

Flood Resilience in the Commonwealth

Joint Subcommittee on Recurrent Flooding

September 2, 2025

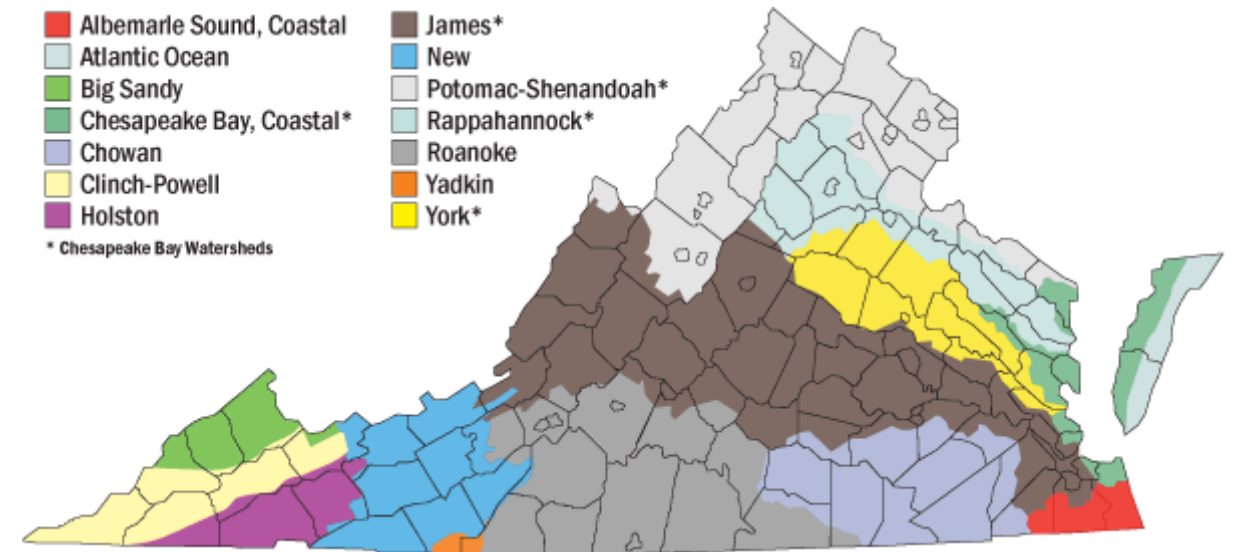
Matthew Wells – Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation



About the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

- The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is the state's lead natural resource conservation agency. DCR protects what Virginians care about - natural habitat, parks, clean water, dams, open space and access to the outdoors.

- Parks and Natural Area Preserves
- Land Conservation
- Soil and Water Conservation
- Dam Regulation
- Floodplains and Resilience



Virginia Major River Basins

Sources of Flooding

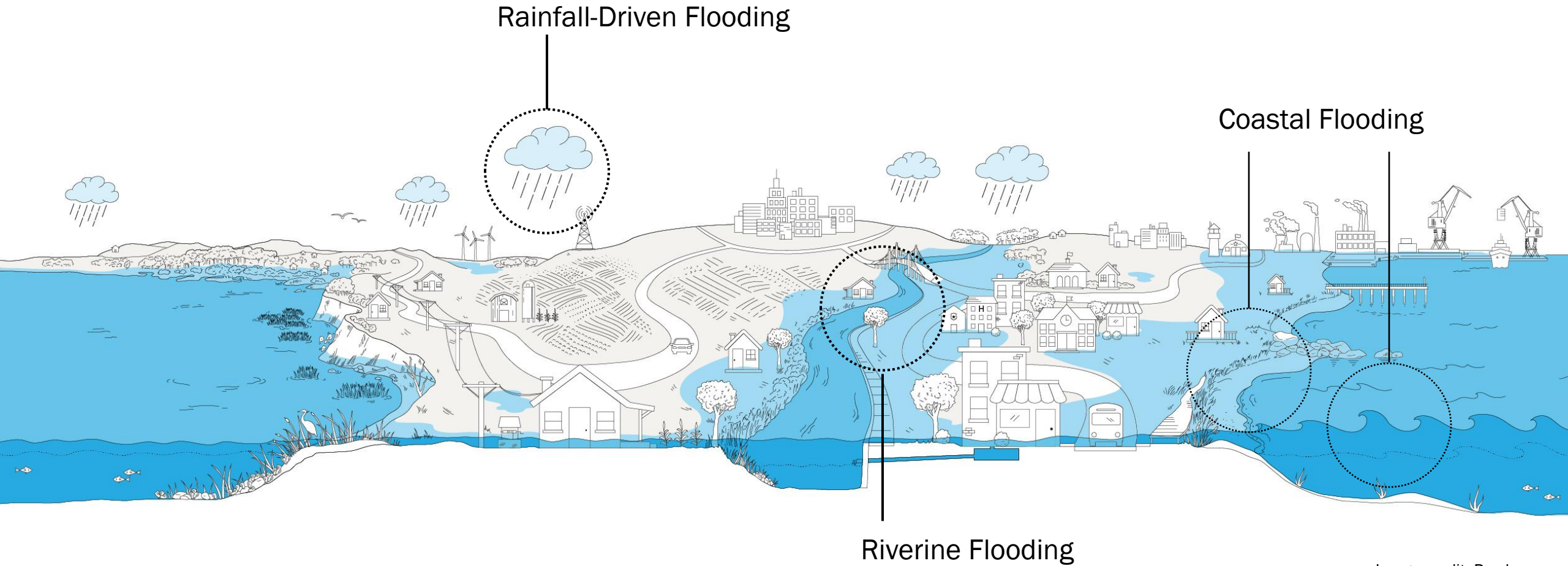
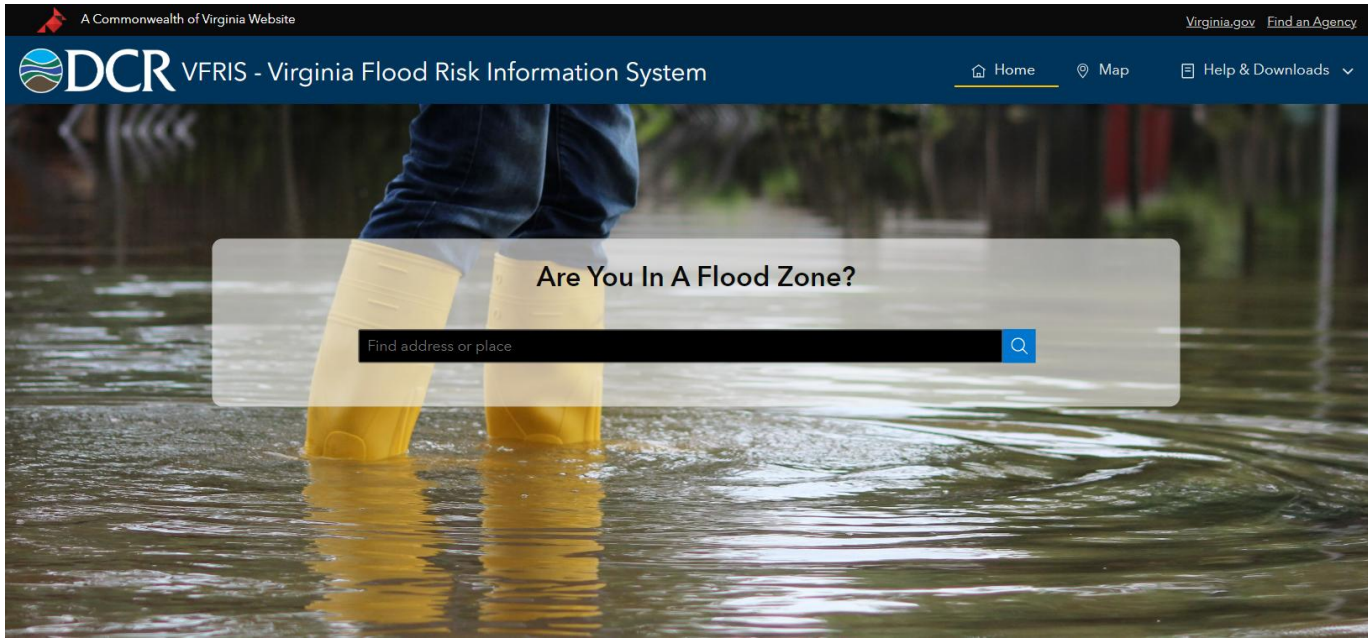


Image credit: Dewberry

Understanding Flood Risk

Virginia Flood Risk Information System (VFRIS)



Understanding Flood Risk

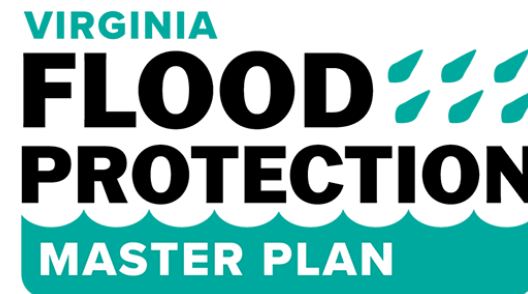
COASTAL RESILIENCE MASTER PLAN (CRMP)

- A trusted resource to assist government entities in making evidence-based decisions to mitigate severe and repetitive flooding.
- Provides a consistent regional flood hazard analysis.
- Identifies opportunities to prioritize impactful flood resilience solutions.
- Phase I was released in 2021.
- Phase II is in the final stages of development.



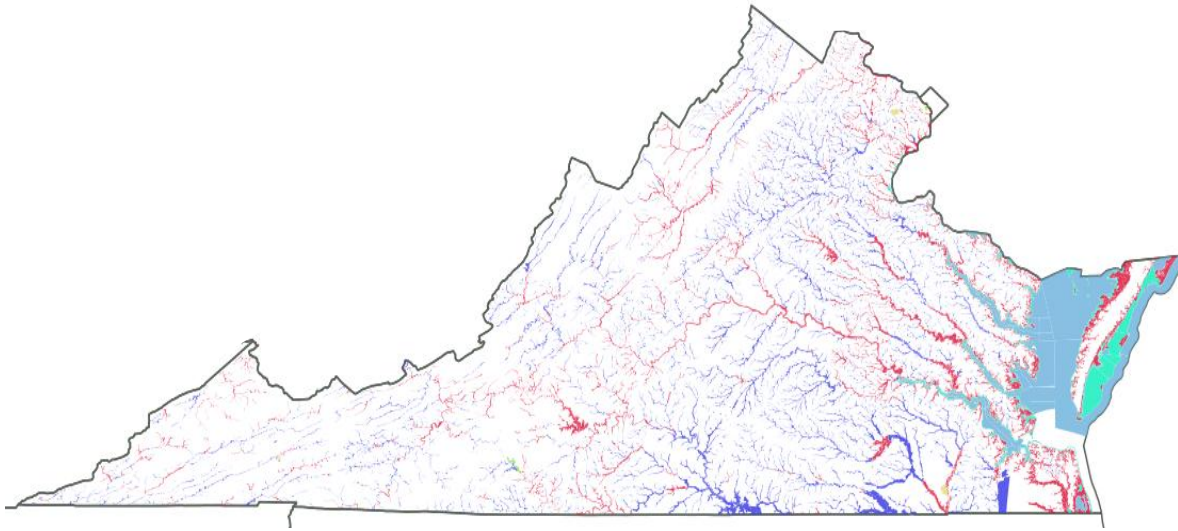
VIRGINIA FLOOD PROTECTION MASTER PLAN (VFPMP)

- An actionable framework to align and enhance the Commonwealth's policies and programs that mitigate the impacts of flooding on people, the economy, and the environment.
- Identifies strategies informed by a holistic picture of current and future flood impacts across the state, as well as identified gaps in data, resources and capacity.
- Establish flood resilience goals and metrics to track progress toward achieving them.
- Virginia Flood Resilience Advisory Committee established to support development.

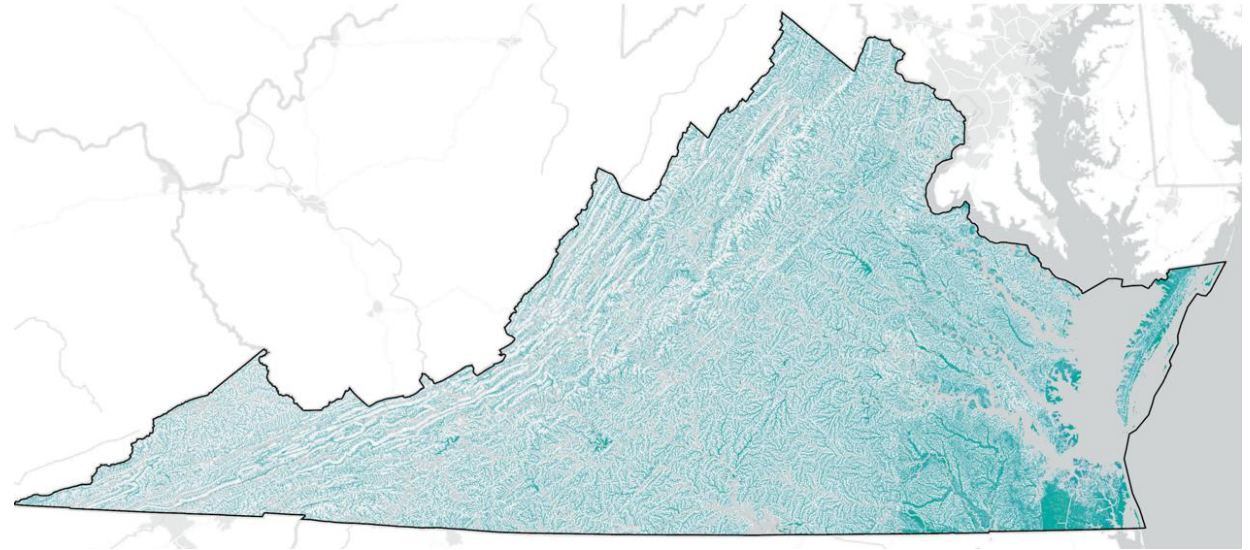


Understanding Flood Risk

FEMA Regulatory Flood Extents



Virginia Non-Regulatory Flood Extents (Fathom)



The gap between FEMA and Virginia's Flood Resilience planning data represented unaccounted and unmanaged flood risk at the individual, local, and state level.

Flood Resilience Funding

Community Flood Preparedness Fund

- Round 5 awarded on July 2nd
- 70 applications received with a total \$65 million in grant requests
- \$50 million in grants awarded for 60 projects; 67% to Low-Income Geographic Areas
- \$17 million in loans awarded for 5 projects; 36% to Low-Income Geographic Areas

Proposed Round Six

- Public comment closed
July 17, 2025
- Proposed changes:
 - Addition of tribes as eligible
 - Capping per-grant amounts for capacity-building, studies, and resilience plans
 - Changes to property-acquisitions and consideration of public recreation areas

Category	Amount	Award Type	Notes
Planning & Capacity Building, Studies, and Resilience Projects	\$50,000,000	Grants	Awards require match that varies depending on activity/project type. Reduced match for low-income geographic areas. Total awards per applicant are capped.
Resilience Projects	\$25,000,000	Loans	Below market-rate loans for resilience projects. Awards do not require match. Designed primarily to accommodate large projects that exceed grant caps.
Start-Up Funding	\$10,000,000	Loans	Short term (36 month) loans to provide up-front funding for activities funded by CFPF grants. Currently, CFPF grants are paid on a reimbursement basis, which is a limiting factor for some localities.

Flood Resilience Funding

Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund – Resilient Recovery and Rebuilding

- Targeted at areas impacted by Helene and February 2025 storms
- Intended to complement programs from federal government, VDEM, and DHCD VDAF
- Three proposed categories – total \$60 million
 - Category 1: Grants and loans to support the resilient rebuilding of communities
 - Category 2: Grants and loans to support the resilient rebuilding of infrastructure
 - Category 3: Loans to mobilize federal grants
- Public comment closed July 6, 2025, final manual and opening of round pending

Dam Safety

Dam Inventory

- DCR regulates over 2,500 dams across the Commonwealth through the Soil and Water Conservation Board. Over 80% of these dams are privately owned
- Almost 400 are known to be “High Hazard”
- It is estimated nationally that up to 70% of dams are reaching the end of their useful life
- American Society of Dam Safety Officials estimates bringing Virginia dams up to regulatory standards will cost \$5.4 billion in a 2023 report

Regulatory Dam Inventory		
Metric	Initial	June 2025
Number of dams with unknown ownership	812	3
Number of dams of unknown hazard	1876	1,367
Number of regulated dams with 'not rated' condition assessment	1974	1,620

Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund

- \$10.6 million awarded in 2024 for 78 projects
- \$4.3 million awarded in 2025 for 63 projects
- \$5 million available for 2026 round – targeted to open Dec 2025

Dam Safety

Regulatory and Statutory Updates

- In 2024 DCR convened a Statutory Workgroup and a Regulatory Advisory Panel to assist with review and development of proposed revisions to the Dam Safety Act and Impounding Structure Regulations.
- Regulatory Advisory Panel proposal focused on low hazard dams – Soil and Water Board to consider final adoption late 2025
- Statutory Workgroup proposal lowered match for Dam Safety Grants, established general permit process for low hazard dams, and made other improvements – Passed during 2025 session and signed into law
- Additional fast track regulatory changes to incorporate statutory changes



Greg Steele, Chief Resilience Officer



Caitlin Verdu, Resilience Coordinator



Sigrid Lampe, Resilience Policy Adv.

Virginia Office of Resilience

- Fosters coordination and collaboration
- Serves as a centralized hub that aligns resilience planning and implementation statewide
- Enables cross-sector dialogue and facilitates informed resilience decision-making
- Engages with the public, localities, regional, state and federal partners, and NGO's in the interest of increasing resilience for Virginians
- Convenes the Interagency Resilience Management Team (IRMT)
- Prepares Resilience Status Update to the Governor and General Assembly every 2 years (beginning July 1 2025)

Building Flood Resilience in Virginia

2020

Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework released

Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) is established

2021

Coastal Resilience Master Plan, Phase I released

CFPF Round 1 awards \$7.8M in grants

CFPF Round 2 awards \$24.5M in grants

2022

Coastal Resilience Master Plan codified

Coastal Resilience Technical Advisory Committee codified

Resilient Virginia Revolving Loan Fund (RVRF) established

CFPF Round 3 awards \$65.4M in grants

2023

Office of Resilience Planning established

Status of Flood Resilience Report released

Resilience Coordination Working Group report recommendations

CFPF Round 4 awards \$53.9M in grants

RVRF receives \$100M in General Fund appropriation & Round 1 offers \$12.5M in loans

2024

Community Outreach and Engagement Plan released

Flood Resilience Advisory Committee established

Interagency Resilience Management Team established

Chief Resilience Officer strengthened and Virginia Office of Resilience established

CFPF receives \$100M in General Fund appropriation & Round 5 offers \$85M in grants and loans

Questions?