

Mathews County, VA  
Wednesday, January 6, 2016

## Chapter 122. Sand Dunes

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Mathews County 6-24-1980; amended in its entirety at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I). Subsequent amendments noted where applicable.]

### GENERAL REFERENCES

Erosion and sediment control — See Ch. 50.

Floodplain management — See Ch. 63.

Parks and recreation — See Ch. 109.

Subdivision of land — See Ch. 140.

Wetlands — See Ch. 166.

### § 122-1. Statutory authority; construal of provisions.

The Board of Supervisors of Mathews County, acting pursuant to Chapter 14 (§ 28.2-1400 et seq.) of Title 28.2 of the Code of Virginia, adopts this chapter regulating the use and development of coastal primary sand dunes. Whenever coastal primary sand dunes are referred to in this chapter, such references shall also include beaches.

### § 122-2. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context requires a different meaning, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

#### BEACH

The shoreline zone comprised of unconsolidated sandy material upon which there is a mutual interaction of the forces of erosion, sediment transport and deposition that extends from the low-water line landward to where there is a marked change in either material composition or physiographic form, such as a dune, bluff or marsh, or, where no such change can be identified, to the line of woody vegetation (usually the effective limit of stormwaves) or the nearest impermeable man-made structure, such as a bulkhead, revetment or paved road.

#### COASTAL PRIMARY SAND DUNE or DUNE

A mound of unconsolidated sandy soil which is contiguous to mean high water, whose landward and lateral limits are marked by a change in grade from 10% or greater to less than 10% and upon which is growing any of the following species: American beach grass (*Ammophilla breviligulata*); beach heather (*Hudsonia tometosa*); dune bean (*Strophostylis* spp.); dusty miller (*Artemisia stelleriana*); saltmeadow hay (*Spartina patens*); seabeach sandwort (*Arenaria peploides*); sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*); sea rocket (*Cakile edentula*); seaside goldenrod (*Solidago sempervirens*); and short dune grass (*Panicum ararum*). For purposes of this chapter, "coastal primary sand dune" shall not include any mound of sand, sandy soil or dredge spoil deposited by any person for the purpose of temporary storage.

#### COMMISSION

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

**COMMISSIONER**

The Commissioner of Marine Resources.

**COUNTY**

The Board of Supervisors of Mathews County.

**GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITY**

Any of the services provided by the commonwealth or a county, city or town to its citizens for the purpose of maintaining public facilities, including but not limited to such services as constructing, repairing and maintaining roads; providing streetlights and sewage facilities; supplying and treating water; and constructing public buildings.

**WETLANDS BOARD or BOARD**

The Board created pursuant to § 28.2-1303 of the Code of Virginia.

## § 122-3. Permitted uses and activities.

The following uses of and activities in dunes are authorized if otherwise permitted by law:

- A. The construction and maintenance of noncommercial walkways which do not alter the contour of the coastal primary sand dune.
- B. The construction and maintenance of observation platforms which are not an integral part of any dwelling and which do not alter the contour of the coastal primary sand dune.
- C. The planting of beach grasses or other vegetation for the purpose of stabilizing coastal primary sand dunes.
- D. The placement of sand fences or other material on or adjacent to coastal primary sand dunes for the purpose of stabilizing such features, except that this provision shall not be interpreted to authorize the placement of any material which presents a public health or safety hazard.
- E. Sand replenishment activities of any private or public concern, provided that no sand shall be removed from any coastal primary sand dune unless authorized by lawful permit.
- F. The normal maintenance of any groin, jetty, riprap, bulkhead or other structure designed to control beach erosion which may abut a coastal primary sand dune.
- G. The normal maintenance or repair of existing roads, highways, railroad beds and facilities of the United States, this commonwealth or any of its counties or cities, or of any person, provided that no coastal primary sand dunes are altered.
- H. Outdoor recreational activities, provided that the activities do not alter the natural contour of the coastal primary sand dune or destroy the vegetation growing thereon.
- I. The conservation and research activities of the Commission, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and other conservation-related agencies.
- J. The construction and maintenance of aids to navigation which are authorized by governmental authority.
- K. Activities pursuant to any emergency declaration by the governing body of any local government or the Governor of the commonwealth or any public health officer for the purposes of protecting the public health and safety.

- L. Governmental activity in coastal primary sand dunes owned or leased by the commonwealth or a political subdivision thereof.

## § 122-4. Application for permit; fee.

- A. Any person who desires to use or alter any coastal primary sand dune within Mathews County, other than for the purpose of conducting the activities specified in § 122-3 of this chapter, shall first file an application directly with the Wetlands Board or with the Commission.
- B. The permit application shall include the following:
- (1) The name and address of the applicant.
  - (2) A detailed description of the proposed activities and a map, drawn to an appropriate and uniform scale, showing the area of dunes directly affected, the location of the proposed work thereon, the area of any proposed fill and excavation, the location, width, depth and length of any disposal area and the location of all existing and proposed structures, sewage collection and treatment facilities, utility installations, roadways and other related appurtenances or facilities, including those on adjacent uplands.
  - (3) A description of the type of equipment to be used and the means of equipment access to the activity site.
  - (4) The names and addresses of owners of record of adjacent land.
  - (5) An estimate of cost.
  - (6) The primary purpose of the project.
  - (7) Any secondary purposes of the project, including further projects.
  - (8) The public benefit to be derived from the proposed project.
  - (9) A complete description of measures to be taken during and after the alteration to reduce detrimental off-site effects.
  - (10) The completion date of the proposed work, project or structure.
  - (11) Such additional materials and documentation as the Wetlands Board may require.
- C. A nonrefundable processing fee shall accompany each permit application. The fee shall be set by the Board of Supervisors with due regard for the services to be rendered, including the time, skill and Administrator's expense. No person shall be required to file two separate applications for permits if the proposed project will require permits under this chapter and Chapter 13 (§ 28.2-1300 et seq.) of Title 28.2 of the Code of Virginia. Under those circumstances, the fee shall be established pursuant to this chapter.

## § 122-5. Inspection of documents.

All applications, maps and documents submitted shall be open for public inspection at the office of the recording officer of Mathews County.

## § 122-6. Public hearing on application; notice.

Not later than 60 days after receipt of a complete application, the Wetlands Board shall hold a public hearing on the application. The applicant, local governing body, Commissioner, owner of record of any land adjacent to the coastal primary sand dunes in question, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the State Water Control Board, the Department of Transportation and any governmental agency expressing an interest in the application shall be notified of the hearing. The Board shall mail these notices not less than 20 days prior to the date set for the hearing. The Wetlands Board shall also cause notice of the hearing to be published at least once a week for two weeks prior to such hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in this county. The costs of publication shall be paid by the applicant.

## § 122-7. Determination on application.

- A. Approval of a permit application shall require the affirmative vote of three members of a five-member Board or four members of a seven-member Board.
- B. The Chairperson of the Board, or in his or her absence the Acting Chairperson, may administer oaths and compel the attendance of witnesses. Any person may appear and be heard at the public hearing. Each witness at the hearing may submit a concise written statement of his or her testimony. The Board shall make a record of the proceeding, which shall include the application, any written statements of witnesses, a summary of statements of all witnesses, the findings and decision of the Board and the rationale for the decision.
- C. The Board shall make its determination within 30 days of the hearing. If the Board fails to act within that time, the application shall be deemed approved. Within 48 hours of its determination, the Board shall notify the applicant and the Commissioner of its determination. If the Board fails to make a determination within the thirty-day period, it shall promptly notify the applicant and the Commission that the application is deemed approved.
- D. If the Board's decision is reviewed or appealed, the Board shall transmit the record of its hearing to the Commissioner. Upon a final determination by the Commission, the record shall be returned to the Board. The record shall be open for public inspection at the office of the recording officer of Mathews County.

## § 122-8. Bond; suspension or revocation of permit.

The Board may require a reasonable bond or letter of credit, in an amount and with surety and conditions satisfactory to it, securing to the commonwealth compliance with the conditions and limitations set forth in the permit. The Board may, after a hearing held pursuant to this chapter, suspend or revoke a permit if the applicant has failed to comply with any of the conditions or limitations set forth in the permit or has exceeded the scope of the work described in the application. The Board may, after a hearing, suspend a permit if the applicant fails to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the application.

## § 122-9. Preservation of sand dunes; economic development.

In fulfilling its responsibilities under this chapter, the Board shall preserve and protect coastal primary sand dunes and beaches and prevent their despoliation and destruction. However, whenever practical, the Board shall accommodate necessary economic development in a manner consistent with the protection of these features.

## § 122-10. Criteria for granting permits; denial and

## resubmission.

- A. In deciding whether to grant, grant in modified form or deny a permit, the Board shall consider the following:
- (1) The testimony of any person in support of or in opposition to the permit application.
  - (2) The impact of the proposed development on the public health, safety and welfare.
  - (3) The proposed development's conformance with standards prescribed in § 28.2-1408 of the Code of Virginia and guidelines promulgated pursuant to § 28.2-1401 of the Code of Virginia.
- B. The Board shall grant the permit if all of the following criteria are met:
- (1) The anticipated public and private benefit of the proposed activity exceeds its anticipated public and private detriment.
  - (2) The proposed development conforms to the standards prescribed in § 28.2-1408 of the Code of Virginia and guidelines promulgated pursuant to § 28.2-1401 of the Code of Virginia.
  - (3) The proposed activity does not violate the purposes and intent of this chapter or Chapter 14 (§ 28.2-1400 et seq.) of Title 28.2 of the Code of Virginia.
- C. If the Board finds that any of the criteria listed in Subsection **B** of this section are not met, the Board shall deny the permit application but allow the applicant to resubmit the application in modified form.

## § 122-11. Permit to be signed and notarized; copy to the Commissioner.

The permit shall be in writing, signed by the Chairperson of the Board and notarized. A copy of the permit shall be transmitted to the Commissioner.

## § 122-12. Permit expiration date.

No permit shall be granted without an expiration date established by the Board. Upon proper application, the Board may extend the permit expiration date.

## § 122-13. Compensation for injury.

No permit granted by a Wetlands Board shall in any way affect the right of any person to seek compensation for any injury in fact incurred by him or her because of the permitted activity.