



## MIDDLE PENINSULA CHESAPEAKE BAY PUBLIC ACCESS AUTHORITY

### **What is the Public Access Authority?**

Established by Virginia State Code 15.2-6600 through 15.2-6625, the Public Access Authority (MPCBPAA or PAA) is a political subdivision that acts to serve the public access needs of the encompassed communities.

### **When was the Authority enabled?**

The MPCBPAA was created by the Virginia General Assembly on April 7, 2002 and ratified by participating localities on June 13, 2003.

### **Who are the members?**

The Counties of Essex, Gloucester, King & Queen, King William, and Mathews and the Towns of Tappahannock, Urbanna, and West Point.

### **Why was the Authority enabled?**

The PAA was established to identify, acquire, and manage public water access opportunities in the region that can be used by the general public for passive and active activities.

## AUTHORITY DIRECTORS

**Essex County** – Mr. R. Gary Allen, *Treasurer*

**Gloucester County** – Hon. Charles R. Allen

**King and Queen County** – Mr. Ronald Hachey,  
*Vice Chairman*

**King William County** – Mr. Frank Pleva,  
*Chairman*

**Mathews County** – Mr. Steven Whiteway

**Town of Tappahannock** – Mr. G. Gayle Belfield

**Town of Urbanna** – Hon. Steven Hollberg

**Town of West Point** – Mr. Trenton Funkhouser

**Staff** – Mr. Lewis Lawrence, Ms. Jacqueline Shapo  
804-758-2311

## INITIATIVES

**Public Land Acquisition (1,000 acres  
conserved by spring 2008)**

### CELCP

**Public Policy Problem:** Lack of public access and conservation sites within the Dragon Run watershed.

**Public Policy Solution:** The MPCBPAA used federal grants from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP), distributed through the Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program, 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.

**Future Need:** New holdings will be linked with the Browne Tract (PAA's first multi-use public access site) in the upper portion of Dragon Run and with currently-protected neighboring forest and swamp lands to expand the zone of conservation within, stabilize, and protect the entire watershed. A stakeholder-driven, long-term stewardship plan will be developed for each of the four CELCP parcels utilizing input from members of the public, local and state government, and non-governmental organizations in the region. 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, and educational opportunities.

### Wetlands Banking

**Public Policy Problem:** No wetlands banks to serve citizens within the York River and small coastal basins.

**Public Policy Solution:** Utilize the PAA to create a public wetlands bank. This ensures consistency in the delivery of services, lowers the cost to citizens and localities of mitigating the net loss of wetlands, and enhances passive public access to the York River and small coastal basins region.

**Future Need:** The PAA will convert local land holdings in Gloucester County, including potentially six Gloucester-owned FEMA buyout parcels, and portions of the Shenk property – a 14-acre, PAA-owned parcel on the southwest branch of the Severn River, to create bank credits and build a public wetlands bank. The PAA will then establish strategies, through the development of a wetlands bank management plan, to manage the properties cohesively.



Shenk Parcel  
Gloucester, Virginia  
Private Land Donation



## TNC Land Donations

**Public Policy Problem:** Lack of public access and conservation sites within the Middle Peninsula.

**Public Policy Solution:** The PAA, working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), partners 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.

**Future Need:** Phase I of the TNC land donations will focus on the PAA acquiring Guinea Marshes – 189 acres of islands at the tip of Gloucester County and the Garrett Tract – a 12.5 acre island on the Mattaponi River in King William County. The Guinea Marshes parcel, which historically has been used for hunting and fishing, offers high ecotourism potential for the local community in Gloucester. Additionally, 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.

## VDOT Landing and Road Ending Transfers

**Public Policy Problem:** Many Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road endings are not managed for public access.

**Public Policy Solution:** The MPCBPAA achieved consensus on a process to transfer VDOT road endings to any PAA. The MPCBPAA commissioned a report, entitled *Landing and Road Ending Acquisitions*, that identified ownership of five landings in the Middle Peninsula, obstacles that could impede easement conveyance to or acquisition of the sites by the PAA, and solutions to those

obstacles. Recommendations in the report were presented to the General Assembly as House Bill 2781 in January 2007. The bill, sponsored by Delegate Harvey Morgan, unanimously passed the GA and was approved by Governor Kaine in March 2007.

**Future Need:** The MPCBPAA is working with VDOT to acquire the first of five road endings, Lower Guinea Landing, 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.



Lower Guinea Landing

## Regional Waterfront Access Master Plan

**Public Policy Problem:** Not enough public access to the waterways of the Middle Peninsula.

**Public Policy Solution:** Develop a regional waterfront access master plan for the Middle Peninsula. The PAA has partnered with Virginia Sea Grant to inventory coastal access issues and trends throughout the region, including existing access and ownership patterns, public access needs of residents in the lower Chesapeake Bay, waterfront conflicts, and conversion issues, as well as to highlight solutions for these issues. The PAA has developed a survey, in conjunction with *Write Stuff*, to outline the scope of coastal water access challenges and needs in the

region. Long and shorter versions of the survey will be mailed to various recreational watermen and working waterfront organizations. The survey also will be housed on the VA Sea Grant website: <http://www.wateraccess2007.com/>. Results collected will be used to help the PAA develop a Regional Waterfront Access Master Plan.

**Future Need:** The Regional Waterfront Access Master Plan will be used to inform decision-makers at the local and state government levels about the rapid changes sweeping coastal communities in the Middle Peninsula and to set future public access policy. The PAA will also use the master plan to acquire land for new public access to the water.



For more information, please visit:  
[www.mppdc.com/project/access.shtml](http://www.mppdc.com/project/access.shtml)

**Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay  
Public Access Authority  
P.O. Box 286  
Saluda, VA 23149  
804-758-2311**