerable to the impacts of sea level rise in the Middle Peninsula, a student team researched potential infrastructure adaptations and policy implications associated with such adaptations. Lastly, a student team, as part of an ongoing effort in partnership with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, researched enforcement best practices and other policy issues related to the potential creation of a no discharge zone (NDZ) in Virginia's aquaculture waters. We are very proud of the work of all of our students this semester and wish them the best of luck as they head into finals!

Middle Peninsula Field Trip

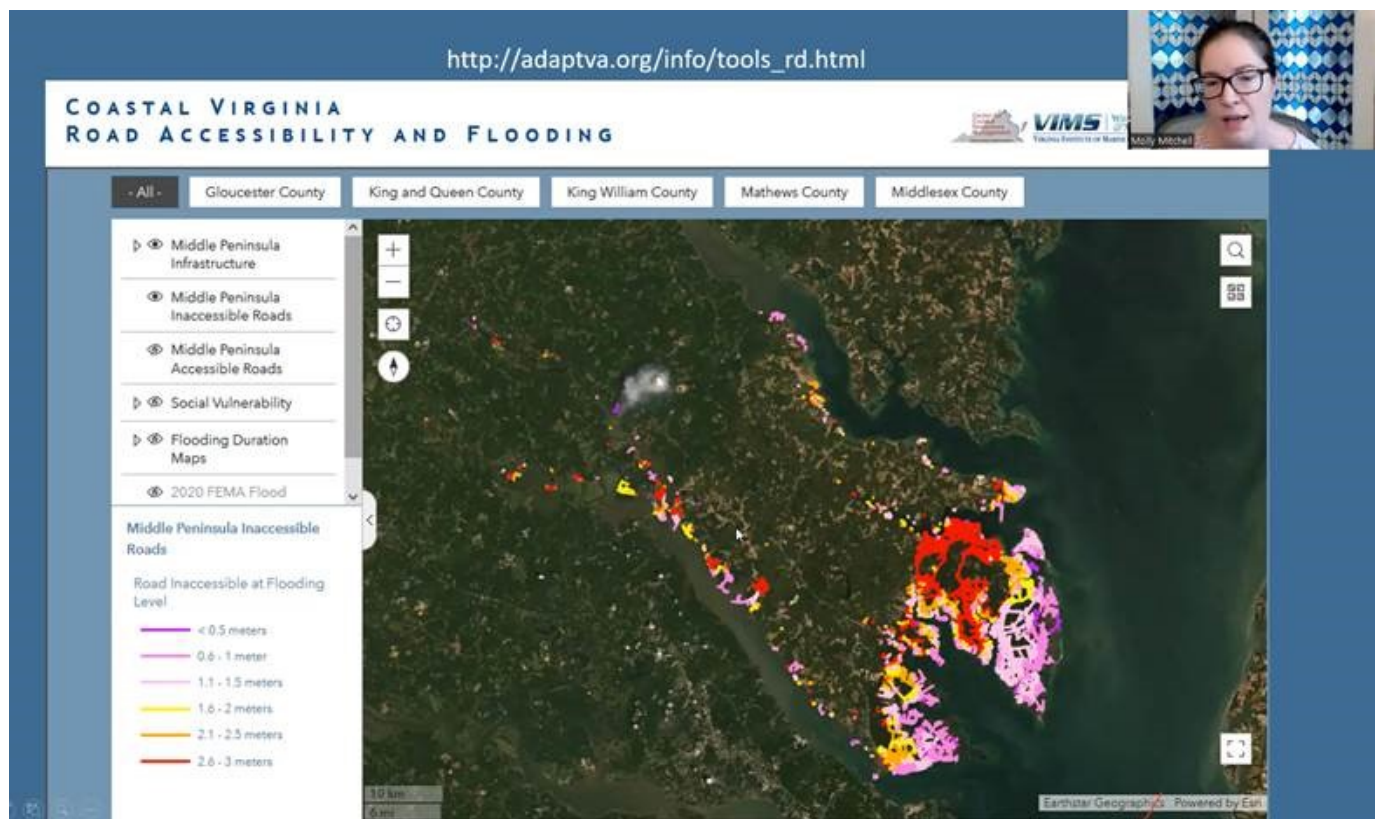


The Practicum I class visited the Middle Peninsula for a full-day field trip to discuss aquaculture and see rural challenges in the face of sea level rise. Their first stop was the VIMS oyster hatchery, where Bill Walton provided them with a tour and an explanation of the methods used and challenges faced in growing oysters. They then visited Bruce and Cathy Vogt at Big Island Aquaculture, and were treated to delicious raw and baked oysters as they heard about their oyster operation and sea level rise impacts in the area. Finally, they discussed sea level rise and flooding impacts in the Middle Peninsula with Dr. Troy Hartley, Director of the Virginia Sea Grant program, and Lewie Lawrence, Executive Director of the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission and Public Access Authority.

(PAA). Director Lawrence then gave the students a tour of one of the PAA-owned waterfront sites where innovative approaches to flooding resilience are planned.



RAFT Update



VCPC, the University of Virginia and Old Dominion University have teamed up once again to work on yet another exciting round of the [RAFT](#) (Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool) project, this time in the Middle Peninsula. We began in January 2022 with hosting a regional workshop in partnership with the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission, aimed at building awareness of sea level rise and flooding impacts and developing a Resilience Action Checklist (RAC) for each participating locality. The community members invited to the workshop formed the basis for an implementation team for each locality, and those teams have been meeting once a month throughout the year to work on the items on each RAC. VCPC has been hosting the monthly meetings for the King William County and Middlesex County implementation teams, discussing concerns and forming plans to address current and future resilience needs, such as Septic and Wastewater, Transportation, Affordable Housing, and Elderly needs.

In September, VCPC hosted a virtual workshop for the Middle Peninsula localities (pictured above, featuring Dr. Molly Mitchell from VIMS) to share information on a variety of topics that they requested, featuring guest speakers from:

- Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), to discuss predicted sea level rise and precipitation-driven flooding
- Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) – both the floodplain management program and the Community Flood Preparedness Fund, and the DCR SEAS (Shoreline Erosion Advisory Service)

- Virginia Cooperative Extension, to discuss the Master Gardners program to help address food insecurity
- Bay Aging and Bay Transit

We will be concluding our yearlong implementation phase in the Middle Peninsula in February, followed by a final workshop in March. Our hope and plan are to leave behind a working committee in each locality to continue community education about flooding risks and carry on resilience efforts.

New VCPC Policy Resource

[In-Lieu Fee Program Case Studies: Lessons Learned for Potentially Expanding In-Lieu Fee Habitat Coverage in Virginia](#)

VCPC's newest white paper analyzes in-lieu fee programs across the country and incorporates lessons learned for the potential expansion of an in-lieu fee program as a mitigation method in Virginia.

