

**King Tide Mapping  
HUGE Success**



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You as Program Grows  
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## **MOVING COASTAL VIRGINIA TOWARD ADAPTATION ACTION**

Wetlands Watch, a non-profit based in Norfolk, Virginia, has been working on sea level rise adaptation for the last ten years, longer than nearly any other organization in the country. Sea level rise is the biggest emerging threat to our tidal wetlands. We work with local governments to develop sustainable, nature-based solutions to adapt & allow wetlands to survive. This newsletter reviews Wetlands Watch's work over the last year. Email [mc.stiff@wetlandswatch.org](mailto:mc.stiff@wetlandswatch.org) if you would like to receive more information about our organization.



**WETLANDS  
WATCH**

## SLR APP USED IN LARGEST FLOOD CROWDSOURCE EVENT EVER!



Wetlands Watch's [Sea Level Rise phone app](#) was put to the test in Hampton Roads as 800 people joined a [regional flood mapping effort](#). Co-sponsored by the regional print, TV, and public radio outlets, the event was timed for the highest tides of the year on November 5.



People mapped across a dozen cities and counties, collecting nearly 24,000 GIS data points, in the most comprehensive citizen science effort ever around flooding/sea level rise. The event generated maps that modelers and planners can use as we adapt to the rising waters.

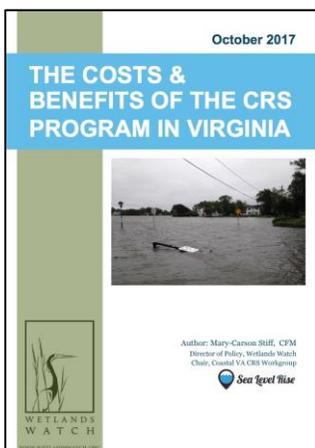
## CHESAPEAKE BAY LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Wetlands Watch & partners in VA & MD moved the [CBLP program](#) towards self-funding and expanded our network of certified landscape professionals into more areas in VA, MD and PA in 2017. In early 2018, about 200 CBLPros will be qualified to create, install, and/or maintain sustainable & resilient landscapes and nature-based stormwater practices for property owners throughout the Chesapeake Bay Region. To earn continuing education credits, CBLPros worked on 176 conservation and stormwater projects that will protect wetlands and reduce annual pollution loads in our local waterways by 775 lbs of Nitrogen, 370 lbs of Phosphorus, and 509,000 lbs of Sediment.

[Click here to find a certified CBLP near you.](#)



## THE COSTS & BENEFITS OF THE CRS PROGRAM IN VA



Wetlands Watch promotes the [Community Rating System \(CRS\)](#) along VA's tidal floodplains. A program of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the CRS rewards localities that take extra steps to reduce flooding in their community by reducing the premiums charged for flood insurance. Why do we care? The CRS offers big points for preserving open space in floodplains. These lands often include wetlands and will offer "retreat" zones for wetlands to easily migrate landward as sea levels rise. Joining and staying in the CRS requires a lot of staff time and training, which likely accounts for our low participation rate in VA: only 9% of eligible localities are enrolled. We assumed that over time the benefits of participating in the CRS would outweigh the staff time costs, but we could not prove it, until we received funding from the VA Coastal Zone Management Program to try. Our recent [report](#) found our assumptions were correct: the benefits of joining the CRS far outweigh the costs of participating. If your community is not in the CRS, contact your local elected officials and ask them to join today!

## COLLABORATORY

Our efforts to partner with academia to bring adaptation designs into communities continues with student teams from the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech tackling sea level rise in the Hampton Roads region this year.



Earlier this year, we teamed with a group of UVA Resilience Capstone course students with our partners at the Elizabeth River Project, Virginia Sea Grant, the residents of Ingleside, and the city of Norfolk. Our goal was to develop a flooding/stormwater strategy for the Ingleside neighborhood in Norfolk. The work was used to develop a \$500,000 implementation grant for the community! Using our “Collaboratory” approach we will use part of this grant to develop flooding/stormwater management strategies for two other Norfolk neighborhoods.

Virginia Tech’s interdisciplinary team of 28, from the course “Climate Change and Social Impact,” is working with the City of Hampton to assist in their city-wide resilience planning. Students will help develop adaptation approaches for three different communities along Hampton’s Chesapeake Bay shoreline. Stay tuned for their results!



[Lean about the Collaboratory & view student presentations/reports.](#)

## Wetlands Watch 2017 Awards



The Virginia Environmental Endowment recognized Wetlands Watch as one of 22 “Partners in Excellence” in celebration of VEE’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We received this honor for work on sea level rise and the CBLP, projects aimed to tackle what VEE regards as “Emerging Issues.” The award read: *From its early beginnings as a watchdog on wetland losses in Hampton Roads to its current role as one of the state’s leading climate adaptation and resiliency advocates, Wetlands Watch is representative of small nonprofit organizations whose reputation, expertise, and influence continues to grow in Virginia and beyond.*

Wetlands Watch’s local government Adaptation Guide received the 2017 Nelsonite Award, Planning Advocate of the Year, from the VA Chapter of the American Planning Association. Our Guide helps VA localities start adaptation planning work today. We interviewed over 70 local government staff before developing the Guide’s content, ensuring it fits local staff needs. A recent grant updated the Guide to include nature-based approaches to stormwater with CRS benefits.



Our goal: with a single nature-based approach or action a locality can cost-effectively meet stormwater and water quality goals, lower flood insurance rates and provide greater flood protection.



## IN THE NEWS

Wetlands Watch's Executive Director, Skip Stiles, appeared prominently in the New York Times Magazine article "[When Rising Seas Transform Risk into Certainty](#)." An interview with Skip also appeared in the Smithsonian.com article "[How Coastal Cities Are Evolving to Deal With Extreme Rain](#)."

Other media exposure: Landscape Architecture Magazine, Think Progress, Inside Climate News, Poynter, EcoWatch, AlterNet, NPR, 13News Now, Virginian Pilot, & The Daily Press.

Thank you grant funders for supporting our exciting work:



Much of our outreach work is not funded through grants. We speak locally to countless civic leagues & community organizations & present on our work at conferences across the US. We can participate in these important discussions thanks to the generous gifts made by people like you.

Follow us on and

[Click here to donate online today!](#)

# Protecting and Conserving Wetlands



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## Flood Mapping Made Possible By Donors Like You!



We are proud our phone app, [Sea Level Rise](#), served as the backbone to the largest [flood crowd-sourcing mapping event](#) ever, but this exciting event only happened because of generous donations we receive from people like you. If you missed the mapping, but donated to our organization last year, you were an integral part of the event too! **[Your donation this year](#) will help pay for future events that bring together neighbors, family, colleagues, and friends to help communities prepare for sea level rise.**