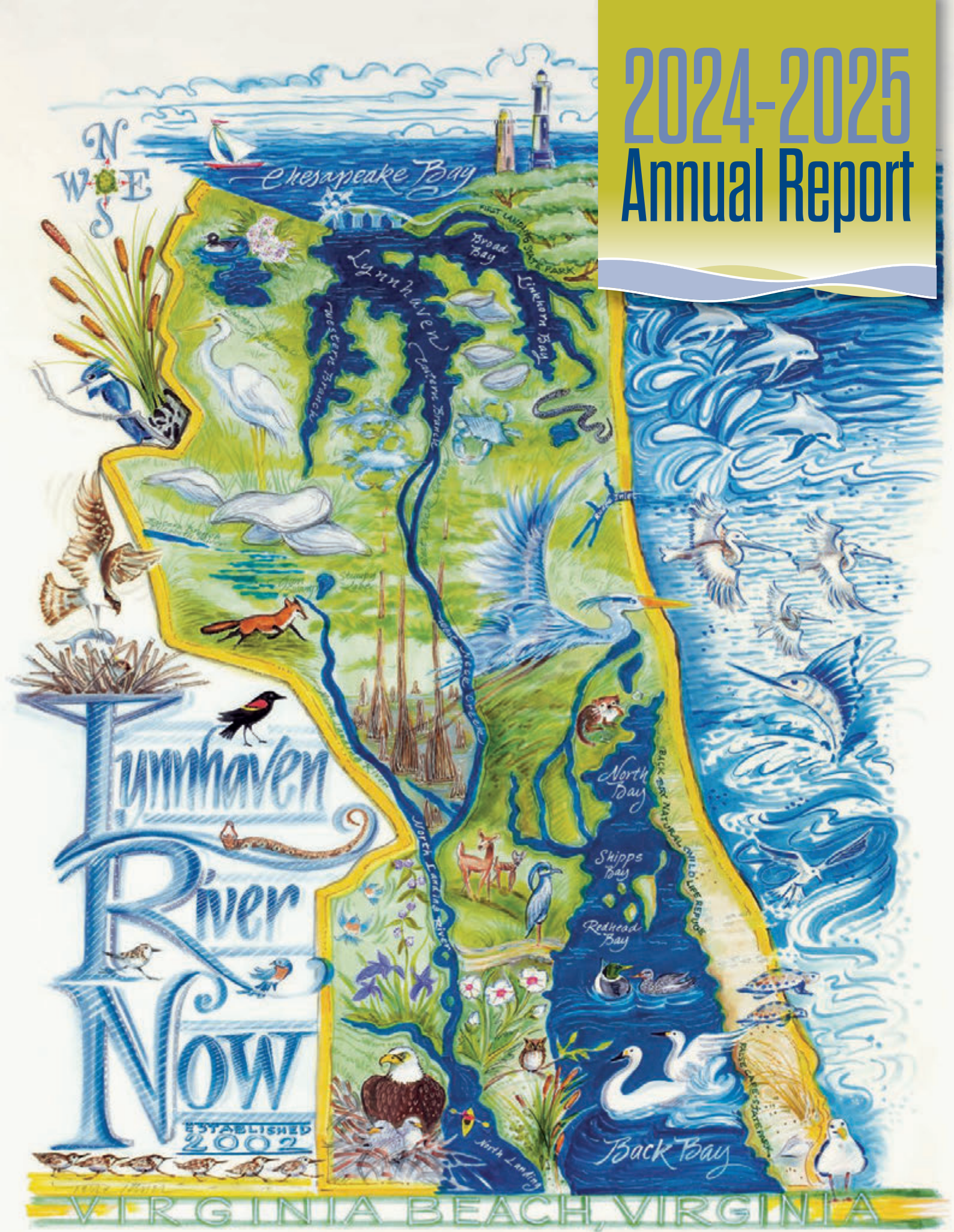


2024-2025 Annual Report





Dear Members and Supporters,

2025 Board of Directors

Steve Herbert
Chairman

Barry Frankenfield
Vice Chairman

Karen Forget
Corporate Secretary

Cathy Maston
Treasurer

Andrew Fine
Emeritus

Harry Lester
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Kate Napolitano
Janet Pawlukiewicz
Chris Schellhammer
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James Spore
Jaketa Thompson
Bob Wells

2025 Staff

Karen W. Forget
Executive Director

Cristin Pullman
Assistant Director

Brian Sagedy
Development Director

Brent James
Oyster Program Manager

Brianna Roberts
Conservation Landscape
Assistant

Dana Gauthier
Conservation Landscape
Manager

Dylan Mason
Public Policy Manager

Emily Fonti Lomauro
Pearl Schools and Faith
Community Manager

Emily Willis
Communications Manager

Jessica Parker
Administrative Assistant

Kathryn Trainor
Pearl Business and
Volunteer Manager

Mary Reid Barrow
Communications and
Blogger

Mackay Keir
Office Manager

Mike Hall
Accounting Manager

Terri Gorman
Pearl Home and
Neighborhood Manager

Tom White
Save Our Shell Technician

Vince Bowhens
Restoration Manager

Lynnhaven River NOW (LRNow) is an extraordinary organization. It is the leading environmental organization in the city. Its accomplishments, many of which are highlighted in this Annual Report, are made possible by talented staff and thousands of members and volunteers working under an exceptional Executive Director, Karen Forget, along with the long-standing support of its Board of Directors.

I have the honor of serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors. It is a group of engaged leaders which includes prominent environmentalists, business executives, former public officials, a Lynnhaven oyster farmer, an environmental attorney, a chemical engineer, and a marketing business owner, to highlight just a few. All our board members celebrate the work of LRNow and understand the importance of a solid financial framework for our critical work.

Two years ago, the Board decided as part of its responsibility to make sure LRNow has adequate resources to advance its mission, that it was time to prepare for a Capital Campaign, the first in the history of the organization. The goal of this campaign is to significantly expand the successful programs that we have developed over the past twenty-four years. Simply, we plan to double our programs by 2035 to meet the needs of our community.

So, stay tuned, renew your LRNow membership, and come along with us on what promises to be an exciting time ahead.

On behalf of the entire Board, thank you for your generous support over many years. I am optimistic about the future.

Steve Herbert
Chair, Board of Directors



Do you love the cover of our Annual Report?

The beautiful artwork was created by Virginia Beach artist Terre Ittner. As a life-long Virginia Beach resident, Terre loves our waterways and all the plants and animals that share this special place with us.

You can purchase your own high-quality poster of Terre's unique map of Virginia Beach from our LRNow office or on our website.

For more information on all our programs, please visit our website at LRNow.org.

Dear Friends,

As we begin our 24th year of restoring and protecting Virginia Beach's waterways and natural areas, we celebrate the interconnectedness of our work and our community.

Just as we need two legs to stand strong and move forward, our progress toward clean, healthy waterways and resilient natural areas depends on two essential efforts working together.

The first is reducing the "bad." Together, we are decreasing the pollution caused by single-use plastics, limiting the hardening of our shorelines, reducing the use of pesticides and herbicides, encouraging a transition away from excessive fossil fuel consumption, and preventing the unnecessary spread of impervious surfaces that keep rainwater from soaking into the ground.

The second is increasing the "good" by restoring nature. Many scientists believe that restoring at least 30% of our lands and waters is critical to protecting biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience, and sustaining healthy ecosystems. Nature has an incredible capacity to heal when given the opportunity. Together, we are planting native trees and plants, building living shorelines, restoring oyster reefs, installing rain gardens, infiltration trenches, and rain barrels, and protecting and restoring wetlands throughout our community.

What powers both of these efforts is you—your innovative thinking, generous spirit, hard work, and steadfast support. Every volunteer hour, every donation, every conversation, and every restoration project helps move us closer to a future with cleaner water, healthier habitats, and a more resilient Virginia Beach.

Thank you for all you do to reduce pollution, restore nature, and inspire others to join this important work. Together, we are creating lasting change.

See you on the river,

Karen Forget
Executive Director, LRNow

We acknowledge the Native American peoples who first called this region home, including the Chesapeian, Machipungo, and Nansemond tribes. For generations, they lived in relationship with these lands and waters, caring for and sustaining them through a deep ethic of stewardship. We honor their enduring legacy and seek to learn from their example as we work to protect and restore the natural resources of our community.





LRNow By the Numbers

7,836 Pearl Home Families

8 Pearl Neighborhoods

17 Conservation Landscaping Project Designed and Installed

170 One-hundred twenty-five Gallon Rain Barrels Installed

64 Rain Gardens Installed

33 Infiltration Trenches Installed

97 Conservation Landscaping Projects Re-certified

50 Pearl Businesses

10 Pearl Business Landscapes Installed

24 Pearl Faith Communities

19 Pearl Faith Community Landscape Projects Completed

110 Pearl Schools

4,800 Educational Opportunities for Virginia Beach Citizens

288,000 Citizens Involved in Educational Activities

2,832 Trees Planted

246 Notable Trees Certified

51,897 Square Feet, **844** linear feet, of Living Shoreline Designed and Built in **11** projects

90,000 Bushels of Oyster Shells Recovered for Reef Construction

1,145 Linear Feet of Oyster Castle Shoreline Installed in 17 projects

153 Acres of Conservation Oyster Reef in the Lynnhaven River

93 Spat Catcher Volunteers

2,352 Water Quality Tests Taken and Analyzed

1,585 Cleanup Events Supported

142,012 Pounds of Marine Debris Removed

60 Abandoned and Derelict Vessels Removed

23,000 members in 2025

LYNNHAVEN RIVER NOW

From our beautiful ocean and bay beaches and the Lynnhaven River to Back Bay, the Elizabeth River, and the North Landing, our waterways define our lives in Virginia Beach. They are a large part of why we chose Virginia Beach as our home. We love to kayak, surf, fish, swim, and simply enjoy a sunset over our favorite body of water while savoring some delicious local seafood.

Founded in 2002, Lynnhaven River NOW (LRNow) is dedicated to restoring and protecting our beautiful Virginia Beach waterways. We began with a singular focus on the Lynnhaven River watershed, but over the years, our programs have grown to include all the watersheds in Virginia Beach. We are truly blessed with miles and miles of beaches and the busy Rudee Inlet and Owl Creek; the bountiful and accessible Lynnhaven River which winds through the entire northern part of our city from the resort area to Town Center; the magnificent North Landing River “green sea”; and the renowned Back Bay.

From the beginning, our work at LRNow has been shaped by these three strategic objectives:

1. **Identify and reduce sources of pollution** in our waterways.
2. **Restore vital habitat** like oyster reefs, wetlands, riparian buffers, underwater grasses, native plants, and forested lands.
3. **Educate and engage the community** and partner organizations in this work.

Since 2002, Lynnhaven River NOW has provided community education and outreach opportunities to all Virginia Beach residents, teaching and inspiring adults and students to take steps to improve water quality in our Virginia Beach waterways. We have been honored to receive a Governor’s Award for Environmental Excellence, a Coastal America Award, and the Dugdale Award from the Garden Club of Virginia, among other recognition.



We work actively with many partners to help citizens learn how we can each contribute to conserving our valuable natural resources. LRNow has three key programs that help us to reach our goal of healthy and clean waterways.

- **Education and Outreach: Pearl Homes and Neighborhoods, Pearl Faith Communities, Pearl Businesses, and Pearl Schools**
- **Conservation Landscaping and Restoration**
- **Public Policy**

We look forward to partnering with our community to meet the challenges of the future, especially as climate change and sea level rise become priorities and continue to restore and protect our Virginia Beach natural resources.



Conservation Landscaping

As an environmentally friendly approach to landscaping, conservation landscaping works with nature to benefit both people and the ecosystem. Instead of relying on large areas of turf grass, intentional environmental design uses native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers to create beautiful spaces that create habitat for pollinators, support wildlife, improve water quality, reduce flooding and build resilience to climate change.

In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

- Designed and installed 10 conservation landscaping projects
- Completed 78 conservation landscaping consultations
- Recertified 77 conservation landscaping projects
- Installed 24 rain barrels
- Planted 12 rain gardens
- Built 10 infiltration trenches



Native Plants

Native plants have evolved over thousands of years in specific regions, making them uniquely adapted to local soils, rainfall patterns, and climate — requiring far less water, fertilizer, and maintenance than non-native ornamentals. They form the biological foundation of healthy ecosystems, providing essential food and habitat for native pollinators, birds, and wildlife that co-evolved with them and often cannot survive without them. Beyond ecological value, native plants stabilize soil, filter stormwater, sequester carbon, and restore natural beauty to landscapes — making them one of the most powerful and cost-effective tools for building resilient, sustainable communities.





LRNow designed and
restored 1,000,000
square feet of shoreline.

The before and after of LRNow putting in the work of restoring shorelines.



Living Shoreline

Living shorelines are nature-based coastal protection strategies that use native vegetation, oyster reefs, and natural materials to stabilize shorelines while maintaining the ecological functions that hard armoring like bulkheads destroy.

By absorbing wave energy and trapping sediment, they reduce erosion and flooding risks while simultaneously providing critical habitat for fish, birds, and invertebrates — creating resilience for both ecosystems and adjacent communities.

Not only do they provide multiple water quality and habitat benefits, living shorelines are both beautiful and practical. They are effective natural defenses against climate change and rising sea levels because they sequester carbon and absorb wave activity. Living shorelines are an affordable and sustainable alternative to bulkheads and seawalls and support a wide variety of plants, animals, and sea life.

In 2024 and 2025,
and installed **40,320**
of living shoreline.





Tree Preservation and Restoration

Trees clean the air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, making them essential allies against climate change. Their root systems anchor soil and absorb rainfall, reducing erosion and the risk of flooding. Beyond their environmental role, trees lower summer temperatures, provide habitat for wildlife, and have been shown to reduce stress and improve mental well-being in people who live near them.

Increasing Our Tree Canopy

What is tree canopy?

Simply, tree canopy is measured as a percent and is the area of our land that is covered by trees. More precisely, tree canopy is the upper layer of foliage formed by the crowns of mature trees, where branches and leaves spread outward and upward to capture sunlight. It acts as a living roof over neighborhoods, parks, and streets, providing shade, intercepting rainfall, and creating a distinct microclimate beneath it that is cooler than open surroundings.

The tree canopy percentage is widely used as an indicator of a city's environmental health and livability. Our Virginia Beach tree canopy goal is 45% by 2045, and our current tree canopy is 40%. Gaining 5% may seem easy, until we consider that a 5% gain equals 3,253 acres. To reach this goal, we need everyone's help to protect our big old trees and plant new young trees wherever we can.



In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

- Planted 832 trees in Virginia Beach
- Transplanted over 800 trees and grasses from Pleasure House Point

Notable Tree Program

LRNow identified 207 Notable Trees in Virginia Beach in 2025. These large old trees store centuries' worth of carbon in their massive trunks and root systems, making them far more powerful climate allies than younger trees — and losing them releases that stored carbon almost instantly. They are also irreplaceable wildlife habitats, with their hollow cavities, thick bark, and decaying wood supporting hundreds of species of birds, insects, and fungi that simply cannot survive on young trees. Perhaps most critically, once an ancient tree is gone it is gone for centuries — no replanting effort can restore in a human lifetime what nature took hundreds of years to build.

In 2025, LRNow:

- Identified and marked 207 Tier-One Notable Trees
- 42 of those are current or former Virginia State Champion List Trees
- 1 is a National Champion

The best time to plant a tree was ten years ago.
The second-best time is now.

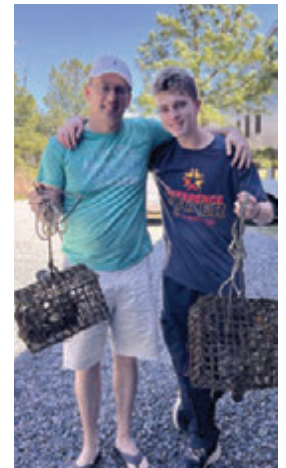
Oyster and Mussel Restoration

Restoring our famous Lynnhaven oysters has been an important goal of LRNow from the beginning. After 23 years of work and collaboration with multiple partners, the Lynnhaven oyster has made a comeback. With 153 acres of sanctuary reef, our native oyster is thriving and providing all their water filtering and habitat benefits.



In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

- Created 27 acres of conservation oyster reef in the Lynnhaven River, bringing our overall total since 2003 to 153 acres, surpassing our 152-acre goal
- Added 6,692 oysters and mussels to sanctuary reefs
- Engaged 58 spat catcher program volunteers in growing baby oysters to add to sanctuary reefs





S.O.S. Program

(Save Oyster Shell)

The Save Oyster Shell (S.O.S.) program began in 2008 and has blossomed into a flourishing reuse program. Shells are picked up for reuse at each participating restaurant and public drop off site by an LRNOW staff member who takes them to a storage site to cure, which gets rid of potentially harmful bacteria. After several months, the cured shell is placed back into the water to build sanctuary reefs in Virginia Beach's waterways. These sanctuary oyster reefs create habitat for hundreds of marine species, including oyster larva.



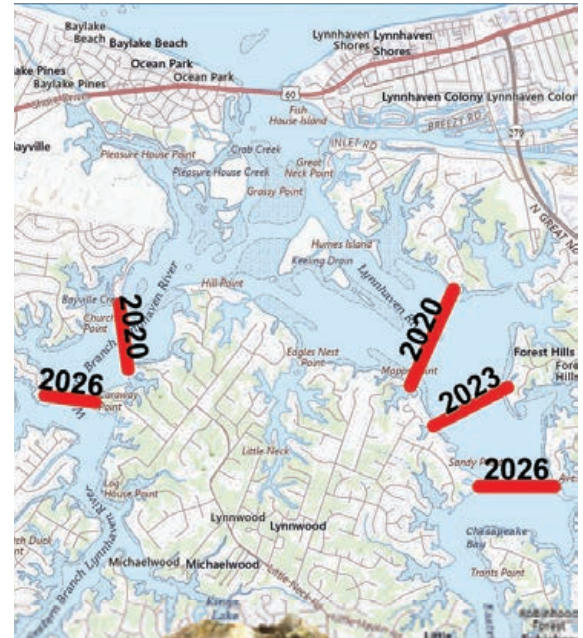
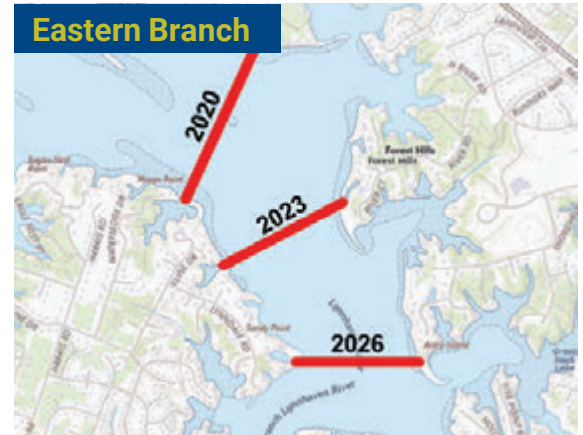
In 2024 and 2025, LRNOW:

- Had 13 local restaurants who collect oyster shell for recycling
 - 1608 Crafthouse
 - Abbey Road Restaurant
 - Chic's Laundry
 - CP Shuckers (Oceanfront)
 - CP Shuckers (Bayside)
 - Virginia Beach Dockside Seafood & Fishing Center
 - Lucky Oyster
 - Ocean Eddie's Seafood Restaurant
 - Steinhilber's Restaurant
 - Tautog's
 - The Atlantic on Pacific
 - Simple Eats Restaurant
 - Arbuckles
- Had 4 collection locations around Virginia Beach for the community to drop off oyster shell
- Recovered 8,013 bushels of oyster shells to be used in conservation reef construction

Milestone Achieved in the Lynnhaven River

The Virginia Department of Health, Shellfish Sanitation Division regularly tests the health of our tidal waters. When LRNow started our work, only 1% of Lynnhaven River met the rigorous water quality standard for shellfish harvest. After 24 years of efforts to clean up our waters and restore our native oysters, 52% of the Lynnhaven River now meets that rigorous water quality standard. Since 2002, we have all worked hard to reduce bacteria in the river and it is working. This is truly a community accomplishment.

The maps show the progression of open areas over the past five years. Let's keep it going!



From 1%
to 52%
Open

Identify and Reduce
Sources of Pollution

Fertilizers & Pesticides

Reducing - or eliminating - lawn fertilizer

Lawn fertilizer is washed off by rain into storm drains that drain to our rivers where the nitrogen and phosphorus it contains fuel algae growth that depletes oxygen and kills fish and other aquatic life. Reducing or eliminating fertilizer use, and replacing it with practices like composting, native plantings, or simply accepting a less manicured lawn, is one of the most direct steps homeowners can take to protect the waterways we love.



We are Rethinking Pesticides and Herbicides

Pesticides don't stay where they're applied — they leach into soil, run off into waterways, and drift through the air, harming beneficial insects like bees and butterflies. By reducing pesticide and herbicide use we are allowing natural predator-prey relationships to rebalance, so beneficial insects, birds, and soil organisms can keep pest populations in check without chemicals.



Reducing Single-Use Plastics

Single-use plastics — bags, bottles, straws, and packaging designed to be used once and discarded — are among the most persistent pollutants on the planet, taking hundreds of years to break down while fragmenting into microplastics that infiltrate waterways, soil, and even the human body. Reducing their production and use eases the enormous burden on landfills and oceans, where millions of tons of plastic waste threaten marine life through entanglement, ingestion, and the toxic chemicals plastics release as they degrade. Shifting toward reusable, compostable, or minimal packaging alternatives not only cuts pollution at the source but also reduces the fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions tied to plastic manufacturing in the first place.



Sewing Workshops

LRNow collects and distributes reusable bags to help Virginia Beach residents reduce the use of single use plastic. We partner with Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation, local businesses, Pearl Faith communities, and other non-profits who will collect and redistribute clean new or gently used bags to members of our community who may not have easy access to reusable bags.

We also host workshops throughout the year to learn how to sew reusable bags and have kits and instructions available at our office.

Identify and Reduce Sources of Pollution



Bag Collection and Distribution

Do you have a trunk or a garage full of reusable bags — many more than you use or will need to meet your own needs? We have a terrific solution to that problem. Donate them to our bag collection program. We redistribute them to our local food banks where they save the food banks money and benefit their customers. Through this program we have distributed 8,750 bags.



Composting

At least 25% of the waste that goes to our landfill is food that could be turned into compost. Composting is a natural, practical, and beautiful process that transforms potential waste materials into a valuable resource — healthy living soils.



LRNow partners with Tidewater Compost to provide a convenient way for anyone to compost their food waste and receive compost back for your garden.

Tidewater Compost is also available to compost leftovers from your events, helping you reach your zero-waste goal.

Identify and Reduce
Sources of Pollution

Waterway Cleanups

In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

- Conducted 200 waterway cleanups
- Removed 50,868 lbs (25.4 tons) of debris from our waterways
- Collected and analyzed 318 water quality tests at 38 sites using 37 volunteers





Thank You to All Our Incredible Cleanup Volunteers



Identify and Reduce Sources of Pollution



Abandoned and Derelict Vessels

We have been committed to eliminating all kinds of debris in our waterways from the beginning of our organization. The largest of this debris are abandoned and derelict vessels (ADV). ADVs can be navigational and safety hazards. They leak fluids and debris into our waterways and damage vital habitats like oyster reefs, wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, and other fragile marine communities. We are fortunate to have the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) funding this work.

One of the goals of the ADV program is to remove up to 100 vessels, but our work does not end there. We are conducting surveys, focus groups, and interviews, as well as researching ADV programs in other states with the end goal of producing a comprehensive report on the ADV problem in Virginia and a list of recommendations for an on-going state-wide ADV management program. We are also exploring and will be recommending funding mechanisms for this program.

In 2025 and 2026, LRNow:

- Removed 60 abandoned and derelict vessels from our waterways



LRNow's Abandoned and Derelict (ADV) Removal Effort

What problems do ADVs cause?

- Polluting of the waterways
- Leaking of fuel or other hazardous materials
- Drifting of debris if vessel breaks apart
- Damaging sensitive environmental habitat
- Creating navigational hazards

What are ADVs?

Abandoned and Derelict Vessels (ADV) are discarded or damaged watercraft that no longer serve a useful purpose. They can include fishing, commercial, or recreational boats that are:

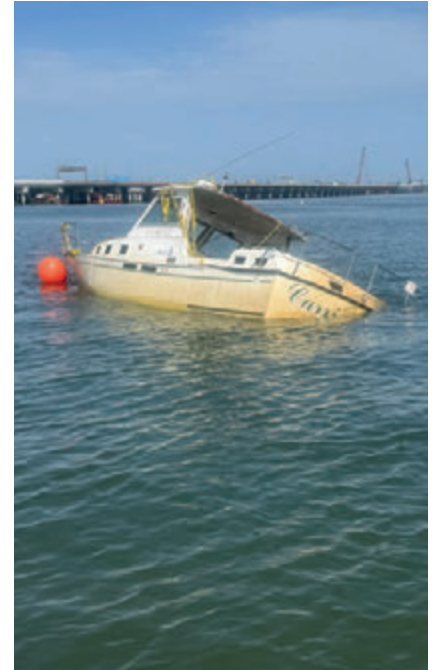
- Sunken or partially submerged
- Left unattended for long periods
- Unregistered and unclaimed in public waterways

Project Partners

- Coastal Zone Management
- Elizabeth River Project
- City of Virginia Beach
- City of Norfolk
- BOAT US
- U.S. Navy
- Virginia Marine Resources Commission
- Opinion Works
- Clean Virginia Waterways
- Coastal Area Planning District Commissions

Coordination and Funding

- Coordinated by Lynnhaven River Now
- Supported by the NOAA Marine Debris Program



To report an abandoned or derelict vessel — use QR code

MAKE AN
IMPACT

Become a Monthly Donor

What does your donation support?

\$10 a month

Buys turtle excluder devices for crab traps to protect terrapins

\$25 a month

Supports education and outreach at local events

\$50 a month

Buys 5 oyster castles for shoreline restoration projects

\$100 a month

Plants 12 native plants to feed the pollinators



Join Our Community

(757) 962-5398

www.lynnhavenrivernow.org/donate



Donate Here

<https://www.lynnhavenrivernow.org/donate/>

(757) 962-5398

Lynnhaven River NOW

is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



Renew or Become a Member Today

Together, we are making a difference.

Your donation allows us to fund education, outreach, and programs that help protect and restore Virginia Beach waterways and natural areas.



How to Become a

Pearl Home and Pearl Neighborhood

Any Virginia Beach home can become a Pearl Home, and everyone can make a difference in the health of our waterways! This program is FREE to all Virginia Beach residents!

The application contains a list of eco-friendly actions and to qualify, you will need to check off at least 10 that you are doing.

Once you're a Pearl Home, you can work on getting your neighborhood to become a Pearl Neighborhood. To qualify, 30% of the homes need to be Pearl Homes, the neighborhood needs to complete an Earth-friendly community project in a shared communal space, and the neighborhood needs to have provided an environmental education opportunity to the neighborhood from LRNow.

Find out more and apply on our website at www.lynnhavenrivernow.org/vb-residents/.



Pearl Homes

Pearl Homes are places where people care about our community and our environment and want to do what they can to live responsibly and help protect our resources. So much of the progress LRNow has made in restoring our waterways is a result of the great work our residents are doing to change their practices and adopt more sustainable behaviors. It's free to become a Pearl Home, and any Virginia Beach resident can apply.

LRNow currently has

7,836 Pearl Home Families
with **806**

having been added since **2024.**

PEARL HOME



www.LRNow.org





Educate and Engage
the Community

Pearl Home Timeline: Creating a sustainable Virginia Beach

2010

Pearl Home Program
Begins

2013

1,000 Pearl Homes

2016

2,500 Pearl Homes

2018

4,500 Pearl Homes

2018

The first Pearl
Neighborhood
becomes certified

2019

5,000 Pearl Homes

2021

6,000 Pearl Homes

2025

7,836 Pearl Homes

Goal 2035

16,000 Pearl Homes!

Pearl Neighborhoods

Pearl Neighborhoods are local neighborhoods where 30% of the homes in the community are Pearl Homes, they have completed an Earth-friendly community project in a shared communal space, and the neighborhood has provided an environmental education opportunity to the neighborhood from LRNow.

LRNow currently has **8** Pearl Neighborhoods:

- Atlantic Shores
- Bay Lake Community
- Linkhorn Cove
- Lynnhaven Dunes
- Pine Ridge
- Thoroughgood
- Westminster Canterbury
- Wolfsnare Plantation

Make Your Neighborhood the Next Pearl Neighborhood

Pearl Schools and Youth Programs

The young people are our future and our future is bright. By partnering with both public and private schools who serve students throughout Virginia Beach, LRNow is supporting excellent environmental education in our schools. LRNow's Pearl School staff are available to help support student learning in relevant issues such as water quality, oysters, climate change, sea level rise, ecosystems, native flora and fauna, and other environmentally focused topics.

In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

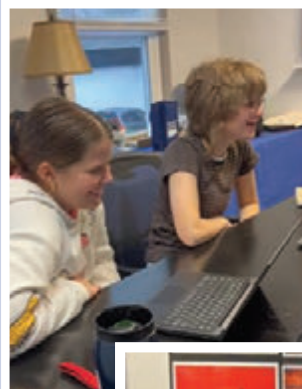
- Completed 37 class visits
- Participated in 8 evening STEM/STEAM nights at schools
- Conducted 23 programs for students with our community partner, Horizons Hampton Roads
- Had 2 week-long summer Watershed Leadership Academies



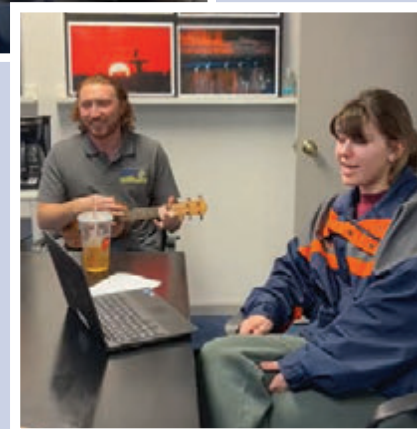
52 LRNow currently has certified Pearl Schools.

Communications

In 2025 alone, LRNow distributed 40 Nature Notes blog posts and 52 Weekly Tide-ings Newsletters. We also have a presence on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. Join us online today!



2025-26 LRNow Interns from the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Environmental Studies Program



Follow
Us on
Social
Media



Let's Get Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



on Facebook
@LRNow



on Instagram
@LRNow



on LinkedIn
@LRNow



on YouTube
@LRNow

#LynnhavenRiverNow #lrnow



Pearl Businesses

In a coastal community like ours, consumers are choosing businesses that reflect their values. Our Pearl Businesses are reducing energy and waste, planting native plants and trees, and helping in many ways to make our community more sustainable. Double bottom line — Good for Business and Good for our Environment!

In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

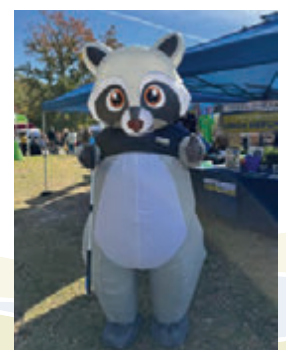
- Completed 2 Pearl Business landscaping projects

LRNow currently has 50 certified Pearl Businesses.



Eco Market

The LRNow Eco Market is an annual event in Virginia Beach that celebrates and promotes local artistry & environmental stewardship. By showcasing local artisans who prioritize upcycling materials for their handcrafted items, using sustainable materials in their work, or selling reusable items, we encourage people to buy local and support a more eco-friendly economy.



Educate and Engage the Community



Native Garden Tour

Every year, LRNow organizes a tour of exemplary native gardens at Pearl Homes around Virginia Beach. The gardens highlighted showcase principles of conservation landscaping including using native plants and trees, limiting the amount of turf grass, creating living shorelines, and other best practices. During the tour, participants engage with native gardening experts and learn about the significance and importance of using native plants in their own yards.



Educate and Engage
the Community

The 10 Rs of Sustainability

Sustainability isn't just about recycling.
It's a mindset shift.



After diverting waste to either be composted or recycled, the only trash left to be sent to the landfill could fit in this small box at the end of LRNow's 2024 Oyster Roast.



Renting glassware and using recyclable bottles and cans for beverages helps reduce waste.

Zero Waste Events

All LRNow events are Zero Waste Events from committee meetings to our Oyster Roast with 450 guests. We have been committed to that goal for many years, and it is easier than you may think. Reusable, recyclable, and compostable items are readily available for any size event. We are happy to work with your group to plan a Zero Waste Event.





Supporting Good Public Policy

LRNow works with our elected officials and community leaders to advocate for good environmental policy at the local, state, and federal levels. We work with multiple partner organizations to educate and raise awareness about environmental issues that impact Virginia Beach waterways, natural areas, and your lives.

LRNow staff members are representing you, our members, on all the following committees, boards and commissions:

Albemarle – Pamlico Citizen Advisory Committee
Albemarle-Pamlico Leadership Council
Beaches and Waterways Commission
Chesapeake Oyster Alliance
Friends of Live Oaks
HRCF Environmental Affinity Group
HRPDC Green Committee
Interagency Oyster Restoration Committee
Norfolk Environmental Commission
Southeast Wind Coalition
Southern Rivers Roundtable
South Hampton Roads Museum Forum
Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) Board of Directors
VCN Water Workgroup
VCN Energy Workgroup
VCN Land Use and Transportation Workgroup
VCN Wind Working Group
VCN Plastics Working Group
Virginia Beach Green Ribbon Committee
Virginia Beach Clean Community Committee
Virginia Beach Open Space Committee
Virginia Beach Vision Board
Virginia Beach Wetlands Board
Winter Wildlife Festival Planning Committee

Educate and Engage the Community



“5 Cents”



Scan to watch the video.

A jingle in support of the proposed 5 cent fee for single-use plastic bags in Virginia Beach

By Josephine Doucette, Brooke McCallister, and Piper Rogers

2025-26 LRNow Interns from the Virginia Beach City Public Schools Environmental Studies Program.

They litter every part of the bay, They don't just magically float away.
Plastic bag pollution isn't free.
Protect the planet, Pay a small fee.

Five cents, five cents Is all it takes.
A better bay Is what it makes.

Pollution's impact may be drastic, But we can fight this with a lack of plastic.

Next time you walk through the store, think about the Earth just a little more.

Five cents, five cents is worth the cost, so the beauty of our beach isn't lost.

Our plants and wildlife will give you thanks, when you keep the bags off the riverbanks.

Help LRNow fight the cause:
Plastic bags put on pause.

Five cents, five cents, we can't ignore.
Bring your reusable bag to the store.



Pearl Faith Communities

Faith communities around the world recognize a shared responsibility to care for the Earth as a sacred gift entrusted to humanity. We are committed to working with them through education, advocacy, and adoption of sustainable strategies to be examples for responsible environmental practices that will restore and protect our waterways and natural areas as well help prepare us for the challenges of increased flooding. By working together across traditions, faith communities inspire hope and collective action to build a healthier, more sustainable world.

In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

- Currently has 24 Pearl Faith communities

5 completed landscape projects at these communities.



Volunteers

Our amazing volunteers are the energy that powers all our work. Whether it is helping us sort and bundle reusable bags for distribution to food banks or cleaning up debris in our waterways and natural areas, or planting trees, educating the community, building living shorelines, or all the other ways our volunteers help, they are making a difference and supporting our work. We could not do this work without them.

In 2024 and 2025, LRNow:

- Had 3,294 volunteers who logged a total of 10,724 hours
- Did 200 cleanups manned by volunteers
- Had 37 dedicated volunteers who were regularly testing water quality at 38 sites around Virginia Beach
- Had 29 volunteers are collecting both spat (baby oysters) and oyster data for us through our Spat Catcher program

Thank You
to Our Volunteers We
Appreciate
You!

By the Numbers

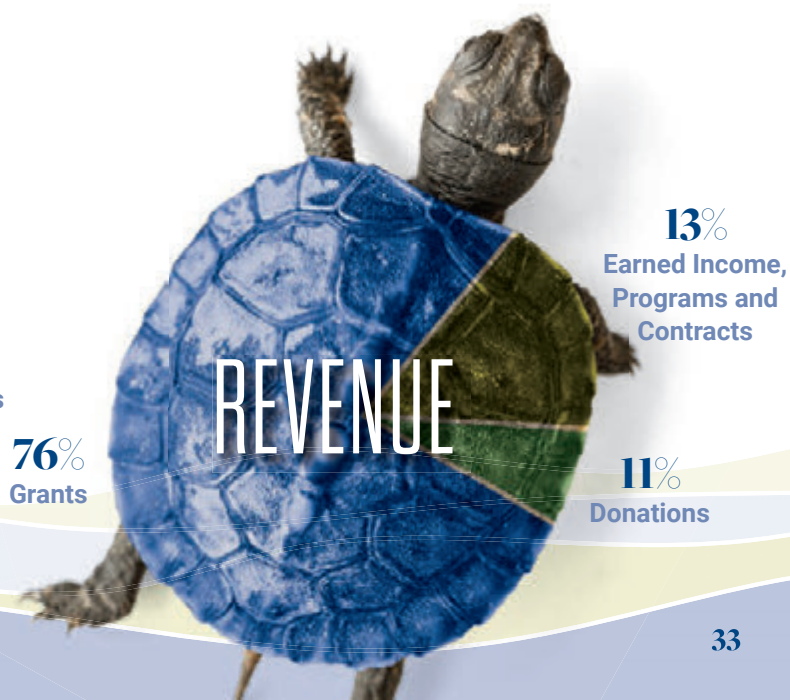
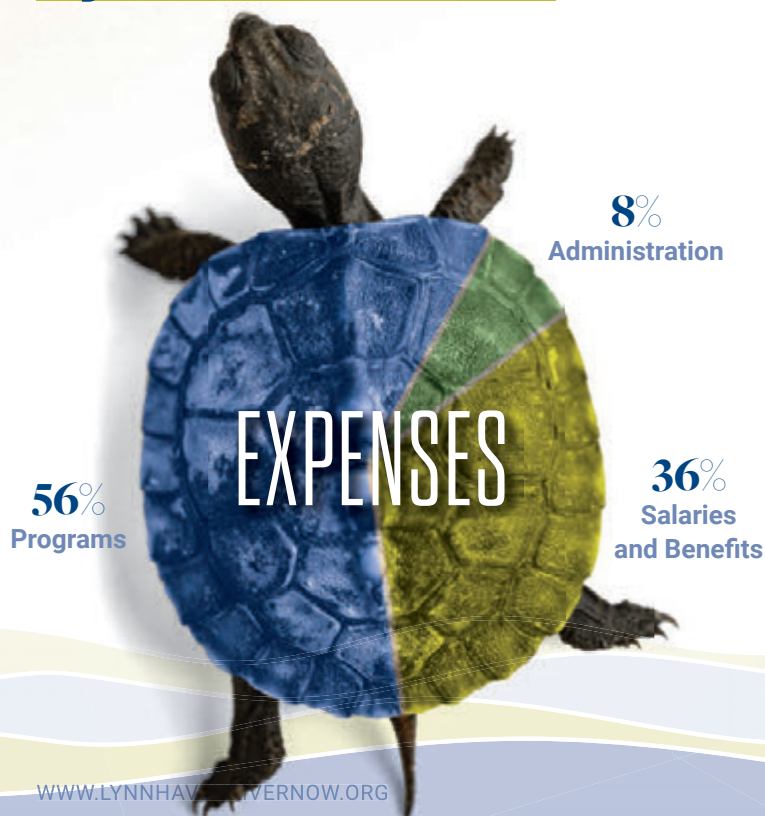


PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



Monica Ramanathan

Title: *My Breakfast is Next!* / Location: Monkey Island

Category: 2024 Overall Winner

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Title: *Live Oaks* / Location: First Landing State Park
Category: Conservation and Sustainability

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Duane Stanfield

Title: *Fisherman* / Location: Stumpy Lake
Category: Humans and the Environment

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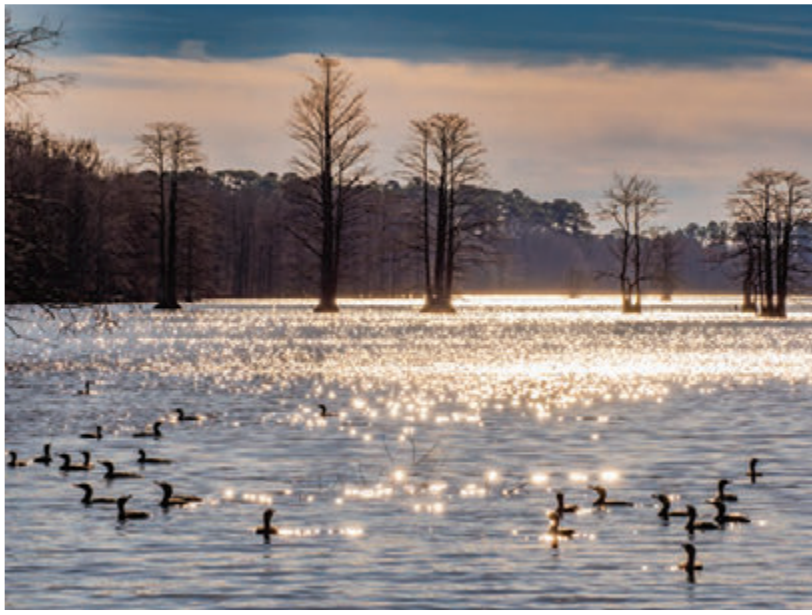
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Alanton Garden Club
Alfred McCall
Ambrose Hudgens
Backbaybirds Driftwood
Barbara LaBelle Giving
Fund
Becky Hubiak
Betty Howes
Bill & Jeanne Evans Cox



Sadie Mixer

Title: *Sunset* / Location: Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Category: Humans and the Environment



Duane Stanfield

Title: *Stumpy Sparkle* | Location: Stumpy Lake
Category: Landscapes

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Bowerbird Energy
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Camm Boyd
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Catherine Fowler
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Christopher & Jillian				Joash Schulman



Susan O'Connell

Title: *Grey Fox Pair* / Location: Trantwood Lake
Category: Wildlife - Others



Susan O'Connell

Title: *Umbrella Tricolor Heron* | Location: Pleasure House Point

Category: Wildlife - Birds



Sadie Mixer

Title: *Taking Flight* | Location: Pleasure House Point

Category: Wildlife - Birds

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John Wass
Jon Johnson
Jonathan Jenkins
Jordan Sanderlin
Jordan Schmitt
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Josh Ballou
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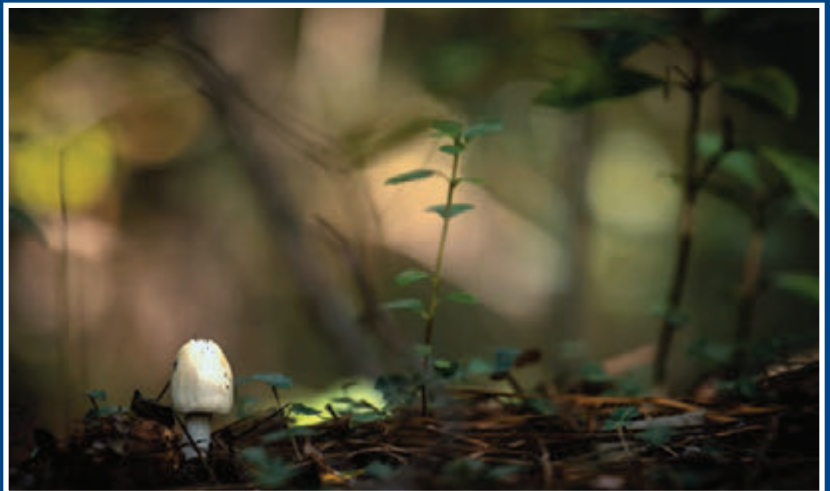
Roy & Anne Maurer
 Ruby Pritchett
 Ruth & Richard Crone
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 Samantha Lyons
 Sandy Martin
 Sara Atherholt

Sara Cummings
 Sarah Williams
 Satoko Moore
 Scott Ainsworth
 Scott Graham
 Semiramy Mendoza
 Shannon & Ronnie Leonard
 Shelby Culver
 Sheri Kattan



C. Denise Maples

Title: *Woodpile Skink* / Location: Virginia Beach
 Category: Wildlife - Others



Sylvia Williams

Title: *Small Landscape* / Location: First Landing State Park
 Category: Landscapes



Bill Niven

Title: *Native Plants* / Location: Virginia Beach
Category: Conservation



Steve Daniel

Title: *Sharing the Space* / Location: Virginia Beach
Category: Humans and the Environment

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Stephanie Swider	Tiffany Gilbert
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Calvin and Constance Jones
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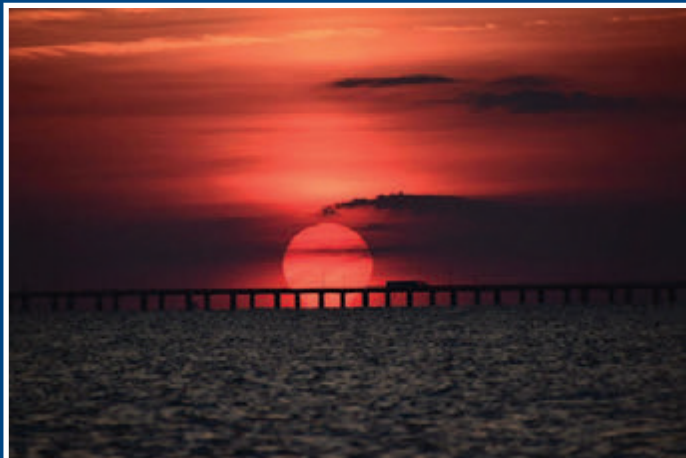
The Adventure Park at Virginia Aquarium
The Atlantic On Pacific
The Beach Bully BBQ Restaurant
The Ludford Family
Thomas Kane
VB Tiki Tours
Virginia Stage Company
Runnymede Corp.
Beach Bully BBQ

Restaurant
Ludford Brothers Oyster Company



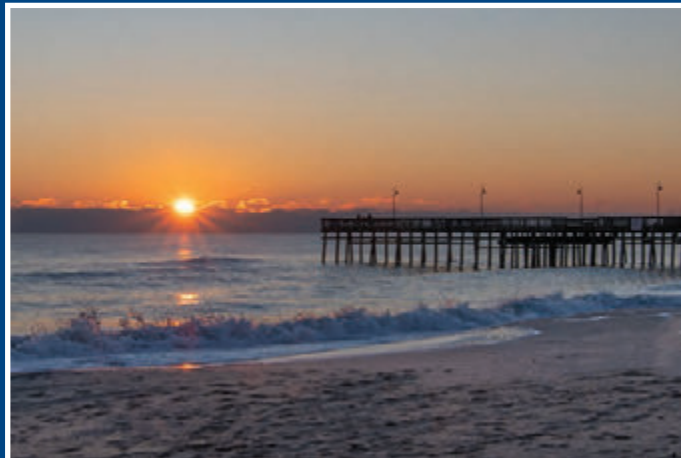
Tim Erskine

Title: *Stumpy Lake Mirror* / Location: Stumpy Lake
Category: Wildlife



Mackay Kier

Title: *Sunset Delivery* / Location: Chesapeake Bay
Category: Landscapes



Tim Erskine

Title: *Little Island Sunrise* / Location: Little Island Park
Category: Landscape

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