



PO Box 6090
Suffolk, VA 23433
757.745.7447

River Chat

NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org

Serving the Suffolk Community Since 2010

Nansemond River Preservation Alliance Receives Statewide Meritorious Conservation Achievement Award from the Garden Club of Virginia



The Nansemond River Preservation Alliance (NRPA) is the 2019 recipient of the prestigious Garden Club of Virginia Elizabeth Dugdale Cabell Award for Meritorious Achievement in Conservation. On September 25, 2019 Elizabeth Taraski, President/CEO NRPA accepted the award on behalf of the Board and many volunteers at an outdoor ceremony at Natural Bridge, Virginia. NRPA was nominated by the Nansemond River Garden Club (NRGC). Linda Consolvo, NRCG President and Sara Ann Johnson, Conservation and Beautification Chairman prepared the proposal.

NRGC provides a forum for NRPA to inform citizens about the status of Suffolk's waterways. Together the two organizations developed the Water Wise Program – a comprehensive outreach program to inform citizens about best practices they can do to protect the waterways. NRCG through a generous grant provided NRPA with the funding for the purchase of scientific instruments for the K-12 Nansemond Watershed Initiative: Connecting the Classroom with the Environment program. "Volunteers and collaborations with partnering organizations have been the backbone of NRPA's success over the last nine years. One our most cherished and enduring relationships has been with the Nansemond River Garden Club. On behalf of the NRPA Board of Directors I would like to express our deep appreciation for the support the NR Garden Club has provided." An excerpt of Elizabeth Taraski remarks during the award presentation.

The Elizabeth Dugdale Cabell Award was established in 1974. Previous recipients include Thomas J. Lipton, Inc., Lynnhaven River Now and the Piedmont Environmental Council.



HOW IS THE HEALTH OF THE NANSEMOND RIVER?

State of the Nansemond River Report and Report Card

An important tenet of the NRPA philosophy is to educate citizens about the current status of our waterways and encourage them to be environmental stewards. The NRPA Water Quality Committee biannually releases the State of the Nansemond River Report and Report Card to inform residents, businesses, government agencies and elected officials about the status of our River. Reports were released in 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017. On October 29, 2019 NRPA released the fifth edition of the State of the Nansemond River Report and Report Card. The Report examines the status of the River using five indicators. The findings are presented through a narrative format with supporting graphs. The Report Card provides a one-page illustration of the five indicators with a brief explanation. Excerpts from the Report are highlighted in this Special Edition – River Chat Newsletter. If you would like to receive a copy of the 14 page Report, email Elizabeth Taraski at taraski.nrpa@gmail.com.

THE NANSEMOND RIVER PRESERVATION ALLIANCE 2018 State of the Nansemond River Report Card

The Nansemond River continues to be impaired. Bacteria levels and sediment have risen steadily in recent years detracting from the value of the River's oyster industry and its recreational assets.

	PARAMETER	2014	2016	2018	AS OF DECEMBER 2018
VA Dept. of Health Data	Bacteria - Oyster				
	Lower Nansemond	A	A	B	Oyster harvesting unrestricted, but bacteria levels are increasing.
	Middle Nansemond	C	D	D	Portions are Conditionally Approved (Closed for 10 days after 0.5 inch of rain) or Restricted (Closed)
	Upper Nansemond	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not an oyster habitat - too low salinity.
City of Suffolk Data	Bacteria - Swimming				No requirement for City of Suffolk to post health warning. (Suffolk does not have public beaches)
	Lower Nansemond	No Data	B	A	Meets National Standards
	Middle Nansemond	No Data	F	D	No swimming 48 hours after major rainfall events.
	Upper Nansemond	No Data	F	F	National Standards warning advisory for swimming.
	EcoCheck - IAN	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade Determined By Ecocheck Methodology
City of Suffolk Data	Total Nitrogen (All Nansemond River)	A	A	A	Total Nitrogen levels are low
	Phosphorous (All Nansemond River)	F	F	F	High levels may cause algae blooms. Fertilizer run off adds to problem.
	Turbidity-Suspended Solids (All Nansemond River) Average	27.4	28.2	35.8 (increase)	Impediment to aquatic plant growth. Suspended solids in the River have increased 25% over 3 years due to increasing run off which increases sediment levels.
NRPA Data	Dissolved Oxygen				Sampling Period: April - October
	Lower Nansemond	A	A	B	Good oxygen levels.
	Middle Nansemond	B	A	C	Acceptable oxygen levels.
	Upper Nansemond	F	F	D	Low oxygen levels at times.
Pollution Control	Storm Water and Runoff Control	C+	C+	D	Need proper compliance by developers, contractors, and homeowners of environmental regulations especially Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act and Stormwater regs.
	Sanitary Sewer Improvements	C+	C+	C+	Sewer or septic tank overflows during major rain events. Collaborative Bacterial Source Tracking Program in process. Aging pipe infrastructure and faulty septic systems are being identified and corrected.
	Clean Boating	B+	B+	B+	Constant's Wharf, Bennett's Creek Landing, Decoy's Marina have pump out. HRSD will pump out.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What will future generations say we did to protect and restore the Nansemond River? NRPA's goal is to educate citizens about the status of Suffolk's precious waterways and promote best practices that will reverse the declining waterway trends and reach our goal of a healthy and sustainable River, for ourselves and for future generations. The responsibility falls upon all citizens, businesses, elected officials and city department managers to do their part to Make a Difference.

The Nansemond River is a complex natural system, with many factors affecting its overall health and vitality.

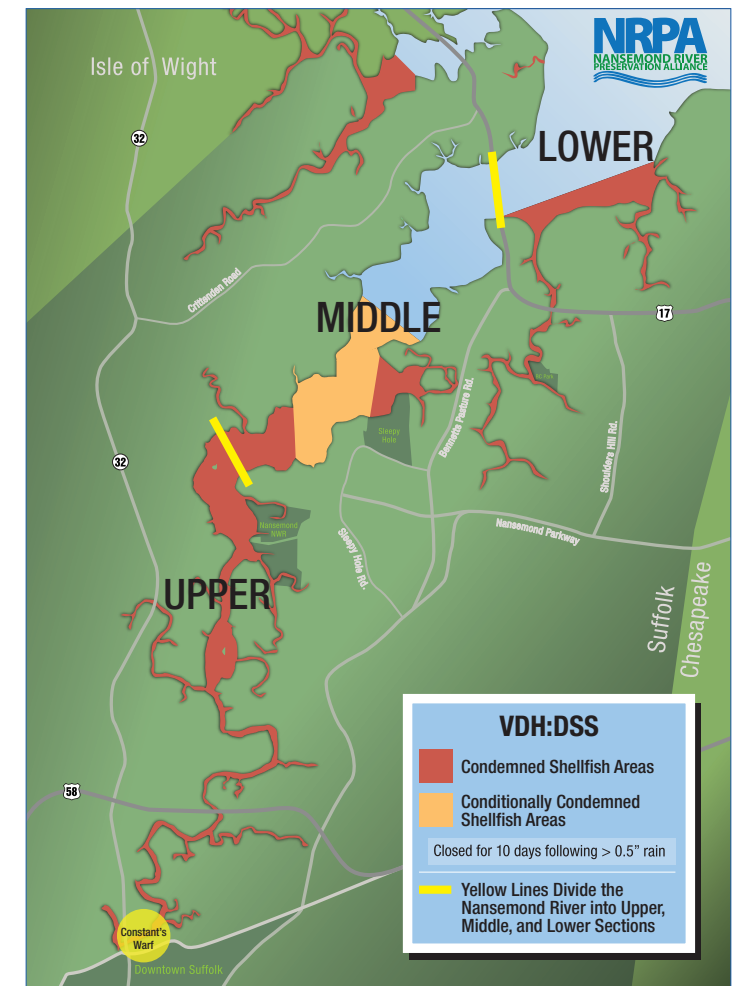
The River is classified as impaired - Impaired, means that the River fails to meet state or federal standards for one or more pollutants. The source is considered non-point source pollution-not one source. Contributing factors include the accumulation of runoff from parking lots, homes and businesses. People are the Solution.

Findings include:

- The overall health of the waterway is declining.
- The River is impaired by excess bacteria which resulted in 60% of the Nansemond River being closed to shellfish harvesting. The VA Department of Health Division of Shellfish Safety issues the restrictions or conditional restrictions.
- According to state and national standards, swimming is not recommended in sections of the River due to high bacterial levels, especially after rainfall events.
- Suspended solids (sediment) are increasing rapidly due to increased run off which impacts water clarity.
- Phosphorus levels exceed the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality standards.
- The River meets standards for nitrates and dissolved oxygen. The implementation of best practices is required to ensure that changes do not occur with respect to nitrates and dissolved oxygen.

Factors to be considered in order to fully understand the elements that can impact the health of the River:

- Unprecedented development, which results in an increase of impervious (hardened) surfaces, contributes to the increase of sediment in the waterways. Low water clarity prevents the growth of aquatic vegetation. There are no bottom grasses in the Nansemond.
- Increased design standards for run off catchment basins and protection of the 100-foot vegetated buffer along the River can reduce the flow of sediment and other elements.
- Environmental governmental regulations, such as the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA), need to be properly enforced. Scientific research supports the fundamental premise of the CBPA, the significance of the 100-foot buffer area as an important natural stormwater runoff filter. The state legislature agreed with the research by passing the CBPA.
- The benefits of a vegetated buffer should not be trivialized by citizens and developers.



PEOPLE ARE THE SOLUTION!!

- Learn about activities that you can do daily to protect the waterways by joining your neighbors and participate in the Water Wise Homes Program. The Water Wise Program was developed in partnership with the Nansemond River Garden Club and provides a list of actions that all citizens can do daily to protect and restore Suffolk's River and creeks.
- Support Suffolk's Green Initiative and encourage the City and their elected representatives to adhere to the recommendations in the City's Green Initiative Report and Comprehensive Plan.
- Reduce stormwater runoff into stormwater outlets and the waterways by:
 - Enhancing the 100 foot Vegetated Buffer Area along your shorelines
 - Establishing a living shoreline
 - Creating a rain garden on your property
 - Learning about native plants, shrubs and trees that you can plant on your property by visiting the NRPA Outdoor Classroom – Riparian Buffer Conservation Demonstration Site at Sleepy Hole Park.
- Participate in the monthly Water Sampling and Monitoring sessions.
- Participate in Clean the River Days.
- Attend River Talk Programs with your neighbors and learn about best practices that you can do every day to be an environmental steward.



757.745.7447

NRPA OFFICERS

Capt. Steven Barnum, Chairman
 Elizabeth Taraski, PhD, President/CEO
 John Wass, VP/Treasurer/Chr. Public Access
 James Winters, VP/Secretary
 Richard F. Barry, III, Chr. Development
 John D. Eure, Jr., Chr. Government Relations
 Brian Martin, Chr. Shoreline
 Geoff Payne, Chr. Water Quality
 Howard W. Martin, Jr. Chr. Governance
 Karla Smith, Chr. Environmental Education

NRPA DIRECTORS

George Y. Birdsong
 Dana Dickens
 David Eberwine
 Paul E. Fisher
 Sandy Hart
 Thomas Hazelwood
 Lem Lewis
 John Newhard
 William Old, MD
 Cindy Pinell
 Dwight Schaubach
 Joseph Verdirame, MD
 Nick Worth

BUSINESS & FOUNDATION ALLIANCES

BASF Corporation
 Bennetts Creek Pharmacy
 Birdsong Peanuts
 Birdsong Trust
 Colonial Pipeline
 Community Action Coalition of Virginia
 Copico Print Services
 Dominion Energy Foundation
 Duke Automotive
 JM Smuckers
 Keurig Green Mountain
 Downtown Hilton Garden Inn
 Hampton Roads Community Foundation
 The Landmark Foundation
 Lipton Tea/Unilever
 Mike Duman Auto
 Pruden Foundation
 Southeast Virginia Community Foundation
 STIHL
 Suffolk Foundation
 Suffolk Iron Works
 TowneBank Foundation
 Volvo Penta

CITY, REGIONAL, STATE & FEDERAL ALLIANCES

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund
 City of Suffolk, Dept of Litter Control
 City of Suffolk, Parks & Recreation
 City of Suffolk, Public Works
 Great Dismal Swamp and National Wildlife Refuge
 Hampton Roads Sanitation District
 National Park Service
 VA Dept of Environmental Quality
 VA Dept of Health, Div of Shellfish Sanitation

COMMUNITY, REGIONAL ALLIANCES

Bethlehem Ruritans
 Suffolk Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
 CE&H Ruritans
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 Chuckatuck Historical Society
 Elizabeth River Project
 GFWC Junto Women's Club
 Healthy Suffolk
 Historic Southside Master Naturalists
 Izaak Walton League
 James River Association
 Linkside Cove Homeowners Association
 Lynnhaven River Now
 Nansemond River Garden Club
 Nansemond River Power Squadron
 North Suffolk Rotary Club
 Oyster Reefer Keepers
 Possum Hollow Ruritan Club
 Suffolk Art League
 Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts
 Suffolk Master Gardeners
 Suffolk River Heritage
 Suffolk Rotary Club
 Suffolk Women's Magazine Club
 Virginia Native Plant Society
 Wetlands Watch
 Westover Garden Club

EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES

Suffolk Public Schools
 Nansemond Suffolk Academy
 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

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
 or make your check payable to NRPA and mail to NRPA,
 P.O.Box 6090, Suffolk, Virginia 23433

*Email Taraskinrpa@gmail.com for more information.
 Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.*

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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