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LYNNHAVEN River NOW

Introducing our first PEARL FAITH COMMUNITIES

We are very excited to tell you about a new program we are launching this fall at Lynnhaven River NOW — our Pearl Faith Communities Program. We are making plans to work intensively with four faith communities this year. We will be exploring with these congregations on ways we can work together to improve their landscape practices, reduce their energy consumption and their energy bills, expand their recycling efforts and reduce their ecological footprint. We know our faith communities already have an ethic of stewardship for natural resources and we look forward to learning new ways we can put that ethic into practice together.



We will be working with them to offer workshops on a variety of environmental topics for adults as well as the young people in the congregation. We are assembling a team of experts who will be able to assist the congregations with landscaping plans, rain water catchment systems, energy audits and more. Through our efforts we hope to greatly reduce the environmental footprint of these institutions and learn new practices that can have broad application.

In coming years, we hope to expand this program and work with more congregations. If you think your faith community would be interested in becoming a Pearl Faith Community, please contact us at 757-962-5398 or email Pam@LRNow.org and we will be happy to talk with you about first steps and what may be possible.

What did you do on your Summer Vacation? At LRNow we...

- went kayaking
- seined in Pleasure House Creek
- went birdwatching
- went on a bike tour
- built rainbarrels
- raised oysters
- and had a great time!



PEARL HOME TIP OF THE QUARTER

INSTALLING A RAIN BARREL OR A CISTERN

Lynnhaven River NOW began offering rain barrel workshops and selling rain barrels in 2007. Since that time, Virginia Beach residents have installed, through LRNow alone, more than 800 rain barrels. Every time it rains that is at least 40,000 gallons of water that is not going directly back into the river. Stormwater runoff is the primary way pollutants get into the river. So, any way that we can reduce or slow down stormwater runoff, helps improve water quality. And it provides you with free water for any of your outdoor uses. Your plants will like the chlorine free rain water during drier times.



Typically, for every inch of rainfall, 600 gallons of water will runoff a 1,000 square foot roof. You may not be prepared to install a 600 gallon tank, but any size tank makes a difference. And you may want to consider linking two or more of the 55 gallon tanks for greater capacity.

Several styles of barrels are available through Lynnhaven River NOW. We have our standard gray 56 gallon barrel for \$75, or \$60 if you assembly it yourself at a workshop, a new green 56 gallon barrel that sells for \$100, beautiful 60 gallon oak barrels for \$260 and 150 gallon home cistern systems that sell for \$300. You can get more information about all of our rain barrels and upcoming rain barrel workshops on our website, www.LRNow.org, or by calling our office at 757-962-5398.

Thank You!

From June 8 – August 31, 2013

Donations from INDIVIDUALS

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REEF MEMBERS

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DEAR MEMBERS,

The key to everything we do at Lynnhaven River NOW is education. We are all learning how to be better stewards of the natural resources that are so important to us and so much a part of our way of life in Virginia Beach.

One of the most important parts of our work is the work that we do with teachers and students in our schools. In this issue of our newsletter, we have shared with you a few highlights of the amazing things our schools did during this past school year. We at LRNow believe that environmental education, understanding the world around us and learning to live in a sustainable manner on our planet, have never been more important.

Our Pearl School program began with the 2006-2007 school year and is designed to encourage excellence in environmental education in our schools and recognize schools and teachers for the great work they are doing. In the first year, we gave seven Pearl School Awards. In the 2012-2013 school year, 51 schools in Virginia Beach earned Pearl School Awards.

In order to receive the Pearl School Award, schools must accumulate the required number of points. Points are awarded for a wide variety of programs and activities including three programs that LRNow and Oyster Reef Keepers of Virginia offer: Growing Wetlands in the Classroom, Nurturing Natives, and Oyster Gardening. In addition, schools can earn points with school gardening projects, special units of study, teacher-professional development courses, service projects, hosting workshops for parents, and more.

Our Growing Wetlands in the Classroom program completed its eighth successful year through the generosity of Dollar Tree who has financially supported this program from the beginning. In this program, students learn about wetlands, their characteristics and values, while growing their own wetland plants in the classroom. In spring, the students have the opportunity to transplant their plants in a wetland restoration area. These plants have restored the shoreline of Crab Creek and the Mount Trashmore Lake. Last year, 56 Virginia Beach classrooms were growing wetlands.

In the Nurturing Natives program students will be growing native plants while learning about food webs, our threatened pollinators, invasive species, population dynamics and other concepts. The native plants they nurture in their classroom will be planted in gardens on their school grounds where they can continue to observe them through the seasons.

Oyster Reef Keepers' oyster gardening program has been growing baby oysters with teachers and students for 17 years. They have placed 6.1 million oysters on sanctuary reefs throughout Hampton Roads. Last year, 175 teachers in Hampton Roads participated in the oyster gardening program.

In addition to these programs, LRNow offers professional development courses for teachers, some of which are now using Pleasure House Point for field study. We also consult with schools to develop water quality curriculum units, to develop project ideas and service activities, or to simply share resources and provide support.

In his book *The Bridge at the Edge of the World*, James Gustave Speth said, "Soon it will be abundantly clear that it is business as usual that is utopian, whereas creating something very new and different is a practical necessity." It is our students who will be creating something very new and different and we need to give them the experiences and skills to visualize what that can be. In my lifetime the population of the United States has doubled and the population of Virginia Beach has grown five times. That alone supports why we need something very new and different.

Thank you for your support and for learning alongside us on how to be better stewards of the Lynnhaven River.

Karen
Karen Forget
Executive Director

We All Live on the Water

You may not be able to look out your window and see a beautiful water vista or watch the sunset over the river, but from the perspective of stormwater, we all live on the water.

Stormwater runoff is the conduit that carries most of the pollutants into the river. The fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides on your lawn; the cigarette butts, other trash and soil and sand that build up in the gutter; the dog waste that was not picked up; and the oil and gas that leaks from our cars. Some people think that runoff is only a problem if the land or paved area is next to a waterway. But the water that runs off our land ends up in a waterway. From that perspective, we all live on the water.

Polluted stormwater runoff can have many adverse effects on plants, fish, animals and people. Sediment clouds the water and makes it difficult or impossible for underwater grasses to survive. We have virtually no underwater grasses in the Lynnhaven currently, in part because of high levels of sediment runoff. Sediment can also cover and smother oysters.

Excess nutrients from fertilizer and other sources can cause algae blooms. When algae die, they sink to the bottom and decompose in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic organisms can't exist in water with low dissolved oxygen levels. Algae can also cloud the water and contribute to losses of underwater grasses.

Bacteria can come from a variety of sources including dog and goose waste, boat holding tanks, faulty septic tanks, and sanitary sewer overflows. High bacteria levels can be dangerous for swimming and fishing and can close our oyster farming areas.

Debris like plastic bags, bottles and cigarette butts washed into our river can choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life like ducks, fish, turtles, and birds.

Toxic household products like insecticides, pesticides, paint, motor oil, and soaps can poison aquatic life. Land animals and people can become sick from eating diseased fish and shellfish or ingesting polluted water.

So what can we do to make sure that we are not contributing pollutants to our river every time it rains?

The next time it rains, take a good look at the water that runs off your property. Do you have downspouts that spill water onto a paved area like a driveway or sidewalk? Do you have water pooling in your yard? Can you see where the water runs into a storm drain for its quick journey through a pipe and into the Lynnhaven River?

We can all help to reduce pollutants entering the river through our stormwater. Here are some things you can consider that will help reduce stormwater runoff.

- Use lawn fertilizers and pesticides sparingly or eliminate them.
- Compost or mulch yard waste including leaves. Do not sweep or blow it into the street or into the storm drain.
- Don't overwater your lawn.
- Clean up regularly after your pets even in your own yard.
- Dispose of all hazardous wastes properly.
- Don't wash your car on a hard surface. Take it to a car wash where the water is recycled or wash it on a grassy area where the water can soak into the ground
- Consider replacing your patio, driveway, or walkway with a surface that allows water to soak into the ground.
- Install a rain barrel or a cistern
- Build a rain garden in a low area of your yard to capture water and allow it to soak into the ground.
- Replace part of your lawn with a vegetated bed and plant trees.
- Build a buffer or vegetated strip along driveways, roadways and waterways to absorb water and trap pollutants before they enter the river or the stormwater system.

There is additional information on all good practices on our website, www.LRNow.org. Thank you for looking at your property and thinking about how you can make improvements. If you would like for someone to come out and look at your property with you and make suggestions, please contact our office at 757-962-5398 or Karen@LRNow.org.

Thank You!

From June 8 – August 31, 2013

Donations from BUSINESSES & GROUPS

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Runnymede Corporation
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