

# Thanks for great progress, and stand by!

2014 will be a big year for community-wide efforts to improve water quality the Lafayette branch of the Elizabeth! **Based on state data, it appears that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality is likely to issue a draft report as early as August that the Lafayette meets water quality standards for recreational contact -- achieving a key community goal.**

Elizabeth River Project is thrilled, and remains dedicated to providing you with information you will need to make safe decisions about recreation in the Lafayette. Safety precautions will remain important. Additional data shows that certain areas and conditions will continue to be unhealthy for human contact. **Visit [ElizabethRiver.org](http://ElizabethRiver.org) for the latest information and our Safety First precautions, many of which apply to any natural waters.**

**THANK YOU!** This good news would not be possible without the enormous efforts of our many partners, from HRSD and the City of Norfolk to Chesapeake Bay Foundation, NOAA, Lafayette Wetlands Partnership, River Star Homes, Schools and Businesses. Working together, we are making progress every day.



## Lafayette River Scorecard 2014

<p><b>Goal: Make the Lafayette River safe for swimming by 2014 in all practical areas.</b> Reduce harmful bacteria to state water quality standards.</p>	<p><b>Great Progress! Stand by</b> Based on state data, it appears that the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality is likely to issue a draft report as early as August that the Lafayette meets water quality standards for recreational contact. This will make our scorecard grade a "B" when the report is finalized. Safety precautions will remain important. Additional data shows that certain areas and conditions will continue to be unhealthy for human contact. <b>Get the latest information at <a href="http://ElizabethRiver.org">ElizabethRiver.org</a></b></p>	<p><b>C</b></p>
<p><b>Goal: Eat the Norfolk oyster by 2014.</b> Reach "restricted" rather than "prohibited" oyster harvesting.</p> 	<p><b>Historic Progress - Also Stand by</b> State data shows more than 50% of the Lafayette (943 acres) meets VA Dept. of Health bacteria criteria for safe harvest of oysters - historic progress on a river where oyster harvest has been banned since the 1920s. However, don't eat the oysters yet. The state is considering a change in the longstanding ban on the Norfolk oyster - but is taking a careful look at toxics, viruses and other factors. Meanwhile, any change in harvest status will need to protect ancient, robust oysters discovered this year.</p>	<p><b>C</b></p>
<p><b>Goal: Reduce algae to non-harmful levels by 2020.</b> Reduce the size and extent of harmful algal blooms.</p>	<p><b>Great news—2013 saw a significant reduction in the density and duration</b> of a massive harmful algal bloom that appears in the Lafayette each summer. This harmful algal bloom can lead to low dissolved oxygen for marine life throughout the lower Chesapeake Bay. Eight of the nine warmer months tracked (Feb-Oct) showed a lessening of the algal bloom compared to 2012 and 2011.</p>	<p><b>C+</b></p>
<p><b>Goal: Engage citizens to make a difference.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit at least 1,500 River Star Homes in the Lafayette area by 2014.</li> <li>• Enlist all Lafayette area schools as River Star Schools (28 schools; 7/year).</li> </ul>	<p><b>River Star Homes grew from 0 in 2011, when we started the program, to 1,218</b> in the Lafayette area (1,854 across Elizabeth River area). We expect to meet our target of 1,500 from the Lafayette with new recruits at RiverFest 2014. Recruited 24 of 28 Lafayette schools, 2012-13. <b>Sign up today! <a href="http://ElizabethRiver.org">ElizabethRiver.org</a>.</b></p> 	<p><b>B</b></p> 

Elizabeth River Project  
*Making restoration a reality.*

For the latest information visit: [ElizabethRiver.org](http://ElizabethRiver.org)



# Congratulations, Lafayette Community Partners!

Special thanks to these partners and many more for new progress to restore the Lafayette River.



## HRSD, Norfolk Tackle Sewer Systems

These partners' massive efforts to upgrade aging wastewater systems probably are achieving the biggest payoff toward our common goals of a healthier Lafayette. Huge kudos to HRSD for more than \$200 million in treatment upgrades underway at the mouth of the Lafayette to reduce nutrients and \$2.1 million last year alone to reduce bacteria in the Lafayette with pipe and pump station improvements. Norfolk has spent \$182 million on sewer upgrades in the last decade, in 2013 replacing 65,000 ft. and cleaning 1.4 million ft. of pipe, helping reduce bacteria in the Lafayette.

## Partners Restore 5 Oyster Reefs

Five reefs have now been restored in the Lafayette, for a total of seven acres, and funding is in hand for three more acres within the next year to achieve the community goal of 10 new acres for the once famous Norfolk oyster. Elizabeth River Project and US Army Corps of Engineers each built new reefs in 2013-14. Chesapeake Bay Foundation has placed 6 million young oysters on Lafayette reefs.



## Colley Bay Gets New Wetland

City of Norfolk continues to lead the area in wetland restoration, this year building almost an acre of new wetlands along Colley Bay and beginning construction of Haven Creek Greenway, which includes a wetland to double as treatment for polluted runoff. Lafayette Wetlands Partnership completed a wetland restoration at Holly and Columbus Avenue and helped a River Star Home with a wetland restoration.

## River Stars Do Their Part

In addition to the 1,218 River Star Homes who are following 7 stewardship steps along the Lafayette, Elizabeth River Project has now helped 155 of these residents complete lawn makeovers to reduce fertilizer runoff (sign up now - [RiverStarHomes.org](http://RiverStarHomes.org)). Twenty nine of our Lafayette homes have planted their shorelines and 150 installed "super" rain barrels. Meanwhile, Old Dominion University made Inside Business River Star Hall of Fame for comprehensive efforts to reduce pollution along the river, while 24 River Star Schools in the Lafayette area conducted river projects in 2013.



## Boater Pump-Out Program Expands

Special thanks to HRSD for expanding its free boater pump out program to visit all Norfolk marinas every weekend in the summer and every Saturday in the winter. This was in direct response to the community plan for the Lafayette and boater forums that Elizabeth River Project hosted last year, indicating a need for more availability of pump-out facilities to help boaters properly dispose of sewage.



For how to get involved, visit: [ElizabethRiver.org](http://ElizabethRiver.org)

