

NATURE

VIRGINIA

Summer 2020 • nature.org/virginia



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Virginia Coast Reserve at 50: A Beacon of Hope

In protecting an entire coastal system in 1970, our visionary predecessors also set up one of the most important living laboratories in the world. From landmark migratory bird research to innovative marine restoration, The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve continues to produce groundbreaking conservation science as we embark on our next half-century on the Eastern Shore. Every day, TNC and our partners unlock new knowledge, including better ways to protect coastal communities around the world from the harshest impacts of climate change—offering a beacon of hope for people and nature. Our natural world offers us sanctuary in challenging times; nature also offers us almost everything else on which our lives and livelihoods depend. Thank you for helping protect it.

Locke Ogens, Virginia Director



Virginia Coast Reserve volunteers harvesting eelgrass seeds © Alex Novak/TNC

Saving Seagrass

Celebrating the world's largest seagrass restoration

The largest, most successful seagrass restoration project in the world marks two major milestones this year. First, recent analysis shows that the spread of eelgrass across Virginia's seaside bays has reached a remarkable 9,000 acres. Second, Professor Robert "JJ" Orth, who spearheaded the project in partnership with The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve (VCR) and who pioneered new, more efficient techniques, is passing the torch upon his retirement this year from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Celebrating both Dr. Orth's exceptional career and VCR's 50th anniversary, TNC anticipates a new report this summer documenting the myriad benefits of seagrass restoration for nature and communities. Learn more at nature.org/vcr.

Virginia Coast Reserve Hosts College Students

In early March, students from Old Dominion University in Norfolk and Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, spent spring break at The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve. Dr. Hans-Peter Plag, professor of ocean, earth and atmospheric sciences at ODU, led a group of students researching climate change impacts and developing recommendations for TNC and our partners to increase resilience. The Dickinson students, meanwhile, performed volunteer services ranging from trail maintenance to oyster reef restoration.



© Daniel White/TNC



Floating the James River © Jack Looney

Virginia Getaways

Preserves and public lands to visit this summer

Whether you prefer digging your toes into shifting sand and scanning the sea or planting your hiking boots on solid rock and gazing across blue ridges, you can avoid the crowds and find your peaceful summer getaway right here in Virginia. The Nature Conservancy works to protect timeless views, but summer is fleeting, so our staff and volunteer photographers are sharing inside information to help you make the most of your time exploring Virginia's outdoors. To experience nature's "peak" season, for example, you can hike to stunning overlooks at our Warm Springs Mountain Preserve; then beat the heat with a cool stream or lake dip in the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests or at Douthat State Park. Or soak up the sun's warmth and vitamin D along the Eastern Shore of Virginia, home to TNC's Brownsville Preserve at the Virginia Coast Reserve, to several national wildlife refuges, and to the forested bluffs and sandy Chesapeake Bay beaches of Kiptopeke State Park. Plus, learn where to rest and refuel yourself along the way. Plan your getaway today at nature.org/virginia.

Visiting the Virginia Coast Reserve

The Cummings Birding and Wildlife Trail at Brownsville Preserve, our Eastern Shore headquarters, features wooded uplands, expansive marsh views, and opportunities to observe a variety of birds and other life. For information on when and how you can visit our barrier islands, please call the Virginia Coast Reserve office at (757) 442-3049.



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Richmond Professionals Conservation Group

Members of the Richmond Professionals Conservation Group (RPCG) enjoy access to educational opportunities with thought leaders from The Nature Conservancy in Virginia, along with invitations to field trips and social events.

By joining RPCG, you will have the ability to combine your financial support with that of your peers to dramatically increase the impact of your giving. As a new member of the RPCG, you also will be tapping into a local network of like-minded



Courtesy of Richmond Region Tourism

professionals. Collectively, you will be engaged in a shared endeavor to preserve and protect our environment through your activities and gifts. Through the RPCG, you and your fellow members are able to leverage your individual interests, energy and resources to make a real difference in the Richmond area.

Membership dues start at \$1,000 per household per year, and members are encouraged to help recruit friends and colleagues who share your interest in conservation. For more information, call Blair Bowens, associate director of philanthropy, at (804) 249-3423 or email her at blair.bowens@tnc.org.