In 2016, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) announced a temporary anchorage would be established in the Bay near Cape Charles. In 2018, 2 meetings were held in Cape Charles to accept comment on the revised anchorage proposal. The Captain of the Port, Coast Guard Sector Virginia, as well as staff from the Fifth Coast Guard District, were present to answer questions and solicit public comment for the rulemaking docket.

Many Concerns Voiced at Public Meetings

After a total of 120 mostly opposing responses, citing everything from a confusing link for public input, to incomplete process, to environmental concerns, to lack of data on aquaculture impacts, many assumed there would be further analysis of the site’s impacts. But on the same page with the public comments, the official conclusion reads: “Impacts and Effects: None.” Many of the USCG’s responses indicated that navigation rules currently allow anchorage of ships in the Bay anyway.

It was clear from the start to several at the meetings that the anchorage was not going to be reconsidered – that public input was part of a checklist on the way to a permanent anchorage. That conclusion was reinforced as the officials explained that the long narrow area 3 miles off Cape Charles, with its beaches, a thriving aquaculture industry, campgrounds, and a growing tourism locale, was the only possible site in the entire region for the anchorage. The official response: “There are no extraordinary circumstances present that may cause significant environmental impacts.” However, officials were very clear that the needs of the Port for off-site anchorage, with its $5.4 trillion in commerce, was the driving force behind the action. “The intended effect is to protect the environment, facilitate safe navigation of maritime commerce and national defense.”

Compiled by Mary Miller

Social Justice

The Community Conversation and Call to Action

Shore communities have joined the nation in calls for wide-ranging changes – in the justice system, the economic system, the education system, and the health care system – in the wake of the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers. Marches, demonstrations, and other gatherings in Chincoteague, Onley, Exmore, and elsewhere, have shown both citizens’ awareness of the issues and the communities’ willingness to gather together in support of changes. Citizens young and old, elected officials, community leaders, clergymen, educators, health care workers, and law enforcement officers, all marched with the community and addressed the assembled crowds.

ShoreLine intends to join the community conversation in an upcoming issue. CBES founders, long-time NAACP leader Janie Cabarrus and the late Suzanne Wescoat, founded an organization committed to inclusion. CBES mission reflects that commitment. As ShoreLine editors prepare for this discussion, we hope to provide our readers, especially our newer members, with some context, some local history, and some constructive information and ideas for moving toward positive change.
Anchorage, cont’d from p. 1

needed in the lower Chesapeake Bay.”

Main Environmental Concerns

The overwhelming number of objections cited environmental impact concerns.

Nine endangered or threatened species were identified in the area – the USCG determined that the anchorage would have no effect, “based on the lack of available baseline data.”

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ) and the Marine Resources Commission filed documents presuming that the USCG would conduct a Coastal Zone Management Area consistency review for establishing the anchorage grounds. The USCG response: “VADEQ formally objected to our negative determination ... and maintained that insufficient information was supplied to determine if the Coast Guard’s action is consistent with the Commonwealth’s Fisheries Management and Subaqueous Land Management enforceable policies. We reviewed these policies and did not find any applicable to the Coast Guard’s action.”

Several responders suggested that the USCG was not meeting National Environmental Policy Act compliance by using a “categorical exclusion” and not providing an environmental impact statement. The response: “The Coast Guard disagrees. ...

Vessels are allowed to discharge treated sewage from Type I and II Marine Sanitation Devices. ... impacts “may be especially problematic in marinas, slow-moving rivers, lakes and other bodies of water with low-flushing rates.”

Regulations establishing or increasing the size of anchorage grounds generally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. We continue to view the categorical exclusion as appropriate and are making no changes to the rule.” The anchorage will allow about 30 vessels, each for a 30-day period.

Sewage Discharge

The Northampton County Board of Supervisors (BoS) entered a Resolution stating that permitted sewage discharge coliform rates were 14 times greater than shellfish growing water quality standards, and requested that the anchorage be moved to the mouth of the Bay, where tidal flushing occurs, that there be a 20-vessel limit, and that a full Environmental Impact Study be provided.

The USCG response: “Given the suite of laws and regulations already in place to address sewage from ships, we are making no changes to address sewage concerns.”

No Discharge Zones

Many comments, including the BoS Resolution, called for the establishment of a No Discharge Zone (NDZ) of sewage into the Bay; these have been established in Maryland waters. The EPA may establish a Zone when requested by a state – but not by the USCG. In 2009, the Virginia General Assembly adopted an NDZ for tidal creeks, but not for the Bay. In 2011, a second Bill was adopted, clarifying that existing NDZs were for tidal creeks only. It appears that no action was taken on the BoS request.

The last entry: “Anchorage Proponents – 5 comments were generally supportive of the anchorage.”

In late May, the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard announced that the anchorage site would be made permanent.

1 portofvirginia.com
2 https://www.regulations.gov/docket-Browser?ppp=25&so=DESC&sbs=commentDueDate&po=100&dct=PS&D=USCG-2015-1118 (includes all quoted comments, except where noted)
3 https://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/vessel-sewage-frequently-asked-questions
5 https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLS/TMDL/NoDischargeZoneDesignations.aspx
A new report from the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), released April 22, summarizes the nitrogen load to the Chesapeake Bay from the poultry industry in all 6 Bay states, from both manure runoff and ammonia emissions.\(^1\) (EIP’s first report, on the impact of increased manure output from the poultry expansion in Accomack County, was covered in the June issue of ShoreLine).

More than 1 billion meat chickens are grown in the region, including 600 million on the Delmarva Peninsula; along with turkeys and egg-laying hens, poultry in the Bay watershed produces about 5.7 billion pounds of manure each year, “which is often over applied to farm fields that are already saturated with nutrients,” leading to runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus and the resultant algal blooms and “dead zones,” the report notes.

The Impact of Ammonia Emissions on Bay Recovery

The report highlights a source of nitrogen pollution to the Bay that “is not even monitored, let alone controlled” – ammonia emissions. The ammonia “breaks down into nitrogen in the environment,” and “can also harm the health of neighbors downwind, triggering coughing, asthma attacks,” and irritation. A 2018 Johns Hopkins study found 66% increased odds for a diagnosis of pneumonia for those living within 2.5 miles of poultry operations in Pennslyvania.\(^2\)

The EIP report used computer modeling data from the Chesapeake Bay Program, for nitrogen from both manure runoff and ammonia emissions, but adjusted the ammonia figures to reflect more realistic estimates. The adjustment included adding turkeys and egg-laying hens to the total for poultry operations, and adjusting for the larger birds, different climates, and different farming practices from those used in the model.

As shown in the table below, the adjusted figures for ammonia reflect an additional 1.4 million pounds a year (13.5% increase) into the Bay. The total of 11.6 million pounds of nitrogen from ammonia emissions, added to the 12.4 million pounds of nitrogen runoff from poultry manure, results in a total of 24 million pounds of nitrogen into the Bay from the poultry industry (out of a total of 119 million pounds of nitrogen from the agricultural sector).

**Recommendations**

The report provides 6 recommendations:

- “EPA should update the ammonia emission estimates it uses … to reflect the most recent available science.”
- “All large new animal feeding operations should be required to install air pollution monitors and report their emissions on an annual basis.”
- “EPA should establish safety thresholds for ammonia … to help protect local communities from excessive levels of ammonia.”
- “States and the EPA should require poultry houses to install effective air pollution control systems, including filters to capture particulate matter.”
- “Poultry companies should pay for the planting of more trees and forested areas around chicken houses, to protect neighbors and … reduce ammonia emissions.”
- “Because the Chesapeake Bay region states are already struggling with the overproduction of manure, lawmakers should impose limits on the approval of new permits for large animal feeding operations, especially in areas

See Impact of Poultry, cont’d on p. 5

**Nitrogen Pollution to the Chesapeake Bay From Poultry Industry (annual pounds, 2018)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Nitrogen from ammonia emissions</th>
<th>Nitrogen from ammonia emissions, adjusted*</th>
<th>Nitrogen runoff from poultry manure</th>
<th>Total nitrogen from poultry entering the Bay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>508,015</td>
<td>752,114</td>
<td>1,483,306</td>
<td>2,235,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td>2,802,139</td>
<td>3,324,251</td>
<td>2,066,499</td>
<td>5,390,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY</td>
<td>77,478</td>
<td>81,433</td>
<td>59,185</td>
<td>140,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>4,017,257</td>
<td>4,258,587</td>
<td>5,757,462</td>
<td>10,016,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>2,139,000</td>
<td>2,473,710</td>
<td>2,322,844</td>
<td>4,796,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WV</td>
<td>702,972</td>
<td>742,929</td>
<td>709,977</td>
<td>1,452,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10,246,861</td>
<td>11,633,024</td>
<td>12,399,273</td>
<td>24,032,297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Numbers are from the Chesapeake Bay Program Bay Model, with the “adjusted” numbers correcting for the likely underestimate in ammonia in the program’s watershed model. Adapted from Pelton et al.\(^1\)
Scientist Bo Lusk is part of a generations-old Eastern Shore family. Since 2007, he has worked at The Nature Conservancy’s Virginia Coast Reserve, a string of 14 barrier islands that run along more than a third of the state’s Atlantic coast. Accessible only by boat, the 40,000-acre reserve is celebrating its 50th anniversary and its many restoration efforts.

What makes the barrier islands in Virginia different from other islands on the East Coast?

I was born in 1975. Only 5 years earlier, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) had made its first land purchase here. The environment I grew up in, and who I am and what I’m doing today, was really shaped by the fact that TNC started its work here in 1970.

It was a time when people were buying up large tracts of land on barrier islands all throughout the East Coast and developing them. Ocean City, Maryland, down to Hilton Head, South Carolina—these are all barrier islands that just got completely built up. And that was what was proposed for a lot of our barrier islands here. I’m growing oysters off the edge of a marsh on Smith Island where the airport was going to be. They were going to fill in that marsh and put a runway on it. It blows my mind. Today, we’re the largest protected stretch of coastline in the U.S. I grew up in a very different place because of what TNC did.

Eelgrass was decimated by disease and a hurricane in the 1930s, and then more than half a century later, somebody noticed a single patch of eelgrass that had returned to one of the bays.

Around the time I graduated from college, 1997, they found that first patch of grass. Today, we’re up somewhere around 9,000 acres.

That expansion came thanks to a lot of hard work by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, plus help from TNC and volunteers, but the eelgrass also really took off on its own, right?

To have zero acres for almost 70 years, and then to suddenly start counting in thousands of acres, is nuts. That grass has been there for a few years now, and as it fills in and fish and animals start to find it, the system starts to adapt to having this whole community of marine life back in it.

Besides providing habitat, what makes sea grass special?

It helps with coastal resilience, because as waves roll across these shallow seagrass meadows, that grass takes a lot of the energy out of them, and it can help to moderate shoreline erosion rates. The grass also captures a lot of suspended sediment. That ends up clearing the water, so you’ve got more light for the plants.

As ocean temperatures are increasing around the planet, that’s accompanied by increasing ocean acidification [caused by rising levels of carbon dioxide]. But as grass is photosynthesizing, it’s absorbing carbon dioxide, and that’s actually changing the pH of the water. It’s sort of like throwing a big Tums in these bays to help out our shellfish.

Can sea grass help address climate change?

Sea grasses sequester carbon, and they do it at a really high rate. A sea grass meadow in the right conditions can sequester more carbon per acre than forests on land. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science, University of Virginia, and TNC are working together with the state now to try to start the world’s first sea grass-based carbon credit project.

Let’s talk about oysters. Ecologically, and culturally, they’re important. But you’re also showing that oysters can do important work to protect both the bigger barrier island ecosystems and the human communities that are built there.

Figuring out how to use nature-based solutions to increase our coastal resilience has become really important for TNC. We can now design oyster reefs in a way that they help to moderate shoreline erosion.

We are blessed here on the Eastern Shore to have these big, wide, long salt marshes. And those salt marshes are really the key to protecting our coastal communities in big storm events. So instead of building an offshore breakwater, I can build an oyster reef and, right off the bat, have this surface that’s taking the punch out of waves before they hit that marsh behind it.

What’s the biggest challenge for the future? [What questions do you ask yourself?]

This system is really dynamic. When I’d go out to the islands as a kid in the summer, one of the things I was
Goldie Hawn’s Tomato Sandwich

Years ago, Goldie Hawn described her favorite tomato sandwich to a pretty uptight, very neat-looking talk show host. She was graphic and hilarious. This is one to be made and eaten privately – preferably over the kitchen sink. And right now is the time to make this treat – the tomatoes won’t be this ripe and delicious ‘til next summer.

- Two slices of white bread
- A very ripe tomato, warm from the garden, sliced thick
- Salt and pepper
- A lot of mayonnaise

Spread mayonnaise thickly on BOTH slices of bread. Add a layer of sliced tomato. Season with salt and pepper. Put bread slices together and slice in half, if you can. Lean over the sink and eat the whole sandwich. Wash up and rinse the sink.


Island Guy, cont’d from p. 4

most excited to do was see how an island had changed since I was there the previous week. They change that fast. They’re moving. And that’s what they’re supposed to do: Part of what a barrier island does is it migrates.

The Conservancy has historically managed these islands hands-off. This is a natural barrier island system, and the healthiest thing for the whole system is to let these islands move the way they want to move. But it looks like the increased pace of sea-level rise, and increased frequency of storms, is changing the way that these islands naturally migrate.

How fast can this system adapt to that change? And what, if any, is the right way to step in? The best thing we can do is make sure that all the parts of the system are there. Before, we didn’t have sea grass, we didn’t have oysters. Now, we’ve got them back. What other parts of the system ought to be there, and how can we manage them as loosely as possible, to let them move where they want to move?

ShoreLine Comment. CBES is proud to call Bo one of our own – including being a long-time CBES Board Member.

Impact of Poultry, cont’d from p. 3

that produce more manure than crops can use.”

In reacting to the report, Beth McGee, Director of Science and Agricultural Policy for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, said, “We need to offset these new nitrogen loads or risk falling behind on the Bay’s 2025 cleanup goals.”


**Recycling Corner**

**Keeping Track**

**Successful Start for Displaced Hampton Roads Waterbirds**

As reported in the March 2020 issue of *ShoreLine*, an estimated 25,000 migratory seabirds lost their nesting site on the South Island of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel this spring, due to ongoing construction. In response to a coalition of birding advocates, Governor Northam announced a plan to create new habitat for the returning birds on Rip Raps Island, also known as Fort Wool, as well as on nearby barges.

The parade ground of the Fort was converted to suitable nesting habitat for the seabirds – trapping predatory rats; removing trees and shrubs, as well as granite blocks and markers, from the parade ground; adding sand and gravel; and placing decoys and broadcasting audio calls of each species to attract the birds. The plan is also using border collies on the old nesting site on South Island to scare birds away, hopefully in the direction of Rip Raps Island and the barges.

As of mid-May, hundreds of royal terns, common terns, and laughing gulls had returned to the site, including “a robust colony” of royal terns, according to Michael J. Parr, President of the American Bird Conservancy. He added, “Governor Northam made ambitious commitments to ensure that the birds – the region’s largest waterbird colony – would be accommodated. … He has kept those commitments, and … we’re seeing a lasting bird conservation legacy in the making.”

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**What Does the Recycling Symbol Really Mean?**

That symbol on the bottom of a plastic bottle or yogurt tub – 3 arrows chasing each other in a triangle – means it’s recyclable, right? Unfortunately, not always. In fact, except for #1 and #2 plastics, almost never. And some #1 and #2 plastics can only be recycled in a laboratory setting.

That symbol with the numbers is part of the Resin Identification Code (RIC) system, created by the plastics industry in 1988. According to the American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) International, which administers the RIC system, the use of the symbol “on a manufactured plastic article does not imply that the article is recycled or that there are systems in place to effectively process the article for reclamation or re-use.” However, 68% of survey respondents in 2019 thought that any item with this symbol was recyclable.

In reality, only #1 and #2 plastics in bottle or jug form (soda and water bottles, and milk, juice, and different jugs) can be recycled in most places. Plastic cup with a #1 symbol? No. Plastic “clamshell” for blueberries, with a #1 symbol? Not recyclable.

The recycling industry and plastic manufacturers have not been able to agree on a reform to this code. The plastics industry has focused its efforts instead on advertising the benefits of plastics to boost its favorability. In 1993, the plastics industry changed the symbol to a triangle rather than 3 arrows, but this is voluntary for manufacturers, and is too similar to the arrows for consumers to distinguish. Plastics production more than doubled from 1990 to 2010, and is expected to triple between now and 2050. Yet only 9% of all plastic waste ever generated has been recycled.

So what can we do? Here are a couple of action items:

- Resist the temptation to put anything but #1 and #2 bottles and jugs in the recycling bins – other plastics will contaminate the mix, and cost money and time to remove.
- Support policies to reduce the production and use of single-use plastics, and reduce the use of plastics in your own life wherever possible.

Sources:


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**It’s All in the Details**

*Excerpted from an article by David Martin in the Eastern Shore Post, June 19, 2020*

Ever wonder what the significance is of the little stickers found on some fruits and vegetables available in grocery stores?

Each fruit or vegetable has its own price look-up code (PLU). If the PLU is four digits, the product has been grown with conventional methods, meaning with the use of pesticides. All conventionally grown bananas are 4011. If the PLU has five digits that start with 8, the product has been genetically modified, so a banana with an 84011 sticker has been genetically modified. If that five-digit PLU starts with a 9, the produce has been organically grown. So, 94051 is the PLU for a red, small mango organically grown. Some fans of organic foods remember the codes like this: “Eight I hate. Nine is fine.”
The Eastern Shore has lost a friend that many did not even know it had. At the age of 73, I can say with confidence that Vic and Lila Schmidt were two of the finest people I have ever known. Miss Lila passed away some years ago – Vic a few days ago.

I first met Vic around 1980. He was newly retired and building a house near Cheriton. A native of New Jersey and a graduate of the University of Maine, Vic spent his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He worked on a wide range of assignments and finished his career near the top of the agency’s leadership hierarchy in Washington.

Vic knew the wealthy people who contribute to conservation causes. He had testified before Congress. He knew powerful politicians. But you would never have known it by talking to this quiet man. Vic came to the Shore wanting a quiet life – working his garden, fishing, playing cards with friends, and enjoying long walks with Miss Lila.

I got to know Vic pretty well in 1985 when we both served on the Northampton Board of Equalization (BoE), along with Harold Parks from Exmore. The two of them conspired to make me Chair, but Vic was the real guiding force behind the Board. Vic knew good public process, and he knew how to communicate with sometimes-disgruntled citizens. From the BoE, I went to several other positions that required those skills. I was nowhere near as good as Vic, but he became a friend, confidant, and adviser, and helped keep me on the straight and narrow – most of the time.

Later, Vic became one of the founding members of CBES. In fact, not much the organization did or said in the late 1980s and early 1990s was done without Vic’s advice. In the mid-90s, Vic and another CBES leader, Ted Reynolds, approached me about working for the organization. Frustrated with farming, I took on the job just as Suzanne Wescoat was leaving the organization (to run for the Northampton Board of Supervisors). Vic became an even closer friend and adviser to me. If you needed someone to help get your thoughts in order, to help understand the nuances of a problem, there was no one better than Vic – and I took advantage of his guidance.

Vic Schmidt was a New Jersey native who became a true Eastern Shoreman. He made many quiet contributions to the Shore that few people know about. I will miss him – and so will the Eastern Shore.

Please consider renewing your membership and/or sending a donation now!

Help CBES continue our Mission – and keep ShoreLine going – during this challenging time.

Send to CBES, PO Box 882, Eastville, VA 23347
Join online at www.cbes.org – Thank you!
**Community Calendar**

*NOTE: As of press time, some in-person public meetings in both counties have been cancelled. Some are available to view or join online; for current status, go to the appropriate website or contact by email or phone.*

![Community Calendar Graphic]

**Accomack County**
- **757-787-5700**
- www.co.accomack.va.us

1st Wed: **Board of Zoning Appeals**
- 10 AM, Accomac

2nd Wed: **Planning Commission (PC)**
- 7 PM, Accomac

3rd Tues: **School Board**
- 6:30 PM, Accomac

3rd Wed: **Board of Supervisors (BOS)**
- 5 PM, Accomac

4th Tues: **PC Work Session**
- 7 PM, Accomac

4th Thur: **Wetlands Board**
- 10 AM, Accomac

**CBES and Other Activities**
- 1st Wed: **VIMS Public Seminar**
  - 7:30 PM, Wachapreague
- 3rd Tues: **ES Ground Water Committee**
  - 10 AM, Accomac
- 3rd Tues: **CBES Board Meeting**
  - 7 PM, Eastville or Belle Haven

**Northampton County**
- **757-678-0440**
- www.co.northampton.va.us

1st Tues: **Board of Zoning Appeals**
- 10 AM, Eastville

1st Tues: **Planning Commission (PC)**
- 6 PM, Eastville

2nd Tues: **Board of Supervisors (BOS)**
- 6 PM, Eastville

3rd Wed: **Wetlands Board**
- Meets as needed, Eastville

3rd Wed: **PC Work Session**
- 6 PM, Eastville

4th Tues: **BOS Work Session**
- 5 PM, Eastville

4th Thur: **School Board**
- 6 PM, Machipongo

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**The COVID-19 Memorial Page**


**CBES ANNUAL MEETING**

**JULY 14, 7 PM on ZOOM**

Details on page 5 of this issue.

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**For membership and other CBES information:**

www.cbess.org