



# Thank You!

9/09/09 – 12/20/09

**INDIVIDUALS**

**Founding Members:**  
Mr. & Mrs. Harry Lester  
Fine Family Fund through Virginia Beach Foundation  
Mr. David Sterling  
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Fisher  
Mr. & Mrs. Macon Brock

**BUSINESSES & GROUPS**

**Founding Members:**  
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DIA Inc.

**Pearl Members:**  
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**PEARL MEMBERS:**

Mr. & Mrs. Roy Newton

**General Members:**  
VB Chpt. National Audubon Society  
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Linkhorn Garden Club  
Civic League of Pembroke Meadows  
AARP Great Neck Chapter

**Reef Members:**

Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Summerlin  
Mr. & Mrs. Irvin Gentry  
Mr. Carter A. Briggs  
Mr. Skip LeGault

**MEMORIAL & HONOR DONATIONS**

**In Honor of Bob & Janice Wells**  
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Fine

**In Honor of Brooker Van Danner, The Lyon Family, The Calayo Family, and the Klemstine Family**  
Dave & Debbie Meadows

**In Memory of Capt. Norman Edward Chalmers**  
Dea Chalmers

**General Members:**

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Nichols  
Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Kane  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert S. Herbert  
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Mr. William G. Thomas  
Ms. Linda Lexier  
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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Lloyd  
Mr. & Mrs. Lewis White  
Mr. John Watters, Jr.  
Ms. Leah Bernick  
Cdr. Donald McDowell  
Mr. Rick Lutz  
Mr. John A. Watters  
Mr. & Mrs. John Litz  
Mr. Stephen Reader  
Mr. & Mrs. Edgar MacKinlay

## Green Hospitality at the Beach

In October, Virginia Beach announced that it had exceeded its goal of certifying 100 businesses as Virginia Green. Currently, more than 115 local businesses are part of the program, including 42% of the hotel rooms.

The Virginia Beach Convention Center, one of our Virginia Green businesses, is pursuing the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification for the Convention Center. The Convention Center saved \$210,000 last fiscal year through energy conservation and, when compared to last year, used 49% less power, gas and water. Since implementing the use of recycling containers and dumpsters two years ago, 156 tons of waste has been diverted from the landfill to a local recycling center.

This is one example of the benefits that have come from this statewide program. If you are a business owner or operator and are interested in learning more about this program, please visit [www.virginia.org/Green/](http://www.virginia.org/Green/).

We want to extend special recognition to Laura Habr at Croc's on 19th Street and Lori Herrick at the Convention Center for their leadership in this effort to make our oceanfront operations more sustainable.



# LYNNHAVEN River NOW

## LRNow and Partners Win Coastal America Award



The award recognizes the team's innovative efforts to restore the native oyster population in the Lynnhaven River and our contributions to the objectives of Coastal America.

The project being recognized is the restoration of our native oyster population in the Lynnhaven. Our restored oyster reef network has been built as a large network of about 60 acres of permanent sanctuary reef and is one of the largest sanctuaries for native oysters worldwide. In addition, the latest research science was used in the design and placement of the reefs to improve their effectiveness in restocking the oyster population in the entire river system.

The Lynnhaven River Oyster Restoration Team, which includes Lynnhaven River NOW, the City of Virginia Beach, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (College of William and Mary), has been selected to receive a 2009 Coastal America Partnership Award for outstanding efforts to restore and protect the coastal environment.

Coastal America gave only seven partnership awards nationwide in 2009 and we are honored to have been one of the recipients. It is nice to be recognized as an inspiration to others.

For more information about Coastal America, visit their website at [www.CoastalAmerica.gov](http://www.CoastalAmerica.gov).

Remember...when it rains, everything on your lawn and driveway washes into the river – dog waste, fertilizer, loose soil, pesticides, herbicides and other toxins. Thank you for keeping pollutants out of the storm drain and taking good care of the river.



## Lynnhaven Holds at 38% of the River Open to Shellfish Harvest

"We're almost there, Hampton Roads: Less than half an inch of rain is all we need for 2009 to break into the area's top five wettest years." (Virginian Pilot, 12/14/09) For the past four years, as our areas open for shellfish harvest have increased, the skeptics said it was just the drought. This year with near record rainfall, we have maintained 38% of the river open and proven the skeptics wrong. To see the maps, visit our website at [www.LRNow.org](http://www.LRNow.org).

Stormwater is the major way that pollutants enter the river and your efforts to control what goes down your storm drain are paying off. Cleaning up after our pets, not feeding wildlife, installing rain barrels and rain gardens to reduce runoff and buffer gardens to filter the water are all making a difference.



The standard for shellfish harvest is very rigorous. It is a much more rigorous bacteria standard than the swimmable fishable level. To keep the river at this level requires everyone's participation.

Thank you for all the ways that you have contributed to this success and enjoy some delicious Lynnhaven oysters!

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## DEAR MEMBERS,

The insert in this newsletter is our State of the River Report. We produce this document at the end of each year. It is one of the most important things we do each year. It is an objective measure of where we are in relation to our goals or benchmarks. Some of the data we collect ourselves but most of it is obtained from other sources, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, the City of Virginia Beach, the Virginia Department of Health and others. As part of this process each year we also assess our goals. Over the past five years, we have raised our goals in several areas: membership and involvement, stormwater treatment, open space, media attention and others. I hope you will take the time to carefully read this report. Copies of previous year's reports are available on our website under the River Resources tab for comparisons.

Our overall grade this year remains a B-. That does not mean we have not made progress. In a year with drastically higher rain fall, to maintain the percentage of the river open to shellfish harvest is a big accomplishment. On this measure and others, significant effort is required to maintain the status quo. We have also worked hard over this past year to increase access to the river for the community and the number of sanitary sewer overflows has been dramatically reduced during the past two years. In other areas, work may go on for several years before a reportable result is achieved. Environmental restoration work is often slow and hard.

One of the most important areas, where we are only beginning to see improvement is nutrient levels. The biggest culprit here, especially in a watershed that is primarily residential development like ours, is fertilizer. We must do a better job of reducing our use of fertilizer. That does not mean you cannot have an attractive yard. It means using the appropriate amount and type of fertilizer at the right time of year so that your plants can utilize it. You can save money and the river at the same time. Turf grass is generally fertilized much more heavily than gardens and trees. By reducing the amount of turf grass in your yard, you can reduce your fertilizer usage and reduce the amount of run off from your property. That may be the singly most important thing you can do to improve water quality in the Lynnhaven River.

Why are nutrient levels so important? Nutrients in the water feed the algae and excess algae can lead to harmful blooms. Excess algae also reduce water clarity which inhibits the growth of underwater grasses. And underwater grasses are important not only as habitat for many of the animals that live in our marine habitat, but also because they help to stabilize the sediments that can also reduce water clarity. And the bacteria that feed on the decaying algal matter reduce the oxygen levels in the water. Oxygen needed by all of the animals that live in the river. It is all tied together and nutrients are the key link in the chain.

There are several sources of excess nutrients in our waterways, but the single largest source and the one that we can control is fertilizer. Many of you have already reduced or eliminated fertilizer from your lawn. If you haven't, think about making a change this spring season. Do it as a test and see how your lawn does without it. An added benefit may be less mowing and one hour of mowing is equivalent to approximately eleven hours of driving in air emissions. Another added benefit.

Thank you for everything you have done and continue to do to support the restoration and protection of the Lynnhaven River. As we move into 2010, we will learn new things and continue to move forward. We are so fortunate to live in such a beautiful place and have evidence every day that the things we are doing are making a difference.

Happy New Year,

**KAREN WILSON FORGET**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Watch for Sturgeon in the Lynnhaven River



When a dead sturgeon washed up on the shore of the Lynnhaven River recently brothers Keil and Wesley Gatling knew there was something different about the unusual fish. The Gatlings' grandfather, Ed Gatling, was even more interested that the rare fish had washed ashore on the Lynnhaven.

He alerted Chris Hager, a Virginia Sea Grant fisheries by-catch specialist at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in Gloucester Point. Hager, who studies the rare sturgeon, said it was only the second report in his six years of working with them that one has washed up on the Lynnhaven.

**Hager wants people to know that he needs "rapid feedback" if a tagged sturgeon is found, so call the institute's main number, 894-684-7000 if you are lucky enough to see a sturgeon in the Lynnhaven River.**

Fishermen cannot keep the sturgeon they catch because all Atlantic Coast states have had a moratorium on the fish and its eggs since 1998. In 2010, the Atlantic sturgeon is expected to be listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Sturgeons, which grow to 10 feet or more in length, were an important and abundant food source for the Jamestown settlers. Since then, the numbers of sturgeon have declined drastically. Though over-fishing

caused the initial collapse of the Atlantic sturgeon population, their failure to come back is attributed primarily to habitat destruction.

An anadromous fish, sturgeon make a yearly spawning run upriver to brackish waters to lay their eggs. Over time, shallow spawning areas have silted in from development and have been obliterated by man made channels, Hager said. River dams have not helped either.

Sturgeon can live up to 60 years, must be around 10 years old to breed and often breed only every other year—all factors that make them very vulnerable, Hager explained.

Tagging is about the only way to learn where sturgeon are at what age and what they do when not breeding so their habitat can be protected and the fishery managed effectively. That's why Hager is so vitally interested in tag reports.

"We know so little about this fish," he said, "that trying to preserve it and keep it on the face of this Earth is awfully hard."

To find out more:

- Go to the Virginia Institute of Marine Science website, [www.vims.edu](http://www.vims.edu), enter "sturgeon" in the search bar and you will find any number of interesting articles on rare fish.
- You can see an Atlantic sturgeon in the Coastal River Room at the Virginia Aquarium.
- You can also see Atlantic sturgeon at the Living Museum in Newport News.

*By Mary Reid Barrow  
Excerpted from the Virginian-Pilot*



PHOTO BY: CHUCK GUTHRIE

## Issues to Watch in this Richmond Legislative Session

The new Virginia General Assembly session begins in January and many issues related to our environment are likely to arise. Through our E-news, we hope to bring you updates on issues of particular importance to us in Virginia Beach. Of interest to us will be issues dealing with clean energy, green communities and healthy rivers.

Lynnhaven River NOW is a member of the Virginia Conservation Network (VCN). VCN is a voice for conservation throughout Virginia and monitors state legislation relevant to the environment. I encourage you to visit their website, [www.vcnva.org](http://www.vcnva.org) and subscribe to their action alerts. Please look for the Virginia Conservation Briefing Book 2010, on their website. This document will give you good background information on all of the important conservation issues likely to arise during this General Assembly session.

If you are particularly interested in public policy and legislation related to the environment, I encourage you to join our Public Policy Committee. Information about the committee can be found on our website under the Getting Involved tab or by calling our office at 757-962-5398. What happens in Richmond does have direct effects on our work in Virginia Beach.



PHOTO BY: CHUCK GUTHRIE

## Upcoming Events

### Happy New Year

Is 2010 your year to get more involved with restoring and protecting our natural environment in Virginia Beach with Lynnhaven River NOW? Check out the list of committees on our website under the Getting More Involved tab.

### January 30

Winter Wildlife Festival, Kempsville Recreation Center, 7:30 AM – 7:30 PM. Excursion, Workshops and Exhibits

### February 5 – 7

Mid-Atlantic Home and Flower Show at the Convention Center

### March 4

Our next Public Meeting at Dockside Inn at 8:00 AM

Our regular clean-ups begin again in January, 2010 at the Hutton Circle Canoe and Kayak Launch Site and the new launch site at Birdneck.

Check out our website calendar or subscribe to our E-News to get regular updates about workshops, volunteer opportunities and other events at Lynnhaven River NOW.

Watch for a special feature on the Lynnhaven Bald Eagles in our spring newsletter.

You can subscribe to our E-news on our website home page: [www.LRNNow.org](http://www.LRNNow.org)



## New Virginia Beach Stewardship Development Award

The City of Virginia Beach has a new Stewardship Development Award. This program honors residential, commercial and public development projects in Virginia Beach that demonstrate outstanding environmental stewardship in the protection, conservation, improvement and awareness of our natural resources. The deadline for submitting the 2009 VB Stewardship Development Award application is February 26, 2010. More information on the award can be found on the City's website, [www.vbgov.com](http://www.vbgov.com).

This award is an initiative of the Green Ribbon Committee. Do you have a project that might qualify? The first awards will be made in May, 2010.