Virginia speaking –

Hello! My name is Virginia Witmer. I am the Outreach Coordinator for the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program. On behalf or Margaret, Joanne and myself, thank you for participating on the webinar today. We are excited to share with you a brief highlight of our efforts, through regional native plant marketing, to build demand for natives plants, to increase the supply of native plants, and create places where people can visit and see natives at their best.

A quick note: the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program is a network of state agencies and localities. We are headquartered at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, which serves as the lead coordinating agency of the network. Virginia CZM is 100% funded by an annual grant from NOAA through the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

45 minutes and 15 for questions.
In our presentation, I’ll first provide some background on why we are focusing on native plant marketing. I’ll give a crash course on the approach we are taking through community-based social marketing. Then Margaret and Joanne, campaign team members extraordinaire, will go into more detail about the components of the regional native plant marketing campaign strategies, and the many ways you can be involved.
Virginia speaking –

Foremost, we need your help in conveying the message that natives are beautiful, economical and environmentally the right choice.
Virginia speaking –

However, people need to see and experience the wonderful variety of native plants Virginia has to offer.
Virginia speaking –

As Master Naturalists, we know we do not need to convince you that natives are not “weeds”!

Background - They evolved in specific areas without cultivation. They are part of the historic fabric of our natural communities.

Native species evolved within specific regions and dispersed throughout their range without known human involvement.

They form the primary component of the living landscape and provide food and shelter for native animal species.

Native plants co-evolved with native animals over many thousands to millions of years and have formed complex and interdependent relationships. Our native fauna depend on native flora to provide food and cover. Many animals require specific plants for their survival.
Virginia speaking –

Our challenge is that over the past decades development has rapidly increased in areas of Virginia, particularly in Virginia’s coastal zone. With this, we see more native vegetation replaced with lawns, houses, and pavement.

This has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the population of our native songbirds, pollinators, and other wildlife. The visual that really sticks with me is how a wide expanse of lawn is literally a desert to bird parents in need of the thousands of caterpillars it takes to raise just one nest of hungry chicks.

The loss of vegetation has also resulted in increased pollution and runoff to our waterways.

Additionally, some non-native plants sold are very invasive, which compounds our problems when they escape into our remaining natural areas.

You can help us achieve our goals to not only increase the demand for natives at local retailers, further encouraging local growers to supply them...but to change a social norm and what appeals to our neighbors and communities.
Virginia speaking –

We probably also don’t need to sell you all on the benefits of natives! These are the key messages that are communicated to gardeners through our regional native plant marketing campaigns.

As you know, using native species in landscaping reduces the expense of maintaining cultivated landscapes and minimizes the likelihood of introducing new invasive species.

Natives thrive because they are adapted to our climate
Native plants often require less water, fertilizer and pesticide, thus adding fewer chemicals to the landscape and maintaining water quality in nearby rivers and streams. Fewer inputs mean time and money saved for the gardener.

Natives support a vast network of wildlife
Native plants increase the presence of desirable wildlife, such as birds and butterflies, and provide sanctuaries for these animals as they journey between summer and winter habitats.

The natural habitat you create with native plants can become an outdoor classroom for
children, or a place for you to find peace and quiet after a busy day.

Native plants evoke a strong sense of place and regional character
Virginia speaking –

The benefits we are selling through our use of social marketing are the time and money saved on planting natives.
Virginia speaking –

Only native plants will give:

A Sense of Place...which is one of the things we tap into with our regional marketing approach. Increasing native vegetation also provides superior wildlife habitat and protects bio-diversity.
Virginia speaking –

You do not need to convince these guys that increasing native vegetative cover is the right thing to do!

In the mid-Atlantic, and nationally pollinators are threatened by habitat loss, including a decline in the native plant communities that support these animals. The federal and state government is responding to the sense of urgency with the national Pollinator Protection Act and state Pollinator Protection Strategy.

The regional native plant campaigns play an important part in getting the message out and you can help!

The Mid-Atlantic is not only strikingly diverse in its ecological diversity, it is remarkable for its range of pollinators, including 19 bumble bee species and thousands of other species of native bees, butterflies, hover flies, flower-visiting beetles, wasps, and moths. Native plants are usually the best sources of nectar and pollen for native pollinators. Many pollinators have developed a specialized relationship with certain native plants.

As a group these pollinators maintain healthy, productive plant communities, provide food that sustain wildlife, and play an essential role in crop production.
You can help by providing the flower-rich habitat that these pollinators need. Nectar is a primary food source to adult bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Female bees collect pollen for their offspring.
Virginia speaking –

Another important point to stress to the public is that even ‘SMALL’ nature in yards can have a “BIG” impact. This is especially true because as you connect yards, and other community properties, you are creating natural “stepping stones” or green corridors.
Virginia speaking –

Efforts to increase and protect the native vegetation that is undeniably a foundation of Virginia’s ecological integrity has been ongoing for decades.

The Virginia CZM Program has invested significant funding and effort over its 30 year history on land and water-based habitat restoration and protection, and improving the quality of coastal waters, so preserving our native vegetative cover is a significant goal.

Increasing the amount of native vegetation in Virginia’s coastal zone can accomplish many goals, including 4 of the ten goals of the Virginia CZM Program.

This is why the Virginia CZM Program has been funding regional native plant marketing campaigns in Virginia’s coastal zone and has initiated the Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership, which is facilitating the expansion of the regional campaign model through out Virginia.
Virginia speaking –

In spring 2009, the Virginia CZM Program and its partners launched the Plant ES Natives campaign using proven social marketing tools and techniques with a focus on making planting natives fun, easy and popular. Plant ES Natives is going beyond awareness to change individual behavior and make planting natives the social norm rather than the exception.
Virginia speaking –

For those of you unfamiliar with the term, I wanted to give you a quick overview of what we mean by social marketing.

I often get the question – Do you mean social media? The quick answer – no, these terms are not syn·on·y·mous.

However social media can be a multi-media component of a community-based social marketing campaign strategy, which is a more deliberative and comprehensive approach.

Social marketing campaigns ask who must do what differently, what benefits can we offer them for changing their behavior, and what barriers or obstacles – real or perceived - are stopping them from engaging in the desired behavior.

Social marketing sets out to change behavior and ultimately a social norm for that behavior.
To answer these questions, it is key to talk to and, most importantly to listen to, the people you are trying to reach.

Developing effective Social Marketing strategies means avoiding making premature assumptions about your audience(s): who they are; their attitudes, awareness and knowledge; the barriers to the behavior you want them to engage in (real or perceived) ...in this case planting native plants; the benefits they would receive in engaging in the behavior...a beautiful and colorful, and less needy landscape, along with the birds and butterflies they like to watch; and, the avenues to reach or communicate with them – how do we most effectively convey our message to our audience...where do they go for their information and what language is best to use. Conducting research is the important first step in developing a social marketing strategy. Yes, we could have assumed that our research would show that too many people still believe that native plants are scraggly and ugly, but our research also provided a wealth of information and some surprises.
Virginia speaking –

With your research in hand, you are ready to design your campaign strategy.

A Community-based Social Marketing strategy uses “tools” that have been proven to change behavior.

One of these tools, prompts, are visual or auditory aids that remind us to carry out an activity, or to engage in a behavior, that we might otherwise forget.

Your ultimate goal is to make the behavior you want people to engage in, a new “social norm”. Norms guide how we should behave. If we observe others acting unsustainably or badly, like throwing trash on the ground, the more likely it is we are more likely to feel like act similarly. In contrast, if we observe members of our community acting sustainably we are more likely to do the same.

Multi-media is an important component to an effective social marketing campaign. Make it colorful, vivid, and captivating.
Virginia speaking –

So, the Plant ES Natives regional (social) marketing campaign strategy was designed after listening to Eastern Shore residents, and identifying: the barriers that were inhibiting their planting of natives; the benefits they would receive by increasing their use of natives; and the outlets through which they receive information.

The campaign's planning team then selected social marketing methods that would most effectively convey a campaign message that would resonate with this audience: “They’re Shore Beautiful!”
Virginia speaking –

There is now a campaign, or developing campaign, in every region of the coastal zone - with the exception of the Middle Peninsula.

Note that the design of the campaign logos visually link these efforts as a broader coordinated and collaborative marketing initiative.
Virginia speaking –

Ultimately we hope to have campaigns in every part of Virginia. Beginning with the Piedmont Native Plant Initiative, the regional social marketing campaign model is spreading westward.

How are the regions for these campaigns being identified? We worked with Natural Heritage Division staff at the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation to first delineate planting regions in Virginia’s coastal zone, and to develop regional native plant lists based on the new Flora of Virginia. Later Natural Heritage (Chris Ludwig) expanded this map state-wide. The hash shows the regions covered by current and upcoming campaigns, with the exception of the Roanoke, Shenandoah Valley and Highland county areas.

Margaret and Joanne are going to highlight the opportunities to volunteer with existing campaigns.
We also need partners to bring together other organizations in regions without a campaign to get the conversation started.
The campaigns also are programmatically linked through the use of shared campaign techniques and materials – multi-media elements of the Plant ES Natives Campaign strategy have been easily transferrable to address barriers common in all the regions to planting natives - such as plant tags at garden centers, regional native plant, and demonstration gardens. Many of the same organizations are participating on the regional campaign planning teams, including the Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. Research tools and results, campaign strategies and materials (including point of sale and collaboration with local plant retailers and providers), and campaign successes, fails and challenges are all readily shared.

In our focus on supporting the local economy, we are using a series of noticeable, eye catching, self-explanatory prompts at point of sale – such as banners, signs, and plant tags.

As the adage goes, seeing is believing, so we have been establishing demonstration gardens to showcase the beauty of Virginia’s native plants, working with local community groups and businesses. These community places are helping establish a “native plant norm”.

And we conveying our message through channels our audience gets their information, and doing in it in a colorful, vivid, and captivating way. This includes regional plant guides that showcase the beauty and variety of Virginia’s natives, and many other print and on-line materials.

Margaret and Joanne will now highlight the components of our regional strategies and
the types of activities that could use your talents.
Margaret – Multi-media materials produced in the regional native plant campaigns have been easily transferrable.
Don’t alienate people
Information is at hand where our audience looks for it.

About two years ago the Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership launched a new website as a state-wide hub for information about Virginia's native plants and the marketing and Education resources the partners have to offer. Help is also needed to populate state-wide information places to see and purchase native plants. Contact Virginia if you are interested.
Help is needed to identify and gather state-wide information about places people can go to see natives and to purchase natives. Contact Virginia if you are interested in helping populate this information for the Plant Virginia Natives website.
Information is at hand where our audience looks for it.
INFORMATION AT THE READY:

Why Native Plants?
1. Moderately bred, native plants and add beauty to your garden. Not invasive.
2. Lower maintenance: Native plants are adapted to local conditions.
3. Good for the Earth: Native plants support butterflies, birds, and pollinators and healthy water!

How

Super-Low-Maintenance Native Plant Gardens
All gardens require some maintenance, but if you want to keep it to a minimum while providing wildlife habitat that looks neat and tidy, here are some suggestions.

Plant trees
- Trees support overhead and add beauty to your garden. If you can't find a tree that works in your area, consider planting a native one in your yard. Now is the time to do this.

Plant shrubs and vines
- Shrubs and vines are great for filling in gaps and add a variety of colors and textures to your garden. Now is the time to plant them.

Spread the word – work with us
There are so many great ways that we can work together to inform and motivate others on the benefits and beauty of planting NOVA Natives.

1. Let us know you're interested
   - Contact us if you're interested in volunteering or hosting a garden. We can help you get started!

Volunteers

VOLUNTEER
Sign up here for 2019 Volunteers!
INFORMATION AT THE READY:
Create resources that make it easy for volunteers to help

Why Plant Northern Virginia Native Plants?
- Natives enhance your property by increasing value.
- Natives attract butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.
- Natives require less care than non-native plants.
- Natives help maintain local water and soil quality.
- Natives provide habitat for wildlife.

A native plant in every yard!
Native plants:
- Attract wildlife
- Provide beauty
- Provide natural ecosystems
- Add value to your property
- Improve water quality

Enhance your property while saving the birds and butterflies

Nurture Nature: Plant NOVA Natives

Native plants:
- Provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and bees
- Add beauty to any location, such as a wildlife garden
- Require less maintenance and water once established
- Reduce or eliminates the need for pesticides
- Improve water quality

Make A Difference Plant Natives

Find out about native plants at your local garden center, native plant nursery, and garden center plant sales.

www.plantnovanatives.org
Presentation materials. Hometown Habitat
Events you arrange – fairs, farmers markets, plant sales, environmental forums, community forums
HOAs, garden clubs, Rotary, workplaces – a Community Leader program and training is a part of some of the regional native plant campaign strategies.
Faith communities – lots of land, educate membership, educate community
Schools – environmental clubs, school gardens. Stormwater facilities. The CURRICULUM is key.
Libraries – exhibit space, talks – they are looking for stuff
Information at the Ready:
Share short articles

Save the Planet for Under $30

Would you like to help the birds and butterflies but have a limited budget for landscaping? What the living world needs from Northern Virginians is for us to plant native plants, and lots of them. Luckily, we can obtain seedlings of several trees and shrubs for next to nothing...
### INFORMATION AT THE READY:

Help populate social media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Scary stuff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Free stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nextdoor.com</td>
<td>Humor</td>
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<td>Videos</td>
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<td>Photos</td>
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Reprint. Social media. NextDoor.com
Information at the Ready:  
Traditional media – writers needed!

- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Newsletters
- Radio – ads or community spots
Colorful regional native plant guides include a plant list based on the Flora of Virginia, and highlights the beauty of natives.
These regional guides are based on the Flora of Virginia, and much easier to carry! The Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora made it easy to identify the species native to Virginia by county.

There also is now an app of the Flora of Virginia for Android and Apple devices.
We are here to help you sell the plants you already stock
The relationship is all – keep the message positive! (Avoid talk of invasives, lawns, pesticides)
A series of noticeable, eye-catching, self-explanatory prompts at point of sale makes it easier to find natives.

The campaigns need garden center liaisons:
Help reach out to garden centers about partnering
Help tag native plants
Coordinate an exhibit at the garden center, and talk with customers
Inexpensive. So customers can walk along the aisles and pick out the ones with red stickers.
Enterprising nurseries recognize that events bring customers who increase sales – so offer your services and knowledge base.
No regional campaign is a 501-C3. They are a partnership of interested parties (although 501-C3 status can help facilitate financial contributions and grants, such as the Plant NOVA Natives campaign partnership with the non-profit Potowmack Chapter of VNPS, which is receiving contributions on behalf of the campaign through the Northern Virginia Community Foundation). Strength in unity.
Regional commission, foresters, conservation districts, fish and game, stormwater divisions, parks, schools, etc
Nonprofits – Sierra Club, Audubon, “Friends of” groups, interfaith groups, Issac Walton Leagues
Businesses – native plant landscapers, landscaping associations, property management associations, realtors, bird stores, native plant suppliers
Collective action – each organization, or volunteer, partnering with the campaigns in whatever way fits with its goals and structure

• Guide sales
• Publicity
  • Email lists
  • Newsletters
  • Social media
• Events
• Financial help
Plant ID markers in demonstration gardens help visitors identify the natives Latin and common name, and provides a line drawing, description, and characteristics of the plant, its growing requirements, and interesting facts and history.
Let other people do the work! You don’t have to make demo gardens yourself. Libraries, government buildings, businesses, parks, etc
Signage helps connect the plantings and tell the story.
The educational value of signage is high –

Plant ID markers installed in demos installed by or identified by regional native plant campaigns have plant ID markers installed with that include the campaign logo and the Latin and common name of the species, a line drawing, description, and characteristics of the plant, its growing requirements, and interesting facts and history. As these markers are produced by Smart Garden Signs we have been helping to build their catalogue of native plant information.

Michelle has worked with a local producer with good prices and excellent service: PlantsMap
As the regional campaign effort grew, we reached out to our state agencies and other partners and established a state-wide partnership to:

*Identify and prioritize opportunities to collaborate on Virginia native plant communication and marketing efforts and form cohesive and coordinated messaging and strategies to increase local availability and use of native plants state-wide.*

During these meetings, we established the Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership - a forum to collaborate and coordinate, leading to more consistent messaging to the general public and greater efficiencies in the use of limited resources.

The partnership has grown quite a bit since those first meetings. A steering team of lead partners for the VNPMP evolved, and the current member organizations are shown here, and represents an array of public and private organizations and businesses interested in collaborating to increase the local and statewide availability and use of Virginia native plants.
The steering team identified needs and projects that could be more effectively and efficiently addressed and supported through Partnership efforts.

To engage other interested organizations, businesses and individuals, the Virginia CZM Program and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries hosted a forum in May 2013 to gather input on priorities for the partnership.

In August 2013, the Team prioritized the following priorities:

1) Support development of a Virginia conservation landscaping certification;

2) Develop new strategies to help increase the availability of native plants including a framework and guidelines for native plant seed collection/propagation; and

3) Develop new coordinated/collaborated state-wide native plant marketing strategies.

Another forum was held in January 2014 to solicit more specific ideas on addressing these priorities.
To address these priorities and to lay out a roadmap for our efforts, the Partnership’s steering team drafted an Action Plan. This was based on facilitated team discussions, and feedback from the two open forums.

The Action Plan is focused on strategies and actions to address the five goals as you can see on this slide.

Members of the partnership have been coordinating their activities and have collaborated on a number of projects, and achieved some of its priorities. If you are interested, I have brought copies of the Action Plan, which highlights our accomplishments to date.

For example:
1. With support from members of the partnership, the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional Certification Program was launched in 2016.
2. In 2014, the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association added a native plant section to
the Virginia Grower’s Guide. This will help us reach growers, landscape architects and designers, and contractors and is a great first step in highlighting and increasing the wholesale availability and distribution of Virginia natives. The 2014, 15, 16 and 2017 guides include ads highlighting the habitat value of native plants, the Flora of Virginia, the CBLP, and the availability of the regional guides. Over the last three summers, the Partnership has also exhibited at the VNA Field Day. In 2014, this included being recognized as a sponsor of the event, during which the VNLA paid for presentations by Doug Tallamy.

3. VNPS added webpage to their site to highlight availability of regional guides.

4. Virginia CZM partnered with DCR and the Natural Heritage Program, DGIF, the Flora Project and VNPS on an exhibit at the Executive Mansion in spring 2016.
Want to Help?!

Plant NOVA Natives
www.plantnovanatives.org
plantnovanatives@gmail.com

Other Regional Campaigns
or State-wide Effort:
Virginia.Witmer@deq.virginia.gov

Collaboration, communication,
Questions