Internship at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge with the Fish and Wildlife Service through the Mitigation and Adaptation Research Institute at Old Dominion University

During this past summer, 2019, I spent the summer working at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge as a field technician on the property as well as doing investigative work on how sea level rise will effect the Refuge and the local community of Virginia Beach.

My responsibility as a field technician

❖ Sea turtle patrol that included identifying nest and moving if needed
❖ Removing invasive plant species, including; Johnsons Grass, Alligator Weed, Sand Hedge, and Beach Vitex
❖ Spraying pesticides on invasive plants
❖ Using GIS programs to map the invasive species and their removal.
❖ Pollinator surveys which included identifying flowers in the area.
❖ Removing wild hog traps with the USDA.
❖ Operating the fee booth for a day a week.

Impacts of sea level rise on Virginia Beach.

❖ Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise.
❖ It does have high dunes on the east side to protect against some level of rises on that side.
❖ It has a wind driven tidal system which changes the water levels of the Bay on the West side.
❖ An increase in sea level could cause Back Bay to need to shift, but due to construction there is no where for it to shift to.
❖ Due to the land being used to protect wildlife it will need natural solutions more than man made to protection against the rise.

For more information on the experience or research please contact Lexi Watson.
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