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# River Chat

NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org

Serving the Suffolk Community Since 2010

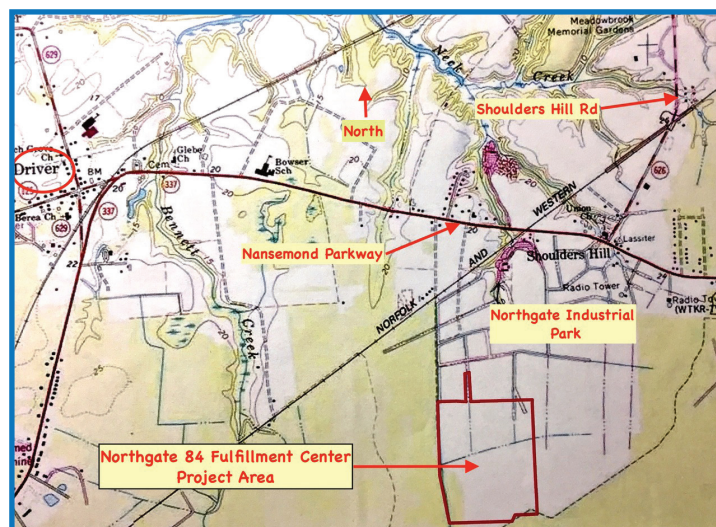
## SUFFOLK'S RIVER AND CREEKS SERVE THE COMMUNITY ALL YEAR LONG— SO DOES NRPA!

Bennett's Creek

### POTENTIAL NEW NEIGHBOR - Northgate 84 Fulfillment Center

As you may have read in the newspaper or overheard at the grocery store, an application was submitted by a "client" to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build a 820,000 square foot Fulfillment Center at the Northgate Industrial Park located at the intersection of Shoulders Hill Road and Portsmouth Boulevard. The site plan also proposes 1,750 employee parking spaces and 200 parking spaces for trucks and trailers. The application states that....The project site appears to ultimately drain to the Nansemond River through Quaker Neck Creek to Bennett's Creek. The proposed project is located within the Hampton Roads basin. NRPA spoke with George Janek, US Army Corps of Engineers about the site plan. Members of the NRPA Board, Shoreline and Water Quality Committees drafted a three-page list of recommendations that was formally submitted to the Corps during the Public Comment period.

NRPA's position is that the Fulfillment Center offers many opportunities – opportunity for economic development, opportunity for increased employment, and opportunity for exemplary environmental stewardship. The recommendations



reflect NRPA's mission to help restore and protect the waterways.

On July 31, Karl Mertig and Taylor Hollingsworth from Kimley-Horn, the firm that is leading the permitting effort for the applicant, met with 16 NRPA Board and committee members. During the 90 minute meeting Mr. Mertig went over the history of the site, reviewed the site map and plan and responded to NRPA's Public Comments.

*(Continued on next page)*

### Save the Date

- September 7:** NRPA Exhibit at Taste of Suffolk, Downtown
- October 8 & 9:** NRPA's Marshfield Study Program, Bennett's Creek Park – Seeking Volunteers
- October 29:** River Talk – Environmental. Release of the NRPA State of the Nansemond River Report and Program on oysters. Location: CE&H Ruritan Community Hall, Eclipse. 6:30 Social, 7:00 – 8:00 PM Program

One of NRPA's major concerns is the amount of impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff created by the project and the City of Suffolk's policy to only require meeting minimum stormwater discharge standards. The plan only addresses minimum SWMP standards; the health of Bennett's Creek is likely to be further impaired. NRPA offered several recommendations and inquired about the storm water modeling used. Karl Mertig answered the participants' questions and will get back to NRPA with some additional information. The application is currently under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and their report will be released

in a few months. The client would like to begin construction of the project in early 2020 with a completion date of Fall 2021.

NRPA is exploring avenues to meet directly with the "client's representatives" about expanding their role as a business leader in exemplary corporate environmental steward by moving forward with this project. NRPA is also interested in meeting with the city manager, mayor and council about reviewing the city's stormwater discharge requirements and adopting policies that are more current.

The application and Public Comments can be found AT the following links:

State application 2109-0960 <https://webapps.mrc.virginia.gov/public/habitat/index.php>

Editorial Suffolk News-Herald <https://www.suffolknewsherald.com/2019/07/11/transparency-urged-on-project/>

## *Smiles And Summer Learning*

# NRPA HANDS-ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMER SESSIONS

### *Educate The Next Generation*

Summer vacation has a new twist for students in kindergarten through high school. Several organizations that have summer enrichment programs for children reached out to NRPA to provide a hands-on environmental educational experience for their students. NRPA responded with a resounding "Yes" and is delighted that so many organizations are seeking NRPA's help to inspire the children to be environmental stewards.

The next step was for NRPA to do a shout out for help from volunteers who don't mind working in 90+ degree temperatures with high humidity. An 8th grader and her mom, 12 high school students, several adults and four Suffolk Public Works staff responded to the call!

The summer program is a modification of NRPA's signature Nansemond Watershed Initiative: Connecting the Classroom with the Environment. That initiative educates 1,500 K-12 students during the school year, and now NRPA's summer programs reach an additional 200 children through the exciting projects highlighted below.



*Children learning about crabs during ECOCAMP*

## ECOCAMP

NRPA has been offering this day-long program in collaboration with the Nansemond River Garden Club for five years. Each year between ten and fifteen 8 – 10 year olds meet at an NRPA member's pier located along the Chuckatuck Creek to explore the world of oysters. They then travel to Johnson and Sons Seafood pier, also located along the Chuckatuck Creek, and learn about crabs and other marine life.

## TIDEWATER GOVERNORS SCHOOL SUMMER ACADEMY

Sixty 4th – 7th grade students learned how to maneuver a canoe in a very secure area along Bennett's Creek. NRPA received some impromptu help from the citizens fishing on the pier who cheered for the students and provided some coaching. Other students put on waders and learned how to use a seine net to capture crabs, anchovies and other



*Tidewater Governors School Summer Academy*

marine critters. NRPA explained the anatomy and special purpose of each critter and then released them all back into the creek. The students also observed the use of water quality testing instruments and learned about the negative impact of stormwater runoff on the Creek. Then the students were transported by bus to an NRPA member's private home located along Hoffler Creek to learn about oysters. The program included a visit to the NRPA oyster reef sanctuary, with extensive education about the bi-valves, their life-cycle and the important role they play in filtering the Creek water.

## SUFFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Eighty middle school students took a break from hearing lectures and writing papers and learned about Suffolk's very special marine life and the status of our River and creeks from NRPA staff and high school volunteers. During the two-hour classroom session, students learned how to use NRPA water quality testing instruments and interacted with live crabs and other marine life brought to the school by NRPA volunteers.

## FORKIDS

Twenty preteens participated in the NRPA Marshfield Study at Bennett's Creek Park. They put on waders, captured marine life using a seine net, and learned about water quality and the impact of stormwater runoff on the Creek.

## BETHLEHEM CHURCH FAMILY PICNIC

Eight 3 – 6-year olds along with their parents, and in 95 degree temperatures, participated in a challenging environmental scavenger hunt at Sleepy Hole Park. NRPA hosted the hunt as part of the church's family picnic. The children and adults learned about native shrubs and trees, the history of the River and the status of Suffolk's waterways. The session ended with the youth receiving the official NRPA sticker and being sworn in as proud NRPA junior members.



*NRPA Junior Members during the Bethlehem Church Family Picnic*



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 Old Dominion University  
 VA Institute for Marine Science  
 W&M Law School/VA Coastal Policy Center



**Join your Neighbors and Sign Up for the WaterWise Home Program.**

Go to [NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org](http://NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org)

to learn about the steps that you and your family can do everyday to protect the waterways!



**Join the over 300 citizens, businesses, foundations and government agencies that are Making A Difference in Suffolk.**

**DONOR LEVELS**

SUSTAINING	\$ 15,000	CREW	\$ 250
BLUE RIVER	\$ 5,000	PATRON	\$ 100
ADMIRAL	\$ 3,000	FAMILY	\$ 40
CAPTAIN	\$ 1,000	INDIVIDUAL	\$ 25
COMMANDER	\$ 500	STUDENT	\$ 10

Make your donation online at [NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org](http://NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org) or make your check payable to NRPA and mail to NRPA, P.O.Box 6090, Suffolk, Virginia 23433

*Email [Taraskinrpa@gmail.com](mailto:Taraskinrpa@gmail.com) for more information. Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.*

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*Your email address allows us to send you important updates and information about activities and events. NRPA will not share your information.*