



PO Box 6090
Suffolk, VA 23433
757.745.7447

River Chat

NansemondRiverPreservationAlliance.org

Serving the Suffolk Community Since 2010



Discover Suffolk's Beautiful Waterways!

Suffolk's river, creeks, waterfowl and marine life are magnificent treasures that make our community so special. NRPA developed this edition of the RiverChat newsletter to highlight some of our beautiful assets.

Mother nature is a sophisticated producer and throughout the year different waterfowl and marine life take center stage. The river and

creeks are year-long stars as well as supporting actors. The information in the newsletter is only a snapshot of what Suffolk has to offer. Our intent is for you to go outdoors, discover our waterways and to look around. NRPA has been serving the Suffolk Community since 2010. Hundreds have joined our efforts to educate and encourage all citizens to be environmental stewards and work to restore and protect our precious waterways.

Nansemond River

The Nansemond River originates in downtown Suffolk (upper Nansemond). Lakes Cohoon, Kilby and Meade were once streams which were the headwaters of the Nansemond. They have since been separated from the River by dams and are now owned by the city of Portsmouth. Lakes Burnt Mills and Prince were once streams which were the headwaters of the Western Branch but were also impounded by dams and are now owned by the city of Norfolk. Except for lake overflow, the River has no significant source of fresh water except for storm water runoff from rain events.

The Nansemond River runs more than 23 miles from downtown Suffolk to its confluence with the James River and is home to the Nansemond National Wildlife Refuge managed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Nansemond Watershed drains 161,358 acres of land in Suffolk and Isle of Wight County. However, a significant portion of the rain water drains into the aforementioned lakes.

Creeks that Flow Into the Nansemond River

Lower Nansemond Area

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Eclipse Village</i> | <i>Harbour View Area</i> | <i>Bennett's Creek Area</i>
<i>(and its two tributaries)</i> |
| Bleakhorn Creek | Knotts Creek | Bennett's Creek |
| Chuckatuck Creek | West Creek | Deanes Creek |
| | Streeter Creek | Quaker Neck Creek |
| | Hoffler Creek | |

Middle to Upper Nansemond Area

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Oyster House Creek | Burnetts Mill Creek | Shingle Creek |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|

DID YOU KNOW?

Suffolk has over **4,000 ACRES** of freshwater lakes!

NORFOLK OWNED LAKES/RESERVOIRS

Burnt Mills Reservoir

Route 603, Suffolk, VA 23504

Burnt Mills is 711 acres and dates back to the early 1940s. The main tributary (Great Swamp) is a dense cypress swamp.

Lake Prince

U.S. 460 at Providence Church on Route 604 (Lake Prince Road), Suffolk, VA 23434

Lake Prince is 946 acres, 30 feet deep and it has numerous long, narrow coves extending out from the main body of the lake.

Western Branch Reservoir

Route 603, Suffolk, VA 23504

Western Branch is 1,265 acres with a maximum depth of 35 feet. The lake is horseshoe shaped with Lake Prince upstream on one arm and Lake Burnt Mills upstream on the other arm.

Look up!

Commonly Seen Waterfowl Along the Waterways

- Blue Heron
- Egret
- Osprey
- Canadian Goose
- Cormorant
- Mallard
- Wood Duck
- Seagull
- Pelicans
- And so many more....

PORTSMOUTH OWNED LAKES

Lake Cohoon

2756 Lake Cahoon Road Suffolk, VA 23434

Lake Cohoon is 510 acres.

Lake Kilby

829 Lake Kilby Road Suffolk, VA 23434

Lake Kilby is a colonial era millpond. The upper half of this 222-acre is a dense and very scenic cypress swamp. The water is dark-tannin stained and slightly acidic.

Lake Meade

689 Lake Meade Drive Suffolk, VA 23434

Lake Meade is the youngest Portsmouth water supply lake. It was impounded in 1960 on the mainstem of the Nansemond River. It is horseshoe shaped with Lakes Kilby and Speight's Run on one arm and Lake Cohoon on the other. The lake is 512 acres and has a maximum depth of about 25-feet.

Speight Run

Route 688 Suffolk, VA 23434

Speight's Run is a 197-acre lake that overflows into Lake Kilby. The lake is separated into 2 sections, split by Route 645 (Manning Road) off Route 58 in Suffolk.

Commercial Oyster and Crabbing

Have you tried a Nansemond River oyster? Love those hard or soft-shell crabs?

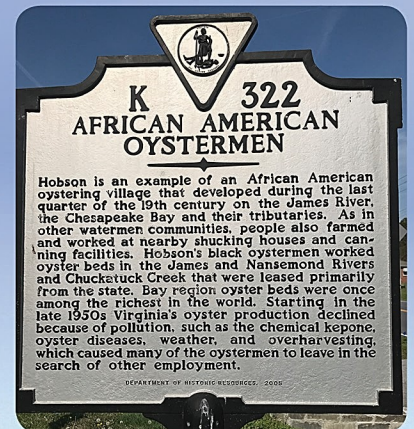
Suffolk has an active commercial oyster harvesting and crabbing industry. You can visit some of our resident watermen at Johnson and Sons Seafood and Eclipse Seafood Company. Both have a dock located in the Suffolk's historical Eclipse Village.

History Bytes Source: Suffolk Trails map

African American Oystermen

After the Civil War, some freed slaves earned their livelihood in oystering and boatbuilding. Black watermen and boatmen from the villages of Hobson, Sandy Bottom and Oakland, near

Chuckatuck, worked the river from the mid 1800s until the 1970s. *The Historical Marker is posted on Crittenden Road in the Hobson section of Suffolk.*

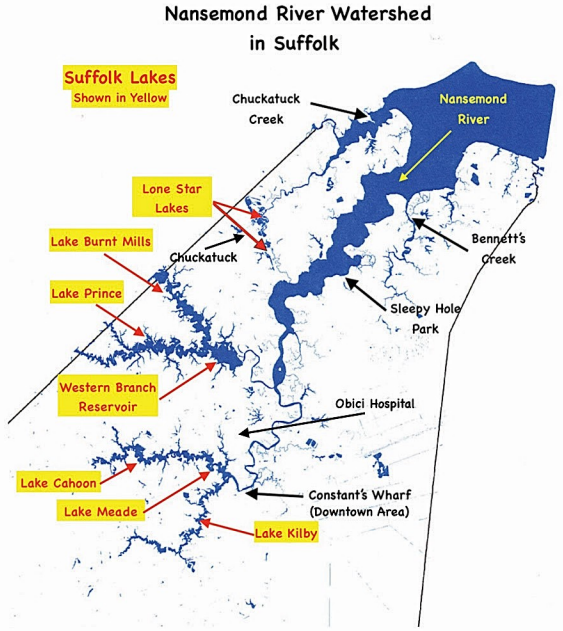


SUFFOLK OWNED LAKES

Lone Star Lakes

The Lone Star Lakes are a series of 11 lakes (some interconnected) varying in size from 3 to 50 acres. The lakes were created from marl pits dug for cement by Lone Star Industries between the early 1920s and 1950s. When the company moved out, the holes filled with rainwater. The area was established as a wilderness

park and purchased by the city of Suffolk in the 1970s. The total acreage is 490. One is brackish, some are dark-stained, while others very clear. Some are deep while others are very shallow. Among the best is Crane Lake, which opens into Chuckatuck Creek.



Visit the NRPA Conservation Project Site at Sleepy Hole Park

Native trees and shrubs serve an important role in protecting the waterways. NRPA created the Conservation Project at Sleepy Hole Park as an **outdoor classroom** where citizens can visit a display of a variety of native vegetation they can plant on their property. Native shrubs and trees reduce stormwater runoff and are resilient. They also promote biodiversity, shelter and food for wildlife. NRPA also

created a walking path lined with river stones and benches at the site where citizens can stroll, relax and enjoy the view of the Nansemond River. The NRPA Conservation Project Site is located at **Sleepy Hole Park, near the pier.**

Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail National Park Service

Through the lead efforts Suffolk River Heritage and NRPA in collaboration with Suffolk Parks & Recreation, the Nansemond River and its' tributaries were added to the nationally recognized trail map.

Four hundred years ago Englishman John Smith and a small crew of adventurers set out in an open boat to explore the Chesapeake Bay. Between 1607 and 1609 Smith and his crew mapped nearly 3,000 miles of the Bay and rivers and documented American Indian communities. Smith's map and journals are a remarkable record of the 17th-century Chesapeake. Visit the kiosk at Sleepy Hole Park – near the pier.



The Nansemond Watershed has a legacy of livestock and agriculture, from tobacco in the 18th century to peanuts, soybeans and cotton today. But the real legacy of the Nansemond stems from its once thriving oyster, crab and shad fisheries that are all but gone today as the result of pollution, impervious surfaces (hard surfaces like paved roads and parking lots), and from development and loss of habitat along our waterways. Major activities on the River today include shellfish harvesting in the lower Nansemond, and waterfowl hunting, recreational fishing, swimming and boating along the length of the River.

The Battle of Pig Point was an engagement between the Union gunboat USRC Harriet Lane and a shore battery and rifle company of the Confederate States Army on June 5, 1862 in the third month of the Civil War.

Constant's Wharf was a site of Commerce since 1712. John Constant built a tobacco rolling house here in 1712. Later in 1728, a warehouse was built to store the tobacco, grain and salt local farmers brought to market. In 1742, with commerce thriving, the colonial legislature established a town, Suffolk Town, on the site previously known as Contant's Wharf.





757.745.7447

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 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	\$ 20,000	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.
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