



# CITIZENS FOR A BETTER EASTERN SHORE *SHORELINE*<sup>TM</sup>

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Culture on the Eastern Shore of Virginia*

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## Help Wanted – EVERYWHERE ... ... Where Are All the Workers?

By Mary Miller

Just a few years ago, the phrase heard most often around here was, “We need jobs!!!!” Now the jobs are here, and “We need workers!!!” The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), in its April newsletter,<sup>1</sup> reports that there is 1 unemployed worker for every 2 job openings in the State. By comparison, in January 2010, during the Great Recession, there were 4.4 job seekers for every job opening.

From the Chesapeake Bay Bridge-Tunnel to the Maryland line, job offers abound. Jobs are available in education, public safety, hospitality, health care, municipal and institutional facilities, recreation, vehicle and appliance repair, landscaping, management, production, administration, construction, retail, and professional services. Pages of jobs are listed in the local papers, many of them still advertised week after week. Jobs with specific skills, jobs with few skills, jobs with sign-on bonuses, with extended benefit packages – apprenticeships are also available, some with paid job training. Many businesses display what appear to be permanent “Help Wanted” signs.

There are so many jobs available now on the Shore that employers report that workers accept jobs, work a few weeks, then for one reason or another, decide to move on to something different. Some businesses have had to reduce days or hours to give their hard-working staffs some rest – or often, because they are too short-staffed to operate.



### Unemployment Rates

The VEC in April reported the unemployment rate in both counties as 4.4%, based on the number of unemployment insurance claimants – 61 claimants in Northampton and 102 in Accomack. Claimants include workers who received wages reported on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form W-2. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS),<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, also counts self-employed persons who report their incomes on their IRS Form 1040 (instead of a Form W-2), to determine each county’s unemployment rates. BLS reports March unemployment for both counties at 3.8%.<sup>2</sup> Many economists consider 4% “full employment” – often because unemployed job seekers’ skills don’t match the skill-set requirements of available jobs.

And as in most rural areas, the Shore also has a cohort of workers that are situationally employed, often day workers, in unrecorded circumstances. All told, there appear to be very few workers available to fill the scores of jobs on offer.

### Where Have All the Workers Gone?

A recent list of the counties with the oldest populations in the state<sup>3</sup> showed that most were rural – either in the western-mountain region, where populations are declining, or in the counties around the Bay, where residents are aging in place, and newcomers are generally retirees. Accomack and Northampton counties are high on the list. In both counties, about 25% of residents are over 65 years old, and less than 20% of the population is under 18. These numbers are not expected to improve over the next 2 decades – state demographic projections indicate there will be fewer young people and more elderly and retired people living on the Shore.

In a report<sup>4</sup> to the General Assembly, Hamilton Lombard,<sup>5</sup> of the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia, wrote:  
*See Help Wanted, Cont’d on p. 2*

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**Help Wanted, Cont'd from p. 1**

sity of Virginia, shows another major change. Virginia as a whole had more people moving to other states than into the state, for the first time since World War II. Virginia has been losing residents through out-migration since 2013 – more people leaving the state than moving in. However, the net out-migration was so large, led by Northern Virginia and Hampton Roads, that it outnumbered births over deaths – meaning that “Virginia would have lost total population if it weren’t for international migration.” The current Governor has devoted much of his governorship to warning about Virginia’s decade of net out-migration. Both Accomack and Northampton counties fall into the category of losing population due to more deaths than births in the general population – but the loss would have been even greater if there hadn’t been an inflow of retirees to both counties. “The free market seems to be saying that these are desirable places to live – otherwise they wouldn’t be seeing net in-migration – but that desirability is masked by an aging population and high death rates.”

Out-migration increased during the pandemic, as employees and self-employed persons who worked from home sought other places to live – places free from high-traffic commuting and high living costs. One of the major reasons


for the out-migration is that “over the past couple of decades, home prices in most of Virginia rose faster than in the rest of the U.S. By 2019, the

**The Virginia Employment Commission reports that there is 1 unemployed worker for every 2 job openings in the State.**

median home price in Virginia was slightly higher than Connecticut’s median home price, and 50 percent higher than in North Carolina.”

**Conclusion**

As Shore economies continue to grow, through tourism, space facilities,

second homes, vacation rentals, incoming retirees, health care, and hospitality, the need for workers will continue to remain high. And as the populations of both counties continue to age as projected, there will be fewer residents to provide that workforce. 

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/node/17306>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/VANORTIURN>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wric.com/news/virginia-news/list-the-30-counties-with-the-most-seniors-in-virginia/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://demographics.coopercenter.org/reports>

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton Lombard is the Estimates Program Manager for the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

## Juneteenth – A Short Primer

By Sarah Morgan

The end of slavery in the United States was a gradual process, starting with enslaved people gaining their freedom either by manumission, whereby an owner signed a deed that went into effect immediately, or by a deed of emancipation, which became legal upon the owner’s death. Some enslaved people fled to areas that didn’t have (or enforce) laws that would cause them to be returned, such as in some northern states and most of the western U.S.

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. This act officially freed slaves in Texas and all the rebellious southern areas that had seceded from the Union, except areas under Northern control, including Accomack and Northampton counties. On “Freedom’s Eve,” or the eve of January 1, 1863, the first Watch Night church services took place, marking a vigil for the anticipated law.

It was generally up to Union troops to enforce the law. In Texas, where the incidence of slavery had increased substantially prior to and during the Civil War, there were few Union troops even as the war neared its end. So especially in Texas, slavery continued mostly unabated until June 19, 1865, when 2,000 Union troops, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston Bay. Granger issued an order freeing the 250,000 enslaved people in Texas, and it is to commemorate this action that Juneteenth is celebrated.

The Emancipation Proclamation did not end all slavery, only that in Confederate states. In the Union border states of Delaware and Kentucky, slavery was abolished only when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified on December 6, 1865. And slaves held by Choctaw Indians, who had sided with the Confederacy, were only freed upon the signing of the 1866 Reconstruction Treaty, a new agreement required by the U.S. government to reestablish their relationship.

After 1865, Juneteenth celebrations began to spread throughout the country, and as of 1979, every state and the District of Columbia had acknowledged Juneteenth as some sort of holiday. In 2021, President Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law, formally declaring June 19th a Federal holiday.

Sources:

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/historical-legacy-juneteenth>  
<https://www.nytimes.com/article/juneteenth-day-celebration.html>

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# Maximizing Benefits of Conservation Easements for Waterfront Properties in Virginia

By Jim Lang, Waterfront Law Attorney, Pender & Coward

In 2019 the Chickahominy Indian Tribe acquired a permanent home for its people by purchasing a 105-acre site along the James River, in Charles City County, Virginia. The Tribe made the purchase with a \$3.18M grant from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation.

This land now provides a location to showcase the culture and traditions of the Tribe, and the land is permanently protected from development by a conservation easement held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. In addition, this conservation easement also protects scenic resources, Chesapeake Bay water quality, and wildlife diversity.

## What Is a Conservation Easement?

Conservation easements are available for use at waterfront and inland properties in Virginia.

*A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement with a nonprofit land trust or government agency that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property, while retaining private ownership of the land.*

It is a permanent legal agreement, and it applies even when the property changes ownership. One reason landowners donate a conservation easement is to preserve their land in its natural state, while maintaining ownership and still allowing their family, tribe, or other organization to live and work on the land. There is, in addition, a strong economic reason that motivates a landowner in Virginia to agree to impose a conservation easement on the land: the landowner who donates the easement may qualify to receive certain valuable tax benefits.

## State Income Tax Benefits Provided by Conservation Easements in Virginia

In 1999, the legislature created Virginia's Land Preservation Tax Credit program. Its purpose is to encourage preservation and sustainability of Virginia's natural resources, wildlife, open spaces, and forest resources. It provides an income tax credit, in the amount of 40% of the fair market value of the interest in land represented by the conservation easement, this value to be established by a "qualified appraiser."

No person or entity may hold the easement, other than the Commonwealth of Virginia or a qualified private nonprofit organization, typically a land trust (of which there are 28 at the present time in Virginia, including Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust, with Virginia's United Land Trusts operating as an "umbrella" organization for all of the land trusts in Virginia). Virginia taxpayers may use up to \$50,000 of the tax credit each year, to reduce their Virginia state income tax obligation, and may carry the tax credit forward for up to 10 years after the year of donation.

Unused credits may be sold. If the holder of the credit dies, the credit transfers to his or her heirs.

## Federal Income Tax Benefits Provided by Conservation Easements in Virginia

An important difference between the federal and Virginia tax benefits is that the federal tax code offers a tax *deduction* for the value of the conservation easement, as established by a qualified appraisal, whereas the state benefit is a tax *credit*. Another important difference is that the federal deduction may be reduced by the amount of the income tax credit a taxpayer obtained under Virginia law.

## Other Tax Benefits Provided by Conservation Easements

The conservation easement may qualify for a benefit under the federal estate tax law (Virginia has no estate tax).



## Rail Trail Progressing

ShoreLine Staff



Construction of the Eastern Shore Rail Trail (ESRT) can seem painfully slow at times, but there are a lot of moving parts! In the past few months, all the salvage work on the tracks has been completed, and road crossings, gates, and other signs have been updated. The Eastern Shore Rail Trail Foundation has been recognized as the official sponsor, which took most of a year to achieve.

A recent ESRT newsletter provided information on the trail's progress in terms of funding timelines, public awareness efforts, and specific project developments. To read the newsletter, go to [https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Eastern-Shore-of-Virginia-Rail-Trail-Newsletter.html?soid=1126154670421&aid=VTRRhr5uv\\_w](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Eastern-Shore-of-Virginia-Rail-Trail-Newsletter.html?soid=1126154670421&aid=VTRRhr5uv_w). On the same page is a sign-up link for future updates.

According to the newsletter, the first segment of the trail, 2.3 miles in Cape Charles, received \$2.5 million in federal funding for a project that includes engineering, survey, and design, in addition to construction and modifications to existing roads. The timeline for this project has not yet been disclosed.

Several funding decisions will be made public in June. The outcome of 4 SMART SCALE applications submitted by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-NPDC) should be announced, as well as news on a Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity application also submitted by the A-NPDC. In addition, a request for funding a 1.5-mile segment through

See **Rail Trail**, Cont'd on p. 7



## Artist Bethany Simpson-Durham Shares Her Process

By Donna Bozza

This year's *Between the Waters Bike Tour* marks our 30th ride. And what better way to recognize this milestone than with vibrant new artwork from Bethany Simpson-Durham. For 7 years, Bethany's paintings have graced CBES bike tour apparel, T-shirts, and promotional materials, and as a painting raffle, has provided much-needed funds to support our Shore-wide mission.

She constantly amazes us with her talents and generosity. This year is no different with her whimsical take on cycling the seaside in Willis Wharf.

Here's Bethany's painting process in her own words:

"I always start with a drawing and then the color of the sky. Then I bring the sky color down to where the water will be. The sky always sets the tone for my landscapes. [Phase 1]

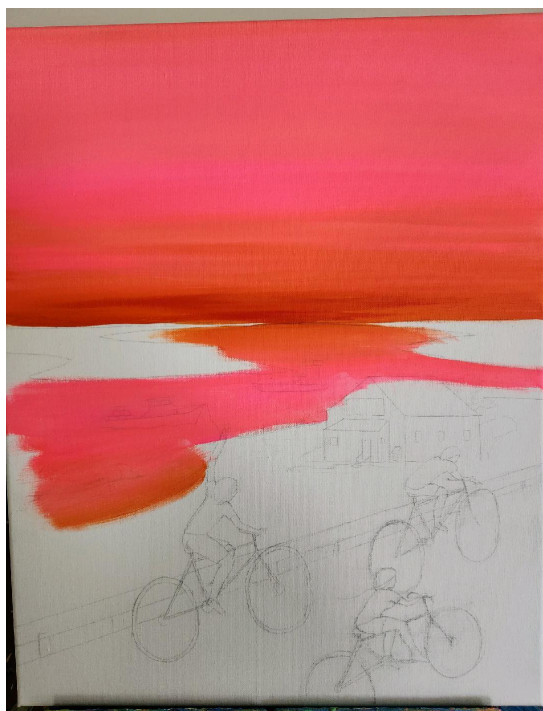
"The blues and purples then get layered on top. The pinks wouldn't show up if I were to do it the other way around. [Phase 2]

"Next is the most fun part – filling everything in with as much color as I can cram. The vivid greens separate land from water, I then let the imagination play a bit once I'm away from the "rules" (my pencil lines). Adding little fun details like the geese. Lastly, the outlines. The black ones help to define and separate, and then the white acts as a highlight, and helps things to jump forward at you, pulling you into the painting, taking you along on the adventure!"

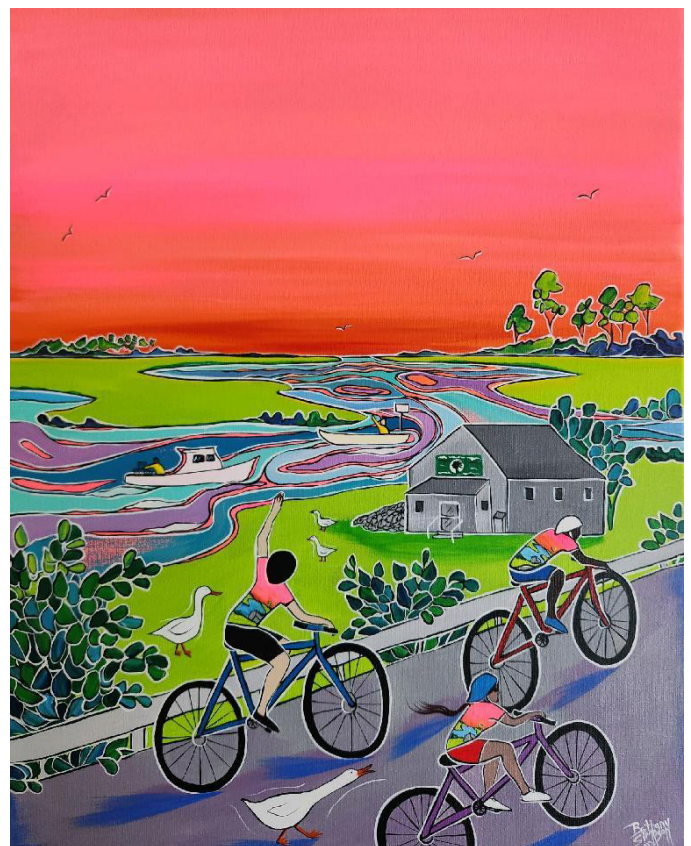
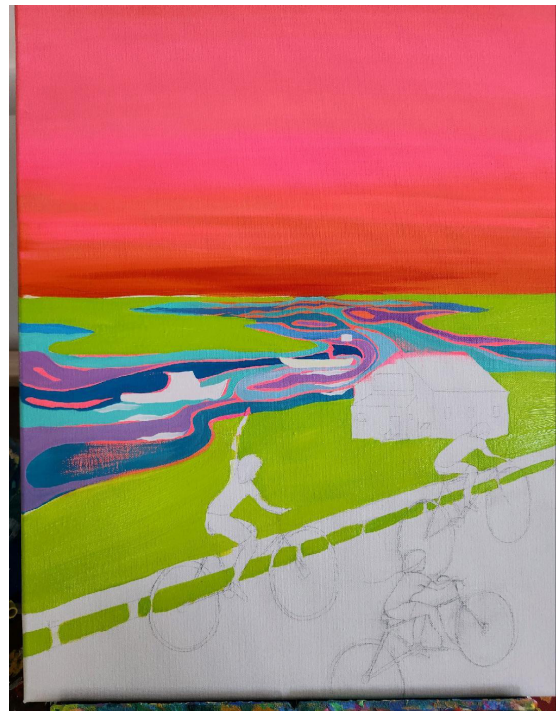


CBES would like to congratulate Bethany and Andrew Durham on their recent nuptials.

### Phase 1



### Phase 2



### TAKE THIS PAINTING HOME!

Raffle to Win Tickets can be found online at [www.cbes.org](http://www.cbes.org).



# Volunteer Fun at “Meet Matt”

By Donna Bozza

A friendly vibe filled the Exmore Social Hall on a recent Saturday afternoon, as *CBES Between the Waters Bike Tour* volunteers mingled and enjoyed camaraderie and delicious hors d’oeuvres.

A crowd of 44 gathered at MEET MATT, a gathering geared toward introducing CBES volunteers to new Bike Tour Coordinator Matt Pienkowski. It was also a fun opportunity for those who may be interested in joining the ranks of volunteers to ensure the success of this year’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Bike Tour. The 2023 ride starts and finishes in Exmore on October 28.

The event was hosted by Exmore Social Hall owners Matt Rohdie and Jen Downey. CBES thanks them for their catering generosity as well as sharing their event space, a clever adaptive reuse of a 1950’s bank. Check them out in centrally located downtown Exmore, or online at <https://www.exmoresocialhall.com/>.

“It was wonderful for me to have the opportunity to meet and hear from our amazing volunteers,” said Matt. “I am excited for the opportunity to work with this great group as we put on an excellent event in October!”

## Join CBES Volunteer Team!

The long-term strength of a grassroots organization is largely dependent on its volunteers. Now in its 36th year, CBES is no exception. Bike Tour tasks range from helping at rest stops and lunch to registration and pre-event-day setups. There’s more volunteer fun to be had at the 6 PM post-tour Oyster Roast in the Eastville area.

For specific information on volunteering for either Bike Tour or Oyster Roast duties, please contact Matt at [cbesbiketours@gmail.com](mailto:cbesbiketours@gmail.com), or phone/text 757-607-7659.

Photos by Cecil Watts, Watts Photography



*New Bike Tour Coordinator Matt Pienkowski welcomes the crowd of 44 current and future bike tour volunteers, along with CBES board members.*



*John Baird, with mom Cora Ann Baird, was the youngest volunteer attendee.*



*An innovative, new event space, the Exmore Social Hall, hosted CBES volunteers with delicious food and drink, and enthusiastic hospitality.*





## RECYCLING CORNER

By Sue Mastyl

### Chesapeake Region Report Explores Plastic Producer Responsibility

A recent report from the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Chesapeake Legal Alliance explores the possibility that one of the Bay states could be next in the growing list of states requiring plastics manufacturers to fund or participate in recycling their products, a concept called “extended producer responsibility” (EPR). The idea is to shift the burden for recycling or disposing of the materials back to the manufacturers, which may also encourage them “to introduce fewer [plastic] products and more recyclable materials into the market to begin with,” the report notes.

The United States generates more than 35 million pounds of plastic waste each year, only 10% of which is recycled.

Maine, Oregon, Colorado, and California have passed EPR laws over the past 2 years; nearly 20 states, including Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, have introduced similar legislation. The laws vary across states, with the most successful catering to the specific industries in each state that will be impacted, as well as the existing recycling infrastructure and economics.

Kate Bailey, Chief Policy Officer for the Association of Plastic Recyclers, described these bills as a “fundamental shift around how we think about recycling.” She added, “the goal of recycling isn’t to keep packaging out of landfills, [but] to create a circular economy where companies make new products from our old stuff.”

Recent surveys have found plastic pollution in every waterway, and research has just begun to assess the impacts to wildlife and their habitats. “The Chesapeake may be even more vulnerable to plastics pollution than many other watersheds,” noted Virginia Del. David Bulova (D-Fairfax), a member of the Chesapeake Bay Commission. Because of the Bay’s unique shape and flow, it likely serves as a “sink” for plastic pollution in the region. A 2021 study estimated that 94% of the plastics that enter the Bay remain in the watershed.

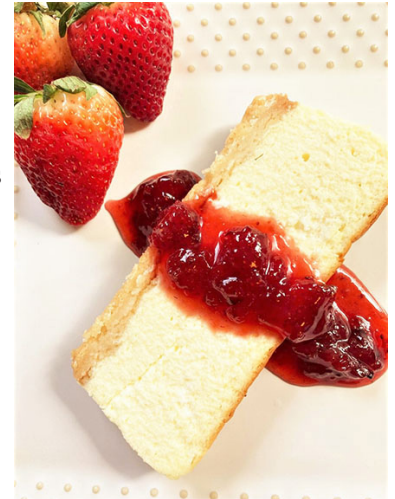
Virginia has established a Plastic Waste Prevention Advisory Council, which will study and advise the Governor on plastic waste reduction policies.

**“The Chesapeake may be even more vulnerable to plastics pollution than many other watersheds.”**

**– Virginia Del. David Bulova**

## Cheesecake With Fresh Strawberry Sauce

Strawberry shortcake for dinner – a once-a-year treat. The 2 rows of strawberries had filled jars and jars of strawberry jam, sent baskets of berries to friends and neighbors, and made a big hit with strawberry ice cream at the Fourth of July picnic. As the short season ended, the strawberry shortcake dinner was a happy tradition. Just 1 pint of berries can make a wonderfully decadent topping for this small-size almond cheesecake, with its simple shortbread crust. Have all cheesecake ingredients at room temperature.



### Crust:

- ½ cup flour
- ¼ cup sugar
- 3 tbsp melted butter

Combine all ingredients until mixture looks like damp sand. Butter a 9" x 5" loaf pan and line with parchment, with paper overhang on 9" sides. Press crust into bottom of pan, then bake at 350° for 15 minutes. Let cool completely.

### Cheesecake:

- 1½ (8 oz.) pkgs cream cheese
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 tsp almond extract

With hand mixer, mix cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Beat in eggs and extract until thoroughly mixed. Pour into pan and bake at 350° until the top is set and cake barely jiggles in center, about 40 minutes. Cool in pan for 2 hours.

### Sauce:

- 1 pint strawberries
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 tsp orange liqueur

Hull berries, cut into pieces, combine with sugar in small saucepan. Bring to high simmer and cook, stirring frequently, until sauce thickens. Mash gently. Remove from heat and add liqueur. Use immersion blender for a few seconds for a smoother sauce if desired.

Mary Miller • *The Kitchen Hive*

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## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Juneteenth Celebration and Unity Parade

### Set for June 17 in Exmore

Activities for Northampton County's Annual Juneteenth Celebration are set to kick off in Exmore on Saturday, June 17, 2023, with an action-packed, fun, and informative agenda centered on cultural pride, community, and ideas for healthier living.

Activities in the Exmore Town Park begin at 10 AM with a wide array of health exhibits and free medical screenings. At noon, the gala Unity Parade begins proceeding down Main Street to the Town Park. This year's Grand Marshall is Pastor Felton T. Sessoms, a native of Nassawadox, VA, and a dedicated community leader with a history of activism spanning more than 60 years.


For those interested in participating in the parade, marchers and vehicles will assemble in the parking area of the Fresh Market Plaza, located on Route 13 (Lankford Highway) in Exmore, before advancing down Main Street to join the music, food vendors, games, and other activities happening in the park.

Headlining the live entertainment this year is the Bridge Band RVA, known for their classic R & B and for "Connecting People with People."

Each year, local and state officials, area health professionals, representatives from the Northampton County Sheriff's Office, and other dignitaries take part in this county-wide observance. Juneteenth, short for June 19<sup>th</sup>, is now a state and federal holiday in recognition of its importance to the principles of freedom and liberty this country was founded on.

The Annual ESVA Juneteenth Celebration for Northampton County, the longest-running Juneteenth on the ESVA, is organized by the Juneteenth Coalition, led by Jane Cabarrus. "This is a day for communities to celebrate the things that make us stronger and more resilient, including education, our freedoms, and our rich diversity," said Ms. Cabarrus. "The history and accomplishments of African Americans here on the Eastern Shore goes back 400 years and is woven into the fabric of Northampton County. There is so much strength in this proud legacy."

This is a family-oriented celebration of diversity and inclusion, free to attend and open to everyone. There's ample free parking at the Exmore Town Park. The grounds are accessible to wheelchairs and strollers. A playground for children is adjacent to the festival area.

To learn more about the Unity Parade and Celebration, contact Janice Langley at [jellie823@gmail.com](mailto:jellie823@gmail.com), 757-710-0330. For general information, contact Subrina Owens Parker, [northamptonnaacp7099@gmail.com](mailto:northamptonnaacp7099@gmail.com), 757-442-2139, or Jane Cabarrus, [janecabarrus@aol.com](mailto:janecabarrus@aol.com). 

## Keeping Track

### Groundwater Committee Issues Statement of Principle

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee recently issued a Statement of Principle (<https://www.esvaplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Statement-of-Principle-8.16.2022.pdf>), supporting the preferential use of the surficial (Columbia) aquifer.

According to the statement, the Committee "has over the past 20 years promoted use of the surficial aquifer as one of a number of sustainable approaches to preserving the resource-limited Yorktown-Eastover aquifer. The surficial aquifer has proven to be suitable for potable and non-potable use over much of the Shore. To date, the potable uses are principally [for] domestic wells, and non-potable uses are principally for agricultural irrigation and commercial/industrial cooling water on the Shore."

The statement outlines several ways to promote the use of the surficial aquifer, including adding special conditions to groundwater withdrawal permits to assess the feasibility of using the surficial aquifer; assessing the use of the surficial aquifer before a draft permit is developed, or before any new or replacement permitted wells are constructed; and assessing the transition from the Yorktown-Eastover aquifer to the surficial aquifer. The statement also "recognizes the importance of maintaining close communication with the Department of Environmental Quality on issues related to the groundwater resource on the Eastern Shore."

Additional information about the Committee's work can be found at <https://www.esvaplan.org/planesva/ground-water-management/eastern-shore-of-virginia-ground-water-committee/>.




### Rail Trail, *Cont'd from p. 3*

Parksley is now being considered by the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee.

People eager to use the ESRT should be aware that none of the corridor is open to the public, as it is an active construction zone. Infrastructure development by the Hampton Roads Sanitation District Commission, plus improvements to culverts, periodic herbicide spraying, and other construction activities along the future trail will continue for some time.

The Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail in the lower part of Northampton County is open from Capeville to the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. It is convenient to Kiptopeke State Park (be careful crossing Route 13); the Refuge has some additional roads suitable for biking as well. A proposed trail from Capeville will link to the ESRT at the Cape Charles light.

As the weather warms and the days lengthen, bikers will proliferate – please share the road! 



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