



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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Oyster Village Plans for Flood Mitigation

By Mary Miller

The working waterfront village of Oyster has a flooding problem. When a major storm is forecast to come up the East Coast, residents begin a familiar routine. Flashlight batteries, extra food, ice in the coolers, get out the boots, and move vehicles to higher ground. The rains start, the wind picks up, the tide comes in – and with it, marsh vegetation that fills the streets and dams up the flowing waters. When the

storm passes and the water goes down, it often takes heavy machinery to clear the debris and open up the streets again. Year after year, flooding takes its toll on roadways, driveways, foundations, structures, and harbor infrastructure. Although many of the homes are now either newly built on pilings or have been retrofitted, the perils of flooding, including the inability of fire and rescue services to reach the village,

affect the quality of life for residents.

For many rural communities impacted by flooding, either coastal, rivers, or mountain streams, the concept of mitigating flood impacts is daunting. While the internet is full of government and institutional guidelines for identifying problems and outlining solutions, the strategies for planning and implementation are mainly aspirational.¹ So instead, communities mainly rely on personal preparedness as storms approach, then regional and local government agencies for help in post-storm recovery.

“Meet the Candidates” Forums Cancelled

It is with sadness that CBES is announcing the cancellation of our 3 Candidate Forums this fall.

For over 20 years, CBES has tried hard to make these Forums a service for our community, by providing an unbiased and civil setting that allows each candidate to present his/her position. There are very few opportunities in our local and state elections where you can listen to both candidates answer questions that are focused on Eastern Shore issues.

With this year’s Forums, we partnered with several organizations, including the local sorority community. CBES felt it was important to work with the sororities because they provided a broader reach into the African American community, and they represent many of the African American women leaders of the Eastern Shore.

Their role in our Forums was limited to helping to publicize the event, and a few members would

have been helping us collect questions from the audience.

A total of 11 candidates (out of 22 candidates for contested seats), for state legislator, supervisor, clerk of court, and school board, declined to participate, many because any involvement of the sororities was unacceptable due to the perceived bias from the sororities, and by extension CBES.

Given that in all but one of the races we would no longer have both candidates participating, we have decided we could no longer hold the three Candidate Forums.

CBES would like to apologize to the candidates who still wanted to participate and to the voters who use our forums to help inform their decisions.

Unfortunately, the candidates who pulled out of the Forums have made it impossible to provide this important service to the community.

Oyster’s Adaptation/Resilience Plan

Several local, regional, state, and national partners have joined together with residents and other stakeholders in Oyster to create a community-based plan to identify flooding hazards and impacts, establish action priorities and strategies, and produce preliminary project designs selected by the community. In addition to the Oyster community, planning partners include

See Oyster Plans, Cont’d on p. 2

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Oyster Plans, Cont'd from p. 1
Northampton County and The Nature Conservancy, and funding has been provided by the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund Grant and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The project will be facilitated by the professional consulting firm Dewberry,² and by the Oyster Resilience Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives from the Oyster community and project partners.

With a timeline of about a year, beginning in Spring 2023, data have been gathered and flooding issues described. Ongoing now is assessment of the impacts of future flooding – challenges that will be faced due to impacts to residential homes, public and commercial structures, infrastructure, and natural habitat. Strategies to address these issues, both short- and long-term, will be identified and priorities established. The Steering Committee will participate in a design charrette to identify preferred strategies, and a public meeting will be scheduled, where the community will provide additional input.

Then the highest-priority projects will be advanced to grant-ready status, and funding opportunities will be identified. The final plan will document the challenges, opportunities, and selected adaptation strategies, and



Nor'easters and tropical systems periodically bring flooding and marsh wrack to Oyster streets. Staff photo.

will include an action plan. Community meetings will be held every step of the way.

Looking to the Future

While publications providing guidance for flood mitigation planning are numerous, examples of action plans – and strategies in place – are few. The Oyster project may well serve as a prototype for rural communities working to find a way to make a realistic start to planning for their own futures.

Extensive community input to establish strategies and priorities, combined with the expertise of professional consultants, is exactly the planning process outlined by environmental scientists, research institutes, and government agencies. This year alone, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation announced 2 major funding opportunities to increase flood resilience across the Commonwealth. The Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund and the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund are offering communities a total of \$103 million to advance projects that will improve resilience to flooding.³ Community action, and government grants and loans, indicate a serious commitment to resilience and adaptation to flood-prone areas.

¹ <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/resilience-indicators.pdf>

² <https://www.dewberry.com/>

³ www.dcr.virginia.gov/cfpf

Be Sure to Vote!

Uncontested elections will be held in Northampton County for Supervisor, Districts 4 and 5, and School Board Members, Districts 4 and 5 and At Large; and in Accomack County for Supervisor, Districts 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 9, and School Board Members, Districts 2, 5, 6, and 7. Candidates on the ballot for *contested* elections are shown below. Tuesday, November 7, is Election Day. Polls will be open 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

General Assembly:

Member, House of Delegates: Robert S. Bloxom, Jr. (R) and Charlena Jones (D)

State Senator – William “Bill” R. DeSteph, Jr. (R) and Victoria A. Luevanos (D)

Accomack County

Supervisor, District 2

Roger L. DeGeorges and Ron S. Wolff

Supervisor, District 4

Paul E. J. Muhly and Jeffrey A. Parks, Sr.

Supervisor, District 5

Harrison W. Phillips III and Calvin L. Washington, Sr.

Clerk of Circuit Court

Cedrick L. Cooper and Talia Custis Taylor

School Board Member, District 1

Connie C. Burford and Jesse W. Speidel

School Board Member, District 3

Rev. Lisa M. Cropper Johnson, PhD, and Jessica J. Lewis

School Board Member, District 4

(Paul) Glenn Neal, Jr., and Gary S. Reese

School Board Member, District 8

Dr. Ronnie E. Holden and Stefanie A. Jackson

School Board Member, District 9

Alejandro “Alex” E. Vargas and Malcolm F. “Pep” White

No excuse is needed for voters who choose to vote by mail or early in person. Key dates to remember:

- October 16 – last day to register to vote or update your address
- October 27 – last day to request that an absentee ballot be mailed to you. If you mail your absentee ballot,

See Vote, Cont'd on page 3

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Eastern Shore Events & Rentals, LLC

By Sarah Morgan

The subject of this month's business profile has been "Open for Business" for several years; their company vans are familiar to many Shore partygoers. Locally owned and operated, Eastern Shore Events and Rentals (ESER) is headquartered on Main Street in Exmore. The company is known for providing party rental equipment, including tents, tables, chairs, linens, flatware, dishware, lighting, staging, and dance floors. What may be less well-known by the general public is that ESER staff also offer consultation services and guidance in choosing the "necessary ingredients" to realize each customer's vision.

The genesis of the business was a result of the adage, "To have a successful enterprise, find a hole and fill it." Peter Henderson and Hunt Addison, co-owners of ESER, come from families long involved with local non-profits. Through helping to organize several fundraising events, they realized that Virginia's Eastern Shore lacked services for event rentals. Then, in 2011 while on a golf trip in North Carolina, "everything became real with a handshake."

Henderson and Addison felt an event rental service would be successful on the Shore because even though similar services were available from Hampton Roads or Maryland, there was room for a local option. They decided that with enough drive and determination, their business would grow and prosper.

The biggest challenge was figuring out how to begin. They overcame it by developing a solid business plan outlining a modest start and a handful of commitments from clients. They bought only enough gear to do what was coming next. That evolved from a handful of chairs and 1 tent in a small storage unit to a 3,000 sq. ft. warehouse full of gear. Although they did most of the labor themselves at the beginning, they now have 9 employees ("including ourselves and our wives").

Henderson says he and Addison believed the Shore was a good fit for their business because of the number of entities (both non-profit and corporate) that required rental services. In addition, several event venues have popped up in the last decade, and services providing catering, photography, and floral design have grown as the Shore has emerged as an event destination.

According to Henderson, "The combination of vacationers discovering the Shore and wanting to return for a wedding or event, along with the local population marrying off their kids has kept us going strong! Shore folks love a good party and when you pair our 'ingredients' along with the other great vendor services on the Eastern Shore, we can create a fabulous, LOCAL event that keeps folks talking!"

The most surprising thing about starting the business has been the enthusiasm people have for supporting local businesses. Henderson credits that strong community sup-




For the past 12 years, Eastern Shore Events & Rentals has evolved from being a startup with a couple of guys, a tent, and a handful of chairs, to a company providing equipment and services for a variety of community events. Photo by ESER.

port with motivating the company to provide stellar service to its customers. "Our work is a reflection on our community, and we want to make our community proud."

Others thinking about starting a business on the Shore would do well to consider the following advice:

- Create a solid business plan with a budget – & stick to it!
- As you set out, remain flexible, as there will be lots of moving targets.
- Always do what you say you're going to do and know your limits. Sometimes you have to say no.
- If you are partnering with someone, make sure it is someone you trust with your life.

Eastern Shore Events and Rentals is a great example of entrepreneurship. Its success did not come overnight, but with its track record and the owners' demonstrated business acumen, it will undoubtedly remain a strong community presence well into the future. 




Vote, Cont'd from p. 2

it must be postmarked by Election Day, November 7, and received by noon on November 10. Drop boxes for absentee ballots will be available at all polling places on Election Day.

- September 22 to November 4 – Registrars' offices open for in-person voting, including 2 Saturdays (October 28 and November 4)

For more information, and details on polling locations, visit the Registrars' websites for Accomack County (<https://www.co.accomack.va.us/departments/registrar>; 757-787-2935) and Northampton County (https://www.co.northampton.va.us/government/departments_elected_offices/voter_registration_and_elections; 757-678-0480).

Remember, all elections matter, and every vote counts – including yours! 

Tankard Stepping Down After 16 Years on the VMRC Board

By George Mapp



Long-time CBES member John “Ed” Tankard recently retired from the Board of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) after serving four 4-year terms, appointed by Governors Kaine, McDonnell, McAuliffe, and Northam – 3 Democrats and 1 Republican. Ed has served longer than any other Board member. George Mapp

caught up with Ed at Tankard Nurseries for a conversation about VMRC.

Mapp: So you’ve stepped down from the Board, but you’re still chairing the Crab Management Advisory Committee. (VMRC has 9 stakeholder committees to get input from the impacted community on specific subjects like crabbing.)

Tankard: Yes, I joined the crab committee during my third term. It’s another meeting, but I enjoy interacting with the community of crabbers.

Mapp: How are crab committee members selected?

Tankard: They are selected from people who have demonstrated interest and have related experience. For example, we had a young fellow from the Shore show up at our last meeting. He was very well-spoken so we asked him to join us.

Mapp: At one of the meetings, one speaker stated, “I’ve been doing this for 40 years now, and all you guys do is put more regulations on me, and I just keep catching fewer fish.” What do you say to that?

Tankard: It’s a common refrain. But as Patrick Geer (VMRC Chief of Fisheries Management) will tell you, Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government thought that the blue crab was just whiskers away from collapse in 2006. Someone would say, “you shut down the crab dredge fishery and nothing got better.” Well, actually, that’s not the case. At a recent meeting we heard Rom Lipcius (from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science) present statistics that showed a significant increase in the female crab population as a result of stopping harvesting by winter dredging.

Mapp: VMRC issues licenses for commercial fishing. For shellfish, regulations are so complicated that online training is required. There are health department regulations in addition to where and when you can fish.

Tankard: In the old days, we didn’t harvest oysters unless there was an “R” in the month. Now, with aquaculture, it’s year-round. In August, you can’t treat them like you do in December. *Vibrio* is real and it exists in warmer water – and it can kill you. We had a waterman who failed to

cover (shade) his clams in the heat of the day. He was very disdainful – he thought it was stupid. As a result, he lost his license for a period of time.

Mapp: One of the hot topics has been conflict between aquaculture and landowners, who object to oyster cages as hazards to navigation and recreation, unsightly, and detrimental to property values.

Tankard: We’ll probably be dealing with it more as we go into the future. Floating cages grow great oysters.

Mapp: Leaseholders can keep a lease indefinitely if they pay rent on time?

Tankard: Yes, and they have a transfer right. We’re seeing transfers of leases go for 6 figures around here. Lots of people would like to get into oyster aquaculture – it’s like a gold rush. So far, we’ve done a decent job of only permitting where it seems to make sense. We put together a committee to come up with guidelines, and they basically said, keep doing what you’re doing – take it case-by-case.

Mapp: VMRC also manages oyster bed restoration. There are many success stories, but there has recently been 1 huge failure: a case where waterfront owners complained, and VMRC ordered the sponsors to remove material that they had put down.

Tankard: Yes, that was in Lynnhaven. It was unfortunate. They were spreading recycled concrete, but there was rebar, wire mesh, trash, and plastic mixed in, and people started complaining. If the public is involved, you can really trip yourself up if you don’t engage them and be accommodative to their comments. Apparently, the guy who was the coordinator was totally unempathetic.

Mapp: At the meetings a staffer presents each issue and gives recommendations. How often does the Board vote to accept staff recommendations?

Tankard: Without any modification, I’d say 60% or 70%. I find the staff super-competent, and most recommendations fit the circumstances well. However, we often make changes after hearing from stakeholders.

Mapp: If you show up at a meeting, you can have your say?

Tankard: Yes, or you can submit a written comment. Those are given to Board members before each meeting. VMRC makes a real effort to ensure that everyone’s heard.

Mapp: Once a decision is made, it can be appealed to a circuit court?

Tankard: That’s right. The attorney general represents VMRC in the appeal process. The appeal is heard by the appropriate court, which can vary depending on the case.

Mapp: Currently there are 2 vacancies on the Board. Who will replace them?

See **Tankard**, *Cont’d on page 5*

Community Discusses Ways to Reduce Roadside Litter

Staff Report

Representatives of several state and local agencies joined Shore citizens on Friday, September 15, for the Waste Watchers Open House, “Talking Trash,” to address the problem of roadside litter on the Shore. Organizations represented included Betsy Mapp, Northampton Board of Supervisors; Greg Duncan and Tristan Wagner, Accomack Department of Public Works; Chris Isdell, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT); Julie Head, Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD); and Donna Bozza, CBES.

Roadside Litter

Virginia Schneider, Secretary for ESVA Waste Watchers, introduced the program and led the discussion. In addressing the problem of roadside litter, several attendees suggested increasing fines for littering. Chris Isdell from VDOT suggested that localities could post “Littering Is Illegal” signs, following federal guidelines.

Isdell described the VDOT Adopt-a-Highway program; individuals, groups, or businesses need to commit to pickups for their designated road section twice a year. VDOT provides bags and will pick up the trash when collected. In both counties, VDOT has 51 Adopt-a-Highway groups, covering 105 miles. Through September 14 of this year, they have had 831 pickups with 7,938 bags of trash. Added to the Northampton County Sheriff’s Office program, with more than 500 bags of trash, and the Accomack/Northampton parolee program, with 150 bags of trash, the total is almost 8,600 bags of trash in less than 9 months. Tristan Wagner from Accomack County added that they are cur-

rently hiring, both full-time and part-time, for employees to pick up trash along the roadways.


Glass Recycling

Wagner also indicated that Accomack County is working with a vendor to recycle glass, who will provide the county with 2 containers. Glass will only be collected at one site initially; the location and details of the program will be announced once the containers are received from the vendor.

Maureen Dooley from Onancock asked whether containers could be provided in towns such as Onancock, to collect glass from restaurants and bars. Greg Duncan from Accomack County suggested that the towns can work with the glass recycling vendor, and there may be funds available from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Wagner added that applications are sent from the county to the towns every year to participate in funds from the state litter fund grant.

Sue Mastyl from Waste Watchers noted that one of the organization’s goals is to develop a “Waste Watchers Sustainability Award” for local businesses; recycling, including glass bottles, would definitely be one of the criteria.

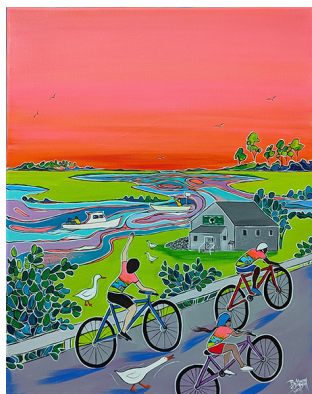
Educational Opportunities

Julie Head from SWCD focused on educational programs, noting that she has 8,000 contacts in the schools each year. Part of her message focuses on the fact that if each person used 1 less plastic bag each week, that would add up to 20,000 fewer plastic bags over the year for each school. She also referenced the SWCD Water Wise home program (featured in August-October 2022 *ShoreLine*), with 9 different ways to improve the local environment, one of which is to participate in a litter cleanup day. 

RAFFLE TO WIN!

Between the Waters Painting (16" x 20")
by Shore Artist Bethany Simpson Durham

Bethany’s painting celebrates what makes the Shore such an uncommon place of tide and sky, depicting a whimsical seaside sunrise in Willis Wharf.



1 Ticket: \$22
3 Tickets for \$54
<http://www.cbes.org>

See her artwork on FB: *Bethany Simpson, Artist*; and *Lemon Tree Gallery, Cape Charles, VA, 757-710-1867.*

Bring It Home - Join the Raffle Excitement!*

All Proceeds Benefit CBES Between the Waters Bike Tour and its mission: Pedal to Protect Virginia’s Eastern Shore.


**Drawing December 8, 2023*

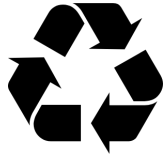


Tankard, Cont’d from p. 4

Tankard: Patrick Hand and Jeanette Edwards. So, along with Heather Lusk, there are now 3 from the Shore.

Mapp: Thanks for 16 years of service, and for continuing to serve on the crab management committee. And thanks for all you’ve done as a supporter of CBES.

Tankard: I came back to the Shore in 1992, when Henry Dixon started the Between the Waters bike event. I helped get it started, and I’ve participated for a long time. I think CBES is important. As with VMRC, public input and public outreach is important, so we know what the heck is happening. Suzanne Wescoat was all about being inclusive – she felt that was important. It’s democracy, our forefathers’ legacy. We have our independence, and that’s great, but if you don’t exercise your rights as a citizen, are you really independent? 



RECYCLING CORNER

By Sue Mastyl

Potpourri

A few recent announcements caught our eye –

Accomack Fall Clean-Up

The Accomack County Department of Public Works announced a county-wide Fall Clean-Up for Saturday, October 14. To encourage Accomack citizens to remove unsightly refuse from their yards, homes, and communities, tipping fees will be waived at the North Landfill in Atlantic and the South Transfer Station in Keller. Commercial for-hire waste haulers will still be required to pay tipping fees.

The North Landfill and South Transfer Station will be open 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM on October 14th, to accept residential trash, yard waste, and construction/demolition debris. They will also accept tires (car and small truck only; limit 12 per person per day) and used motor oil, scrap metal, and car and truck batteries. Recycling materials are accepted year-round at any of the county's 7 convenience centers. Yard waste is also accepted year-round at the Painter Convenience Center, where it is converted to free mulch for citizens' use. For additional information, contact the Public Works Department at (757) 787-1468.

The Accomack County Spring Clean-Up is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 11, 2024.

Change to Hazardous Waste Collection

The Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center at the Painter Convenience Center is no longer open on Wednesdays; the Center is now open only on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Hazardous waste is accepted from citizens of both counties.

Staples Recycling Program

Many stores have recycling programs; Staples has long been known for recycling ink and toner cartridges, as well as computers and other technology products. They've recently expanded their program, to include pens and markers, mechanical pencils, phone and tablet cases, coffee brewers, stylus pens, adapters and cables, label makers, laminators, and SodaStream® CO₂ cylinders. They also now recycle single-use alkaline batteries, non-rechargeable lithium batteries, and 5 different kinds of rechargeable batteries. A complete list of products that can be recycled can be found at https://www.staplesconnect.com/site/binaries/content/assets/staples-connect/recycling/recycling_flyer.pdf.

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now at www.cbes.org**



Italian Wedding Soup

The name does sound like it might be mixing with happy dancing and the clinking of champagne glasses, but that's not quite it. Originally called *minestra maritata*, it's one of those peasant dishes born of the "use what you have" school of cooking. Ingredients, leftovers from a previous meal, garden vegetables, and broth, were "married" in the pot – and were often better the next day. The soup always included a little meat and some greens. This recipe uses flavorful tiny meatballs and the first of the fall greens, along with pasta and vegetables on hand.

Meatballs

- ½ lb. ground beef
- ½ lb. Italian sausage, hot or sweet, casings removed
- 1 egg
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- Italian seasonings to taste (oregano, basil, rosemary)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan
- Salt and pepper

Soup

- Olive oil
- Diced onion, garlic, carrots, and celery, to taste
- 6-8 cups broth
- ½ cup dry white wine
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup ditalini pasta
- 4 oz. spinach, roughly chopped

Mix meatball ingredients. Using melon scoop, make tiny meatballs and place on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 18 to 20 minutes, until lightly browned. Set aside. Heat olive oil in large pot – add all vegetables except spinach and cook until softened. Add broth, wine, salt, and pepper. Simmer for ½ hour. Bring to gentle boil and add ½ cup water and pasta – cook to al dente. Reduce heat and add meatballs and spinach – simmer a few more minutes. Check and adjust seasoning, then spoon into bowls and top with more Parmesan.

Mary Miller – The Kitchen Hive

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

Child Labor – Hazardous Work

Tyson and Perdue Facing Child Labor Investigations

It took a Pulitzer-prize winning investigative journalist for the *New York Times* to open the dark door to the labor violations occurring right here in poultry processing plants on the Shore.² Children working the night shift, cleaning the sharp blades of the poultry lines, using chemicals that leave burn scars on their young bodies. Children spraying pressure hoses with scalding water, racing all night to sterilize the bloody floors by morning. Children with faked documents, IDs for sale by someone who knew what the night-shift kids needed to get hired for the dangerous jobs.

Was this really an open secret in the community around the poultry plants – children working with chemicals and machinery that could kill or maim? Did plant managers even notice that a young teenager had a name and papers of a 25-year-old man? Did a food safety inspector observe the very young workers around her and look away? Did State and Federal authorities fail to notice – fail to report?

The desperation that drove families to send their children to relatives in the US, extreme poverty, lawlessness, food shortages, no work, is the second part of the story.

Tyson Foods and Perdue Farms are under federal investigation into whether they relied on migrant children to clean slaughterhouses.³

In the November issue, *ShoreLine* will form questions that need to be asked in our community, and attempt to discover who, or what entity, would have some answers.

¹Hannah Dreier is a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter for The New York Times.

²<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/magazine/child-labor-dangerous-jobs.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>

³<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/us/tyson-perdue-child-labor.html>

Osprey Presentation Slated for October 10

Osprey reproduction in the lower Chesapeake Bay is in serious decline. The lower Bay osprey population is dependent on menhaden to feed their young; the “decades-long overharvest of menhaden has caused localized depletion,” with “young osprey starving in their nests,” according to Dr. Bryan Watts, Director of the Center for Conservation Biology (CCB) at the College of William & Mary. The CCB has been studying osprey nests in Mobjack Bay since 1970.

Michael Academia, Osprey Researcher for CCB, studied osprey nests in Mobjack Bay in 2021, and found a reproductive rate below that seen during the DDT era, indicating, “the current availability of menhaden is so low that it can’t support a healthy and stable osprey population.” He will discuss his study, along with recent CCB studies of additional sites throughout the Bay, at the October meeting of the Eastern Shore Bird Club at 5:30 PM on Oct. 10, at the Community College, Education Building, Room 147/148.

Permanent Home Slated for Seabird Colony

As we described in the March and July 2020 *ShoreLine* issues, an estimated 25,000 migratory seabirds – including gull-billed terns, royal terns, sandwich terns, common terns, black skimmers, laughing gulls, and other gull species – lost their nesting site 3



years ago, when the South Island of the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel (HRBT) was paved over for the HRBT expansion project. A plan was quickly made to relocate the colony to newly created habitat on Fort Wool (also known as Rip Raps Island), a decommissioned island fortification.

Although it has been critical as a temporary site, Fort Wool doesn’t have enough space for a permanent site, according to Becky Gwynn, Executive Deputy Director of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). The habitat on South Island occupied about 10 acres; Fort Wool only provides 1½ acres. Flat-top barges located nearby provide an additional acre.

In addition, several groups, known as the Coalition for Historic Fort Wool, have expressed concerns about Fort Wool’s historic importance, citing the lack of public access and deteriorating conditions of the historic structures. The island has also been sinking due to rising waters and neglect.

DWR recently announced a plan to construct a man-made 10-acre island for the colony, near the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge-Tunnel, near the bend in the Newport News shoreline.

Costs were projected in 2021 to be about \$12.7 million, which will be shared between the state and federal government. Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner secured \$200,000 for the project through the Army Corps of Engineers’ Beneficial Use of Dredged Material program. The island will be constructed with a perimeter of armoring rock stone, which will be filled with dredge material, with a top layer of sand.

The goal is to have the island ready for the 2026 nesting season. However, historian Michael Cobb with the Coalition for Historic Fort Wool expressed concerns that Fort Wool might degrade significantly by 2026.

Source:

Janney J. New island for the birds: State officials hope to move seabirds off Fort Wool and give them their own island. *Virginian-Pilot*, 12 Sept. 2023. <https://www.pilotonline.com/2023/09/11/state-officials-hope-to-move-seabirds-off-fort-wool-and-give-them-their-own-island/>

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