

VIMS Living Shoreline Research & Demonstration Projects Walking Tour

Led by Karen Duhring & Donna Bilkovic

VIMS Center for Coastal Resources Management

The VIMS Teaching Marsh is a 1-acre created wetland area with a salt marsh, freshwater pond, native plant garden, and a mini-oyster restoration reef built with recycled shell. There are two living shoreline project types here, including a planted tidal marsh by itself & a planted tidal marsh with a marsh sill (hybrid type project). The VIMS beach nearby has an offshore breakwater system with beach nourishment and planted dune vegetation. This demonstrates a third living shoreline project type for higher energy shorelines. We would also walk through a forested riparian buffer between these 2 locations.

Here is the suggested schedule for a walking tour to see these 3 demonstration sites. This would be a fairly easy walk on paved & unpaved surfaces, including gravel paths, an elevated boardwalk, and a sand beach. Comfortable, closed toe footwear is advised & we can keep everyone's feet dry.

1:15 - 2:00

Teaching Marsh tour (Karen Duhring, Teaching Marsh caretaker) - project history & habitat elements (non-structural living shoreline, hybrid marsh sill, native plant demo garden, storm water treatment wetland)

2:00 - 2:15

CCRM living shoreline research summary (Donna Bilkovic, CCRM research scientist) - recent studies comparing living shoreline marsh sills with natural, revetment, & bulkhead shorelines will be described, including habitat tradeoffs & nutrient reduction potential

2:15 - 2:30

Walk over to VIMS beach via coastal forest boardwalk

2:30 - 3:15

VIMS offshore breakwater & beach nourishment project tour (Karen Duhring) - this erosion protection project built in 2010 will be described, including how the artificial beach was designed and how the planted dune habitat has evolved. Donna Bilkovic will describe another CCRM living shoreline research project that compared the abundance and diversity of animals associated with the rock breakwater structures.

3:15 - 3:30

Transition back to Watermen's Hall

