

Video: Preserving life on a sand bar

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Fighting coastal erosion is one of many sustainability efforts conducted by University of Virginia researchers with the Virginia Coast Reserve Long Term Ecological Research program on Virginia's Eastern Shore.

With more than half of the world's population living on the coasts and along rivers, large population centers increasingly are experiencing the devastating effects of [severe storms](#), flooding, erosion and the loss of functioning infrastructure – as seen after recent hurricanes in Texas and Florida.

Capitalizing on UVA's strong environmental sciences research and sustainability programs, the University this year established a multi-disciplinary Environmental Resilience Institute, directed by environmental scientist Karen McGlathery. The institute brings into collaboration the creative minds of investigators from multiple fields – the sciences, economics, public policy, engineering, architecture, international law, behavior, the humanities, education and beyond – to tackle some of the stickiest problems involving interactions between humans and the environment.

As the climate changes, naturally and through human activity, societies will have to come up with a range of solutions and adaptations to this change on local, regional, national and global scales. The Environmental Resilience Institute's goal is to delve into problems and answer questions in ways that can viably sustain healthy environments.

"Environmental change is one of the biggest issues the world is facing,

and it cannot be dealt with by people working only independently and strictly within their disciplines," McGlathery said. "We have to collaborate, share ideas and find solutions together. It is at the intersection of disciplines where we can truly understand how complex systems work and discover solutions that make a difference."

Provided by University of Virginia

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