

# Bay View Wetlands Restoration

## Northumberland County, Virginia



*The beaches provide significant habitat for the Northeastern beach tiger beetle and are protected by a conservation easement. ©NNLC*

### Restoring and Protecting Wetlands in North America's Largest Estuary

The Bay View wetlands site is a tidal and non-tidal wetland restoration project of the Virginia Aquatic Resources Trust Fund (VARTF) completed in partnership with the Northern Neck Land Conservancy (NNLC). Located in Northumberland County along Ball Creek, the project protects 223 acres of land along the Chesapeake Bay and restores nearly 10 acres of wetlands. The site is situated between two Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Natural Area Preserves—Dameron Marsh and Hughlett Point—and provides an important corridor of connectivity for various migratory birds as well as important nursery and spawning habitat for fish, shellfish, waterfowl and raptors such as osprey and bald eagles. The site also protects an area that has been designated as significant habitat for the federally-threatened Northeastern beach tiger beetle.

### Quick Facts

- Preserves over 127 acres of existing tidal and non-tidal wetlands in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Creates over 4 acres of non-tidal wetlands and restore or enhance nearly 9 acres of tidal wetlands.
- Protects important nursery and spawning habitat for fish, shellfish, waterfowl, migratory shorebirds, raptors and more.
- Provides habitat for the federally-threatened Northeastern beach tiger beetle.



*The mitigation site is located in Northumberland County, between two DCR Natural Area Preserves.*



## Pre-restoration Conditions

The 223-acre property consists of mature mixed hardwoods, forested wetlands, tidal marsh and a 14-acre former agricultural field, situated along Ball Creek and adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay. The property contains nearly 10 acres of non-tidal wetlands within the property interior and nearly 40 acres of tidal wetlands along Ball Creek. Over 125 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands are preserved through mitigation activities.

A small portion of tidal wetlands are impacted by and being managed for the presence of *Phragmites australis*. Also known as the common reed, *Phragmites* is a non-native, invasive wetland grass that grows in fresh, brackish, and saline waters and in the moist soils of tidal and nontidal wetlands. *Phragmites* can displace native wetland plants, reduce biodiversity and crowd out wildlife habitat.

## Restoration Activities

In addition to preserving over 125 acres of wetlands, VARTF is restoring and reforesting the former agricultural field to functioning tidal and nontidal wetlands. VARTF manages treatment the *Phragmites* to enhance the tidal wetlands, helping to re-establish native wetland vegetation and improve fish and wildlife habitat. These mitigation activities protect wetland resources and habitat and will improve water quality by removing agricultural inputs and sedimentation into Ball Creek and the Chesapeake Bay.

## Current Status

The project is expected to go to construction in 2023. Once construction is complete, the project will be monitored and managed as needed to ensure ecological success.



Restored tidal marsh along Ball Creek. © TNC



Tidal marsh bordering the Chesapeake Bay © NNLC



These tidal marshes and ponds are important habitats for a multitude of fauna. © NNLC