



# CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

# SHORELINE

*A Journal of Natural Resources, Public Affairs and Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*

TM

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## Sea Level Rise Projections Revisited

By Sue Mastyl

October saw two coastal flooding events on the Shore – Saturday, October 12, from a combination of the Hunter’s Moon and Tropical Storm Melissa offshore, and the King Tide on Sunday, October 27. A February 2018 NOAA report (NOAA Technical Report NOS CO-OPS 086) noted that high-tide flooding has doubled in 15 years along the Mid-Atlantic – from 3 days per year in 2000 to 6 days in 2015. The report projects daily flooding by 2100 under the Intermediate, Intermediate High, High, and Extreme scenarios for global sea level rise (3.3, 4.9, 6.6, and 8.2 feet, respectively), and 130 days of flooding with the Low scenario (1 foot of global sea level rise by 2100), which follows the current historic trend, without factoring in additional drivers of climate change.

With so many different projections of sea level rise, and new reports appearing regularly, it’s easy to get confused about which will be the likely scenario. And it’s not an academic exercise – we need to be planning now, as individuals and more importantly as communities, for what the future will look like in 2030, 2050, 2100, and beyond.

### Global Projections

The September 24, 2019, report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on “The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing

**With so many different projections of sea level rise, it’s easy to get confused about which one will be the likely scenario.**

Climate” lists the primary drivers of global sea level rise as ocean heat content, Greenland ice sheet mass loss, Antarctic ice sheet mass loss, and glacier mass loss, with a projected global sea level rise by 2100 of 1.4 feet (Intermediate-Low scenario, if carbon levels are reduced quickly in the next few decades) to 2.8 feet (High scenario, if current trends in carbon pollution continue through mid-century). The IPCC’s projections for sea level rise have been steadily increasing since its first report in 2001; the current projections are 10% higher than those from 5 years ago.

### Local Conditions

Locally, we know that sea level rise is a combination of global sea level rise and land subsidence. The subsidence is a combination of the effects from the meteor strike off Cape Charles and glacial isostatic rebound. There is additional subsidence occurring in the Hampton Roads area, due to overpumping of the Potomac aquifer.

The two main sources for local information are the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), which has a Sea-Level Report Card on their website (<https://www.vims.edu/research/products/slrc/>) for 32

locations, including Sewells Point in Norfolk, and The Nature Conservancy’s Virginia Eastern Shore Coastal Resilience tool (<https://maps.coastalresilience.org/virginia/#>). The projections in the Coastal Resilience tool are based on the 2017 National Climate Assessment (which projected global sea level rise of 1 to 4 feet by 2100), and were customized by VIMS to account for the lower subsidence rate compared with Hampton Roads.

The local projections are higher than the global ones; the Coastal Resilience tool shows 2.3 feet of sea level rise by 2100 with the Intermediate-Low scenario, and 7.2 feet with the High scenario.

### Applying the Projections

The Accomack County Planning Commission has been reviewing options for coastal resilience for the

*See Sea Level Rise, cont’d on p. 4*

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# To the CBES Community From the President

By Arthur Upshur

As I write this, the partisan divide in our country seems almost insurmountable. Talk of impeachment and political “witch hunt” fills the airwaves, and everyone seems to be circling the wagons around their positions. It is a mess. And it is difficult to know fact from partisan spin.

A tribal political environment carries with it a clear delineation of who is the “enemy” – anyone outside “our” belief tribe. We are urged to attribute horrendous motives to folks from the “other” side. But the Eastern Shore is also defined by its sense of place and community. While I may disagree with your political choices, we are still neighbors and we still live together. We have common local problems that we need to solve together that have little to do with the Republican or Democratic divide. If a storm knocks down a tree in your yard, I’ll help you get it cleaned up – even if you and I don’t vote the same way.

I was struck by that thought at the recent voter forums that CBES sponsored. Making voting decisions forms the core of our citizenship. Most local elected officers operate outside party

positions or philosophy. Party affiliation rarely helps make a decision on who is a good School Board member, Treasurer, or even a Supervisor. Yet these roles are critically important for the Eastern Shore. We depend on selecting good folks who are willing to volunteer their valuable time for the Shore. CBES for many years has taken a lead role in helping introduce competing candidates to the voters. Many of the questions asked are given in advance, so everyone has a chance to think through a response. It is not a debate. We don’t interrupt to get in points. We ask that answers be directed to the audience instead of the other candidates. We really just facilitate a conversation that allows voters to get to know the candidates a little better by hearing what is important to them.

It is a great example of how CBES works in our community. We quietly keep conversations going, work to keep our citizenry informed, and always advocate for transparent and open decision-making by our leaders. In our materials, we refer to “inform, engage, and empower.” It is often messy. We invariably make someone angry when we challenge processes or raise opposing views so they too are considered. It is my sincere hope that we do not do those things flippantly. We work hard to respect all sides. It is one reason we still operate CBES on the basis of consensus rather than majority rule. It is a lot slower to get to a position on anything, but it is crucial to remaining inclusive.

While CBES serves a valuable role in watching over our political process and local decision-making, the organization only exists because of you, our members. Our influence is dependent on how many voices we represent, through membership, donations, and other support. We do not have an endowment or outside

support. Our donor base is limited, and each gift, no matter how small, is incredibly important. We operate on a shoestring, with only one full-time staff member. Everything else is done with volunteers and part-time help. But while our costs are low, they still must be supported. And, truthfully, we would like to do more if we had the resources to do so.

An organization dedicated to making a whole community “better” is truly a rarity. I wish I had a dollar for every person over the years who has told me that this is an impossible mission in a small rural county. And yet for 31 years, YOU have kept us going through your generosity and commitment. Will you please consider a gift to keep us going another year? Can you help us grow our membership with your friends and family? I know that there are many demands on all of us for contributions. Good causes are all around us on the Shore. But CBES is unique in its focus and positive impact. I hope you will be as generous as you can be. Thank you.

Arthur Upshur  
CBES President

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**NORTHAMPTON RESIDENTS,  
Make Your Voices Heard!**

All Northampton County residents are invited to complete a short survey to provide input for the upcoming **Comprehensive Plan Update**. Please go to:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NorthamptonCo>

Participants can complete the survey online or print it out and submit by mail.

**The survey is only available until November 8, so do it today!**

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# What's Next For the Railroad? (Part III)

By George Mapp and the *ShoreLine* Staff

When the Bay Coast Railroad ceased operations south of Hallwood in May 2018, the corporate entities that own and manage the railroad filed a request to the federal agency in charge of railroads, the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The request was to divide the railroad holdings into 3 segments: the northern segment, from Pocomoke to Hallwood, would be contracted to the Delmarva Central Railroad; the southern segment, in Norfolk, would be contracted to the Buckingham Branch Railroad; and the middle section, between Hallwood and Cape Charles, would cease operations.

In June of this year, another filing was made to begin the process of “railbanking” the middle segment, from Hallwood to Cape Charles. Railbanking is preferable to total “abandonment” because it preserves the corridor for a future railway and for other public uses. The corridor is currently being used for broadband infrastructure, and it is also being considered for sewer lines. In the future it may be needed for natural gas lines. Railbanking also enables establishment of multi-use trails, to accommodate walkers, dog-walkers, runners, skaters, wheelchairs, bikes, electric bikes, modified bikes for people with disabilities; and in some cases, horseback riders, golf carts, ATVs, and snowmobiles.

At recent Accomack-Northampton Transportation District Commission meetings, there were discussions about modifying the plan to allow continuation of rail service between Hallwood and Parksley, but the additional costs of maintaining the rail bed are high, and the budgets are already stretched. A counter-offer was made to modify the facilities at Hallwood to better accommodate Associated Grain, Inc.

As part of the railbanking process, an individual or organization must agree to partner with the railroad to manage the trail, and the railroad must agree to the partnership. In August, the president of the Virginia Bicycling Federation submitted a request to the STB on behalf of the Dahlgren Heritage Rail Trail Association (DHRTA) to be that partner. The DHRTA is a privately owned trail in northern Virginia, owned by David Brickley, former director of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, who bought the trail so that it could be preserved for public recreation.

The next step in the railbanking process is for the STB to issue a Notice of Interim Trail Use or Abandonment (NITU). Once the NITU is issued, landowners along the railroad may be eligible for compensation from the federal government. The background for these claims is that when

the railroads were first built, if the land was not purchased outright, easements were issued with the condition that if the railroad ceased operations, the property would be returned to the landowners. Since then, the National Trails System Act permitted the federal government to convert railroads to trails, with the stipulation that the railroad could re-take the corridors in the future. However, if the original agreement was to return the property to landowners, this would be considered a “taking” of land by the federal government and would entitle landowners to file claims for compensation.



Recently, at least 2 law firms have sent out letters to landowners notifying them of this potential entitlement, and offering to represent them in their claims. Normally, payment amounts depend on individual appraisals, based on comparable sales and the impact of the taking on the property. By seeking compensation, landowners are not affecting the railbanking process, nor are they affecting their property rights.

As for the railroad spur south of Cape Charles to the Bridge Tunnel, there is now an established trail covering the southern half. The Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail (STBHT) starts at the CBBT parking lot and extends 5 miles north alongside Route 13, to just south of Sting Ray's. A feasibility study was completed last year for the remaining 2 segments. The first, which extends to the Food Lion intersection, needs a party to take ownership and assume responsibility for trail maintenance before funding for construction can be pursued.

As to the final segment of the Southern Tip trail, from Food Lion to the Cape Charles harbor, the Cape Charles Town Council agreed to own and maintain this segment of the trail, and to pay some of the costs incurred by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) to prepare a grant proposal. As *ShoreLine* reported in September 2018, the Food Lion shopping center area is something of a traffic hazard, which is being addressed by VDOT. VDOT engineering consultants have worked with A-NPDC, the town of Cape Charles, and Northampton County to develop plans. A-NPDC will apply for funding when an appropriate grant cycle opens, but don't have any dates at this time. The project will not require matching funds from the town or the county.

George Mapp, a CBES member, has started a petition to “Support Our Eastern Shore Rail Trail,” for the following reasons:

*See Railroad, cont'd on p. 4*

# CBES Candidate Forums

ShoreLine Report



State election candidates answer questions at the 2nd of three CBES forums. From left, Del. Rob Bloxom, Phil Hernandez, Elizabeth Lankford, and Sen. Lynwood Lewis. Photo by WESR staff

In October, CBES presented a trio of Candidate Forums for contested local and state elections, partnering with local radio station WESR. CBES decades-old tradition of organizing these forums is an important part of our mission in the Shore community, assisting citizens with making informed votes. Attendance was inspiring, with 130 citizens participating in the Accomack County Forum, nearly 50 at the Northampton event, which had only one contested Supervisors' seat, and approximately 200 for the upcoming state elections.

WESR provided live coverage as well as recording the forums, which are still available on [www.shoredailynews.com](http://www.shoredailynews.com) on the Audio On Demand page. CBES thanks Accomack County Schools, Northampton County Schools, and our volunteers for helping make this public service a success.

From Lorna Gagneux, a forum attendee:

*“Just wanted to take a moment to congratulate you and the CBES members on a well organized and well attended event. It was obvious the work put into making this come off so smoothly, without the partisan taint of many events. It gave everyone the chance to meet and hear the stark differences in perspectives on a variety of issues and I think helped many to consider their vote. Again, many thanks for all of your hard work in providing this essential service to the Eastern Shore community.”*

Thanks, Lorna, and thanks to all who contributed to making the CBES Candidate Forums such a success!

## Sea Level Rise, *cont'd from p. 1*

upcoming Comprehensive Plan update over the last several months, and has identified several areas of focus, including revising county plans and strategies with every inch of sea level rise. However, they have been using a projection of 1 inch every 7 to 8 years, or 1 to 1.2 feet by 2100, which is much lower than even the most optimistic projection from the Coastal Resilience tool and seems to be extrapolating the historic trend forward, without any further acceleration – an unlikely scenario, given the acceleration we've seen just in the last decade.

According to Rich Morrison, Deputy County Administrator of Planning and Community Development, this projection is based on a 2010 VIMS study ([https://www.vims.edu/newsandevents/topstories/archives/2010/sea\\_level\\_study.php](https://www.vims.edu/newsandevents/topstories/archives/2010/sea_level_study.php)), which indicated that the rise in absolute sea level in the Chesapeake Bay (without factoring in subsidence) is about half that of the global average. Unfortunately, a lot has changed in this field in the last 9 years; the county is currently awaiting a more current projection from VIMS.

*ShoreLine comment: Planning for the future is by nature an uncertain business, which is why it's important to start with the most accurate assumptions possible. We can't afford to be complacent or overly optimistic – future lives and property depend on our best efforts.* 



## Railroad, *cont'd from p. 3*

- Public Health and Wellness: to get us outdoors more in the fresh air and sunshine, where we can safely bike, walk, run, and skate
- Economic: to promote local businesses, and to attract tourists, retirees, and companies who are concerned about quality-of-life
- Transportation: for residents to local businesses, and of emergency vehicles to (currently inaccessible) homes along Route 13 on the other side of the tracks; also, as a path for emergency vehicles during hurricane evacuations
- Fun: to enjoy all the scenic natural resources the Eastern Shore has to offer 

**Please give generously to the Annual Fund!  
It's also a great time to renew, or gift a CBES membership to a friend or colleague.**

# Whimbrel AJK Returns to Aruba

By Bryan Watts, Director, Center for Conservation Biology, the College of William & Mary

Submitted by Barry Truitt, Former Chief Conservation Scientist at The Nature Conservancy

Many North American residents flee their homes during the cold winter months to spend time in Aruba. Due to its dry climate, visitors can count on having plenty of sun. With temperatures consistently in the low 80s and miles of white-sand beaches, it is all about sun, fun, and spending money. Aruba has become a magnet for destination travelers and cruise ships. Aruba has also become the winter home of a whimbrel (AJK) flagged by the Center for Conservation Biology at the College of William and Mary and The Nature Conservancy during the fall of 2009.

AJK was captured on August 15, 2009, while staging on Boxtree Creek along the Delmarva Peninsula in Virginia as part of an investigation of whimbrel migration. The bird was an adult at capture and weighed 559 grams, indicating that it was in the later days of fattening before continuing

on to winter grounds. Unlike many of the other whimbrels captured within this study area, AJK did not receive a satellite transmitter but was released on the hope that it would be encountered again somewhere, sometime. The hope that AJK would be encountered and reported by someone out there has been fulfilled several times and all reports have come from the island of Aruba.

Michiel Oversteegen, an accomplished local bird photographer, photographed AJK on August 14, 2019, within a small wetland just northwest of Santa Anna. Oversteegen first photographed the bird during the fall of 2018 in this same location. AJK had been identified and reported during previous years on the island and Oversteegen sometimes sees the bird with other whimbrel but also alone. The site may support 10-15 whimbrel total through the winter.

Although the white-sand beaches of Aruba draw many visitors from the north during the winter months, the availability of wetlands on the island to support whimbrels is limited due to its volcanic origins. The vast majority of whimbrels tracked by satellites over the past decade have spent the winter on the northern coast of South America around the Amazon Delta. Remaining birds like AJK or Hope winter throughout the Caribbean Basin in small, isolated pockets of habitat. Hope, you might remember, was the celebrity whimbrel tracked for over 50,000 miles in the course of 4 years of nonstop long-distance migration between the MacKenzie River in northwest Canada and Great Pond in the British Virgin Islands. Both birds stopped over at Boxtree Creek on the Eastern Shore during spring and fall migration. The incredible site fidelity exhibited by both Hope and AJK point to the importance of these dispersed habitats. 



*Whimbrel AJK foraging near Santa Anna, Aruba. AJK was flagged in Virginia in 2009 and has continued to winter in Aruba through the early fall of 2019. Photo by Michiel Oversteegen.*



*AJK with friends on Aruba. Small pockets of wetland habitat throughout the Caribbean Basin support a large number of wintering shorebirds. Photo by Michiel Oversteegen.*



*AJK foraging on fiddler crab in Aruba. Time and location of flag resights provides critical information for researchers. Photo by Michiel Oversteegen.*

## RECYCLING CORNER



### Permanent Site For Household Hazardous Waste Collection

No more saving your hazardous waste for the annual collection! A new, permanent collection site for household hazardous waste (flammable, corrosive, reactive, or toxic products) will be opening on November 6 at the Painter Convenience Center, 16495 Wayside Drive, west of the Painter traffic light.

Key facts about the collection center:

- Open every Wednesday and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM year-round
- Open to all residents of both counties
- Materials accepted – aerosols, cleaners, disinfectants, fire extinguishers, kerosene, mercury thermometers, solvents, varnishes, thinners, stains, oil-based paints, pesticides, poison, pool chemicals, brake fluid, batteries, and unbroken fluorescent and LED bulbs
- Not accepted – commercial waste, medical waste, radioactive waste, dioxin-related waste, unknowns, explosives, or latex paint (for latex paint, open the can and let it dry completely, and then throw it in with household trash)

Disposing of these products separately keeps them out of the landfill, which reduces the risk to our groundwater (ie, our drinking water) and our surface waters (to protect swimming, fishing, and aquaculture).

The program is funded by the Virginia Department of Health and is made possible through regional cooperation.

**OPENING DAY IS WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 6TH!**



## Keeping Track



### Local Job Opportunities Available

The 2020 Census is fast approaching! Our local census officials need your help. First, make sure you take the opportunity to fill out the census form next spring when it is available. Second, encourage others to fill out their census forms as well; the results of the census will determine much of the apportionment of funds from public sources to our area. Third, join the Census team! There are several types of jobs available, many of which do not require contact with the public by way of going door-to-door – the job most are familiar with.

For more information or help applying, call 1-800-JOB-2020 or go to [2020census.gov/jobs](https://2020census.gov/jobs). You may be surprised at the variety of tasks necessary to complete the census on the local level – and pleasantly surprised at the money you can earn by helping out!

### Hungars Thrift Shop

The Hungars Thrift Shop was started in 1984 by the late Rev. Harry Crandall and a group of parishioners from Christ and Hungars churches. Their mission was then – as it is now – to provide low-cost clothing and household goods to the community. They receive no funding, are staffed entirely by volunteers, and donate every penny that they receive to local charities. It is through the generosity of Eyre Baldwin that they have no expenses. He remodeled the building and charges them no rent or utilities.



Thrift shops provide a service, allowing those with means to share their goods with those less fortunate. Doing so allows those without adequate means to clothe themselves and furnish their homes while retaining the dignity of purchasing rather than receiving charity. This is recycling at the highest level, benefiting both donors and recipients.

The shop is located in Eastville on Courthouse Road across from the Courthouse Green. It is open Monday and Friday mornings from 9 AM until noon.

## Accomack County Moves Forward on Hacksneck Boat Ramp

By Sue Mastyl

As previously reported in *ShoreLine* (September 2017, “County Asserting Control Over Boat Ramp”), the current landowners at the end of Killmon’s Lane in Hacksneck (county road 759), Tucker Terry and Guy Pruitt of Nandua Selects Oyster Farm LLC, claimed that their purchase of 8.3 acres in 2013 included the end of the road and the boat ramp there, and tried to block access to the boat ramp in July and August 2017. Accomack County maintains that the county has had clear title to the boat ramp since at least the 1940s.

On August 8, 2018, the county and the landowners reached a settlement, acknowledging that the boat ramp itself and a 30-foot right-of-way is county property, although the land for parking remained in dispute. The settlement required the county to develop a plan for parking (8 spaces), and to purchase the required land for parking (adjacent to the boat ramp) at its appraised value (\$31,000 for 0.57 acres). However, the landowners want to provide a parcel behind the crab house for parking, and they believe the waterfront land adjacent to the boat ramp is worth \$100,000.

A public hearing was held at the Accomack Board of Supervisors meeting on October 16, during which 8 local citizens spoke in favor of the county’s position. Those opposed included Pruitt and Supervisors Paul Muhly (who suggested boaters use the Harborton boat ramp) and Laura Belle Gordy (who suggested the landowners might want to use the waterfront property to build their homes). Supervisor Donald Hart noted that “you cannot turn around without encroaching.” One of the citizens, Clinton Pitts, noted that the boat ramp is “the only direct access to Nandua Creek and the Bay between Harborton and Occohannock Creek, more than 10 miles apart.” The Harborton boat ramp is over 6 miles away by water; Morley’s Wharf boat ramp is over 14 miles.

The Board passed a resolution 7-2 (with Muhly and Gordy voting against) that directs the purchase of the adjacent parcel at the appraised value, under eminent domain if necessary. 

**Northampton Residents and Business Owners:  
The 2nd Northampton County Comprehensive Plan  
Public Workshop will be held on Tuesday, November 19,  
at Northampton High School Cafeteria, at 7 PM.**



### Apple Tart

This is one of those classic recipes that turns out to be not only delicious and great looking, but incredibly easy to make. Use crisp fall apples, warm fragrant spices, and just a little sugar. You hardly need a recipe. This works best in a tart pan with a removable bottom.

Drape an 11" pastry circle (home-made or purchased) over the tart pan and gently fit the dough into the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Trim the excess dough and refrigerate while you fix the apples.

Peel, core, and quarter 3 apples – then thinly slice them lengthwise.

Toss apple slices in a large bowl with 1 tbsp lemon juice, 2 tbsp sugar, a tiny bit of salt, and warm spices to taste (cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, etc).

Arrange apple slices in circles, coat top of crust with melted butter.

Bake about 1 hour at 350°.

Cool slightly before serving.

Reprinted with permission: The Kitchen Hive <https://www.talkrealnow.com/category/kitchen-hive/>



### Teacher Housing

At the CBES Northampton County Candidate Forum, a question was asked from the audience about a program for designated teacher housing in counties in the western part of the state – and the possibility of creating that program here. *Shoreline* researchers are aware of such a program underway in McDowell County, *West Virginia*. But as far as our researchers are aware, the Virginia Code has no provision for localities to establish or regulate rent- or occupant-controlled housing other than that designated by HUD as “Affordable Housing.”

Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore  
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**INFORM, ENGAGE, EMPOWER!**

**Check your label – if it doesn't show '19 or Life, you need to renew ([cbes.org](http://cbes.org)).**

**VOTE**  
**On November 5**



## Community Calendar

*Note: Please verify times and places prior to traveling to meetings.*

### Accomack County

757-787-5700

[www.co.accomack.va.us](http://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**  
6:30 PM, Accomac
- 3rd Wed **Board of Supervisors (BOS)**  
5 PM, Accomac
- 4th Tues **PC Work Session**  
7 PM, Accomac
- 4th Thur **Wetlands Board**  
10 AM, Accomac

### CBES and Other Activities

- 1st Wed **VIMS Public Seminar**  
7:30 PM, Wachapreague
- 3rd Tues **ES Ground Water Committee**  
10 AM, Accomac
- 3rd Tues **CBES Board Meeting**  
7 PM, Eastville or Belle Haven

### Northampton County

757-678-0440

[www.co.northampton.va.us](http://www.co.northampton.va.us)

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

**For membership and other  
CBES information:**  
[www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org)