

2026 LRNow Photography Contest Rules

Eligibility

The general Lynnhaven River Now (LRNow) photography contest is open to the public, both amateur and professional. Employees and board members may enter the Employee/Board Member category. All photographs must be taken by the person who enters the contest, be the property of the entrant and **be taken within Virginia Beach**. Basic editing (cropping, exposure, color correction) is allowed. Composite images, AI-generated elements, or heavy digital alteration that changes the reality of the scene are not eligible.

Entry Period

The LRNow Photography Contest entry period begins at 12:00 a.m. EST on Saturday, March 7, 2026, and ends at 11:59 p.m. EST on Saturday, April 18, 2026. Entries submitted before or after the entry period will not be accepted.

Categories

- **Wildlife**
- **Landscape**
- **Humans & the Environment:** positive and negative examples
- **Conservation & Sustainability:** Examples include) rain gardens, living shorelines, energy efficiency, alternative energy, native plants, buffer gardens, waste reduction, etc.

Winning Entries

Official judging will be performed by a panel of LRNow employees and select professional advisors. Judges will make their selections based on subject matter, composition, focus, lighting, uniqueness, and impact. Entries will be judged anonymously wherever possible. All decisions are final and at the discretion of LRNow.

One winner from the general entries will be chosen from each category, and one overall winner will be chosen. Employees/Board Members will also have one overall winner but will be judged separately from the general public entries. Depending on the amount of

employee/board member entries we receive, there may also be winners awarded for each of the four categories. Employees/board members should follow all contest guidelines.

Winners will be announced by email before the end of April and only the winners will be personally notified of the contest outcome. Entries will not be returned. Winning photos will be featured in the following places:

- LRNow website (www.lynnhavenrivernow.org)
- LRNow social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- At the 2026 LRNow oyster roast fundraiser event
- In the 2027 LRNow annual report

LRNow reserves the right to not award a winner in any category if submissions do not meet standards.

Submission Guidelines

Entries should be submitted via email by the entry period deadline to emilyw@lrnow.org as either:

- A photo file attachment **OR**
- A download link (Google Drive, Dropbox, etc)

Each photographer may submit up to 5 photographs across all categories.

File Naming

Each file must be named using the following format:

LastName_FirstName_Category_PhotoTitle

Example) Bergamot_John_Wildlife_Birds of a Feather

Entry Forms

Each photograph requires its **own completed entry form**.

- **PDF Form-fillable version: <https://www.lynnhavenrivernow.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/2026-Photo-Contest-Entry-Form-Form-Fillable-PDF-Version.pdf>**

- **A word doc version can be requested from emilyw@lrnow.org**

Entry forms must include:

- Current contact information
- Photo caption/details (location, subject, context if relevant)
- Signed artist release (digital signature counts)

Incomplete submissions may not be considered.

File Requirements

To ensure images can be displayed and printed properly:

- File format: **JPEG (.jpg)**
- File size: Maximum 50 MB per image
- Resolution: 300 dpi
- Dimensions: Maximum 3000 x 3000 pixels

Rights & Image Use

Entrants retain full copyright to their photographs.

By entering the LRNow Photography Contest, entrants grant Lynnhaven River Now (LRNow) a **perpetual, royalty-free, non-exclusive license** to use submitted images for educational, outreach, and promotional purposes that support LRNow's mission.

This includes the right to:

- Display the photograph on LRNow's website and social media platforms (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube)
- Print and display the photograph at LRNow events, exhibits, and community spaces
- Use the photograph in LRNow publications such as annual reports, newsletters, educational materials, and program materials
- Use the photograph in LRNow promotional and fundraising materials, including print and digital advertisements, posters, brochures, and email communications
- Archive the photograph in LRNow's digital image library for future mission-related use

- Share the photograph with partner organizations for promotional purposes connected to LRNow programs or initiatives
- Allow third parties (such as media outlets or community partners) to share LRNow posts that include the photograph on social media

Photographer credit will be provided whenever reasonably possible.

LRNow may crop, resize, or make minor adjustments for layout or formatting purposes, but will not significantly alter the content of the image.

This license does **not** transfer ownership of the photograph to LRNow. Entrants remain free to use their images elsewhere.

Model and Property Releases

If a photograph includes identifiable people or private property, the entrant is responsible for obtaining written permission (model or property release) from those individuals/property owners and may be asked to provide documentation.

Important Notes

We are not responsible for lost or misdirected entries.

Entries that do not meet format or eligibility requirements may be disqualified.

Photos must be taken within Virginia Beach and must not involve wildlife harassment, disturbance of nests, baiting, or unsafe environmental practices.

Basic editing (cropping, exposure, color correction) is allowed. Composite images, AI-generated elements, or heavy digital alteration that changes the reality of the scene are not eligible.

Entrants under 18 must have parent/guardian permission.

Questions

Question about contest rules and eligibility can be emailed to emilyw@lrnow.org.