



## Mission

The Authority recognizes that shorelines are high priority natural areas and that it is critical to set aside access sites for all types of recreational activities important to our economy and to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## Members

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Mr. R. Gary Allen  
(*Treasurer*)

### Gloucester County

Hon. Charles R. Allen

### King and Queen County

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(*Vice Chairman*)

### King William County

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### Town of Urbanna

Hon. Steven Hollberg

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# At the Water's Edge

## Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) Acquisitions

As one of the Chesapeake Bay's most pristine watersheds, the Dragon Run encompasses some of the most extensive and unspoiled swamp forest and woodland communities in Virginia. It is mainly undeveloped and composed almost entirely of privately owned wetlands, forests, and farms. It contains the northernmost example of the Baldcypress-Tupelo Swamp natural community in Virginia and is home to 25 state and globally rare plants and animals and five rare, natural communities.

In September 2007, a federal grant from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), distributed through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program, permitted the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority

(MPCBPAA or PAA) to acquire and open to public access 357 acres in the Dragon Run watershed, specifically the Dragon Bridge, Jackson, and Haworth Tracts. Again in early 2008, CELCP funding will be used to acquire a fourth parcel, the 209-acre Clay Tract, which abuts the Dragon Bridge and Jackson Tracts in the center of the watershed. All four holdings will be linked with the Browne Tract (the PAA's first multi-use public access site) in the upper portion of Dragon Run and with currently-protected neighboring forest and swamp lands in an effort to expand the zone of conservation within, stabilize, and protect the entire watershed. Additionally, commencing with the Haworth Tract this summer, the PAA will utilize input from members of the public, local and state government, and non-governmental organizations in the region to develop a

stakeholder-driven, long-term stewardship plan for each of the four CELCP parcels. The land management plans will incorporate passive and low-impact, active public access to associated land- and water-based ecosystems, habitat core conservation, and multiple, traditional uses. Such uses may include walking, fishing, picnicking, paddling, bicycling, hunting, forest and habitat management, water quality monitoring, and educational opportunities.



Haworth Tract



Clay Tract

## Land Donations

In 2008, the MPCBPAA will have conserved and opened to public access more than 1,000 acres of land with waterfront access in the Middle Peninsula.

During early 2008, the PAA, working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), will partner to transfer more than 350 acres of waterfront

property in Mathews, King William, King and Queen, and Gloucester Counties for conversion to public lands for passive and low-impact, active recreational uses. Phase I of the TNC land donations will focus on the Guinea Marshes—189 acres of islands with high ecotourism potential at the tip of Gloucester

County and the Garrett Tract—a 12.5 acre island on the Mattaponi River in King William County. Acquisition of the Garrett Tract, an area prime for waterfowl hunting, will give the PAA a significant presence in King William County and provide much needed public access to the community.



**Public Access Authority Project Revenues FY 2004—2008**

Project	Federal/State	Regional	Local	Private
Browne Tract	\$392,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Browne Mgmt. Plan	8,000	^569	0	0
BFI	0	0	0	37,500
Ches. Bay License	900	0	0	0
CELCP	989,477	0	0	**989,477
Shenk Acquisition	0	0	0	260,400
CZM Program Grants	35,000	0	0	0
PAA Insurance	0	3,073	0	0
Road Ending Study	60,495	^122	0	0
Transportation Study	10,000	10,000	0	0
New Pt. Lighthouse	10,000	^223	0	0
Coastal Experience	35,000	^77	0	0
MPDSB SAG	5,000	0	0	0
FY07 Gen. Assembly	20,000	0	0	0
FY08 Gen. Assembly	75,000	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,640,872</b>	<b>\$14,064</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$1,287,377</b>

**TOTAL FUNDS RECEIVED: \$2,942,313**

^ Overmatched project funds

\*\* TNC match for CELCP acquisitions

**VDOT Landing and Road Ending Transfers**

Pursuant to Virginia State Code 15.2-6600 through 15.2-6625, the MPCBPAA has been charged with the duty of identifying land owned by the Commonwealth or private holdings that can be secured for use by the general public as public access sites.

Funding from the Virginia CZM Program allowed the PAA to identify 300 roadways with public access capabilities running to or near waterways in the Middle Peninsula. Five properties representative of a broad range of landings were then investigated, specifically Roane Point Landing (Mathews County), Lower Guinea Landing (Gloucester), Ferry Landing (Essex), Chain

Ferry Landing, and Byrd's Bridge Landing (King & Queen). The MPCBPAA commissioned Beale, Davidson, Etherington, & Morris, P.C. to develop a report entitled *Landing and Road Ending Acquisitions* that identified ownership of each site, obstacles that could impede easement conveyance to or acquisition of the sites by the MPCBPAA, and solutions to those obstacles.

Recommendations presented in the report suggested that legislative action was necessary to permit the transfer of ownership interests in Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road endings, without the requirement of abandonment or discontinuance, to

any PAA. These recommendations were presented to the General Assembly as House Bill 2781 in January 2007. The bill, sponsored by Delegate Harvey Morgan, unanimously passed the General Assembly and was approved by Governor Kaine in March 2007.

Currently, the MPCBPAA is working with VDOT to acquire the first of five road endings, Lower Guinea Landing (pictured bottom left), at the end of Kings Creek Road in Gloucester. The PAA looks to finalize the landing transfer later this year and begin development of a road ending management plan for the parcel.