ALICE – Finding the Working Poor
By Mary Miller

Poverty – its numbers, its components – has always been part of the Shore’s troubling statistics. A new set of figures now identifies the ALICE population. Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, describes the working poor – working families earning more than the Federal poverty level, but still struggling to afford the basic costs of living. ALICE households add to the painful list of childhood, elderly, single-parent or low-skilled head-of-household poverty statistics in both counties.

Using figures from Federal and State agencies, types of employment available, age, and median household income, community-based household survival budgets were configured for basic living expenses, with no savings included. The United Way-sponsored study issued ALICE figures for each Virginia county* to indicate the percentage of households identified specifically as “working poor.” Numbers Aren’t Enough

Although the poverty rate has almost always been higher for Northampton than Accomack, the new ALICE figures (2016), the working poor component, was not. In spite of more economic development and the large employers in Accomack, including poultry processors and Wallops, Accomack’s ALICE households were 39% of its population, while Northampton’s ALICE component was 34% of households.

Identifying the problem, and its depth, is only the first step. Perhaps these new figures will encourage county policy makers to further analyze the causes of poverty for the working poor, and consider more comprehensive solutions than the idea that more economic development is the only answer.

* https://www.unitedforalice.org/virginia

Bike Trail Expansion
by Sarah Morgan

The existing Southern Tip Bike and Hike Trail, which runs from the ESV A Wildlife Refuge to Capeville, is popular among residents and tourists alike. The paved trail goes along farm fields and wooded areas, and features informational signage, benches, and well-marked road crossings for safety.

According to CBES member and cycling enthusiast George Mapp, the proposed final segments of the Southern Tip Bike and Hike trail between Cape Charles and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge/Tunnel pass along the old railroad near Route 13 and through farm fields, which has aroused opposition from some farmers/landowners as well as VDOT.

One issue is potential exposure to the public by agricultural spraying. Suggestions for mitigating impacts include notifying the county so that the

See Bike Trail, cont’d on p. 5

LEND A HAND – HAVE FUN

CBES Between the Waters Bike Tour OYSTER ROAST

Saturday, October 26, Savage Neck Rd, Eastville
Volunteers needed on Friday/Saturday morning for pick-up and deliveries, & at Event to park cars, serve oysters and food, sell drink tickets, assist clean-up.

Oyster Roast Runs 6-9 PM
Volunteers arrive 5:15 PM
Welcome 200 cyclists in a beautiful old barn, make new friends, enjoy great Shore music. Students Welcome!

Contact Donna at info@cbes.org, 757-678-7157
Help support “Pedal to Protect Virginia’s Eastern Shore”

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Sounding Science: Listening for Coastal Futures

By Sarah Morgan

It is a fascinating premise, that through listening closely to the sounds produced in the coastal ecosystem here on the Eastern Shore of Virginia and elsewhere, then recording those sounds, musical compositions can be created that produce a wide spectrum of auditory experiences. *Sounding Science: Listening for Coastal Futures* features sound-art from musicians working with scientists to understand coastal change.

The exhibit will be available at the Barrier Islands Center in Machipongo through December 21. It features 9 listening stations that present field recordings, data sonifications, and eco-acoustic compositions from the coasts of the Eastern Shore, Australia, the Arctic, and elsewhere.

The exhibit represents a collaboration of the Barrier Islands Center, the Virginia Coast Reserve Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) program headquartered at the Anheuser-Busch Coastal Research Center (ABCRC) in Oyster, and the Coastal Futures Conservatory at the University of Virginia (UVA).

The Virginia Coast Reserve LTER was created by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) almost 50 years ago to provide the opportunity for researchers to study the watersheds, tidal marshes, lagoons, and barrier islands in what now is the largest stretch of wild lands along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. It is funded by the National Science Foundation with the goal of seeking to understand and predict how coastal systems respond to long-term changes in climate, sea level, and land use, and to relate these to the ecological services these habitats provide.

The Coastal Futures Conservatory is an initiative by UVA to integrate arts and humanities into the investigation of coastal change. Focusing especially on music and listening, the Conservatory works with scientists at the Virginia Coast Reserve to create new ways of experiencing and understanding the dynamics that are reshaping coasts throughout the world.

According to exhibit materials, listening is a form of inquiry that can immerse hearers in their living environments, and connects people across boundaries. It is a way that human beings communicate information and also a way to pay attention to the changing environment that we share with other species.

Each listening station features headphones and a sign that identifies the sounds heard in that presentation. For example, Station 1, entitled “Barrier Island Ecosystem Field Recordings,” by Matthew Burtner, describes the small tunnels called “crab flutes” that fiddler crabs make when digging their homes. Placing small microphones inside the tunnels yields sounds created by the wind blowing across the entrances of the tunnels as well as the movements of the crabs.

“**PO₄⁻³ | NH₄⁺**,“ by Christopher Luna-Mega (UVA), features sonification produced by mapping data values of ammonium and phosphate levels collected by LTER scientists at the mouth of Cattleshed Creek off Hog Island. The composition maps the ammonium data in the highest-pitch region, while the phosphate data are mapped in the lowest-pitch region. Variations in the data produce ascending and descending pitch; the resulting composition sweeps through a field recording of the shore.

Another piece by Christopher Luna-Mega (Station 5: “Piano Etude No. 2: Tidal Flow”) is derived from tidal data from the LTER collected from 2010 to 2018. Using daily measurements of high and low tides in meters, the data are mapped and scaled to the pitch regions of a piano, with the low-tide sounds performed by the left hand and the high-tide sounds by the right hand. According to Luna-Mega, even though the version of the piece presented in the exhibit relies on electronic sounds, “a new version for 2 pianists is possible at a slightly slower pace. The artistic intention is for a pianist to embody the tides.”

Other stations include “Requiem for the Reef (Australia),” “Above 8,” a sound and poetry piece whose title refers to changes in the acidification of the oceans, and compositions derived from recordings from southern Florida, the Alaskan Arctic and the Gulf of Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

Interested in hearing and seeing more? The Barrier Islands Center is located just off Route 13 in Machipongo. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 AM until 4 PM. Admission is free. For more information: www.barrierislandscenter.org.

SOURCE: http://coastalconservatory.org/
More than 100 people came out to help kick off the public input part of Northampton County’s review of its Plan. Representatives from the Berkley Group and the county Planning Staff facilitated lively discussions at each meeting. Initial reports from the meetings seemed to reflect some common themes as participants looked to the future of the county.

Protection of the county’s natural resource assets ranked high in importance – along with rural character; small towns and villages; diversity in population; the critical value of the sole-source aquifer; the importance of tourism, agriculture and aquaculture, and entrepreneurship to the local economy; and opposition to the spread of industrial poultry operations in the county.

Challenges ahead mentioned at most of the workshops were also similar: the lack of broadband and other infrastructure; the lack of a skilled workforce necessary to attract new businesses; persistent poverty in some areas; current lack of minority participation in the planning process; perceived weaknesses in education/difficulty attracting teachers; sea level rise; and coastal resiliency.

One participant mentioned that the workshop comments were getting repetitive, but Project Director Todd Morgan of the Berkley Group suggested that he was seeing that as a beginning of consensus early in the project.

Citizens Voice Concern About the Process

A bump in the road appeared at several meetings when some attendees asked for confirmation about one-on-one “stakeholder” meetings already scheduled with the consultants – who selected the participants, who were they, and why were they selected. None of the facilitators nor the County Administrator appeared to have a satisfactory explanation. One attendee remarked that he thought “we were all stakeholders.” Attending Board of Supervisor members, and some Planning Commission members, seemed surprised to learn about the meetings – although they had been scheduled for the following morning. A public record memo from the County Administrator, available on September 13, is titled “Stakeholder meetings conducted on 9/10/19”; it listed participants as 2 community organizations, 1 pastor, 2 realtors, 1 county official, 1 farmer, and 14 education representatives.

Virginia Code § 15.2-2230 directs local Planning Commissions to conduct the review and decide if amendments are needed. Both Onancock and Cape Charles Planning Commissions and Staff are moving forward with their Town reviews. Supervisors, Mayors, and other Administrators don’t appear to have a codified role in the actual review. When the Supervisors met the following night, the consultants were reminded to reach out and keep track of every contact they make. And in apparent reference to a previous Comp Plan rewrite draft, which had been returned to the Planning Commission for, among other things, inadequate public outreach, one Supervisor expressed his thoughts about making no mistakes about the process: “This time, it’s just got to work.”

Later, in response to citizen concern about the process, a September 18 memo from county officials to the Board and the Planning Commission ordered a change in the communication method, as well as the statement that there is no “stakeholder group.” The memo states that during the review process, “the Berkley Group will coordinate directly with the Planning Commission and its support staff” in further communication with the public. “A list of those participating in those direct communication meetings will be compiled and submitted in the public record via Planning Commission reports.” The Berkley Group “has been informed of this change and is committed to comply.”

The change appears to conform to the Code’s intent.

Moving Forward

The plan forward is to conduct a county-wide, 6-week survey in September/October, reaching as many residents and property owners as possible. Another set of District Workshops is scheduled for November. Between December and March, draft amendments will be considered by the Planning Commission, assisted by the consultants. A first draft is expected by May 2020.
On August 23, Virginia released its final Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan, also known as the Clean Water Blueprint, to meet the EPA’s 2025 targets for water quality standards for the Chesapeake Bay. The final plan can be found at https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/ChesapeakeBay/ChesapeakeBayTMDL/PhaseIIIWatershedImplementationPlanning.aspx.

Secretary of Natural Resources Matthew Strickler noted that, based on EPA’s June 21 comments on the draft Plan (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2019-06/documents/epa_evaluation_virginia_draft_phase_iii_wip.pdf), “multiple, significant revisions … were necessary to improve clarity, to provide updated information, and to offer additional explanation and detail for specific initiatives.” EPA had noted many strengths of the plan, including the extensive local engagement, new agricultural strategies (including increased nutrient management and livestock exclusion), additional reductions in the wastewater sector, and annual needs assessments. Areas requiring revision included:

- More detailed information on the funding needed and current funding gaps in the proposed agricultural and stormwater programs
- More details on the schedule for implementation of proposed regulations for nutrient management plans and livestock exclusion, and reducing pollution from wastewater treatment plans
- More detail on incentivizing pollution-reducing techniques in the unregulated portion of the urban/suburban stormwater sector, including using the trading program in this sector

The final Plan addresses these issues, including funding sources (Chapter 9) and next steps to implementation (Chapter 10). Secretary Strickler noted that many of the initiatives are already moving forward, including “the largest-ever investment in the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost Share (VACS) Program” in fiscal year 2020; a re-initiation of the Agricultural BMP Loan Program; contracting with local Planning District Commissions “to maintain the strong momentum and collaboration established during development” of the Plan; and a “multi-agency collaborative effort [with the Departments of Commerce and Trade and Health and Human Resources] to resolve wastewater islands.”

The Plan makes clear that the targets cannot be met without adequate funding of the individual programs.

The Plan notes in Chapter 9 that annual needs assessments for the Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF) and the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) will be provided to the Governor and the General Assembly. Additional funding sources identified include various grant and loan programs at the federal level (through USDA, EPA, the National Park Service, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation) and the state level (through the Department of Conservation and Recreation and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Forestry).

All these funding sources require approval in each budget cycle, and the Plan makes clear that the targets cannot be met without adequate funding of the individual programs. Peggy Sanner, Virginia Assistant Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, noted that “The 2020 General Assembly session is our best chance to ensure the investments and programs are in place to achieve these goals by 2025.”

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Funding Provided by the Northampton Tourism Infrastructure Grant
timetable for spraying can be posted on social media and websites. Another is to move the trail to a side of the field so the landowner does not have to farm around it. A third suggestion is to provide signage as to the crops being grown and the potential dangers of entering the area.

Many farmers get frustrated by the lack of awareness to the requirements of growing specific crops such as cotton and peanuts, which tend to require heavier spray cycles than beans and corn. Educating trail users on the farmers’ behalf might ease tensions and make for more successful negotiations. According to Kristal McKelvey, of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the local Soil and Water Conservation District can sometimes help bridge the discussion between trail enthusiasts and the farmers/landowners who oppose trail construction, and can advise whether a buffer beside the trail could qualify for cost-share funds.

North of Cape Charles, the process of “railbanking,” the conversion of the railroad track to a multi-use trail, is in progress. The federal Surface Transportation Board handles these conversions, and is expected to issue a “Notice of Interim Train Use or Abandonment (NITU)” soon. Once the NITU is issued, landowners along the railroad are eligible for compensation from the federal government.

The background for these claims is that when the tracks were first built, the easements were issued with the condition that if they were ever abandoned, the property would revert to the landowners. Since then, the national Trails Act allows the federal government to convert the railroad to trails, with the stipulation that the railroad could re-take the easements in the future. However, given that the original agreement was to revert the property to landowners, this is considered a “taking” of land by the federal government and entitles landowners to file claims for compensation. At least 2 law firms have sent out letters to landowners notifying them of this entitlement, and offering to represent them.

For those who support the conversion of the railroad easement to a public multi-use trail, there is a petition circulating that will be available to be signed at a table at the Bike Tour Registration on October 26 at the Exmore Town Park. It cites some of the benefits of creating such a trail, among them: public health and wellness, promoting more outdoor activity; economic benefits by promoting local businesses and tourism; transportation of residents to local businesses and by emergency vehicles to currently unaccessible homes along Route 13 on the other side of the tracks, as well as during evacuations; and last, for more fun!

Ed. Note: Stay tuned. More information on this issue will be coming as it is available.

CBES Candidate Forums

Mark your calendar! Forums for all contested seats in the November 5 election will be held as follows, to give Shore voters an opportunity to hear the candidates’ positions on matters of concern and consequence:

- **Accomack County Forum** - Tuesday, October 8
  7 to 9 PM at Nandua High School, Onley
  **Treasurer:** Brandy Custis Childress and James A. Lilliston, Sr.
  **District 4 School Board:** Connie C. Burford and Gary S. Reese
  **District 7 School Board:** Thomas E. “TJ” Johnson III and Janet Martin-Turner
  **District 5 Supervisor:** Harrison W. Phillips III and James D. Rich
  **District 7 Supervisor:** Howard “Jackie” Phillips and Miriam E. “Tina” Riggs

- **State Legislators Forum** - Wednesday, October 9
  7 to 9 PM at Nandua High School, Onley
  **Member, House of Delegates:** Rob Bloxom and Phil Hernandez
  **State Senator:** Elizabeth Lankford and Lynwood Lewis

- **Northampton County Forum** - Thursday, October 17
  7 to 8:30 PM at Occonhannock Elementary, Exmore
  **District 4 Supervisor:** David L. Kabler, Sr., and L. Dixon Leatherbury
  Written questions will be accepted from the audience. All 3 Forums will be live-streamed on WESR 103.3 FM (www.shoredailynews.com, “Listen Live” on the right-hand side of the screen).

“Meet the Candidates” – Candidates for uncontested seats in Accomack and Northampton County will be available for an informal discussion in the lobby at 6:30 PM, prior to each Forum.

CBES neither supports nor opposes candidates for public office.
**Keeping Track**

**More Good News for Solar**

At the September 18 Accomack Board of Supervisors meeting, it was announced that SolarGuys Inc., which installed the solar panels at Sawmill Park in Accomac, is donating an 8.5-kW solar panel system for the County Public Safety Office on Dunne Avenue in Parksley. This is intended as a demonstration project for a smaller office building; the company also stated they would like to reduce their inventory. The value of the installed system is approximately $17,000.

In related news, Governor Northam signed an executive order on September 17 calling for the state’s power to include at least 30% renewables by 2030, and to be 100% carbon-free by 2050. This builds on the 2018 Virginia Energy Plan, requiring at least 3 GW of solar and offshore wind projects in operation by 2022 and 5.5 GW by 2028. Virginia currently has 802 MW of solar installed in the state, out of a total of 24.1 GW of electricity capacity.

- **Smart Growth Principles**
  
  Since the mid-1990s, the Smart Growth Network, made up of organizations representing diverse interests, has been identifying best practices, policies, and strategies that help communities get the results they want from growth. The network developed 10 smart growth principles, based on experiences of communities around the country. The principles are flexible enough to apply to all types of communities, from rural to urban.
  
  - Mix land uses.
  - Take advantage of compact design.
  - Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
  - Create walkable communities.
  - Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
  - Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
  - Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.
  - Provide a variety of transportation options.
  - Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.
  - Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

Source: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/essential_smart_growth_fixes_rural_0.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/essential_smart_growth_fixes_rural_0.pdf)

**Where Can I Take My Old Clothes and Textiles?**

Clothing and household textiles (towels, sheets) make up 3.8 billion pounds, or 5.2% of the waste in landfills—but we can change that! As the seasons change, we start putting away our summer things and taking out our sweaters, long pants, and the rest of our fall and winter wardrobe. But what to do with those items that we just don’t like anymore, or that don’t fit? Here are a few ideas:

**Repair/reuse**

- See if you can breathe new life into an old item with a new zipper, a patch, or a raised hemline. If you’re not handy yourself, find a good seamstress to help.
- If you or someone you know is a quilter or fabric artist, think about turning that torn T-shirt into a pillow cover, or that pile of old ties into a quilt. Get creative!

**Pass on clean, gently-used items (clothes, shoes, purses, jewelry) in good condition**

- For upscale, designer, fashionable items, we have a couple of great consignment shops on the Shore.
- For saleable items, including socks and underwear, donate to the Lighthouse Ministries Thrift Shop in Onley.
- You can also donate items to the Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence—some of their clients have to start over with literally just the clothing on their backs.

**Don’t throw away the rest**

If you’re hanging onto things because they’re not good enough to give away but you want to keep them out of the landfill, you don’t have to. There are boxes from Special Olympics Virginia at each convenience center in both counties, at the Moose Lodge in Belle Haven, and at the Lighthouse Ministries Thrift Shop in Onley. They accept clothes, shoes, belts, purses, stuffed animals, towels, bedding, blankets, curtains, and ties, regardless of condition. Old shoes and sneakers are ground up and used as filler in car seats, carpet pads, and punching bags. Ripped or stained clothes and textiles are shredded and rewoven into industrial rags.

**Public Info Session for HRSD**

A Public Information Session for the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) Sewer Force Main Project will be held on October 24 at 5:00 PM at the Eastern Shore Community College, in the Great Hall. The focus will be on the process for becoming part of the HRSD service area. Representatives from both counties and all incorporated towns will be in attendance; the public is welcome to attend.
A Safe Welcome for Bike Tour Cyclists  
Saturday, October 26

More than a thousand cyclists will be pedaling Eastern Shore roads on Saturday, October 26, in celebration of the 27th Between the Waters Bike Tour. Tour attendees provide a substantial economic impact to the Shore community as they frequent local restaurants, shops, and businesses, as well as patronize lodging up and down the peninsula during the long weekend.

As organizers of the Tour, Citizens for a Better Eastern Shore is issuing a Watch Out for Cyclists advisory.

The Tour begins at Exmore Town Park at 7:30 AM with the departing 100-milers, followed by staggered starts for the remaining 3 routes (60, 40, and 25 miles). All riders should have started from Exmore by around 10:30 AM. Cyclists are expected to be off local roads before dark.

The Bike Tour stretches as far south as Oyster/Cheriton and as far north as Wachapreague, with both seaside and bayside routes. On the seaside, cyclists will enjoy vistas that include Wachapreague, Quinby, Willis Wharf, Boxtree, and Oyster. On the Bayside, expect to see bicyclists around Pungoteague, Belle Haven, Morley’s Wharf, and Bayford, where the lunch spot for all routes will be held.

Caution is especially requested of drivers, as cyclists cross Route13/Lankford Highway in the following Northampton County areas: Exmore and Weirwood/Nassawadox. In Accomack County, cyclists will cross Route 13 at Wachapreague Road/Route 180.

Friday, October 25, a shorter Fun Ride at 4 PM will have approximately 200 participants, starting in Belle Haven and venturing into the surrounding area.

It’s also requested that dog owners be mindful of the Shore’s cycling guests.

Please help CBES provide a hospitable and safe welcome to Bike Tour participants. For more information, please contact CBES: info@cbes.org or 757-678-7157.

Crevettes a la Bière  
(Shrimp with Beer)  
From The Kitchen Hive

Lost some enthusiasm for hot summer entertaining? But still ready for food, friends, drinks, and some evening company on the porch? You might be interested in this very basic, 2-ingredient supper, ready in about 15 minutes.

After one winter struggling to replicate the flavors of Paris with Julia Child, I discovered the much more user-friendly Pierre Franey, of “60-Minute Gourmet” fame. Pierre suggests adding garlic, allspice, dried pepper, salt and pepper, bay leaf, parsley, and dill to the mix below, but one 90-degree night I just went with the basics – fast and fabulous!

- 3 pounds of shrimp in the shell (heads on, if you can find them)
- 12-ounce bottle or can of beer – nothing fancy!

Put shrimp (with/without herbs and spices) and beer in a heavy skillet, cover and bring to a boil. Simmer for about 2 minutes, until shrimp turn that beautiful pink-orange color. Turn out shrimp on a table covered with brown paper – serve with hot melted lemon butter and/or a catsup/horseradish/tabasco cocktail sauce, and lots of napkins. Feeling virtuous? Make a salad. Not so much? Two to three bags of Cape Cod chips will do.


HELP WANTED

Bike Tour Volunteers

We are still looking for a few people to help prior to or during the 2019 CBES Bike Tour on October 26. Please call 757-678-7157 or email bike-tour@cbes.org. It’s a fun opportunity to support CBES and meet others who care about our community.
Community Calendar

Note: Please verify times and places prior to traveling to meetings.

Accomack County

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

Northampton County

1st Tues Board of Zoning Appeals
           10 AM, Eastville
1st Tues Planning Commission (PC)
           7 PM, Eastville
2nd Tues Board of Supervisors (BOS)
           6 PM, Eastville
3rd Wed  Wetlands Board
           Meets as needed, Eastville
3rd Wed  PC Work Session
           5 PM, Eastville
4th Tues BOS Work Session
           5 PM, Eastville
4th Tues School Board
           6 PM, Machipongo

Accomack County Forum
Tuesday, October 8
7 to 9 PM at Nandua High School, Onley

State Legislators Forum
Wednesday, October 9
7 to 9 PM at Nandua High School, Onley

Northampton County Forum
Thursday, October 17
7 to 8:30 PM at Occohannock Elementary School, Exmore

Hampton Roads Sanitation District Meeting
Thursday, October 24
5 PM at Eastern Shore Community College, Melfa

CBES Bike Tour
Saturday, October 26
7:30 AM - Dusk
Exmore Town Park

For membership and other CBES information:
www.cbes.org

Check your label – if it doesn’t show ‘19 or Life, you need to renew (cbes.org).

INFORM, ENGAGE, EMPOWER!