CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE

SHORELINE

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

Volume 33 January 2020 Number 1

Health Is More Than Health Care

By Mary Miller

Tealth is more than what happens Tat the doctor's office: "... it's a wide range of factors that influence how long and how well we live from education and income, to what we eat and how we move, to the quality of our housing and the safety of our neighborhoods." The 2019 Annual County Health Rankings, from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. document the health outcomes for over 3,000 counties in the U.S. on a yearly basis. Environmental, socio-economic, educational, and personal behavioral factors affecting a community's vital health range from high school graduation rates, teen births, obesity, smoking, lack of health insurance, violent crime, unemployment, access to healthy foods, and income inequality, to the quality of air and water, and are compared and analyzed to determine the health and well-being of each locality's residents.

Since 1988

Not a Great Report Card for the Shore

Both Shore counties ranked in the bottom one third of the 133 counties and cities included in the health rankings for Virginia – Northampton at 95 and Accomack at 101 out of the 133 localities. Several of the primary factors resulted in fairly similar rankings for both counties. For quality of life, Northampton ranked 97 and Accomack, 93; for length of life, Northampton ranked 95 and Accomack, 101.

Some of the subsets were shown

as percentages and were compared with the Virginia statewide figures, and several of these also showed minor differences between the Shore counties. The numbers of uninsured were similar and higher than the state average. Rates

Both Shore counties ranked in the bottom 1/3 of the 133 Virginia localities for health outcomes.

of high school graduation and existing severe housing problems were about the same in both counties and mirrored the statewide figures. The percentage of children in poverty were similar in both counties, but double the state figure. Adult smoking, obesity, and inactivity were all higher than the state averages. Both counties showed below-average air pollution, but both also showed drinking-water violations.

Differences Between the Counties

Some of the differences between the 2 counties were stark. Alcoholimpaired driving deaths were 43% higher in Accomack, higher than the state average, and the incidence in Northampton was lower than the state numbers. Figures were similar for violent crime – 56% higher in Accomack and above the state average - Northampton incidents were less than half the state average. Teen births were 21% higher in Northampton, but both counties were about double the state figures. And single-parent households were 22% more frequent in Northampton than Accomack, but again, both counties were well above the state average.

The figures for sexually transmitted infections were especially stark. Each county's figures were about twice the state average. According to an interactive map,² they were among the worst numbers in the state – more similar to Virginia's cities than to other rural areas.

But there was one very bright spot in the 2019 health rankings – Northampton was ranked in the top one third, at 44 for its physical environment – and Accomack was ranked 80, out of 133 localities.

The Annual County Health
Rankings are intended to be guides
to assist communities in identifying
problem areas. The website offers
many types of assistance to localities
to find pathways to work toward better
health outcomes.

SOURCES:

- https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/ explore-health-rankings
- www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/ virginia/2019/measure/factors/45/map

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Shore Native Is National Geographic Scholarship Recipient

By Sarah Morgan

7ictoria Long is a Shore native who grew up having a special relationship with the environment. One of 8 children in her family, she remembers working on their farm during the majority of her summers. During this time, she learned a lot about conservation and the importance of protecting the Shore's natural resources. A few months ago, Long was awarded the University of Virginia National Geographic On-Campus Scholarship in the category of Environmental Resilience. It is a merit-based scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 for the 2019-2020 academic year. She was also invited to attend the National Geographic Society's Explorers Festival in Washington, DC, this past June.

Long's interest in studying environmental issues was piqued in high school, when she was asked to help her older sister, Bridget, with her undergraduate thesis work at the University of Virgina (UVA), and met Linda Blum, Long's future academic adviser. She enjoyed working on her sister's project and subsequently worked for 2

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Printed on Sustainably Produced Paper summers in the Research Experience High School program at the Anheuser-Busch Coastal Research Center in Oyster. She continued to work summers at the ABCRC while completing a BS in Environmental Sciences at UVA.

Academia, specifically teaching, has always appealed to her. Both her grandfather and mother hold degrees in environmental sciences and went on to teach at the college level. Long says she would love to follow in their footsteps – teaching, like farming, seems to run in the family. After the completion of her PhD program this year, Long hopes to find a job that involves community education and outreach.

Part of Long's scholarship was used to attend the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation Biennial Conference in Mobile, AL, in November, where she presented part of her research on carbon and nitrogen content within the soils and plant biomass of farm fields, and agricultural buffers planted with a salt-tolerant species called marsh mallow (Kosteletzkya pentacarpos). Long says that beyond the grant's monetary benefit, she is now a member of a global network of scientists and environmentalists, and has been afforded opportunities to advance her career that she would not have had without the National Geographic Society.

The 2019 field season marked the end of 8 years of Long's inter-disciplinary research on the Shore. During her second year at UVA, she was approached by her adviser with a potential Master's project, a study of the impacts of sea level rise on coastal agricultural communities. This also included the investigation of new tools for prolonging the utility of farm fields experiencing more



Environmental Scientist Victoria Long clearly enjoys her field studies!

flooding related to storms and sea level rise, and the implications of soil salinization. The project quickly grew out of the realm of a Master's project and Long made the transition to a PhD program shortly after her second semester of graduate school. She says, "I was excited to take on a project that was directly impacting my home, and I was in a unique position to work with farmers directly, given my family's history in the region. If I end up pursuing a post doc degree, I would love to be able to continue my research on the Eastern Shore."

Long has a suggestion for current high school students who might like to pursue environmental science studies: "Find ways to be involved with local conservation efforts. There are many great organizations on the Shore that are dedicated to preserving the environment, and they are always looking for volunteers. You never know when you will meet someone who can put you in touch with the person who allows you to pursue your interests – for me, that person was my own sister, Bridget Bernick, who introduced me to my university adviser during high school, and paved the way for my ecological studies on the Eastern Shore of Virginia."

Ammonia Emissions From Poultry Farms Quantified

By Sue Mastyl

n estimated 33.8 million pounds of ammonia are emitted from 603 poultry houses on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, according to a new study from North Carolina State University, commissioned by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF).1 Of those total emissions, approximately 24.4 million pounds of ammonia – or 72% – are deposited on the land and water.

For comparison, the 2019 Annual Poultry Report for Accomack County estimates a total of 482 poultry houses (see April 2019 ShoreLine,

Keeping Track); however, there are no data on any difference in size between the houses in Maryland and those in Virginia.

Bay watershed after being emitted."

- Chesapeake Bay Foundation

"We hope this study will encourage farmers, poultry

industry leaders, and regulators to better understand

the significance of this source of nitrogen to the

Chesapeake Bay, and find ways to minimize it."

- Beth McGee, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

"Much of the pollution is staying within the

The study, published in the journal Science of The Total Environment, used an air-quality model to "simulate the fate of ammonia/nitrogen emitted (using emission factors from the U.S. EPA in conjunction with Carnegie-Mellon University)."2

Impact to the Bay

Ammonia contains nitrogen, which is a critical pollutant to the Chesapeake Bay. Using the Chesapeake Bay Program's estimate that 11% of ammonia gas is deposited

as nitrogen in tidal waters and the Bay, CBF estimates that "ammonia emissions from the poultry houses in the study could deliver as much as 3.8 million pounds of nitrogen to the Bay each year." This

represents one quarter of the Bay Program's total nitrogen loads from all agriculture on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

The data from this study "provide insight into how the poultry industry is contributing to overall nitrogen loads entering the Bay" in Maryland, CBF noted.

The study's lead author, Professor Viney Aneja of the Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences at North Carolina State University, noted that the Bay "is plagued with poor water quality due to excess loads of reactive nitrogen and phosphorus. These excess nutrients cause algal blooms that reduce water clarity, create drinking water concerns, and contribute to the Bay's dead zone. [The ammonia emissions from poultry production] will further exacerbate water quality in the Chesapeake Bay."

One key finding of the study is the distance ammonia travels before being deposited. The study found that about 30% of emitted ammonia is deposited on land or water within a third of a mile, and about 70% is deposited within

31 miles. "This means," CBF noted, "that much of the pollution is staying within the Bay watershed after being emitted."

Drawbacks of the Study

There were limitations to the study. As noted, the study only focused on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and did not include poultry operations from other Bay states. Since researchers could not estimate the prevalence of litter amendments or other practices to reduce ammonia emis-

> sions, these were not included in their model. In addition, the model assumed that all poultry houses were operating at full capacity 365 days a year, which is

not the actual practice. CBF has indicated they will work with the poultry industry and other stakeholders to update the model to include these data. Holly Porter, Executive Director of Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc. (DPI), added, "We look forward to working with CBF to correct those flawed assumptions in the model."

The Path Forward

"The poultry industry on the Delmarva Peninsula continues to grow, and if nothing is done the pollution created

> by these operations will grow with it," noted Alison Prost, CBF's Maryland Executive Director. "We need to offset any new nitrogen loads, or risk falling behind on the Bay's 2025

cleanup goals." According to DPI, the pounds of chicken processed on the Delmarva Peninsula has grown by 36% over the last 20 years.

"We hope this study will encourage farmers, poultry industry leaders, and regulators to better understand the significance of this source of nitrogen to the Chesapeake Bay, and find ways to minimize it," said Beth McGee, CBF's Director of Science and Agricultural Policy. CBF believes that the information gained from this study "can be used to promote the use of manure amendments, bird diet management, and other options currently available to reduce ammonia emissions." CBF also called for Maryland to "require ammonia mitigation as part of its permitting process for animal feeding operations."

SOURCES:

- https://www.cbf.org/news-media/newsroom/2019/maryland/ new-study-estimates-ammonia-emissions-from-poultry-farms-onmarylands-eastern-shore.html
- https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/ 50048969719352829

The REAL Rangers Program Combining Environmental Stewardship with Fun!

By Bill Dyas, Northampton County Public Schools

On November 14, 2019, Kiptopeke Elementary School kicked off the REAL Rangers after-school program for 3rd- and 4th-grade boys. Led by volunteer mentors, the REAL Rangers participate in hands-on activities focused on Recreation, Education, Advocacy, and Land conservation (REAL). With activities drawn from Growing Up Wild, Project Learning Tree, Keep America Beautiful, and other related programs, the REAL Rangers meet after school every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month for activities, stewardship projects, and local field trips, culminating with a Project Based Learning Activity in June, such as Clean the Bay Day or National Get Outdoors Day.

The REAL Ranger program evolved from the Kipper Ranger program started in 2017, with 20 2nd- and 3rd-grade boys meeting each Friday during school hours for a 20-minute REAL Experience. Some of the activities included the Bird Migration Game, Fishing Fundamentals, and 20 Trees in 20 Minutes, where we pre-dug 20 holes in and around the school's outdoor classroom, and each student planted a native species tree. The REAL concept aligns with and supports Virginia's new "5 Cs of Learning": critical thinking skills, creative thinking skills, citizenship skills, communication skills, and collaboration skills.

Recreation and physical activities are incorporated in all REAL Learning programs, and may range from physical actions, such as playing games or planting trees, to more sedate activities, like wagon rides or strolling in a native species garden. According to the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan, published by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, approximately 56% of Northampton County citizens have insufficient access to locations for physical activity, and 36% of our adults have a Body Mass Index (BMI) equal to or greater than 30 kg/m², the threshold indicator of obesity established by the Centers for Disease Control. The physical benefit of incorporating recreation into educational programs is well-documented, and there is substantial evidence for its value in enhanced retention of salient points by students. A child who experiences the complexity of migration through a challenging and fun bird or butterfly migration game is more likely to retain the information, as well as recalling the experience as a fun and positive use of their time.

Education (or learning) can, and should, be woven into all programs. The question, "What do we want our students to know and/or be able to do at the end of the day?" should be the starting point of program



Kiptopeke Elementary School students are learning valuable information and skills in the after-school REAL Rangers program, which is led by volunteer mentors.

development. While teaching the life cycle of the white-tailed deer in an elementary school is clearly an Education program supporting Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs), discussing the physics principles of density and displacement while paddling around the concrete ships at Kiptopeke State Park or the significance of climate change during a walk through the watershed will enhance the student's experience and help us to effect positive behavior change.



REAL Rangers learn about their local environment through lectures, field trips, and informative displays.

Advocacy for our public lands, cultural treasures, and the environment in general is critical for our future. If we fail to recognize the changing demographic of our nation and do not work with purpose to build the next generation of advocates, customers, leaders, and law-makers, our parks, public lands, and natural areas will become irrelevant, and support for these things we hold dear will diminish. Students should be encouraged to

REAL Rangers, cont'd from p. 4

advocate for their own beliefs, and be provided with tools and strategies to effectively create positive change in their communities.

Land conservation and good stewardship of our natural, historical, and cultural resources are critical in ensuring the future of our public lands and the environment we live and work in. To "Conserve, protect, enhance, and advocate wise use of the Commonwealth's unique natural, historical, recreational, scenic, and cultural resources" is our civic duty, and a positive behavior we should model and encourage in our students at every grade level.

In initial meetings, the REAL Rangers picked up litter around the school grounds and helped to further develop the school amphitheater and outdoor learning laboratory that were started in 2017. During the December 5 meeting, the REAL Rangers learned about bird migration and the importance of the Eastern Shore in supporting birds and butterfies as they migrate each year. Our Rangers then made bird feeders and hung them in the trees and bushes around the school.

During our follow-up meeting on December 19, the Real Rangers of Kiptopeke State Park joined the REAL Rangers of Kiptopeke Elementary School to finish our migration theme with a short video, a discussion, and a hands-on bird migration game. Starting in January, the REAL Rangers will spend the winter months exploring the history and culture of the Eastern Shore, before transitioning to Environmental Stewardship, Advocacy, and Land Conservation issues and projects this spring.

The REAL Ranger program joins existing after-school activities such as GLAMs (Girls Learning and Aspiring Merit) and Ties with the Guys to provide our students with mentoring and learning opportunities beyond the classroom, further strengthening our family engagement. For more information or to get involved with this and/or other school programs, contact Northampton County Public Schools at 757-678-5151.

Community Unity Day January 20

By Donna Bozza

"People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

A new year is traditionally a time of renewal and a chance for individuals to realign their lives like a compass, orienting to a better purpose. As with individuals, it can be for communities as well. In the dawning days of hope that each January represents, our community comes together to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

In Northampton County, this is the 30th Community Unity Day, held on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to honor the civil rights icon whose life was devoted to the nonviolent pursuit of freedom, justice, and equal opportunity for all.

The Community Unity Celebration was founded in 1990 by Jane Cabarrus, representing the NAACP; Dr. Dawn Goldstine, Superintendent of the Northampton County Public Schools; and Suzanne Wescoat, President of CBES. The annual breakfast event is still sponsored by the 3 founding organizations, and is held on the 3rd Monday of January in the Northampton High School cafeteria at 8:30 AM.

This year's Keynote Speaker is Linda Byrd Hedgepeth, a noted advocate for civil and human rights. Among her many achievements, she is the founder of the Women's Inspirational Network Ministry, helping to build stronger families and communities.

Community Unity Day is an uplifting morning of inspirational talks, awards to the often-unsung heroes among us, the voices of our youth, goosebumps-producing Gospel songs – all in all, it's a big Shore hug. Join us.

The event is a grassroots effort and funds are a challenge. Would you or your business consider being a sponsor? Contact CBES at info@cbes.org.

MEET THE SCIENTISTS



You are cordially invited to UVA's Coastal Research Center in Oyster on Tuesday, January 7, for a Reception with the Scientists. Over 60 members of the research community will be here to introduce themselves. Research updates will be presented informally via posters. The lab will be open for you to explore. The reception is from 4:30 - 6:30 PM. We'll provide light appetizers and complimentary drinks.









www.vcrlter.virginia.edu or @virginia.coast.reserve on Facebook

RECYCLING CORNER

Recycling Oyster Shells With ESCSB

The Eastern Shore Community Services Board's (ESCSB's) Day Support Program, with initial support from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), is recycling oyster shells and shucks, to help rebuild oyster reefs in the Chesapeake Bay.

The Bay's oyster reefs have dramatically reduced in size since the 1980s. Oyster reefs play a vital role in habitat restoration, stabilizing shorelines, and purification of the bay's waters. Oyster reefs also create a natural habitat that attracts crabs, small fish, shrimp, flounder, and many more marine species. Every recycled half shell creates a new home for 10 oysters.

Currently, the ESCSB Oyster Program collects shucked oyster half shells in recycling bins at the following locations on the Shore:

- ESCSB's Behavioral Healthcare Center and the Dunne Substance Abuse and Counseling Center, both in Parksley
- The ESCSB Administration Office, Lankford Highway, Tasley
- ESCSB Developmental Services, Main Street, Exmore
- The Fabric Outlet, Lankford Highway, Cape Charles
- The Island House Restaurant, Wachapreague

Keep in mind these tips for dropping off oyster shells at these locations:

- Please separate from trash.
- Keep shells in a porous container to reduce odors.
- Please do not put shells back in the bay or the ocean.

So, remember, when you shuck, don't chuck.

The oyster restoration program is funded through the sale of the CBF DMV license plates. These proceeds help support our region's most celebrated resources.

Find your nearest bin and help rebuild the bay's oyster reefs. If you have any questions regarding the program, please call ESCSB Developmental Services at 757-442-3933.

Remember – every recycled oyster shell creates a home for 10 oysters!

The EPA estimates that Americans generate 25% more waste between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day compared with the rest of the year – an additional 1 million tons per week of food waste, shopping bags, packaging, wrapping paper, bows, and ribbons.



Parsnips – The Frogs Waiting for the Princess

They look a little strange – kind of gnarly, spotted, and sprouted – like anemic carrots. But just like books, you can't always tell a vegetable by its cover. A half dozen parsnips, a little knife work, and the barest of preps produces a sweet, savory, crispy, delicious plate of the great parsnip Princess event.

Roasted Parsnips

- Peel and cut about 2 lbs parsnips to resemble French fries.
- In a large bowl, toss parsnips thoroughly with 2 tbsp olive oil, dried oregano to taste, salt, pepper, and a pinch of red pepper flakes.
- Line baking sheets with foil and spread parsnips in a single layer.
- Roast in a 425° oven for about 30 minutes, turning once, until parsnips are golden brown and easily pierced.

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

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Keeping Track

Carolina Bays Under Attack

Once again, the Clean Water Act is under attack. Conservation groups are challenging the rollback



of the science-based 2015 Clean Water Rule, which clarified the scope of Federal protections for wetlands and streams – including the East Coast's Carolina Bays. The EPA/Army Corps of Engineers rollback will strip pollution protections from the more than 20 million wetlands acres remaining in the continental U.S. "Without the Clean Water Rule's critical protections, innumerable small streams and wetlands that are essential for drinking water supplies, flood protection, and fish and wildlife habitat would be vulnerable to unregulated pollution, dredging, and filling," said Bob Irvin, President and CEO of American Rivers. American Rivers is 1 of 11 organizations represented in the challenge by the Southern Environmental Law Center in Charlottesville.

Carolina Bays on the Eastern Shore are rich in biodiversity – flora and fauna that thrive in the marshy environment – and the Bays provide some flood control. Over 700 of these clearly defined elliptical wetlands are visible in both counties through LiDAR images – http://cintos.org/CarolinaBays/styled-13/index.html



PAID HELP WANTED CBES Bike Tour Coordinator

Be a part of the oldest and largest bike tour on the Shore. The successful candidate for this job will be detail-orientated, with keen organizational skills, to handle the many moving parts of the Bike Tour process. Event planning experience is a plus, as well as good people skills. Flexible hours throughout 2020. Contact info@cbes.org or 757-678-7157 for more information.

Next Steps for New Groundwater Regulation

Earlier this year, SB 1599 was passed, directing the Department of Environmental Quality to "adopt regulations providing incentives for the withdrawal of water from the surficial aquifer, rather than the deep aquifer, in the Eastern Shore Groundwater Management Area."

A Notice of Intended Regulatory

Action (NOIRA) was posted on the Virginia Regulatory Town Hall (https://townhall.virginia.gov/L/viewchapter. cfm?chapterid=2963) on November 11, to establish "a general permit regulation to promote the use of the surficial aquifer on the Eastern Shore for non-potable water uses." Public comments will be accepted through January 6, 2020. Comments can be submitted through the Town Hall portal; by email to scott.kudlas@deq.virginia.gov; by mail to Scott

Kudlas, Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box

1105, Richmond, VA 23218; or by fax to 804-698-4456.

There will be a 6-month timeline for developing this new regulation, so that draft language can be presented to the State Water Control Board for approval at their June 2020 meeting. A Regulatory Advisory Panel will be convened to develop this draft language; anyone interested in participating can contact Scott Kudlas by the end of the comment period with name, address, phone number, email address, and the organization they represent (if any). Members of the Eastern Shore Ground Water Committee will be included in the panel. Meetings will be held on the Shore.

The panel will focus on specific incentives to be included in the regulation to promote the use of the surficial (Columbia) aquifer.

More Food for Thought

Check out this New York Times video op-ed, "The Great Recycling Con": https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/09/opinion/recycling-myths.html. Tala Schlossberg and Nayeema Raza break down the myth about recycling – "the greatest trick corporations ever played was making us think we could recycle their products."

The authors call for corporations to "stop hiding behind green marketing ploys and actually deal with the plastic crisis they created." Their advice? "Start buying as if nothing gets recycled."



Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore P. O. Box 882 Eastville, VA 23347-0882

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INFORM, ENGAGE, EMPOWER!

Check your label – if it doesn't show '20 or Life, you need to renew (cbes.org).

MEET THE SCIENTISTS

January 7, 2020

4:30 - 6:30 PM

UVA's Coastal Research Center 6364 Cliff Road in Oyster



30th ANNUAL COMMUNITY UNITY BREAKFAST

January 20, 2020 8:30 AM Northampton High School Eastville, VA \$6 Adults

Free for Children

Community Calendar

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

Accomack County									
	757-787-5700								
www.co.accomack.va.u									
		_							

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

Nonprofit Organization U. S. Postage Paid

Eastville, VA

Permit No. 8

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