



CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE SHORELINE

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TM

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Aging in Place... ... Are There Enough Places?

By Mary Miller

When community meetings for amending Northampton County's Comprehensive Plan were being held, housing was a subject of much interest to participants. A review of both multiple meetings and survey input confirmed this interest.

A report by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission also confirmed both counties' interest in exploring more and better housing for several demographic and income groups. The need for more unrestricted subsidized housing, as well as the scarcity of workforce housing, have been widely discussed. The subject of independent elder housing, rent-assisted or not, public or private, including issues of accessibility and availability, has not been so widely considered. And this subject appeared to be of particular interest to many who provided input.

Currently, Northampton County has 5 age-restricted (62+) apartment complexes, from Exmore to Cape Charles. These designated rental apartment facilities are either income-based or offer rental assistance to low-income renters. Accomack County has 1 large apartment complex in Parksley and another in Onancock whose name indicates senior living, but which does not appear to be designated age-restricted. Some of the units have rental assistance possible,^{1,2} but available rentals in all these facilities are usually very limited.

Populations of both Shore counties have been trending older for

decades. As residents age in place, as young families become empty-nesters, and as an influx of retirees has increased the population of people aged 50-plus, the need for available, accessible housing, private and pub-

Populations of both Shore counties have been trending older for decades.

lic, subsidized or not, has increased, and will continue to increase as the middle-aged cohorts age into the fast-growing 50-plus segment of the Shore's population.

New Census Bureau research indicates that household wealth among the 55+ age group is higher than was previously calculated. Pensions and withdrawals from retirement accounts are now factored more precisely into projections. So that might indicate that many retirees, including Baby Boomers, may have resources to finance more sustainable and accessible housing as they age.

Just How Old Are We Anyway?

In both Northampton and Accomack counties, the fastest-growing age cohort over the past 11 years has been those 65 years of age or older. In Northampton, the increase was 24.6%; in Accomack, the 65+ age group increased 32.4%. This increase is most likely due to both in-migration of retirees and the aging-in-place of local residents. This may be borne out by the largest decrease in population

in both counties in the 35-to-49 age group (approximately 16% to 17%). This proportional decrease is likely due in part to a desire of locals, many of whom are now approaching the older population cohorts, to age in place. And like most rural counties nationwide, Census population age charts show the population who are aged 50+ vastly outnumbering the under-30 age group on the Shore.³

Aging in Place - Where and How?

Between retirement homes and assisted-living facilities, on one hand, or residents still living in large, 2-story houses on the other, there's room for accessible, available homes, condos, and apartments for aging on the Shore in comfort and safety. Both the Virginia and the Federal Fair Housing Acts have standards for accessibility, particularly in facilities with 4 or more units. "Accessible housing (both rental and for sale) is

See Aging in Place, Cont'd on p. 2

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housing that is designed, constructed, or modified to enable people with physical, sensory, communication, or other disabilities to enjoy full use of their home.” Requirements for specific details include minimum widths for doorways, zero-step thresholds, grab-bars, wheelchair access, etc. Accessibility, to apply its general meaning in housing, often means a single-story home or multi-family building, or a multi-story building with an elevator.

There are both high- and low-rise age-restricted communities across the Bay to fill the growing need for retirement housing, many of which have waiting lists for apartments. When considering increasing demand from a growing older population on the Shore, combined with the resources available to many of its aging Baby Boomers, it remains to be seen if there's enough profit to be had for builders and developers to fill the growing need here.



¹<https://affordablehousingonline.com/housing-search/Virginia/Accomack-County>

²<https://a-npdc.org/eastern-shore-of-virginia-housing-alliance/esvha-apartments/>

³<https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/virginia?endDate=2021-01-01&startDate=2010-01-01>

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Former Cap2Cap Ride Coordinator Takes on Bike Tour

ShoreLine Staff

It's already a milestone year in 2023, as the Between the Waters Bike Tour hits 30, but add to it CBES good fortune in finding an experienced Bike Tour Coordinator in Matt Pienkowski. Matt is taking over for Mary Ehmann, who returned to teaching after 2 highly successful Bike Tours.

Matt is no stranger to the bicycle world, as his work has allowed him to interact with cycling in intriguing ways. He has led trips with the College of William and Mary's Tribe Adventure Program. He also taught classes in Bike Maintenance and Repair and How to Ride a Bike with REI's Outdoor School.

For the past 2 years, Matt worked for the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation in Richmond, where he planned and coordinated the annual Cap2Cap ride. The popular, 18-year-old ride utilizes the scenic trail that connects Richmond to Williamsburg.

Along with his career choices, cycling is also Matt's passion. "I've been a bike commuter, mountain biker (kind of...), and have ridden across the U.S. on the TransAmerica Trail," he said.

The CBES Board is looking forward to Matt's putting his own spin on what is the oldest and largest bike tour on the Shore.

Matt currently lives in Accomack County with his fiancée and dog, and works at the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust as the Community Outreach Coordinator.

"I'm excited to explore the Eastern Shore by bicycle," said Matt, "as well as help the CBES team put together another excellent ride this October!"

The 2023 Between the Waters Bike Tour will be held on October 28 in Exmore, but the weekend's activities traditionally include a Friday Fun Ride, and participants in the Bike



CBES is happy to announce that Matt Pienkowski will be coordinating the 2023 Between the Waters Bike Tour.

Tour will also have the opportunity to purchase tickets for the Bike Tour Oyster Roast, held the evening of the ride. The limited tickets for the Oyster Roast typically sell out fast, so interested Bike Tour cyclists will want to be looking for their invitation as soon as they register.

Although Matt is ready and able to handle coordinating the Bike Tour, he will need help before, during, and after the various events. Volunteers are a huge part of the effort, and are greatly appreciated, not only by CBES, but also by Bike Tour and Oyster Roast participants. Their feedback is overwhelmingly positive, and volunteers report that they enjoy interacting with cyclists and contributing their time to such a worthy cause.

There are volunteer opportunities for adults of all ages and abilities, so please consider renewing your commitment to the Bike Tour (if you're a veteran volunteer), or starting a new fall tradition (if you're a first-timer). Even if you're riding in the Tour, you can still help!

Contact us at info@cbes.org or 757-678-7157 to learn about volunteer opportunities.



The Heat Is On: Warming Water Threatens Aquatic Life in Chesapeake Bay Region

By Karl Blankenship

Excerpted, with permission, from the Bay Journal

Warming water is threatening to undo decades of efforts aimed at improving aquatic habitat in the Chesapeake region, from headwater streams to the open water of the Bay. The increasing water temperatures, which threaten species like brook trout and striped bass, are already offsetting some of the habitat benefits of the multibillion-dollar Bay restoration effort, a new report warns. Worse, some actions taken to reduce pollution are actually contributing to warmer, more stressful, stream conditions for fish.

A report from the Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee warns that increasing temperatures could undermine

progress toward Bay Program goals for "fisheries management, habitat restoration, water quality improvements, and protecting healthy watersheds." For example, a 2013 study found that meeting all Bay nutrient reduction goals would increase habitat for Atlantic sturgeon, an endangered species, by 13%. But an increase in water temperature of 1.8 degrees would reduce available sturgeon habitat by 65%.

The report stressed the urgent need to save areas that can still be protected from rising temperatures while mitigating harm to places where changes are inevitable. "We've got to be thinking about temperatures in the same way we talk about nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment," said Rich Batiuk, a former senior science official with the Chesapeake Bay Program.

For Aquatic Life, the Heat Is On

In the Chesapeake, the average summer water temperature has increased about 1.8 degrees since 1995 – driven primarily by warming air temperatures. Across the watershed, a U.S. Geological Survey analysis found that stream temperatures increased 2.52 degrees on average from 1960 to 2020. That increase stems not only from warming air, but land-use changes that warm stream temperatures.

These increases have already impacted aquatic life. Nearly a century ago, the Bay's blue crabs spent nearly 5 months burrowed into mud as they hibernated during cold months. "They've probably shaved 3 weeks at either end," said Tom Miller, who heads the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's Chesapeake Biological Laboratory. "So their winter has gone from 5 months, down ... to as little as 3 1/2 months."

Meanwhile, eelgrass beds, one of the Bay's most important underwater habitats, have been declining for

decades. Scientists fear that the heat-sensitive plant, which is the only underwater grass species in many portions of the Lower Bay, will largely disappear in coming decades, dramatically reducing important habitat for juvenile blue crabs and fish, waterfowl, and other species.

As water warms, it holds less oxygen. In the summer, low-oxygen levels in bottom areas of the Bay force striped bass toward warmer surface waters, which are stressful to the fish and cause increased mortality when the fish are handled. Warmer temperatures also increase the toxicity of some heavy metals and other chemicals, promote the growth of bacteria and harmful algal blooms, and spread pathogens that can infect fish.

Managing for Heat

Temperature is already bringing a "regime shift" to the Chesapeake, in which the mix of species is significantly altered. Some southern species, such as white shrimp and red drum, are already moving into the Bay in increasing numbers. Shrimp are even starting to support a commercial fishery in Virginia's portion of the Bay. For blue crabs, fewer severe winters would reduce mortality during hibernation. But growing numbers of red drum could increase predation on blue crabs, and eelgrass losses will remove an important refuge for young blue crabs. Likewise, oysters may benefit from longer growing seasons, but warmer temperatures may also promote diseases. Warmer temperatures might increase growth rates for small striped bass, but heat-sensitive adults will be more stressed by warmer summer conditions.

The report suggests that large-scale restoration projects, which mix living shorelines, oyster reefs, and underwater grass beds, could help mitigate conditions for a variety of species when conditions get bad.

Warmer water could also require some changes to fishing – and fishing management. Adult striped bass are more likely to die when handled during warm temperatures. Educational efforts, which the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is already working on, could encourage anglers to refrain from fishing during stressful conditions.

Sizing Up Stream Opportunities

As discussed above, stream temperatures in many parts of the watershed have risen more than temperatures

"We've got to be thinking about temperatures in the same way we talk about nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment." – Rich Batiuk, former senior science official, Chesapeake Bay Program



Bike Tour Raffle Winner

Tammy Fletcher of Norfolk, VA, is all smiles picking up her raffle win, the original painting “Between the Waters Bike Tour 2022,” created by Bethany Simpson.

“I have the spot already picked out where I’m going to hang it,” said Tammy.

Bethany is working on this year’s painting, which will again be used for a fundraising raffle and to beautifully promote CBES 30th Between the Waters Bike Tour, scheduled for Saturday, October 28, in Exmore, Virginia. We can’t wait to see what she comes up with next!

The Heat Is On, *Cont’d from p. 3*

in the Bay. While climate drives overall temperature increases, land cover continues to have a major influence on stream temperatures. Generally, forested areas moderate the impact of rising temperatures, while developed landscapes magnify the warming. Forests can cool local air temperature by several degrees as trees evaporate water through their leaves. Shade from trees can also moderate ground temperatures, keeping sunlight from heating water as it runs off the land. Larger forests also promote the infiltration of rain into groundwater, where it is further cooled.

That’s why coldwater streams – the habitat for brook trout and other temperature-sensitive species – tend to be heavily forested. A recent Maryland Department of Natural Resources study found that brook trout typically require at least 70% of a watershed to be forested and brown trout 52%. No trout are found when a watershed is less than 46% forested.

In many areas, conserving existing forests and planting new streamside trees can mitigate the impacts of warming air and even reduce water temperatures in smaller headwater streams. Unfortunately, those efforts are lagging throughout the Bay region, with planting of streamside buffers far below Bay Program goals – just 169 miles were planted in 2020, far less than the 900-miles-a-year goal.

As forests are lost and land developed, the hardened surfaces that replace trees warm rainfall and speed that heated water into streams. A study in the Anacostia watershed found that runoff after summer storms could increase stream temperatures 5 to 7 degrees.

Urban areas with large amounts of roofs, pavement, and other impervious covers have little opportunity to help stormwater soak into the ground where it can be cooled. The region is also rapidly installing best management practices (BMPs) that add to the problem. Generally, these are ponds that capture rain running off heated surfaces,

allowing it to be further warmed by sunlight before being released into streams. Examples are stormwater detention ponds and lagoons at animal feeding operations.

Planting more trees in developed landscapes can help reduce stream temperatures by cooling the air and shading pavement. But Bay Program goals to increase urban tree cover are also off track. Instead of adding 2,400 acres by 2025, the region has actually lost 12 times that amount since 2013.

Unfortunately, the time frames for meeting water quality goals will be “challenging,” especially in more urbanized areas, said Lee Currey, director of Maryland Department of the Environment’s Water and Science Administration. “You’re talking, once trees are planted, 5 to 10 years out before you start seeing something that will provide the shade cover.” 

Ed. Note: To learn more about Bay Journal and sign up for a free subscription, go to <https://www.bayjournal.com/>



Striped bass are among the many aquatic species stressed by warmer water, with more dying after handling during summertime fishing. Photo credit: Dave Harp

Help Your Local Pollinators

By Sarah Morgan and Ann Snyder

Honeybees, native bees, birds, bats, and butterflies, among other pollinator species found here on the Eastern Shore, are vital to the production of fruits, nuts, and vegetables. By moving pollen from one part of a flower to another, or from plant to plant, pollinators enable the development of fruits and seeds.

Over the last 30+ years, pollinators have been on the decrease, but anyone with a yard, field, or even flowerpots on a deck or balcony can do something to change that trend on the Eastern Shore. A few simple steps can produce a veritable smorgasbord.

More Welcoming Yards

Leaving borders or other edges un-mowed allows various plants to flower, supplying much-needed nectar to bees. And though garden beds can be dedicated to bee-friendly flowers, there are also less-obvious opportunities for adding to the mix.

Planting low-growing species in lawns, and mowing less frequently, helps the soil retain moisture and grow thousands of tiny flowers, many of which survive judiciously set blades. The recommended time frame between mowing is 2 to 3 weeks, with a blade-height no lower than 3". Suggested additions to lawn grasses include white and red clover, Roman chamomile, bird's foot trefoil, violets, and dianthus.

Eastern Shore Natives

Flowering plants that are native to the Shore are hardy, easily cared-for, and resistant to disease. They range from small wildflowers, to shrubs and trees; not only do they provide flowers for pollinators, but they also provide habitat for many of the birds and other animals that spend all or part of the year here on the Shore.

Several years ago, a wonderful guide was published in print and online for those wanting to learn more about the Shore's natives. Entitled *Native Plants of Accomack and Northampton*, it is no longer available in print, but can be downloaded at no charge from the Plant Virginia Natives website: <https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/plant-essentials>. According to the website, the guide is currently being updated; the new publication is projected to be available in print and online by late spring 2023.

The full-color, 44-page booklet includes species that are relatively easy to grow, have robust ecological benefits, and are (mostly) readily available from area vendors. In addition to high-quality photographs of selected flowers and plants, descriptions contain types of wildlife supported (e.g., pollinators and/or birds), preferred soil moisture, and light requirements. Plant categories include Forbs (flowers and groundcovers), Grasses, Ferns, Vines, Shrubs, and Trees.

In addition to information on specific plants, the guide



The Monarch is a beautiful orange-and-black butterfly that captures our imaginations and much scientific curiosity, and can use our conservation. Its caterpillars feed on Asclepias genus plants and a few others in the milkweed plant family. To survive, the Eastern US and Canadian Monarch populations must make a migration journey of several thousand miles, taking up to 4 generations to complete. The Monarch is not an endangered butterfly, but its North American migration may be in danger of disappearing. – From the Virginia Living Museum website: <https://thevlm.org/>

directs interested gardeners to demonstration plots throughout the Shore, where native plants have been established for public viewing. There is also a section listing other resource material for those who want to learn more.

Protect, Don't Poison

The Shore's native plants are largely resistant to the area's pests. If you **MUST** use pesticides, spot-treat only the affected plant, and only when the plant is **NOT** flowering. Leave patches of vegetation and soil undisturbed whenever possible (even through the winter), as these areas provide habitat for various pollinators. Many live in the soil around the roots of the very plants they pollinate, so turn over the soil only when you need to.

Before using a pesticide, ask yourself: Are flowers in bloom? Will pollinators be active during the pesticide application? Are there alternatives to using pesticide? Is the pesticide being applied according to the instructions? Pollinators can be sickened or killed if they consume nectar or pollen contaminated with pesticides. Reduce the risk by applying pesticides at night, when bees and other pollinators are inactive.

Try to tolerate a few weeds and pests rather than resorting to pesticides. Many pests that alarm us actually are self-limiting and do little damage. Even when pesticides don't kill beneficial pollinators immediately, they can have subtle but serious long-term effects on populations (including us!). 

RECYCLING CORNER

By Sue Mastyl

Recycling Plastic Bags – All the Details

As we reported in the March 2020 issue of *ShoreLine*, Accomack County convenience centers, as well as Food Lion and Walmart stores, have separate bins to collect plastic grocery/shopping bags and plastic film for transport to Trex®, where the material is recycled into composite decking and other outdoor products (<https://nextrex.com/>).



Here's what is accepted in the bins (all plastic must be clean, dry, and free of food residue; all colors are accepted) –

- Plastic grocery and retail bags
- Plastic overwrap (e.g., for toilet paper, paper towels, water bottle cases), pallet wrap, and stretch film
- Bread bags
- Dry cleaning bags
- Newspaper sleeves
- Produce bags
- Zip-Loc bags
- Cereal liners
- Bubble wrap and air pillows; plastic shipping envelopes
- Salt and ice bags; wood pellet bags

The following *cannot* be recycled –

- Chip bags or candy bar wrappers (note that some of these can be recycled by Terracycle; see the September 2021 issue of *ShoreLine*)
- Frozen food bags
- Net or mesh produce bags
- Personal protective equipment
- Vinyl shower curtains or tablecloths
- Degradable or compostable bags or film
- Pet food or bird seed bags
- Hot dog or meat packaging
- Thicker, stiffer plastics (like those for bedding) or anything with a zipper
- Boat wrap

Here are easy ways to verify whether your plastic is acceptable or not –

- If the wrap or bag will stretch when you pull it, it can be included. If it tears like paper, it can't be.
- If the package is shiny or makes a crinkly/crunchy sound, it cannot be recycled.

Keeping Track

VDOT to Host Open House for Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Project

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is hosting an event on Monday, March 13th, from 4 to 6 PM, at the Eastern Shore Community College, Workforce Development Center – Great Hall, to provide information about the Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Project and to elicit oral and written feedback. Also, especially for those who can't make it to the event, there is an online survey:

<https://metroquestsurvey.com/ar7g7l>

This is a VDOT Public Hearing staffed by VDOT Public Affairs personnel – *not* the transportation district commission (ANTDC), *not* the planning district commission (A-NPDC), and *not* the Eastern Shore Rail Trail Foundation. It will be more like a poster session than a town hall. The public is urged to attend, ask questions, and learn more about this ongoing project.

Dillon Rule May Limit Local Wetland Mitigation Regulatory Efforts

The Northampton County Board of Supervisors (BOS) recently sent a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to the Planning Commission that would restrict wetland mitigation projects of the type currently being developed south of Exmore. *ShoreLine* subsequently received a copy of a letter from Mark Herring, then-Attorney General of Virginia, to a State Delegate on that very subject. Herring writes, "I note that Virginia follows the Dillon Rule, which 'provides that municipal corporations have only those powers that are expressly granted, those necessarily or fairly implied from expressly granted powers, and those that are essential and indispensable.' In addition, a corollary to the Dillon Rule restricts the powers of local governing bodies to those that are fixed by statute, and limits their powers 'to those conferred expressly or by necessary implication.'" Since the restrictions stated in the amendment have not been "conferred expressly" to the locality by the State, the proposed ZTA may not be allowable. The BOS has tabled the proposed amendment for further study.



- Look for the NexTrex® label on brands to be sure the plastic film package is recyclable.

Every year, Trex hosts the Recycle2Win Plastic Film Recycling Challenge, between America Recycles Day on November 15 and Earth Day on April 22, to challenge K-12 students across the country to recycle as much plastic film as possible by weight. Schools compete for cash prizes and a high-performance composite bench for the winning school.

ADDITIONAL 2022 DONORS

It is with sincere regret that, due to data-entry error, CBES failed last month to include the magnanimous donations of these long-time supporters: We thank them for their generosity and grace.

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\$501 - \$1,000

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Amy & Ed Tankard

Peregrine Falcon

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Sanderling

\$51 - \$100

Charles Rhyne

Curlew

\$25 - \$50

Rick & Janice Felker
Alice Rucker
Robert Toner



Fried Tomatoes and Corn Chowder

This time of year, down our way, summer still seems a long way off. Red-ripe tomatoes and just-picked corn seem a sweet memory from last summer and a dream away from next. Maybe we can't have the real tastes of summer right now but a preview might help warm up these late winter afternoons. Hardly need a recipe for this light weeknight supper – tomatoes soften and sweeten in the cooking, and mashing up canned or frozen corn does the same thing. Adjust quantities up or down to suit your table. Try a dish of Remoulade Sauce for dipping and add some crusty bread, and there's your meatless Monday supper.

- 3 to 4 plum tomatoes, thickly sliced
- Panko bread crumbs flavored with salt, pepper, and onion powder; flour and beaten egg for coating
- Olive oil or shortening

Chowder:

- 2 to 3 tbsp finely diced onion
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 small potato, finely diced
- 1 to 2 strips of bacon, cut into small pieces
- 1 small can corn, or ½ to ¾ cup frozen corn
- 2 cups well-flavored broth or stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ to 1 cup half-and-half

Get chowder started. Brown onions and bacon in a little butter and olive oil in a medium saucepan – then add grated carrot and diced potato. Add stock, salt, and pepper – simmer gently until flavors meld. Process or mash most of the corn kernels (save a few whole kernels), then add all to simmering chowder. Cook until potatoes are very soft. Just before serving, add half-and-half and continue heating.

Heat shortening or olive oil in heavy sauté pan until drop of water sputters. Dredge sliced tomatoes in flour, dip in beaten egg, then coat with flavored Panko crumbs. Quickly brown tomatoes until crispy, flipping once. Keep warm in oven – then serve with warm corn chowder.

Mary Miller – *The Kitchen Hive*

Reprinted with permission: <https://www.talkrealnow.com>



REGISTRATION OPENS APRIL 1 30 YEARS OF CYCLING FUN

The oldest eco-tourism event on the Shore returns Saturday, October 28, 2023!

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The Shore's Hometown

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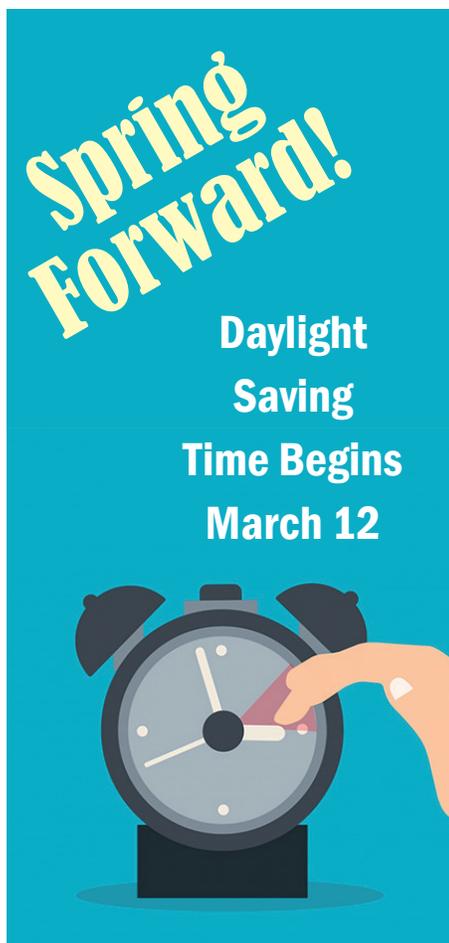
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Spring Forward!

Daylight Saving Time Begins March 12

Community Calendar*

**Note: For current status of public meetings, go to the appropriate website or contact by email or phone.*

Accomack County

757-787-5700

www.co.accomack.va.us

- 1st Wed Board of Zoning Appeals
10 AM, Accomac
- 2nd Wed Planning Commission (PC)
7 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Tues School Board
7 PM, Metompkin ES
- 3rd Wed Board of Supervisors
5 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Wed PC Work Session
7 PM, Accomac (as needed)
- 4th Thurs Wetlands Board
10 AM, Accomac

Northampton County

757-678-0440

www.co.northampton.va.us

- 1st Tues Board of Zoning Appeals
10 AM, Eastville
- 1st Tues Planning Commission (PC)
6 PM, Eastville
- 2nd Tues Board of Supervisors (BOS)
6 PM, Eastville
- 2nd Thurs School Board Work Session
6 PM, Machipongo
- 2nd Thurs Wetlands Board
Meets as needed, Eastville
- 3rd Wed PC Work Session
2 PM, Eastville
- 4th Tues BOS Work Session
5 PM, Eastville
- 4th Thurs School Board
6 PM, Machipongo

CBES and Other Activities

- 3rd Tues ES Ground Water Committee
10 AM, Melfa
- 3rd Tues CBES Board Meeting
7 PM, via Zoom
- 3rd Thurs (odd months) Eastern Shore of Virginia Broadband Authority
2 PM, Exmore

For membership and other
CBES information:
www.cbes.org