



MUD flats

NEWSLETTER of THE ELIZABETH RIVER PROJECT
Making restoration a reality

SPRING 2014 EDITION

Eastern Branch to Get New Strategy

A planning team, convened by Elizabeth River Project on Feb. 6, is working on a targeted strategy for restoring the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth.

With seahorses, fast multiplying oysters and improving water quality on the Lafayette branch of the river, a focus area since 2010, “we’re super-excited to begin the shift to the next branch,” said Marjorie Mayfield Jackson, Executive Director, Elizabeth River Project.

The Elizabeth River has four branches: the Lafayette, the Eastern Branch, Western Branch and Southern Branch. Thanks to you, our generous donors and partners, Elizabeth River Project has discovered the

The Eastern Branch...is the largest section of river we’ve tackled yet.

strength of engaging diverse stakeholders to plan and implement a strategy specific to one stretch of river at a time.



Students observe the Eastern Branch from our Learning Barge. A planning team is setting a strategy for restoring this river stretch.

Elizabeth River Project piloted the approach on Paradise Creek, a tributary to the Southern Branch, in 2001. The Eastern Branch—which runs through three cities; Chesapeake, Norfolk and Portsmouth—is the largest section of river we’ve tackled yet.

Never fear, Lafayette residents: We’re still hard at work there. Come to Lafayette RIVERFest on Saturday, April 26 along Norfolk’s Mayflower Drive (see flyer) for the latest scorecard and new ways to get involved. We’re building two more oyster reefs on the Lafayette this year. And we remain cautiously optimistic that, by the

end of 2014, we will meet our goal for achieving state water quality standards in all practical reaches of the Lafayette—an historic achievement that we will owe to you, our supporters.

Regarding the Eastern Branch...Dr. Frank Dukes of the University of Virginia is facilitating the team, which will meet through late June.

Ideas for the Eastern Branch restoration? Contact Joe Rieger, jrieger@elizabethriver.org. Consider a donation today to keep returning your home river to health. ■

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Each Branch Gets a Lover's Focus

From the Executive Director

For a while now, we've been focusing our most intensive work on one section of the Elizabeth at a time. For me, a big part of the pleasure is getting to know each new stretch as intimately as a lover.

On the Lafayette branch, our focus since 2010, we learned **every delicious bend**. We came to know where the bottom is hard enough for oysters to take hold; what saved a stately home from fire in the Civil War; why Norfolk named local waters for a Frenchman, the Marquis de Lafayette (he helped win the American Revolution while stationed here).

Now comes the Eastern Branch. Until now, I've explored it only in fits. I've climbed the high banks of Norfolk's Chesterfield Heights, where the shore, uniquely, is owned in common by neighbors, some of whom helped me drag bottles and bags out of the sand one Clean the Bay Day. I've sat a whole afternoon just watching the water lap at Carolanne Farms Park in Virginia Beach, where turtles, wetlands and pines form a peaceful pause near the Eastern Branch's farthest reach. I've piled my plate high on the Chesapeake shore of the Eastern Branch at Colonna's Shipyard's Crawfish Jamboree, where part of the annual treat is checking on a quirky, two-story houseboat, moored forever by a storm.

MUDflats is the newsletter of the Elizabeth River Project, a membership-based non-profit working to restore the Elizabeth River through government, business and citizen partnerships. "Mudflats" refers to that slippery, biologically active zone where land and water meet, symbolizing our search for common ground among diverse interests.

www.elizabethriver.org



Photo by Bill Tiernan, The Virginian-Pilot

Elizabeth River Project launched a planning team for restoring the Eastern Branch on Feb. 6, thanks to your generous support. Now comes the great fun of connecting the dots up and down this rather large stretch of our home river. Before long, we will know its specific challenges and opportunities quite well. Through a team picked to represent this branch's singular spectrum of science, government, citizen and business interests, we'll learn where the Eastern Branch needs help the most, and who is most likely to give it.

I know that, as with **the best in love affairs**, something marvelous and unexpected will emerge. A need to engage the mostly residential community of the Lafayette led us to invent River Star Homes, offering free yard flags to citizen stewards (now 1,850 strong and the inspiration for similar programs around the region) and Lafayette RiverFest (3,000 attendees last year - don't miss it April 26, lafayetteriverfest.org). On Paradise Creek in Portsmouth, an outcry for public access led to Paradise Creek Nature Park, a remarkable 40 acres

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Park Family Fun Begins

Join Moonlight Walks, Animal Tracking & More in “Paradise”

Cub Scout Pack 207 had just become animal trackers. The Portsmouth youngsters spotted fox tracks, then songbird tracks. They learned how to tell a dog print from a fox print, and what the fox needs to thrive.

“We stopped near the fox, which lives on a hillside in the woods. They drew a picture of why it would be a good home,” recalls Sarah Sumoski, our new Education Park Ranger at Paradise Creek Nature Park. “There was a lot of excitement.”

Now you can join the excitement. Elizabeth River Project’s education programming at our new Portsmouth park begins in earnest this spring, thanks to your support and generous grantors including Hampton Roads Community Foundation. Most programs are FREE for our members (\$5 non-members, unless otherwise noted).

Explore all the activities at paradisecreekpark.org. Please register in advance. Here’s a sampling.



Photo by Gene Peyton, Hampton Roads Digital Shutterbug Club

“A LOVELY park...to get healthy and fit, preserve our land and resources, and teach our children about nature, giving back and getting outdoors.”

—Michelle Reeves, visitor

Visitors identify insects at Paradise Creek Nature Park on Grand Opening Day. Join new family activities, paradisecreekpark.org.

April 12 – Spring Plant Walk, 2-3:30 pm. *Begin a garden in your own yard after learning the secrets of native plants. Bring home*

a wildflower guide and native seeds to start your own Paradise.

April 12, May 10, June 14 – Junior Rangers, 9-10:30 am. \$10 members, \$15 non-members includes all three sessions. *Sign up your child (ages 7-11) to earn Elizabeth River Junior Ranger Certification. Explore the park, clean up trails, create a craft and play fun, nature-inspired games.*

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Nature Playground to Offer “Little Free Library”

Soon anyone can stop by Paradise Creek Nature Park and pick up a book (or two) and bring back another book to share, ideally a children’s book on nature.

Elizabeth River Project is adding a “Little Free Library,” a box shaped like an owl that will be full of books, as part of a one-of-a-kind playground to be added this year, with your help, at our joint park with the City

of Portsmouth. Little Free Libraries are springing up around the country to invite neighbors to share literature.

Columbia Gas and Maersk Line Limited are the lead funders right now for a playground also to include otter slides, outdoor musical instruments and a shipping container. Let us know how you would like to help: Rdunbar@elizaberriver.org

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• Deepest Thanks •



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Chesterfield Heights: Neighbors To Help Neighbors with Lawns



Don Watson applies compost for a great lawn without chemical runoff on the Lafayette.

Suppose you could have it all: A lawn that looks like a lush, green carpet; yet is safe for your kids, the dog and the river because no chemicals were used. You can. Even better, it can be cost-effective, with our help and perhaps that of your neighbors. Elizabeth River Project's River Star Homes program already helps people achieve beautiful

lawns without fertilizers, preventing harmful run off to the river. This spring we'll pilot "neighbor to neighbor" lawn makeovers in Norfolk's Chesterfield Heights on the Eastern Branch. Thanks to you, our generous donors including Bank of America, we'll keep costs down for natural lawn care by enlisting neighbors to help each other,

while we provide materials and guidance.

Learn why "the grass is always greener with River Star Homes" at riverstarhomes.org, or call Sara Felker, 392-7487. Even if you're not in Chesterfield Heights, you may qualify for a free lawn visit and other help with your yard. ■



First Endowments Spell Stability

Most non-profits live hand-to-mouth, unable to count on funding in future years. If we are very lucky, one day a generous benefactor sets up an endowment, a fund that spins off interest to help keep programs going, year after year.

Cleaning up an urban river once presumed dead is a long and costly task. So we are very lucky indeed that Elizabeth River Project now has not one, but several such generous benefactors.

First, huge thanks to the Hampton Roads Community Foundation and Virginia Beach philanthropist Jane Batten for selecting us for the Batten Endowment Challenge. With it comes \$1 million that will remain invested with the foundation but provide disbursements to us each year from interest earned. Better yet, this remarkable gift comes with an opportunity for YOU to double your dollar. For each dollar up to \$500,000 that we raise for the Batten Challenge, the foundation will add another dollar. We could end up with a \$2 million

endowment to sustain the river you care about.

Second, sincerest thanks to the Southeast Virginia Community Foundation for another endowment challenge that we plan to use, for the near-term, to sustain our new 40-acre Paradise Creek Nature Park in Portsmouth. Your dollars can double there, too, thanks to the generosity of Susan Robertson and TowneBank. Interested in helping with either endowment challenge? Contact Joanne Hansinger, 392-7134, jhansinger@elizabethriver.org.

Lover's Focus

continued from **p2**

(paradisecreekpark.org) where the power of balancing nature and industry is celebrated more eloquently every day. At Money Point in Chesapeake, who dreamed a family of river otters would

show up, once we had begun clean up of one of the most toxic hotspots anywhere?

You make the love affair happen. Only through your generous donations have we come to this next bend in the restoration of the Elizabeth. Thanks in advance for seeing us through the long-term goal: Restoring all practical reaches of your home river, one focus area at a time.

Marjorie Mayfield Jackson
Executive Director

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Charles H. McCoy
W. Hugh and
Melissa McCrory
Robert McCullough
Monica Lynch
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Mr. and Mrs. David
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Claire Puckett
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Ribar
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Ritter
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Rolaf
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Frederick Scarlott and
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Martha Shore
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Staab
Steven and Kathleen
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Van Stephenson
Carl and Bettye
Sterzing
Pete and Susan Stewart
John and Martha
Stewart
Mrs. Elizabeth Parker
Stokes
Drs. Gordon and
Kerri Stokes
E.J. and Randi
Strelitz
Mr. and Mrs. Hil



The River is in Their Will

“One of us was born in Norfolk, the other in Portsmouth. The Elizabeth River flows between our birthplaces... Neither of us can imagine living in a place without the ebb and flow of the tide, maritime traffic and the occasional parade of sail.

“We have been supporters of the Elizabeth River Project since its inception. The river has served our communities well for centuries, but we have not always served the river well. The Elizabeth River Project is restoring the health of the river and doing it the right way.

“We believe so strongly in the work of the Elizabeth River Project that we have included it in our estate plan. We know our continued financial support of the Elizabeth River Project will be used wisely and will continue to make a difference in the quality of the river and the quality of life of area residents.” —Gray and Sharon Puryear

Join Gray and Sharon by including the river in your estate plan, and please let us know if you already have. Contact Joanne Hansinger, 392-7134, jhsinger@elizabethriver.org.

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| Strode
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Michael Studeman
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Mr. and Mrs. David
Sutelan
Joan and Timothy
Taylor
Lawrence and Ann
Taylor
Dr. Jay Taylor
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Sharon Terry
Eugene Thayer
Mr. Anthony Thiel
Martin Thomas
Billy and Barbara
Thomas
Denise S. Thompson
Patrick and Martha
Thrasher
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Helena and
Christopher
Tompkins
Top Guard Security
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Jennifer Torres
Debra Townsend and
Carl Brody
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Virginia
Robert Wood
Mrs. Joyce Wood
Jennifer Wright and
Roger Marce, Jr.
Randy and Arlene
Wright
Edith Wright
Ms. Pat Yeiser
Mr. Richard Yoder
Wayland W. Yoder
Nancy and Ronald
Young
In-Kind
American Rover
BAE Systems - Norfolk
Ship Repair
Colonna's Shipyard, Inc.
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Hampton Roads
Business Journal
Johnson and Sons
Seafood
Nauticus
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River Star
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BAE Systems Norfolk
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- Chesapeake Terminal
Host Terminals
HRSD Environmental
Improvement Fund
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Intracoastal Marine
Kinder Morgan/ | Elizabeth River
Terminals
Lyon Shipyard
Maersk Line limited
McLean Contracting
MHI Ship Repair &
Services
Norfolk Southern
Corporation
Norfolk Redevelopment
and Housing Authority
Norfolk Tug
Perdue Agribusiness
Chesapeake Plant
SIMS Metal
Mangement
Chesapeake
TransMontaigne
Services
Tidewater Global, LLC
Vandever Black,
LLC
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Volvo Penta of the
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Osage of Virginia
Rotary Club of Norfolk
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Watersheds
Association
Virginia Pilot
Association
Ware Insurance
Wilbanks, Smith and
Thomas
Winn Nursery |
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Park Family Fun

continued from p3

April 16, May 14, June 18 – Creek Kids, 9-10:30 am. \$10 members, \$15 non-members includes all three sessions. Join your little one (ages 3-6) as they earn an Elizabeth River Creek Kid Certification. We will read a nature story, explore the park and complete each day with a fun, nature inspired craft to take home.

April 18 – Moonlit Journey, 7:30-9 pm. Explore the dark side of Paradise. Search for wildlife and get up-close with our bug light trap.

May 3 – Birds of Paradise, 8-9:30 am. Follow



Explore YOUR home river aboard America's greenest vessel, the Learning Barge and at Nauticus! Become a river steward, make friends and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Discover the Elizabeth River is alive, teeming with fish, crabs and oysters as well as a rich history.

Plus enjoy an exciting field trip to Paradise Creek Nature Park!

REGISTER NOW AT www.elizabethriver.org
rdunbar@elizabethriver.org | 757-392-7132

Elizabeth River Adventures! Summer Camp

Ages 7-12 | July 7-11 | July 14-18 | July 21-25
\$240 – 1 week tuition 9-4, M-F (#10 discount for returning campers)
\$265 – Includes extended care 8-5, M-F
\$220 – Elizabeth River Project members
\$255 – Become an Elizabeth River Project member today



children. Enjoy a beautiful nature walk with your child, create a meaningful craft together, and bring home and bring home a naturally colorful wildflower bouquet.

May 24 – Animal Tracking, 10-11:30 am. Children will track animals by searching for footprints, creating habitat maps and using nets to swipe for insects in the park woods and wetland.

Consider a special gift to continue restoration and education at Paradise Creek Nature Park. Park suggestions? Sarah Sumoski, ssumoski@elizabethriver.org. ■

Elizabeth River Project members and donors are vital to the success of our organization. We appreciate each donation and have worked to ensure every one made within the listed time frame is acknowledged here. We regret any unintended omissions.

Windmills, Massive Wall Cut Pollution at Hess Site

One of 40 Businesses Earning Stars



Hess uses windmills to power pollution removal. Together, our River Star Businesses have voluntarily reduced pollution by 311 million pounds since 1997.

The towering windmill was not just blowing in the wind. The steel wall being pounded into the ground—1,400 feet long and as much as 40 feet deep—was a long way from just something to stabilize the shore.

“It all felt massive, futuristic, and incredibly important to the river,” recalled Marjorie Mayfield Jackson, Executive Director, Elizabeth River Project, describing a tour last year of Hess Corp.’s voluntary efforts to clean up contamination at its Chesapeake terminal.

Hess’ windmill was pumping raw creosote out of the ground. Associated with cancer in fish, the dark goo was left by a defunct wood treatment facility that sold the Money Point site to Hess decades ago. The steel wall will keep any remaining creosote from seeping through the ground to the river,

where it could re-contaminate an adjacent cleanup of river bottom, underway since 2009 by Elizabeth River Project and partners.

**“It all felt massive,
futuristic and incredibly
important to the river”**

The terminal’s exceptional efforts earned it Model Level at Elizabeth River Project’s annual River Star Businesses Recognition Luncheon on Jan. 23. Hess will continue its cleanup presence at the terminal despite selling it recently to Buckeye Partners.

Thanks to your generous support of the River Star program, 40 business and government facilities documented voluntary

new results through working with us to prevent pollution and restore wildlife habitat. Maersk Line Ltd., headquartered in Norfolk, also earned Model Level for its super-certified green fleet of 56 cargo ships. Old Dominion University made Inside Business River Star Hall of Fame for its “can do” commitment to environmental stewardship. And two professors were on hand to tout their new book, *The Case for Grassroots Collaboration* (Lexington Books). It cites River Star Businesses as one of the best examples.

For a complete list of this year’s accomplishments and our 109 River Star Businesses, visit elizabethriver.org. Find out if River Star Businesses is right for you. Contact Pam Boatwright, pboatwright@elizabethriver.org, 399-7487. ■



Elizabeth River Project
**River Stars
Recognition
Summary 2014**

Advancing to Model Level

- Hess Corporation—Chesapeake Terminal
- Maersk Line Limited

Advancing to Achievement Level

- City of Chesapeake Parks & Recreation
- South Norfolk Neighborhood Watch Group’s South Norfolk Harvest Share
- Vane Line Bunkering

Entering at Commitment Level

- Chesapeake, Central Fleet Management

- Eastern Virginia Medical School
- Ecocycling
- Naval Support Activity Hampton Roads, Lafayette River Annex
- Smartmouth Brewery
- Top Guard Security
- US Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District

Visit elizabethriver.org for a complete list of this year’s accomplishments.