



Citizens  
for a Better  
Eastern Shore

# CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

# SHORELINE

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Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*

TM

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## Osprey: Different Stories for Different Locations

By Sue Mastyl

### Osprey in Trouble in the Lower Bay

The April 2023 issue of *ShoreLine* (“Study Shows Menhaden Are Critical for Osprey Reproductivity”) described a 2021 study by Michael Academia of the Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) at the College of William & Mary, of osprey nests in Mobjack Bay, in the lower Chesapeake Bay. Without supplemental feeding, the reproductive rate was 0.47 fledgling per nest – below that seen during the population crashes of the DDT era.

Data from the 2023 season were even more concerning, with young osprey produced in only 17 of 167 nests monitored in Mobjack Bay, the lower York River, and the Lynnhaven River, and a reproductive rate of 0.13 per nest. A sustainable reproductive rate is 1.15 young per pair. Dr. Bryan Watts, CCB Director, noted that, “Within Mobjack Bay, young osprey are starving in nests because the decades-long overharvest of menhaden has caused local depletion; although osprey do feed on other fish species within the lower Chesapeake Bay, none of these species offer comparable nutrient content.” Watts added that menhaden levels would need to return to those seen in the 1980s for osprey to recover in the lower Bay.

### Different Results in Lower-Salinity Areas

Now, a new report from Watts (<https://ccbbirds.org/2023/07/08/a-tale-of-two-bays-osprey-fortunes-diverge/>) suggests that this may not be true for all of the Bay populations. Although there are

“legitimate reasons for concern,” there may be differences on the broader population level. Watts and his colleagues conducted a survey this spring of 2 study areas in the tidal fresh areas of the Bay (the upper James River and the upper Rappahannock River), with lower salinity, large freshwater inputs, and a different fish community. Osprey in these areas feed on catfish, gizzard shad, and other fish rather than menhaden. Out of 91 nests, 73 had a total of 133 young, with a reproductive rate of 1.46 young per pair – nearly 4.5-fold the rate in the high-salinity study area.

The group plans to expand the study in 2024, to cover additional areas over a larger portion of the Bay, in an attempt to “define the edges of the demographic sink ... and assess whether or not the productive areas are capable of sustaining the broader Bay population.”

### Implications for the Menhaden Fishery

Although the coastwide menhaden population seems stable, many have called for studies of the menhaden population within the Bay; as noted in the General Assembly Update in the May 2023 issue, a bill introduced by Sen. Lewis to study the Chesapeake Bay population of menhaden will require VIMS to provide details of a potential study by September 1, including the scope, methodology, stakeholders, cost, and timeline.

A lawsuit filed by the Chesapeake Legal Alliance, on behalf of the Southern Maryland Recreational Fishing Organization, maintains that the Virginia Marine Resources Commis-



*An osprey brood on the upper James River. Photo by Bryan Watts.*

sion failed its legal obligation both to protect the menhaden population from overfishing and to protect species that depend on menhaden, including Atlantic striped bass and osprey. 

**ShoreLine comment:** Academia will be discussing his recent research and the relationship between osprey and menhaden at the Eastern Shore Bird Club’s fall program on Tuesday, October 10, at 5:30 PM at the Eastern Shore Community College (Academic Building).

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# Doing Something About Climate Change

By Arthur Upshur

*"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."* Edward Everett Hale

Like many of you, I worry about climate change and sea-level rise, and what it is going to mean for our homes, our community, and my grandchildren's enjoyment of the Eastern Shore.

Before I attended my 40th college reunion, I watched an alumna's TED talk on solving big problems. There were 4 key points she made: the first is the question, what can I do? The second is to dismiss excuses for not doing something. The third is to start small, recognizing that "small" is different for each of us. And probably the most important last step, how we can do more, now that we have started? The catch phrase in her TED talk was "little rocks can start avalanches."

I realized that my own reaction to the threats of sea level rise and climate change followed that pattern. I began by changing the way my land is farmed, instituting more sustainable practices. That meant less diesel use, and using no petrochemically based fertilizers and pesticides. It was a small thing – on only 8 acres of land among many thousands of acres in production around the Shore. It is not scalable to larger farms because it is too labor-in-

tensive. But it was a start for me. I worked with the research teams with Virginia Tech in Painter, the folks of the Cooperative Extension, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service at the USDA. I got a grant to help develop farming techniques using hay mulch as my weed control and fertilizer. In other words, I got lots of help along the way.

Then I thought about doing more. I used a lot of electricity on my farm. Could I do better? I applied for a USDA grant that paid for 1/3 of the cost of a set of solar panels on my barn's roof. They now power all of the farm's electricity – refrigeration, lighting, and heat.

What else could I do? My solar panels were generating more power than I was using. So this year, I purchased an electric pickup truck that I charge with my solar panels. With a range of about 200 miles, it handles all my travels around the Shore and across the Bay for doctor appointments, grocery shopping, etc. Some of the rumors about electric vehicles are true. I do not use my truck for long-distance travel because of a lack of fast-charging availability. And towing trailers long distances cuts your range too much, but my trailer-towing is mainly bringing my boat to the local boat ramp.

Most of the rumors I hear about electric trucks seem to be driven by a fear that the government is going to outlaw gas trucks. I have heard about incredible problems with electric vehicles, ranging from Chinese slave labor making the batteries, to the batteries needing to be replaced at high prices after 2 years, to the fire hazard from the lithium batteries if they ever get wet with salt water. None of this seems to be true. So far, nearly 6 months in, my Ford Lightning is pretty sweet. There is almost no maintenance – I have no transmis-



*The author's electric truck is regularly charged by solar panels on the barn. Photo by Arthur Upshur.*

sion, no oil, no radiator with cooling fluids, no complex pollution-control systems with catalytic converters and precise engine adjustments based on engine temperature and fuel characteristics. There are 2 electric motors mounted next to the wheels – 1 for the front and 1 for the back wheels – and a big set of batteries mounted low under the middle of the truck body. I charge the batteries in 4 to 6 hours at my barn. The truck goes 0–60 in about 4 seconds, faster than any car I have ever owned. It can tow 7,500 lbs., far more than I ever tow. Maintenance consists mainly of windshield wiper fluid and new wiper blades every now and again. I have a huge amount of space, including a "frunk" where most trucks have their engine.

I have also converted many of my small engines to electric motors: my string trimmer, leaf blower, and chainsaw. They run on the same interchangeable batteries. They do not run as long as my gas-powered implements. But so far, they seem to last about as long as I do. Changing the batteries often provides just the break I need. They tend not to be as heavy-duty as some of my old gas-powered tools, but are lighter and much quieter. They have no exhaust fumes. I never purchase fuel. Electric motors do not have difficulty starting after being stored like my old gas

*See Doing, Cont'd on page 7*

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# What's Your Beef? Cows Can Be Conservation

Submitted by Benjamin Willis, CBES member and Land Manager/Environmental Attorney

When people talk about sustainability in agriculture, it's easy to get lost in the lingo: food security, permaculture, climate-friendly, etc. These terms are rooted in a gut feeling that there's a better way of producing our food. Some voices in the sustainability movement insist that domestic cattle must be drastically reduced, as in the Netherlands, in order to protect the environment. But if quail had a voice, they'd argue against those people until the cows come home.

## By the Numbers

"No quail around here anymore," is a common refrain in our region, once a haven for bobwhite quail and even the introduced Japanese green pheasant. In the greatest failure of Virginia wildlife management, quail have declined by at least 70% since 1960.<sup>1</sup> In that same time frame, wild turkeys grew exponentially and whitetail deer quadrupled.<sup>2</sup> So why is the bobwhite in such dire straits? It's a complex dynamic of habitat loss and increased predation, but the big picture is we're a much more efficient society.

Small farms (< 400 acres) have declined precipitously since 1960.<sup>3</sup> These small, inefficient farms built with our forefathers' elbow grease created the early successional habitat that quail need to thrive. Folks didn't have tractors over 150 hp, nor Monsanto's Round-Up. Pastures were brushier and crops weedier. You might say farms were uglier. There was much more "wasted" space with hedgerows, which happened to be paradise for quail. That ugly paradise has been replaced by perfectly efficient farms and manicured lawns.

## The Right Habitat

Early successional habitat is open grassland or brush that has been recently disturbed to expose bare soil. The best mode of disturbance is prescribed fire, but fire has limitations. Between a local forestry department stretched thin and our region's unfavorable weather patterns, the average Shore landowner would struggle to create quail habitat through burning alone. Prescribed grazing offers an excellent alternative that can be more successful than fire in some regards. A herd of Scottish Highland cattle on my farm, originally meant only to complement a burn regimen, has now become my preferred tool for early successional habitat.

Through trial and error with several breeds, the Highlands have excelled at prescribed grazing. At almost half the size of Angus, soil compaction is minimal. They eat like goats without girdling trees, with a higher tolerance for toxic weeds, and with a marked preference for invasive vegetation. Fescue and brome grass are favorites of any cattle, but Highlands graze Russian olive, *paulownia*, and *phragmites* to the ground next to untouched persimmons and blackberries. Then there's sweetgum. This seemingly



*One of the author's Highland cows looks perfectly at home foraging in thick foliage. Photo by Ben Willis.*

innocuous native tree is the bane of all who manage their land for quail. Burning will only top-kill the organism, but the Highlands will browse a hinge-cut sweetgum so heavily that its energy is never replenished. When a severe sweetgum infestation threatens to ruin otherwise perfect habitat, grazing is the only feasible way to throw out the bathwater while saving the baby. For that reason alone, cows are a Godsend for quail and land managers.

## Perfect Is the Enemy of Good

Cattle seem to work better in practice than theory, which suggests there's some degree of symbiosis occurring. Quail have persisted even where my grazing regimen was not meant to yield short-term results, often jump-starting my heart by flushing from what I'd consider poor habitat. After 3 years of grazing, dense mats of invasive cool-season grasses are yielding to more diverse native wildflowers and warm-season grasses than the burned areas. Soil quality is improving with only the natural fertilizer the cattle provide, and my silvipasture pines have better growth rings than anywhere else. The freezer is full of top-notch beef to boot. What is that if not sustainable?

By striking a "good enough" balance of timber, crops, and cattle, landowners can produce quail habitat without breaking the bank. The synergy of these resources on my farm comes not from any special talent, but rather despite my errors and tight budget. It's far from perfect, but a farm managed perfectly for any one economic resource will not have quail. And in order to manage perfectly for quail, I'd either need much deeper pockets or a deeply masochistic spirit to do the onerous habitat work by hand without a crew. That's the beauty of cattle – they work 'round the clock, no holidays or vacations and no crew necessary.

*See What's Your Beef, Cont'd on page 5*

# Northampton County, Then and Now

## Part 1: The Way We Were

*Private seafood docks, boat launches, and marinas, like Kings Creek Marina at Cape Charles, dotted the shorelines*

By Mary Miller

As recently as 40 years ago, Northampton County was a different place. Easily recognized visually as a rural farming and seafood production community, as it is now, its demographics, politics, housing, and community organization were more connected to an earlier part of the 20th century.

In the early 1980s, the county published an “informative” booklet called *Northampton County Virginia, A Profile*,\* for “present and future citizens, both private and corporate.” It painted a picture of the 225 miles of shoreline, with over 50% of the land either farmed or forested, the 5 public boat ramps, private docks and marinas, a 52-acre park, a 9-hole golf course, 3 private campgrounds, 2 senior citizens’ centers, a public library and a Bookmobile, a hospital and nursing school, a 96-mile railroad, 2 working harbors, 3 truck terminals, 8 motels “with first class accommodations,” and large tracts of land available for industrial development.

### Community Organization

In Richmond, Delegate Bob Bloxom and Senator William Fears represented the county, and John Warner, who at the time was married to actress Elizabeth Taylor, was one of the State’s Senators in Washington. Locally, the county was organized into 3 magisterial, or voting, Districts – Capeville, Eastville, and Franktown – with 2 elected Supervisors from each District. The Federal Voting Rights Act had placed the county, and all of Virginia, under the Section 5 “pre clearance” requirement before any redistricting could be enforced. This meant that the county would need to demonstrate to a Federal Court that any change did “not have the purpose and will not have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color.” This was found unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013, and local governments were relieved of this requirement.

Towns and county governments were set up very much like they are today. A county Comprehensive Plan had been adopted in 1978, a Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance were in place, and both Wetlands and Primary Dunes Ordinances had been adopted.



*Before redevelopment, King’s Creek Marina was a quiet but active place for commercial and recreational use. Photo by Mary Miller.*

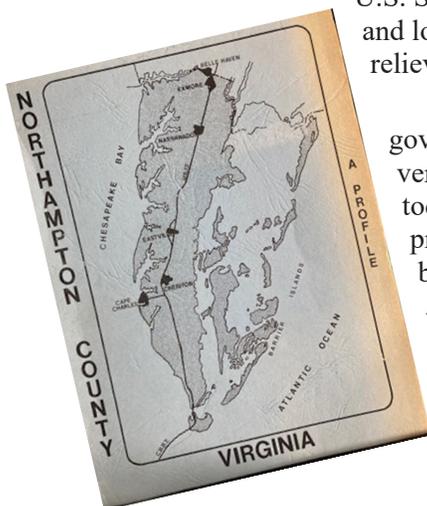
There were 3 K-12 school options, 2 public and 1 private. Telephone service was provided by the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company; solid waste was collected at 16 “green box” disposal sites and 1 sanitary landfill. Only one town, Cape Charles, had a sewage collection system, but no treatment plant was available – so sewage was discharged directly into the town harbor. There were 246 farms, with an average size of 253 acres. The real estate tax rate was \$0.77/\$100, and the county’s real estate was valued at \$1,983,770!

There were 7 pages in the county Profile devoted to state and local information and regulations for hunting and fishing. Included were details on migratory fowl seasons and floating blinds, from snow geese, to opossum and racoon hunting, to falconry and deer and turkey limits. In state waters and oyster rocks, each resident could harvest 1 bushel of oysters and 250 clams per day in season, and each family could have 1 crab pot.

### The People Who Lived Here

The population was 14,625 in the 1980 Census, about evenly divided between Black and White residents. Only 22% of the population was over 60 years old, and over 25% of the residents were under 18. Major industries involved vegetable and seafood harvesting and processing, and the Bayshore Concrete Company, which was involved in building the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel. About 66% of those employed were farm labor or production workers; 469 persons were listed as professional, and there were 15 persons employed as natural scientists. There were more than 45 churches just in the towns, and 58 named civic organizations and clubs.

There were over 6,000 housing units, with more than 80% of them single-family detached. Only 0.5% of them were used for seasonal occupancy. Almost all the units were



*See Then and Now, Cont’d on page 5*

## Shrimp and Pineapple en Brochette



Sweet and salty and shrimp – how can it miss? A little pre-prep first: soak those wooden skewers as long as possible! This is another one of those expandable recipes – for a crowd or dinner for 2, it’s easy to adjust. It works on an outdoor grill, or suspend skewers over a foil-covered pan in a 400° oven. Instead of a bacon wrap, let the bacon become a condiment here, boosting the sweet flavors. Make a little bit ahead – it’s just as good at room temperature. A great appetizer – or add cornbread and some slaw, and there’s dinner.

### Baste:

- Mix some honey, balsamic vinegar, and soy sauce in a sauce pan. Bring to a boil – boil 3 minutes to reduce. Let cool.

### Shrimp skewers:

- Shell shrimp, add to bowl with a little salt. Rub salt into shrimp, then rinse, pat dry, and chill.
- On stove top or in oven, cook some bacon slices until about half done – cool, then cut into 1" pieces.
- Prepare pineapple – either drain large canned chunks, or peel, core, and cut whole pineapple into 3/4" chunks.
- Thread shrimp and pineapple on skewers, adding bacon squares liberally, around both pineapple and shrimp. Insert pineapple in curve of each shrimp.
- About 5 minutes before cooking, baste skewers – then baste again when skewers are turned during cooking.
- Grill until shrimp turn pink on each side, or 4 to 5 minutes per side in a 400° oven.

Mary Miller – The Kitchen Hive

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## What’s Your Beef, *Cont’d from p. 3*

### The Alternative

For readers still opposed to domestic cattle, please consider the alternative. The U.S. will not be dethroned as the world’s leading consumer of beef anytime soon. A loss of domestic supply would be covered by further imports from two countries: Brazil and Namibia. These foreign cows are truly the unmitigated environmental disaster you fear, albeit not in your backyard. Many readers know of the massive fires being set in Brazil to convert the Amazon rainforest to pasture. Fewer know of the wholesale slaughter of African wildlife, namely disease-carrying cape buffalo and wildebeest, that accompanies cattle expansion on the Dark Continent.<sup>4</sup> Namibia, while well-managed, launders beef from the worst offenders.<sup>5</sup> So until beef demand subsides, the choice is clear – support local cattle. Our quail will thank you for it. 

<sup>1</sup> Norman, Gary and Puckett, Marc. “Northern Bobwhite Quail Action Plan for Virginia.” 2014. <https://www.landcan.org/pdfs/quail-action-plan.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Wild Turkey Management Plan 2013-2022.; Virginia Deer Management Plan 2015-2024, <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/virginia-deer-management-plan.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Semuels, Alana. (2019, November 27). ‘They’re Trying to Wipe Us Off the Map.’ Small American Farmers Are Nearing Extinction. <https://time.com/5736789/small-american-farmers-debt-crisis-extinction/>.

<sup>4</sup> Wambua, L., et al. “Wildebeest-associated malignant catarrhal fever...” <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26446889/>; Barnard, Ronald. Personal Interview, Marakele, South Africa. July 2022

<sup>5</sup> Klenfield, James (2019, November 23) Former Namibian minister arrested after Al Jazeera investigation. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/23/former-namibian-minister-arrested-after-al-jazeera-investigation/>; Barnard, 2022.



## Then and Now, *Cont’d from p. 4*

occupied by 1- or 2-person households. The median individual income was \$3,855, and the median household income was \$9,930. Almost 27% of the residents had incomes below the poverty level – 14% of the White and 40% of the Black population. And that was only 40 years ago.

Although then as now, the county was rich in natural beauty, fertile farmland, and productive water resources, the disparities in income, education, housing, and employment revealed significant community differences. 

*Next month:* Northampton County – Then and Now, Part 2 – Between the Lines: *A look at a contemporaneous, well-cited scholarly paper filled with facts, figures, and analysis of the county’s existing community environments 40 years ago; and the beginnings of the impacts of social and economic changes, including a prescient look ahead at what was in store for the county’s evolving dynamic.*

*\*Based on Federal Census information, state and local natural resource, economic and other data – Report not published digitally*



# RECYCLING CORNER

By Sue Mastyl

## New Recycling Vendor for the Shore

Tidewater Fibre Company (TFC) in Chesapeake has provided recycling services for both Shore counties since the program began. However, TFC recently notified the 2 counties that they would not be able to provide transportation after July 31; although they could continue to provide recycling services, the cost would increase from \$70 per ton, including transportation, to \$150 per ton without transportation. TFC cited rising costs in all sectors of the industry, as well as trouble finding outlets for materials, according to Stewart Hall, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works & Facilities for Accomack County, who provided a summary for the Accomack Board of Supervisors at their July 19 meeting.

Currently, all recyclable materials are hauled by the 2 counties to the Accomack Northern Landfill in Atlantic, where the material is baled, wire-tied, and loaded onto TFC's trucks.

Given the additional costs, both counties ceased their relationship with TFC; beginning August 1, Shore Waste in Salisbury, Maryland, working in cooperation with Eagle Recycling (also in Salisbury) will provide our single-stream recycling services, including transportation from the Atlantic facility. Although the cost is higher (\$130 per ton, including transportation), both counties felt it was important to ensure there was no interruption in service. The arrangement is month-to-month, while the counties investigate other alternatives.

The same recyclable materials (#1 and #2 plastic bottles, paper, magazines, cardboard, aluminum/steel/tin cans, milk/juice/soup cartons) will be accepted in the single-stream recycling bins at the 2 counties' convenience centers.

### Keep Your Glass Separate

*One important change is that, in Northampton County, glass cannot be included in the single-stream recycling, since Shore Waste/Eagle Recycling will not accept glass. Northampton is providing separate containers for glass while they search for a vendor for glass recycling. Any glass in the single-stream bins will contaminate the entire load and lead to its rejection, so it's important that we follow this new process.*



# Keeping Track

## Additional State Funding to Expand Broadband

Virginia received \$1.48 billion, the sixth-largest award among the states, from the \$42.5 billion federal Broadband, Equity, Accessibility, and Deployment (BEAD) grant program, part of the 2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The federal government's calculations for the states were based on the National Broadband Map, which the FCC revised last year to reflect availability based on individual addresses rather than census blocks. The program is targeted toward unserved and underserved locations.

Sen. Mark Warner noted that "This whopping \$1.48 billion investment brings us a giant step closer to achieving our goal of universal broadband coverage in Virginia," and added, "This funding is in no small part thanks to the Virginians that took time out of their day to report their connectivity status."

Mike Mason, Accomack County Administrator, indicated that \$1.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds that were previously targeted as matching funds for an unsuccessful 2023 Virginia Telecommunications Initiative Grant, will instead be used as matching funds for a future BEAD grant application.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)'s Office of Broadband will be administering the BEAD grant funds, as well as funds from the State Digital Equity Act Planning Grant Program. This will include planning grant resources to local governments, nonprofits, and other groups to better understand the digital divide of lack of broadband access, affordability, and adoption. As part of this effort, DHCD has launched a Digital Opportunity Survey (<https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/digital-opportunity>), a quick, 10-minute survey to help the office "to better understand the current state of digital access and availability in Virginia." The survey is available in English, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, and Ukrainian; paper copies are also available.



## Northampton County in 3rd Place!?

*Axios Richmond*, a regional news resource, recently ran an article\* extolling the financial benefits of investing in short-term rentals. An internet-rental-platform spokesperson stated that two thirds of the owner/hosts surveyed said they were covering their entire mortgage payments through short-term rentals. Northampton County was cited as number 3 among the top 5 "highest-earning Virginia counties for hosts last year." The article concluded with a warning to potential hosts to be sure to "Check local ordinances before listing your home."

\*[https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2023/06/23/airbnb-host-income-money-richmond?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter\\_axioslocal\\_richmond&stream=top](https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2023/06/23/airbnb-host-income-money-richmond?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axioslocal_richmond&stream=top)

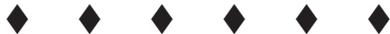
## Assateague Beach Plan Gets Initial Funding

As was last reported in the October 2022 issue of *ShoreLine* (“Progress for Assateague Beach Plan”), the Comprehensive Conservation Plan proposed by the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, which was finalized at the end of 2015, involves moving the beach parking lot 1.5 miles north, with a new 961-space parking lot protected by existing dunes. This project has been in discussion since the 1990s.

The project is estimated at \$40 million; the first phase has now been funded, with \$17.7 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program. It was made possible through the 2021 Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, which reduced the size of projects and increased the federal share on tribal lands to 100%. The Refuge is located on the Indigenous homelands of the Pocomoke and Occo-hannock people. The exact scope of the first phase will depend on updating project estimates.

The current beach and parking lot is on “one of the most unstable portions of Assateague Island,” said John Kasbohm, Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge Manager. According to Hugh Hawthorne, Superintendent of Assateague Island National Seashore in Maryland and Virginia, repairs to the parking lots cost \$300,000 to \$600,000 each year. “We have to rebuild the parking lot every spring because of storms over the winter,” he added.

The park hosts an estimated 1.5 million visitors each year, generating around \$150 million in local dollars. “It’s only a matter of time before we have a major storm that completely destroys the [current] location,” said Hawthorne. Moving the beach parking lot will also remove pressure from nesting piping plovers and American oystercatchers.



### Northampton County

## Sign Ordinance Changes – Back to the Drawing Board

After months of changes, additions, and revisions, the Board of Supervisors voted to deny their own Zoning Text Amendment and start over. Staff has been charged with drafting a new document based on Planning Commission recommendations and other feedback.

The changes will likely include sign sizes and lighting, setbacks from roadways and electronic signs. Changes may impact on-site business signage as well as off-site advertising signs, including billboards.

Since tourism has become a major industry, employer, and source of revenue for the county, based primarily on the county’s non-urban atmosphere, and since the community, during its Comprehensive Plan review, made clear that it values the rural look and character of the county, the visual impact of signage is important.

Public Hearings will be scheduled to receive community input.

## New Funding for Rail Trail

Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner recently announced a \$23.25 million federal grant for the Eastern Shore Rail Trail as part of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability & Equity (RAISE) grant program, funded by the 2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The grant will fund development of 16.8 miles of the railway bed, from Nassawadox to Onley, into a 10-foot-wide shared-use path. The entire Rail Trail project stretches 49 miles, from Cape Charles to Hallwood.



Previously, \$2.5 million in federal funding was awarded to construct a 2.5-mile stretch from Cape Charles to Route 13; this segment is in the planning phase. The Virginia Department of Transportation will administer both grants.

The Rail Trail is expected to encourage economic growth along its length, including bike shops, restaurants, and other small businesses. Ron Wolff, chairman of the Eastern Shore Rail Trail Foundation, added that “We are thrilled both Senator Warner and Senator Kaine understand not only the complex challenges facing the Shore but also the prospects and opportunities a rail trail conversion provides.”



### Doing, *Cont'd from p. 2*

tools did. I hope someday soon there will be options for my larger tools. I have two diesel tractors and am still waiting to have viable electric options for them.

Are all these changes enough? Of course not. But they are a start, and I keep looking to do more. I am amazed at how fast these changes are happening. I do not know if it is fast enough and I know we will still have issues from climate change. But if we all start where it makes sense for us, we become a part of a larger solution.

The question is, what can you do? You may not have a farm, but can you reduce the amount of grass, and the petrochemicals that often go with having a beautiful lawn? Can you change your eating habits to reduce your meat intake and increase vegetable consumption? Not only is that healthier, but it creates fewer warming chemicals in our air. Can you buy local foods? Can you live in a smaller home that uses less energy and materials than a larger home? Can you replace your vehicle to lower its impact, or make a habit of accomplishing multiple goals each time you drive your car? Can you vacation closer to home and reduce your air travel? There are so many possibilities, but only you understand the tradeoffs that work for you. It is certainly more effective if each of us does what we can. Doing nothing is a pretty bad option for our future Eastern Shore. I hope you will join me in trying to make a difference, however small.

Then figuring out how to do more. 

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◆ ◆ ◆ CBES fundraiser is sold out at 1,200 cyclists. Local businesses will again reap the economic benefits of the Shore's largest ecotourism event. Thank you! ◆ ◆ ◆



## 2023 Bike Tour Sponsors

CBES Thanks You!

### NORTHAMPTON TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

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