

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHT: WETLANDS COMMITTEE

The work of Lynnhaven River NOW is centered around our various committees. Each committee has a different area of focus and offers volunteers an opportunity to get involved in the area that most interests them. A complete list of committees is available on our website. Check it out if you want to know more or are interested in getting more involved.

In each of our newsletters, we are doing a focus piece on one of our committees so you can learn more about their great work. In this issue, we are highlighting the good work of our Wetlands Committee. In past issues, we have described the work of our Public Relations & Marketing Committee, our Stewardship & Access Committee and our Public Policy Committee.

Tidal Wetlands are critical to the health of the river. They filter runoff from the developed areas; they slow wave activity and help settle sediments and they are the nursery areas for almost everything that lives in the river. Through development and the hardening of our shoreline with bulkheads and rock, the Lynnhaven River has lost most of its shoreline wetlands.

Our wetland committee is dedicated to restoring and protecting our wetlands through public education on the value of wetlands, working with property owners to better understand their shoreline management options, working with property owners who are interested in living shorelines and developing and implementing wetland restoration efforts in the Lynnhaven.

This committee developed the wonderful new Tidal Wetland Restoration publication and Tidal Wetland Plant guide that is the insert in this spring newsletter. They have also conducted citizen wetlands workshops, are developing an inventory of restoration opportunities, are supporting our work with individual homeowners to promote living shoreline options and have plans for more trainings and restoration projects in the future.

The Wetlands Committee meets the third Monday of each month from 3:30-5:00 p.m. at the Bayside Library on Independence Boulevard. Their next meeting is April 16, 2012. Please contact Joe Scalf at joe@lynnhaven2007.com or 757-962-5398, for more information or to find out about joining this committee.

LYNNHAVEN River NOW

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SUCCESS



10th Annual Oyster Roast

APRIL 21, 2012
Noon - 3 p.m.



- ❁ 4141 First Court Road, Virginia Beach
- ❁ Lynnhaven Oysters
- ❁ Oyster Stew
- ❁ Chesapeake Ray
- ❁ Barbeque and all the Fixings
- ❁ Beer, Wine and Soft Drinks
- ❁ More Perfect Jones Band
- ❁ Oyster Shucking Contest
- ❁ LRNow Merchandise including our book, *The Lynnhaven, Restoring a Legend*
- ❁ Art Auction
- ❁ Tickets are \$50 in advance and \$60 at the door. Tickets can be purchased on our website or by contacting our office at 757-962-5398 or kris@lynnhaven2007.com

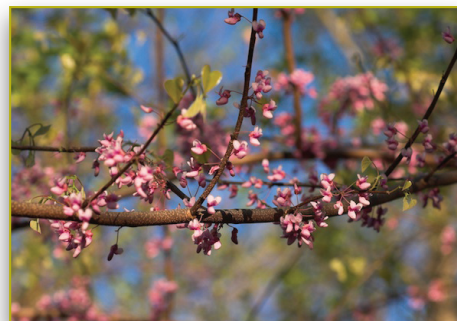


1608 Pleasure House Road Suite 108
Virginia Beach VA 23455 • 757-962-5398

Restoring a legend.

LYNNHAVEN River NOW

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA
PERMIT #30



DEAR MEMBERS,

Over the past year, you may have read about the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. TMDL means Total Maximum Daily Load and it is basically a determination of the maximum level of a particular pollutant that can be discharged into a waterway without impairing the health of the waterway. It has been described as a pollution diet. We have been working with a TMDL for bacteria in the Lynnhaven for a decade and it has proven to be a good mechanism for bringing about positive change. The Chesapeake Bay watershed involves six different states and DC and may be the most complex TMDL plan ever attempted. Every locality, including the Lynnhaven River watershed, that is a part of the Bay watershed, is being required to meet new pollution loading guidelines. The three main areas are sediments (sand and soil), phosphorus, and nitrogen (nutrients).

Over the past decade, in the Lynnhaven, we have made notable progress reducing bacteria levels and sedimentation. There is still more work to be done on sediments and bacteria, but nutrient levels, phosphorus and nitrogen, have proven to be more stubborn and have remained high.

For the Lynnhaven, with a higher salinity than other areas of the Bay, nitrogen is the most important nutrient to reduce-and the most difficult. All plants need nitrogen to grow, including the algae that grow in our lakes and the river. Too much nitrogen in our waterways means too much algae, clouding the water, preventing the growth of beneficial underwater grasses and leading to increased bacteria as the dying algae decay. A major source of excess nitrogen is lawn fertilizer. It is critical that we are careful in the use of lawn fertilizers. Know your grass and fertilize at the appropriate time of year only. Get your soil tested and use only what is required. More fertilizer than is needed will not be taken up by the plants and will run off into the water either directly or through storm water runoff. And please choose a slow release fertilizer. Following these steps can make a big difference.

Air deposition of nitrogen is also a problem. EPA data indicate that as much as 1/3 of the excess nitrogen entering our waterways is air deposited. It comes from tail pipes and smokestacks into the air and then into our waterways. In Hampton Roads, we do a lot of driving. Virginia Beach is a sprawling city and many of us log a lot of miles in our cars every week. Driving a more fuel efficient car reduces the emissions and can reduce our contribution of nitrogen to the river as well. Carpooling, walking, biking when possible or consolidating trips can also reduce our impact. These simple decisions that we make every day do make a difference.

Burning fossil fuels of any kind produces air and water pollution, but burning coal is particularly detrimental. Old Dominion Electric Cooperative is proposing to build a coal power plant in Surry County. The Cypress Creek Coal Power Plant would be the largest coal plant in Virginia. Hampton Roads, including Virginia Beach, is directly downwind of the proposed plant and would receive the pollution from this plant including mercury and thousands of pounds of nitrogen. This proposed plant has huge implications for our health and the health of our waterways.

Lynnhaven River NOW has taken a public position in opposition to the proposed Cypress Creek Coal Plant and spoke in opposition at the hearings in Surry County and the Town of Dendron. We will continue to speak out in opposition to the construction of this plant as it moves through the regulatory process. It is an economic, health, and environmental issue for our community.

Thank you for your support and for all you do to help restore and protect our home river.

KAREN WILSON FORGET
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

New Staff Position adds New Capacity to LRNow

Last year we began planning and fundraising to add a new staff position at LRNow. We needed someone with a background in environmental restoration work who could devote all of his or her time to planning, guiding, and seeking funding for restoration work in the Lynnhaven watershed. In early summer, we began the search for just the right person.

Our search process was fruitful and Joe Scalf joined our staff in September. Joe comes to us after seven years of habitat restoration work on the Eastern Shore with the Nature Conservancy. He is a Virginia Beach native and is happy to be working in Virginia Beach and on his home river.



Joe has become our lead on wetlands restoration and living shoreline work. Most of our Lynnhaven River shoreline has been impacted by human development and too often that has meant a hardening of the shoreline with bulkhead and riprap and a loss of beneficial wetlands. We now know that there are better ways to prevent erosion and still maintain the vital shoreline wetlands that are critical to the health of the river. The newer techniques of shoreline management are called living shorelines and this is what LRNow hopes to see more of on our river in the future.

We have understood for a long time that waterfront property owners face challenges in managing their shoreline and often do not know what choices they have or what the most environmentally responsible choices are. Joe is focusing much of his time to assisting property owners who are seeking solutions related to shoreline erosion and are open to considering a living shoreline option. Following his direction, the Lynnhaven's first true living shoreline is expected to be created this summer in Little Neck. This and other future living shoreline projects can become models for a better way to manage our shoreline, restore our wetlands and the health of the river.

Most of the Lynnhaven shoreline is privately owned and we are hoping that other waterfront homeowners with a failing bulkhead or questions about erosion control, phragmites

removal, and wetland restoration will contact us for help. There are many alternatives to bulkhead that will accomplish your goals and contribute to a healthier river. Please contact Joe at joe@lynnhaven2007.com or 757-962-5398, if you have questions about your shoreline.

In addition, Joe is working with Laurie Sorabella and our Oyster Restoration Committee, to continue our oyster restoration work. We are beginning to plan for the first oyster castle project in the Lynnhaven to be constructed later this year. And we are partnering with the city and the US Army Corps of Engineers for the next phase of sanctuary oyster reef construction in the Lynnhaven.

We currently have 63 acres of sanctuary oyster reef, the second largest system of sanctuary reef in the world, and hope to add 20 more acres soon.

Other plans for the future include citizen and contractor trainings on living shorelines; a shoreline restoration opportunity inventory; a series of videos that educate people about the benefits and advantages of living shorelines and documents the experiences of homeowners who install living shorelines; and wetlands restoration work on public property wherever possible.

Adding this new staff position and the capacity it gives us to do more direct outreach to waterfront property owners and more concentrated restoration work is an exciting step for Lynnhaven River NOW and one we know will produce benefits for the health of the river. Thank you for your continued support which has made this growth possible.

