

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

SHORELINE

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Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*

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Meet the New CBES Executive Director

ShoreLine informed CBES members last month that Donna Bozza had joined the CBES staff as the new Executive Director. She has been working with us since late October and will take over her full responsibilities as the full time Executive Director in January. We recently had a chat with Bozza and asked her to share some insights on her background and why she was chosen to move CBES into the future as a full time organization. Please join ShoreLine in welcoming her to CBES.



With a last name like Bozza, can you share your Eastern Shore story?

It's true you don't see many "Bozzas" in Shore cemeteries! In 1986, I was blessed to discover the Shore, where my daughter Alex was later born and raised. The natural beauty blew us away and Shore folks define neighborly. It started from the first day we moved in and our neighbors Tommy and Francie Rayfield knocked on the door with lunch and cold beer – now that was a welcome! Later they took us around to local gatherings so we would feel at home. Even now, I marvel that if you pull off the road, it takes all of 60 seconds for someone to stop and help.

Sometimes I think we forget how amazing this little strip of land is, how wonderful it is to live a life cognizant of the tides and immersed in the cycle of planting and harvesting thanks to our family farms. It's so rare in today's world.

I grew up surrounded by farms in New Jersey; we picked wild blueberries in the woods as kids. By the time I was a teen, the countryside was basically paved over. I saw firsthand that overnight, unplanned growth is rarely in the best interest of the people who live there. So many were either taxed out then, or had to move when they retired.

How has your time on the Shore equipped you for this new position?

I am forever grateful for my years as a reporter for the *Eastern Shore News*. That was the era when newspapers were at their peak. I certainly got a handle on the Shore's political process reporting on both counties' meetings and town governments for six years. Just as important, I learned about Shore culture and Shore folks while clamming at sunrise with a local waterman, following a hospice nurse on her rounds, covering the conditions in Bayview with the local NAACP.

I felt I was truly home when, years ago, Tommy Savage told me, "We [the Shore] knocked the Jersey out of you!" Knowing the Shore intimately gives one the sensibilities essential for leading a pro-community group like CBES.

I received experience growing a local organization as the first director for the Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission. Over seven years with little staff and a talented team of volunteers, we took a stagnant commission and energized Shore Tour-

See "New CBES Executive Director," Cont'd on page 2

Consider this...

CBES members recently received their annual giving appeal. This is a critical year for CBES as it expands to a full-time Executive Director. Please give as generously as you can to support your growing organization.

The Nature Conservancy in Virginia invites you to join them at their annual

Brownsville Open House

Thursday, December 4

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Catch up with neighbors and meet Conservancy staff

Family and friends are welcome!

Tour the historic house and learn more about the work of the Virginia Coast Reserve. Enjoy hayrides, warm apple cider, and homemade treats.

11369 Brownsville Road
Nassawadox, VA 23413

Please call 442-3049 with questions or for directions.

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“New CBES Executive Director” *Cont’d from p. 1*

ism into an economic force. During my tenure, Virginia Tourism recognized the itty-bitty Eastern Shore as having the highest percentage increase in tourism revenue in the entire state.

I’m also proud to say I’m a lifetime member of CBES, joining a year or two after its inception. I greatly admired one of our founders, Suzanne Wescoat, and am honored to be in the position to help CBES continue to move forward.

Why do you feel CBES needs a full time executive director?

Fundamentally, it means moving from a part time to a full time organization. Our part time director for the last two decades, Denard Spady, and previous boards are to be commended for accomplishing so much for CBES and the Shore community. However, the world of volunteering has changed. With so many of us time-starved, CBES can no longer run on volunteer power alone, though it will continue to be essential to our success. Staff hours are needed to continue to do more of what CBES does best, as well as explore with our membership ways to expand on CBES’s mission.

If we are to remain a vital part of the Shore community, we need to grow and evolve to meet our growing community needs.

What would you like to see CBES tackle?

CBES is such a unique organization on the Shore. We bring diverse elements of the community to the table to address a broad range of concerns, be it adequate housing, education and job skills, protection of our natural resources, promoting sustainable growth, etc. And we do it in way no one else does – by advocating open government and citizen participation and by providing sound, well researched information to the public through our monthly journal *ShoreLine*, candidate forums and occasional public information forums.

We are only as strong as our membership, in numbers and in diversity. As a full time director, I will be able to work on increasing our membership and growing our Shore outreach. We can help do that with an updated website and other social media channels. This is especially important for engaging our young people.

Along the same lines, with diminished resources, newspapers aren’t able to provide comprehensive coverage of local issues. This increases the need to make *ShoreLine* and the information it provides more accessible to our residents.

To stay in touch with community issues and provide leadership, CBES needs to be at the table. I hope to increase CBES attendance and involvement at key meetings and organizations. Partnerships are so valuable in a community that has finite financial and manpower resources.

I believe that the CBES admirable past record of initiating and/or helping sponsor community studies needs to continue, along with assisting startups and mentoring fledgling community groups like we have done in the past with the Northampton Housing Trust, the Bayview Community, WE Decide, the Eastern Shore Land Trust, the Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper and Waste Watchers.

Along with the CBES board, I’m eager to hear from our members how they believe the CBES mission can be enhanced in other arenas. It’s an exciting and dynamic time for our organization.

What is your elevator speech on why someone should join CBES?

If you care about the Eastern Shore, join the caring people at CBES. Together we are a powerful voice, a powerful force for making the Eastern Shore a better place for everyone.



SAVE THE DATE!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Community Unity Day – Monday, January 19

Sea Turtle Strandings

By Kristine Williams, MS, LVT

Live Animal Care Technician, Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program

The Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program responds to sick, injured, and dead sea turtles and marine mammals along the coastline of Virginia. Stranding events offer unique opportunities to examine these animals and better understand the threats they face in a changing marine environment. There are five species of sea turtles that may strand in Virginia: loggerhead, Kemp's Ridley, green, leatherback, and hawksbill. Because sea turtles are cold-blooded, they are usually present in Virginia waters during the spring, summer, and fall. Common reasons for these species to strand include disease, parasite infestation, injuries from vessel strikes, fishery entanglements, ingestion of marine debris, and cold-stunning. Usually, sea turtles migrate to the south before water temperatures become too cool.



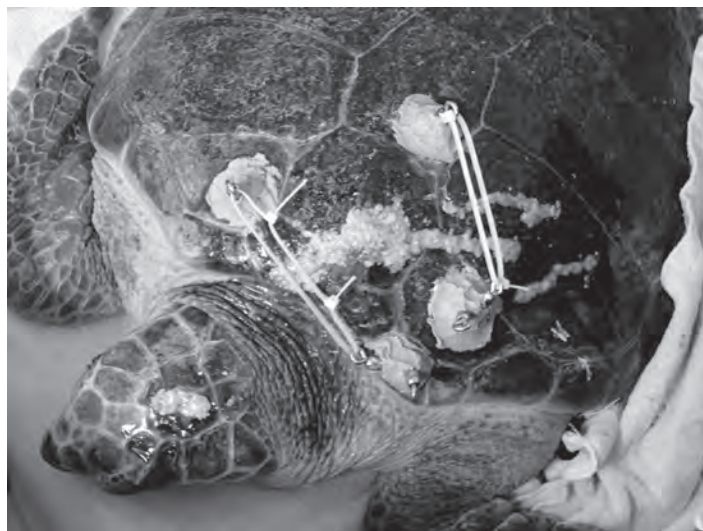
Dublin Mudslide, a cold-stunned loggerhead turtle stranded on December 24, 2012 in Northampton County, VA. (Photo by Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program)

At the Virginia Aquarium's Marine Animal Care Center (MACC), live sea turtles are admitted for treatment and rehabilitation, with the goal of release back to the ocean. At the MACC, live sea turtles are treated appropriately depending on stranding cause. Trained staff conduct complete physical exams, record vitals such as temperature, respirations, and heart rate, collect blood samples to determine any physiological abnormalities, and if necessary, radiographs (x-rays) may be taken to examine any signs of trauma or injury. Sea turtles are treated with antibiotics, fluid therapy, and nutritional support as needed. When dead sea turtles wash ashore, necropsies (animal autopsies) are performed to determine cause of death and stranding and to gather valuable scientific data on species whose health and physiology are not well understood.

There are several ways people within the community can help us care for these animals. The Stranding Response Program is supported by the Virginia Aquarium Foundation. As a non-profit organization primarily supported by grants, any monetary or medical supply donations are greatly appreciated. Currently, we are using honeycomb that was generously donated by Chris Merritt of the Beekeepers Guild of the Eastern Shore to treat a

boat-strike wound on the carapace of a loggerhead. Other beekeepers have also offered to donate honeycomb and cappings as needed. Honey provides a number of positive effects for managing wound care. It acts as a natural anti-bacterial and anti-fungal treatment, has antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, and stimulates cell growth. Working with local beekeepers is ideal since there are certain beneficial enzymes within raw honey that are lost when the honey is packaged for sale in a grocery store.

Additionally, as we approach winter, we rely on people within the community to help us keep an eye out for sea turtles suffering from cold-stunning. If sea turtles are slow to migrate or a sudden drop in water temperature occurs (<50°F), sea turtles enter a state where their metabolism slows dramatically and they become lethargic. Sea turtles are susceptible to predators, accidental boat strikes and eventual death from hypothermia. These turtles often appear as though dead or comatose. These sea turtles can be helped if given the proper medical attention in a timely fashion. Because time is of the essence for these animals, we really encourage and appreciate when people call us to report these animals.



Harry Potter, a loggerhead currently in rehabilitation with a boat strike injury packed with honeycomb. (Photo by Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program)

If people are looking for a more hands-on way to help, we have volunteer opportunities that offer experiences in all aspects of our day-to-day operations. Volunteers get to assist in the husbandry of our in-hospital patients, go on responses in the field for stranded animals, and help with necropsies and data collection. Anyone interested in getting involved can find a link on how to volunteer on the Virginia Aquarium website, www.virginiaaquarium.com. If anyone needs to report a stranded sea turtle or marine mammal, they can call our hotline anytime at 757-385-7575. We could not do what we do without the support from people within the community. We cannot thank everyone enough and if anyone is looking for other ways to help or get involved, please contact us. We'd love to hear from you!



Planning for Coastal Resilience

By Arthur Upshur

On November 12 and 13, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) organized a workshop focused on enhancing our coastal resilience to sea level rise. For many of us, it has been frustrating to get to this point. For years, building consensus on climate change and debating the causes of sea level rise seemed to block serious thought on local planning for the challenges that sea level rise is going to pose for our community.

The reality is that sea level rise is inevitable for the Eastern Shore. Interestingly, there was no debate about this at the conference. I suspect that the residents of the Shore have all spent enough time on the water or heard stories in our family histories to know that the shoreline is changing as the water rises. We all have seen the ghosts of dead cedar trees standing in the middle of a marsh, silently witnessing where dry land used to be. One of the presenters at the workshop began his presentation with a picture of a marsh, which was the location of his grandfather's farm.



Northampton Supervisor Granville Hogg poses a question for discussion.

Causes and questions.

There are multiple causes for sea level rise – from melting ice in Greenland to the thermal expansion of the ocean. We have even more complexity here on the Shore because our land is also subsiding (or sinking) from the after-effects of the ancient meteor strike and resulting crater at the mouth of the Bay. And of course, we have to consider the human effects that can hasten or aggravate the impact of sea level rise, from the way we develop the coast to the health of the natural systems like our marshes and barrier islands, which act as buffers to reduce the impact of the sea on the land.

Due to the multiple causes, it is a complicated debate as to how much sea level rise to plan for. Is the sea level rise accelerating or do we use historical trends? Will we lose the Greenland ice cap? If so, we are looking at a catastrophic rise of nearly four feet

within the next 50 years. Right now, that scenario is considered pessimistic and the base plan anticipates a two-foot rise by 2050. But two feet is an enormous change. The problem is not sea level rise directly. The real problem comes more from the interaction of storm surges and major weather events with how and where we put assets that will be at risk from the sea. The reality is that large urban areas can afford to be more lax on their planning because they have the resources to adapt more quickly. New York City can afford to armor their coastline and lift their streets – but the Eastern Shore is unlikely to have available resources to do that. Long range planning will be our key tool to mitigate and manage the impacts of sea level rise.

Those involved.

The forum was a large affair with nearly 80 community leaders in attendance. This is a testimony to the number of agencies and organizations that need to be involved in a complicated endeavor like this. NASA/Wallops and the US Army Corps of Engineers were well-represented, as were the National Park Service, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. There were also state representatives from the Department of Emergency Management, the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Game and Inland Fisheries. Two members of the Northampton Board of Supervisors were there – Granville Hogg and Rick Hubbard – but no Supervisors from Accomack. Both counties were well represented by their planning staffs and members of Planning Commissions. Perhaps the best example of the urgency of this effort came from the attendance of a number of representatives from Chincoteague and from other threatened communities like Saxis and Onancock.

Models developed to assist planning.

The Nature Conservancy has received a federal grant from the Department of Interior to develop tools to facilitate our planning on the Eastern Shore. They are working with the A-NPDC closely in the effort. The primary purpose of the conference was to introduce the tools being developed and show how they will work together.

The Nature Conservancy is able to build on tools originally developed for Long Island – another community at risk due to lots of “fractured” governance with small towns, counties, beach communities, etc. There are really three areas of focus for this effort:

- a model to project possible **impacts of sea level rise and marsh migration**;
- a model to clarify **storm surge impacts** with sea level rise;
- a model to help project **how the barrier islands will change** and adapt to both sea level rise and to some of the methods we may use to mitigate risks on those islands (for example, the projected effects if some portion of an island is “armored,” such as around Wallops).

Given the TMDL (Total Minimum Daily Load) debates and many of the weaknesses of the models used to describe compli-

“Coastal Resilience” *Cont’d from p. 4*



A forum participant plots sea level rise scenarios.

cated and inter-related environments, some feel like this type of large scale modeling has been discredited. But models are really only a way to collect large numbers of interacting assumptions and to handle the complexity that is difficult for our brains to grasp in any other way. They are, by their nature, dependent on the assumptions made and on how well those interactions are actually understood.

While the models developed will necessarily be working models and will change as we learn more, we should acknowledge how fortunate we are to have the Long-Term Ecological Research Project (LTER) in Oyster where we have over 30 years of study of our ecosystems with a focus in particular on our seaside and barrier island system. We will be a little ahead thanks to the efforts of Art Schwarzkild and his colleagues at the LTER and other researchers at other institutions that are contributing to this effort. There were at least six universities represented at the conference. Probably the best way to think of these models at first is that they will be our clearing house of data – mapping elevations, storm surge records, etc. Those data will be critical when we ask questions like, “What might be the hurricane impact on a community in 20 years?” – or as we debate the trade-offs of where and how we deploy resources to manage sea level rise.

Differing objectives.

There was a lot of debate during the forum discussions and in the hallways during breaks. It is obvious there are going to be some fundamental conflicts among the differing objectives of the organizations involved. Northampton Supervisor Granville Hogg, for example, was challenging The Nature Conservancy because he knows the barrier island system is the primary protection for the Shore. He asked if The Nature Conservancy would repair storm damage or attempt to manage change on their islands when these impacts threaten communities on the mainland? The Nature Conservancy’s basic position will be more focused on how to create natural resiliency by adding adaptive features, like oyster rocks, while allowing the natural evolution of barrier islands to continue in order to keep the entire system healthy and adaptive to sea level change.

But there are broader, more complex questions to be considered:

- What happens when a community like Chincoteague or fixed investments like the Wallops launch sites become threatened?
- What actions are appropriate to protect them from storms that will wash over the lower protection of an oyster rock system?
- What will be the longer term consequences of those actions down the chain of our barrier island system?
- How do we balance the ecological and long-term ecosystem values of a private entity like The Nature Conservancy and the human and community costs that our political system will focus on?
- Finally, how will we allocate resources on protection and mitigation when those resources are typically flowing through a political process in Richmond or Washington?

Other challenges.

Even something as fundamental as the time frame used to evaluate risks and actions is not trivial. Many of the federal agencies are required by policy to use 50 years as their time frame. But the towns and emergency services are often looking only one or two years out. County planning rarely extends past 10-15 years. You can probably see the difficulties if a 20-year solution is rejected by the Core of Engineers and the Federal Agencies involved but cheered enthusiastically by an affected community. How do we balance negative long term impacts with short-term benefits?

The impact of sea level rise also has radically different impacts on the different groups involved. The impact on a coastal wildlife refuge could be simply changing habitats from high marsh to low marsh. Marshes themselves grow upward at about the speed of historical sea level rise and thus may adapt. Oyster rocks also grow upwards at about the same pace. An island can move and be damaged without really affecting its value to The Nature Conservancy. But the community of Chincoteague will obviously feel quite differently with damage or movement of their island. Wallops, too, may struggle with inundation of their launch areas.

ShoreLine Comment. *The Nature Conservancy’s modeling effort is a good next step at addressing community planning for sea level rise. CBES applauds that the effort has begun to gather the data with which to have an informed debate. Our thanks go to Jill Bieri and The Nature Conservancy staff for organizing this effort and to Curt Smith and the A-NPDC for their support of it. We hope to report further progress as the modeling effort evolves and develops.*



VIMS

Public Seminar Series

Lobster Tales: Homelessness, Pestilence, & Alien Encounters

Dr. Mark Butler

Old Dominion University Professor

7:30 PM • Wednesday, December 3, 2014

**Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Wachapreague, Virginia**

County-wide Rezoning for Northampton?

November zoning forum finally provides some answers

A ShoreLine Staff Report

A capacity crowd filled the Eastville Fire Company Bingo Hall on Thursday night, November 6. In spite of an all-day rain and the early nightfall from the first week back on Eastern Standard Time, the community forum, promoted as a place to get details about the county-wide rezoning, had to delay the start time because of the crush of people coming in the door. This was the interactive citizen's information and education meeting the county never held. The forum was sponsored by the Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper (VES) organization and Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore (CBES).

Northampton County staff was asked to rewrite the zoning ordinance last winter, with little public input, no environmental or economic impact studies, no outside professional expertise and no effective community discussion – then held a public hearing last March. There were a few county-sponsored “information” meetings, poorly attended and providing only a few handouts copied from official documents already completed, with no context and little explanation. So for many in the audience, the forum was their first look at the sweeping changes being proposed for the county.

The community meeting demonstrated the volunteer enthusiasm typical of many rural communities. A white cloth covering the Bingo number board in order to display Powerpoint slides, a few storyboards on borrowed easels showing new uses proposed for neighborhoods around the county, a podium improvised from a roll-along video camera case and the bingo game caller's hand-held microphone were all that was needed to get the forum underway.

Moderator Jay Ford, the Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper, introduced the evening's first presenters – state certified Planning Commissioners Martina Coker, Roberta Kellam and Mary Miller – with a combined experience of 20 years on the Northampton County Planning Commission. Real estate professional David Kabler, also a Certified Planning Commissioner, Dr. Art Schwarzschild, Director of the Long-term Research Center at Oyster, business owner and community advocate Ken Dufty, who has attended and reported on county government meetings for the past year, and Gene Hampton, a retired hydrologist from the USGS, were also introduced. Additional panel expertise was derived from Kellam's service on the State Water Control Board, Schwarzschild's service as the president of the Willis Wharf Village Committee and Hampton's membership on the bi-county Groundwater Committee.

Presentations.

Roberta Kellam began with a legal explanation of two of the county's zoning documents – the Comprehensive Plan, the community's guide for future land use, and the zoning ordinance, the local law which allows regulations for land use development. Since there were many in the hall getting their first information about zoning, the explanation included how and why a zoning ordinance protects the county's industries and the resources supporting the local economy, while at the same

time providing residential areas that are separate from industrial and high impact commercial uses. The current rezoning proposal would allow commercial and industrial uses in residential neighborhoods and on farmlands adjacent to subdivisions – most with no advance notice to neighbors.

Kellam described how the county-wide plan will rezone thousands of acres of farmland to residential, increase the number of houses or apartments per acre, and permit additional farmland conversion anywhere in the county. She noted that much of the new development could occur on narrow lots along the waterfront: seaside, bayside and on the creeks. This is in direct opposition to the county's adopted Comprehensive Plan to concentrate development in and around existing population centers and to protect the coastal and bay water frontage from the intense development that would jeopardize the clean waters needed for the aquaculture industry. In addition, lower-income housing options, such as single-wides and Mobile Home Parks, would be nearly eliminated, and the Affordable Housing Density Bonus would be removed.

Finally, Kellam pointed out the proposed removal of a limit on impervious surface permitted on each lot, adding to storm water runoff and flooding problems, and the fact that new authority would be given to the Zoning Administrator to approve new, unnamed Uses in every district.

Mary Miller, former Vice-chair of the Planning Commission, described how the Minor Special Use Permit process had been developed to allow small-scale, entrepreneurial commercial businesses to operate in residential neighborhoods. Public notice is given, adjacent property owners are informed by mail, a public hearing is held, and any concerns about lighting, parking, noise, storage, etc. in the residential district is addressed by the Planning Commission. A recommendation is sent to the Board of Supervisors and an opportunity for more neighborhood input is provided at another public hearing. This process assures both the small business owner and the homeowners of neighborhood compatibility.

Miller then informed the forum attendees that this entire process will be removed from the proposed rezoning, that many high-impact commercial uses (restaurants, convenience stores including fuel sales, research facilities, unspecified commercial services, etc.) will be permitted in the county's small neighborhoods by right – that there would no longer be notice to nearby property owners, and that the Planning Commission would be removed from the process. Story boards around the hall illustrated proposed new commercial uses for residential areas and new non-farm industrial uses for agricultural districts.

Martina Coker, who resigned from the Planning Commission in protest over the flawed process used to develop the proposed rezoning, pointed out that the document had been developed by county staff, behind closed doors, with none of the usual public input and review. She described how the county's Economic Development Director had admitted, on the public

See “County-wide rezoning,” Cont'd on p. 7

“County-wide rezoning,” *Cont’d from p. 6*

record, that no studies had been done to determine the impact of the sweeping changes on either the aquaculture, agriculture or tourism industries, or on the community’s residential property values and the homeowners’ quality of life.

Coker stated that current zoning is working to protect the county’s main industries and went on to show the latest figures that indicate Northampton County’s aquaculture production of clams is the highest in the state and several agricultural products were at or near the top for state production. Tourism on the Shore has shown annual increases which are more than double the state increases. She pointed out the hard-to-ignore fact that increased development along shorelines would impair the clean water quality needed for aquaculture and clam hatcheries, and that farmland conversion to other uses would undermine the agricultural industry. She concluded that the county’s only stated objective for the major rezoning was to attract economic development, but that “there is no guarantee of sustainable jobs or of any other benefits to the county in the proposed county-wide zoning ordinance.”

Dr. Art Schwarzschild, Director of the Coastal Research Center in Oyster, showed with the simplest graphic what happens when coastal bays are impacted by increased development – they get loaded with nutrients. “Too many nutrients entering our coastal bays will have a very negative impact on our water quality, leading to algal blooms, fish kills and the loss of productive shellfish grounds.” Northampton County, he explained, is in the enviable position of controlling everything going into seaside waters. Because we’ve done such a good job with that control, he said, the county is the number one seed clam producer on the East Coast – and is well on the way to increased oyster production, larger sea grass meadows to shelter fin fish, and even the beginnings of a revived scallop industry. “The zoning changes proposed by the Board of Supervisors have the potential to increase nutrient [loading] and negatively impact our water quality.” He went on to dispel the notion that water in the seaside bays is replaced with every tide. “Not true,” he stated. Coastal bays don’t flush out like toilets, but instead they slosh back and forth and pollutants can stay in place for days or weeks.

Dr. Schwarzschild was particularly concerned that these zoning changes had been developed with no input from the aquaculture industry, watermen, scientists or local communities. Both of the seaside villages of Oyster and Willis Wharf, where he is chair of the village committee, have worked diligently over the years with county staff and elected officials to develop sustainable plans for residential and economic development. These plans were adopted and attached to the county’s Comprehensive Plan. They have been totally disregarded in the county-wide rezoning proposal. No scientific studies or surveys were conducted for this rezoning; consequently, no impact data was available to county staff.

David Kabler, a local realtor for over four decades, described how he uses county planning documents and maps to show clients how county zoning will protect their home, business or property investment. Zoning districts of both the towns and the county are planned so that non-compatible uses and different densities protect both businesses and homeown-

ers. Kabler takes great pride in being able to say that county planning has always been done with extensive input from community residents.

Questions and Answers.

Panelists were prepared with county documents to provide more information. Written questions from the audience were read by the moderator.

- **Would there be a referendum on the county-wide rezoning?** *No. The Board has the authority to change zoning at will, as long as they provide legal notice and hold a Public Hearing. The hearing was held March 11, 2014.*
- **Would farm owners be able to sell off lots?** *A qualified yes. Often a rezoning would be required—this would have to meet the test of “spot zoning”, a practice benefitting a single property owner, which is not supported by Virginia courts. The county Subdivision Ordinance has many requirements which must be met, depending on the number of lots created. Roads, sanitation, storm water management, utilities and maintenance of improvements are just a few of the fairly expensive preconditions to creating and selling lots.*
- **Who wrote the rezoning?** *County staff – Economic Director Charles McSwain and his staff, County Administrator Katie Nunez, and County Attorneys Bruce Jones and Bev Leatherbury.*
- **Would a bar be allowed in Franktown?** *Yes. The definition for “Indoor Recreation,” a use permitted in Villages, Hamlets, etc, with no public hearing, includes bars, lounges, pool halls and arcades.*
- **Was any thought given to sea-level rise?** *The hydrologist assured that sea-level rise was going to continue no matter what was built along the shoreline. Rezoning anticipates increased density and development along shorelines.*
- **What kinds of businesses could come to the county under the new zoning, given the poorly performing schools and the untrained workforce?** *New business and industrial uses include biomass fuel production, commercial and industrial waste-related sites, warehouse and storage facilities and wastewater treatment plants.*
- **How close to Hamlets would poultry houses be allowed?** *Current zoning requires a 1500 ft. setback – proposed setback would be 400 feet from any property line.*

Most questioners opposed the rezoning; however, a Virginia Beach commercial real estate broker and a property owner with a waterfront parcel to subdivide both spoke out in favor of the proposed zoning.

All the forum presenters were in support of requesting that the Board of Supervisors withdraw the county-wide rezoning applications and of working with the community to address changes that would benefit the community and retain the things that are working for county residents and businesses. A petition to the Board of Supervisors requesting withdrawal was available to attendees. Attendance at Board of Supervisor meetings and personal contact with individual Supervisors was encouraged, yard signs were distributed and contact information was shared with the sponsors. Information on future meetings and activities will be circulated. To receive email notices, contact info@shorekeeper.org.



A Paddling and Birding Paradise on Virginia's Eastern Shore

By Laura McKay, Virginia Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program

The following article appeared in the Fall issue of Virginia Coastal Zone Management magazine. The author, Laura McKay, is the director of the Virginia CZM program. She knows the Shore intimately and has supported natural resource based economic development projects on the Eastern Shore for many years. This article is a summary of recent work in that field. For more information about the Virginia Coastal Zone Management program, visit their website at: www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement.aspx

Seaside Water Trail Camping Platform.

In 2002, the Virginia CZM Program funded the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (PDC) to create a paddling trail spanning the entire length of the Seaside of Virginia's Eastern Shore from Fisherman Island to Chincoteague. Since then, 17,000 copies of the Seaside Water Trail brochure have been distributed to eager kayakers and canoeists who can go to the trail website (www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/CoastalZoneManagement/CZMIssuesInitiatives/SeasideWaterTrail.aspx), choose a put-in location and skill level, download it and print their own trip map. While that has been very useful, paddlers began wanting more from the trail – namely the ability to take multi-day trips and stay overnight near the trail so that they could paddle the entire trail in one vacation.

So in 2006, we gave a Virginia CZM Program grant to the Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper to investigate the potential for constructing camping platforms at strategic locations along the trail. The full report is available through the link above and identifies locations where there are no convenient overnight accommodations for paddlers. It also researched how other states have built and maintained their “on-the-water” camping platforms.

In summer 2013, the PDC began work on another CZM grant to follow up on this effort. The PDC convened interested businesses and paddlers to discuss the 2006 camping platform report and the need for better accommodations along the trail. They identified two priority camping sites in each county for further investigation of improvement opportunities. They also organized into a 501(c)(3) non-profit called the Virginia Eastern Shore Paddlers Association (VESPA) to:

- Promote paddling on Virginia's Eastern Shore (both bayside and seaside)
- Develop paddling opportunities and facilities
- Protect the environment along the water trails
- Develop a community of paddlers and serve as an information resource for paddlers

There is a great deal of enthusiasm around this effort. Curt Smith, A-NPDC's Director of Planning, reports, “The paddling community has really come out in force to support this project. Their enthusiasm is bound to pay dividends as we attempt to develop a unique paddling experience that will draw people to our region and benefit local businesses.”

Although both Accomack and Northampton Counties' Boards of Supervisors approved the camping platforms concept, none of the sites proved suitable in the end. But there's still hope...

A Water Access Authority for the Eastern Shore.

The 2014 General Assembly passed the Eastern Shore Water Authority Act, which allows Accomack and Northampton Counties to create an operating agreement to form an Eastern Shore Water Access Authority. This authority could be similar to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority and could identify land with access to the bayside or seaside, acquire or receive donations of such lands for public access, develop access amenities and implement management plans for the properties. Curt Smith explains, “The A-NPDC is very interested in pursuing the development of a PAA [Public Access Authority] considering the successes occurring in other regions. The Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean are vital assets to our region and having such an entity would greatly enhance our localities' ability to provide and ensure public access and use of the water.”

Kiptopeke Hawk Observation Platform.

Since 1992, the Virginia CZM Program has given eight grants worth \$1,048,800 to the Department of Conservation and Recreation for Kiptopeke State Park. A 1993 grant funded construction of the Kiptopeke Hawk Observation Platform. As you might imagine, 20 years take quite a toll on a wooden structure close to the Chesapeake Bay's salty winds. So part of a recent grant to the park provided for replacement of sun-bleached signage and much of the deck's decaying wooden planking and stringers with recycled plastic lumber which should, according to the manufacturer, last for 50 years. The Hawk Platform has become an iconic structure at the park where each fall, avid hawk watchers congregate for weeks to watch the thousands of migrating hawks, merlins, eagles, peregrines and other raptors circle the skies in search of a meal – often the tired, tasty songbirds that are also headed south for the winter.

Kiptopeke State Park Deer Hunting Stands.

An excess of deer can wreak havoc on the tender native trees and shrubs the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program and its many partners have been planting on the Eastern Shore in order to restore migratory songbird habitat. So Kiptopeke State Park has a deer hunting season within its boundaries. To facilitate the hunt, and drive deer away from newly planted areas, Virginia CZM Program funded the purchase of seven deer stands which can be moved safely around the park to position hunters in the best locations.

Ecotour Guide Certification.

The Virginia CZM Program has helped develop and fund several Ecotour Guide certification courses over the years. Last

See “Paddling and Birding,” *Cont'd on p. 9*

Public Service Authority considers Rt. 13 sewer service

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Service Authority met on November 18 to discuss the progress of the so-called "Southern Node" project, which would provide wastewater service to commercial businesses around the intersection of US Rt. 13 and Rt. 184 into Cape Charles – and also to contract for sewage treatment service with the Town of Cape Charles. Contract negotiations with Hurt and Proffitt, a Lynchburg engineering firm, were discussed. No decision has been reached yet on whether the system's users would share the cost of construction with county taxpayers – or even whether the project may be totally funded by county-wide tax revenue.

PSA Chair John Reiter asked for a motion to authorize him to sign a contract for the 19-month construction project as

soon as the Board of Supervisors creates the Special Tax District to define the service area *and* enacts a mandatory hookup ordinance for the service area. The PSA vote was 4 to 2 to approve the motion. The two dissenting members stated that neither the Special Tax District nor the mandatory hookup ordinance are supported by the affected property owners.

At the start of the meeting, a member of the public asked that an explanation be provided as to why a 2000-foot section of Rt. 13 south of Parsons Circle and comprised of farm fields had been included in the project. That question was not addressed by the PSA. It is worth noting, however, that the county's proposed new Zoning Map designates that farm field strip as Commercial zoning.

Post Forum Action

Citizens involved in the Northampton Community Forum continue to press for public engagement in the zoning process with a grassroots event "Occupy the Courthouse" – a rally outside the former Northampton Courthouse. Citizens advocating the withdrawal of the proposed countywide rezoning are encouraged to gather prior to the December monthly Board of Supervisors meeting, as well as attend that night's meeting.

CBES supports the efforts to raise citizen attendance at all local government meetings as a vital reminder to our elected officials that voters have the right to be involved in community policies and decisions. The lack of public input in the Northampton rezoning process is a major reason CBES also endorses withdrawing the proposed zoning in favor of going back to the table as a community. CBES staff will be present.

Occupy the Courthouse: Tuesday, December 6, at 6:00 p.m. prior to the 7:00 p.m. monthly Board of Supervisors meeting at the former Northampton Courthouse, 16404 Courthouse Rd, Eastville. For more information: (757) 647-1755.



"Paddling and Birding," *Cont'd from p. 8*

spring, through a grant to Eastern Shore Community College and for the first time to Rappahannock Community College, the Virginia CZM Program was able to support an online class to 8 guides, all of whom passed the course. Course organizers Shannon Alexander of Bay Country Kayaking and Paula Jasinski of Chesapeake

Environmental Communications report they hope to offer the classes again and that "running this as an online course allowed us to reach people that otherwise would not have been able to take the class." They even had a student from Norway participate and share interesting ideas about her Norwegian Ecotour practices.

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Community Calendar - December 2014

Note: Please verify times and places prior to attending meetings.

| CBES and Other Activities | | Northampton County | | Accomack County | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| Dec 3 | VIMS Public Seminar 7:30 PM, Wachapreague | Dec 1 | Board of Zoning Appeals 1 PM, Conference Room | Dec 3 | Board of Zoning Appeals 10 AM, Sup. Chambers |
| Dec 4 | Brownsville Open House 4:00 PM, Nassawadox | Dec 2 | Planning Commission 7 PM, Sup. Chambers | Dec 10 | Planning Commission 7 PM, BOS Chambers |
| Dec 9 | CBES Exec. Committee 5 PM, CBES Office | Dec 9 | Board of Supervisors 7 PM, Sup. Chambers | Dec 16 | School Board 7 PM, BOS Chambers |
| Dec 11 | Shorekeeper Meeting* 1 PM, Barrier Islands Center Machipongo | Dec 17 | Wetlands Board TBA, Conference Room | Dec 17 | Board of Supervisors 6 PM, BOS Chambers |
| Dec 16 | ES Groundwater Committee 10 AM, Accomac | Dec 23 | School Board 5:30 PM, Sup. Chambers | Dec 18 | Wetlands Board 10 AM, Sup. Chambers |
| | | Dec 23 | BOS Work Session 7 PM, Sup. Chambers | | |

* Alternating between the ES Chamber of Commerce and the Barrier Islands Center

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