

## Examining the Role of Environmental Nonprofits in Shoreline Management for Coastal Resilience in Virginia

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### BACKGROUND

Environmental nonprofits emerged over the years to attend to the environmental needs of communities and individuals, as well as address environmental issues that concern the public.

These issues are usually those that have been neglected, given insufficient attention, or cannot be singularly handled by the government. In advocating for coastal resilience, environmental nonprofits have been identified in the literature as actors with critical roles in addressing coastal issues such as sea-level rise, flooding and shoreline management.

In recent times, shoreline management has emerged as one of the foremost areas of focus expedient for the achievement of coastal resilience, and the role of environmental nonprofits in ensuring the management of shorelines is of crucial importance.

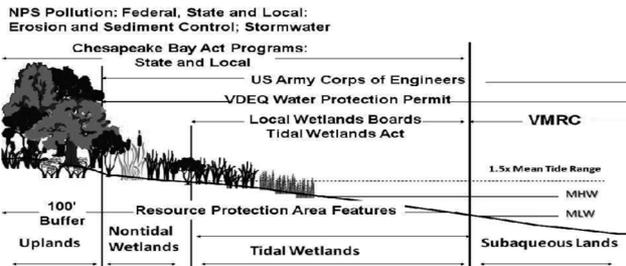
### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to examine the roles environment nonprofits play in shoreline management for coastal resilience. Specifically, the research questions asked were:

- 1) To what extent do environmental nonprofits get involved in shoreline management for coastal resilience in Virginia?
- 1b) How are environmental nonprofits involved in shoreline management for coastal resilience in Virginia?
- 2) What roles do environmental nonprofits play in shoreline management for coastal resilience in Virginia?

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### Virginia Shoreline Management



### METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

A qualitative research design was used, data from some environmental nonprofits in Virginia's coastal communities was collected and analyzed, with the aim of interpreting the roles they play in the management and stabilization of shorelines, and elaborating on the impact and implications for environmental sustainability and coastal resilience.

This study was underpinned by the post-positivist research paradigm and utilized a case study methodology.

The researchers conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews using the snowball sampling technique. Data will be transcribed, organized, and coded using the NVivo Statistical Package, and will be analyzed using thematic content analysis

For reliability and confidentiality purposes, the researchers used unique identifiers such as "Participant 1" to identify the interviewees.

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND WAY FORWARD

**Nonprofit Involvement:** Collaborations with other NGOs, Involved with state legislation and zone ordinances (i.e. in Norfolk).

- Training, Development, and Mentoring of Sustainability professionals.
- **Participant 1:** "Training, Development, and Mentoring of Sustainability professionals."

**Roles of Nonprofits:** Shoreline restoration: **Participant 1:** "We restore the Elizabeth River-working with partners and also water quality and habitat through government and citizen actions."

- o Oyster restoration and promoting living shoreline practices (as contractors).
- o Advocacy: Local advocacy is the focus. There are advocacy activities at the wetlands board. Participants also do city council candidate forums. There are some activity at the state and regional level.
- o Education: Providing workshops to homeowners on the costs and benefits of living shorelines and working with some of them from design-to-build stages.
- o Working with volunteers to support homeowners in maintaining properties.

**Implications:** The findings from this study could improve participation from environmental nonprofits on issues of shoreline management, through the exploration of their roles, and subsequent needs to facilitate coastal resilience. Furthermore, these findings could drive policy understanding and inform policy decisions in the areas of coastal resilience and shoreline management.

**Limitations:** This study is delimited to the Virginia coastal communities and, therefore, the results will not be generalizable to other areas.

**Future research:** Exploring the perceptions of stakeholders in the environmental nonprofits relating to the roles they play in shoreline management for coastal resilience. Exploring the perspectives of policy experts on the roles environmental nonprofits could play in shoreline management for coastal resilience.

**Note to reviewers:** The researchers have not fully analyzed the data, but have sifted it for preliminary results. There is still much to be told from the data.