



Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship

Northumberland is going to grow. Let's help it grow with order and beauty.

NAPS NEWS

Winter 2005

Volume 14, Issue 1

Annual Meeting

By Lynton Land

The NAPS Annual Meeting will be held at the St. Stephens Church Parish House in Heathsville on Saturday Feb. 12, beginning at 09:30 AM with coffee and cookies. This year we will follow up on the theme of "Smart Growth" emphasized by Mr. Ed McMahan, whose lecture was sponsored by NAPS and other county organizations. At 10:00 AM Delegate Albert Pollard will present and discuss a video entitled "A Tale of Two Counties" contrasting the growth in Stafford and Clarke Counties. The two counties had different growth strategies and the video documents how those strategies ultimately affected the county revenues and quality of life. Farms and open land turned out to be almost as profitable to the county as commercial development and, therefore, it is in the interest of local citizens and government to preserve farms and open spaces.

The video was developed by George Sibley, a well known film maker who currently works with the Northern Neck Land Conservancy developing a video about Northern Neck land preservation.

Delegate Pollard will respond to questions about strategies for Northumberland County. Following a discussion period the annual business meeting will be held and new Board member Tommy Tomlin introduced.

California Sludge Breakthrough

By Mike Harwood

From Frank Pecarich, Ventura, California

BAKERSFIELD – Armed with a legal opinion which contradicts county claims that their hands are tied on the issue, Senator Dean Florez will hold a news conference Friday morning in Bakersfield calling for a ban on the application of sewage sludge to Kern County lands.

Florez held a hearing in December on the application of treated sewage sludge, or biosolids, to Kern County fields – often directly above the groundwater table. The Kern County Water Agency expressed serious reservations about the practice, and many residents are equally concerned. However, county officials have indicated that they do not have the power to ban the practice.

The state's Legislative Counsel has since issued an opinion stating that a county does have the power to ban the application of biosolids within its boundaries to protect the underlying groundwater, and Florez is calling on the County to do just that.

He said, "We can monitor and test for years, but the day the test says the water isn't usable anymore it will be too late to do anything about it."

Education Committee

By Susan Lindsay

Traditionally, NAPS has been primarily concerned with issues regarding the environment and local development. However, in 2004 the Northumberland schools have become a new focus of attention. The major issue currently confronting our county is how best to serve our middle school students, and the Board's position is presented elsewhere in this Newsletter. But NAPS has also been involved in other initiatives, in both the High School and the Elementary School.

In an effort to support our High School Seniors in making career choices, we brought a speaker to address many of the questions they need to confront. As a follow-up, we hope to present a program on interviewing skills in preparation for a key element in most application processes. This will assist both students applying for scholarships and those who seek to enter the work force following graduation. In April, members of the NAPS Education Committee will, as usual, be interviewing those seniors who apply for the five NAPS scholarships.

Earlier this year, the Superintendent of Schools, Clint Staples, initiated a proposal to develop a trail through the land owned by the county adjacent to the Elementary and Middle Schools. He invited representatives from a number of local organizations, including NAP, to become involved in this project. Several meetings were held to develop the idea and work out some of the logistics. For the participants, the next phase offered the most enjoyable aspect of this undertaking - scrambling through the woodlands, armed with loppers, pruners and rolls of surveyors' tape, and exploring the unknown territory beyond the school fences. The land has a very varied topography, with ravines leading down to a winding stream, steep slopes covered with dense growths of holly, mountain laurel, oak, maple, pine and sweet gum, tangled masses of bramble, briar and - yes - poison ivy, and a wide range of groundcovers and ferns. A naturalist's delight – all in our schools' backyard!

A couple of connected trail loops have been laid out (avoiding hazardous terrain and the more unwelcoming plant life) and the plan is for students doing their community service to assist in clearing and marking these routes. Before long, it is hoped that a whole new area of the school grounds will be open to groups looking for extra space and new opportunities: the Middle School cross country team; ROTC; science classes from the elementary school; teachers seeking fresh air and exercise during breaks or after school. And in the months ahead, more volunteers will be needed to assist with identifying plant and wildlife that can then be incorporated into the science curriculum and activities.

Sludge Bills

By Mike Harwood

Several bills have been introduced in the General Assembly that, if passed, will to varying degrees improve the sewage sludge land application process. They are:

HB 1790 would require nutrient management plans for government entities that own or lease lands upon which nutrients are applied. This seems to make sense.

HB 2073 would require the Virginia Department of Health to test sludge samples upon the request of any individual, at his or her own expense, using a certified laboratory. But this bill proposal limits testing to trace elements, coliform count and pH level, excluding pathogens, chemicals, viruses, pharmaceuticals, etc. which are associated with potential health and water quality problems. Nobody has any idea whether or not the coliform levels meet EPA standards, so this may be an important bill. We need to ask that the bill be expanded.

HB 2074 would require local governments that adopt a testing and monitoring ordinance (as is the case in Northumberland County) to test at two sites each year. Similar to HB 2073, this bill needs to be expanded to include testing for more than just the four components mentioned above.

HB 2197 would require 100 days prior notice to local governments prior to applying sewage sludge. This bill needs to be expanded to require local governments to alert those to be affected in surrounding areas of possible health and water quality risks and to have effective warning signs posted.

HB 2198 would establish a training program for employees of local governments that adopt a testing and monitoring ordinance, and a "reasonable fee" to be charged to these governments. It is not clear how this requirement would differ from existing Virginia law, except that the cost of testing currently is currently paid through a "dumping fee" paid to the state by the wastewater treatment plants. This needs to be clarified. Local taxes in rural communities should not be used for this purpose since sludge land application is a service to wastewater treatment plant customers and is provided free to the farmers.

HB 2493 and SB 787 would provide that localities be reimbursed for all direct costs associated with testing and monitoring. This bill needs to be clarified as it refers to another section (Section D) of the sludge ordinance that says in part that "The fee shall not exceed the amount necessary to reimburse the direct costs for a reasonable amount of testing and for the monitoring of....." The state has given this provision a very narrow interpretation. It would be extremely helpful if this "reasonable amount" provision were to be deleted as part of HB 2493 and SB 787.

HB 2624 would authorize localities to adopt ordinances that require sewage sludge to be injected into the soil. This is a requirement we have tried to have passed previously as it would provide considerable relief from aerosol related illness. We need to push hard for this one.

HJ 643 would direct Virginia's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee to study sewage sludge land application on farmlands. The study would look into five areas that would provide information and recommend additional funding for monitoring and testing at local government levels, and improved coordination and communication between state and local governments. This bill also needs to be expanded to address inadequate testing, and the lack of state oversight and enforcement in order to provide for adequate protection for human health, especially the severely immune compromised, and the environment.

For further information on these bills, see <http://legis.state.va.us/> and enter the bill number(s) of interest.

All NAPS members are encouraged to notify Delegate Pollard and Senator Chichester today of your concerns and recommendations:

Delegate Albert C. Pollard, Jr. Room 816 General Assembly Building PO Box 406 Richmond, VA 23218 (804) 698-1099 Del_Pollard@house.state.va.us	Senator John H. Chichester Room 626 Senate of Virginia PO Box 396 Richmond, VA 23218 (804) 698-7528 district28@sov.state.va.us
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Bios Needed

By Lynton Land

At a recent meeting, a member of our Board of Supervisors suggested it would be very useful to have a list of people with special expertise who would be willing to be contacted to provide information needed by the County. There was no intent to "assign" people to tasks, merely to tap their expertise. As an example, the Reedville Sewage Treatment Plant is likely to be modified to accept septic tank pumpers, and, hopefully, to be upgraded with tertiary sewage treatment. Civil/sanitary engineers might usefully contribute to this process and save money for the County. Maybe there are architects and educators who could usefully contribute to the design of a new Middle School? If you want to contribute to the list, please send NAPS, via either snail mail or email, your name(s), contact information (mailing address, phone number, email address) and a brief statement of your expertise. Put your talent to work for the betterment of all citizens of the County! On the back page in its usual place are the email addresses of all Board members.

Remember
Saturday, February 12
9:30 AM Coffee & Cookies
Annual Meeting
10:00 AM

Marshgrass Planting and *Phragmites* Control

By Lynton Land

Over the past 3 years, NAPS has invited citizens of Northumberland County to be involved in marsh grass planting and in the control of invasive *Phragmites australis*. We have hosted several opportunities to listen to the experts from VIMS and to literally get our feet wet planting grass. This has been a very successful program with more than 200 people involved. Awareness of both the economic and ecological values of nurturing and increasing our marshlands has been dramatically increased across the Northern Neck. This is highlighted by the formation of a new local company, Green Shore Solutions. Clearly, NAPS does not want to compete in an area that is so important to the environment, but we do want to encourage continued public awareness.

In previous years, NAPS has hosted a “Marshgrass Pioneer” program, where modest amounts of grass have been provided to waterfront property owners. In the spring of 2004, two hundred twenty flats of marsh grass, containing 50 plants each, were planted at 15 sites, involving 21 property owners. Funds were derived from FishAmerica and the Chesapeake Bay License Plate Fund. Approximately 1/3 of the sites focused on using *Spartina alterniflora* for erosion control. The remainder of the sites involved using *Spartina alterniflora* along with *Scirpus robustus*, *Juncus roemerianus* and *Spartina patens* to repopulate marshes being sprayed to remove invasive *Phragmites*.

We intend to continue the “Marshgrass Pioneer” program in 2005, and hope that grant funds will again be available to purchase the grass. People applying as “Pioneers” will have their sites reviewed by NAPS in terms of their suitability for marsh grass restoration. Sites with good sun, moderate slope and modest wave action will be favored. This is an excellent way to become more familiar with your own riparian buffer if you have a site that qualifies. Previous “Pioneers” are also eligible for additional plants, if appropriate. Please contact us.

In the fall of 2004, 52 sites, involving 73 property owners, were sprayed with the approved herbicide “Rodeo” in an on-going program to replace *Phragmites australis* with more desirable marsh plants. This program will continue and we already have several new “clients” for 2005. All “clients” will be re-visited in September and early October of 2005, and their infestations sprayed as appropriate. If anybody wants to help wade around marshes with a 4-gallon backpack sprayer next fall, please let us know!

To participate as a “Marshgrass Pioneer” or to get on our growing list of sites needing *Phragmites* control, please contact NAPS at P. O. Box 567, Heathsville, VA 22473 or contact a member of the NAPS Grass Steering Group -- Lee Allain, Lynton Land, or Susan Lindsey. Additional background information, including “Stewardship Tips” and photos of previous efforts, along with contact information, can be found at our web site, www.napsva.org. Help spread the word!

Bug Zappers Revisited

By Julie Craves from Birders World

Question: I have heard that electronic zappers don't really kill many mosquitoes but do kill a lot of beneficial insects. What about devices that use attractants and suck bugs into the machine? It seems such products are becoming popular with all the concern over West Nile virus.

Answer: You are correct; old zappers that use ultra violet light to attract insects, which are then electrocuted, have been found ineffective in eliminating biting insects. Numerous studies have shown that less than 1% of insects fried by old zappers are biting insects. Other types of stimuli, including carbon dioxide and components in mammalian sweat such as lactic and fatty acids, attract biting insects, such as mosquitoes.

Along came bug killers that utilize carbon dioxide and octenol. Different types of mosquitoes react differently to carbon dioxide and octenol. Experiments using various combinations of the two have found that for mosquitoes of the genus *Culex* — the primary vectors for the spread of West Nile virus — octenol is not especially effective.

Now we have more sophisticated — and expensive — bug killers that use propane gas to generate heat, moisture, and carbon dioxide. These outputs, along with the chemical lure octenol, are supposed to attract mosquitoes to the device, which then captures the insects by sucking them into a chamber or capturing them on a sticky panel.

New studies have determined that this method is nearly as ineffective against biting insects, especially mosquitoes, as the old bug zappers. One recently published paper, reporting results of a summer-long trial of the devices placed adjacent to a wastewater treatment system, found that of the 43,000 killed, only 395 were mosquitoes; just 140 were *Culex* mosquitoes. Non-biting insects made up nearly 50 percent of the sample. Many are beneficial insects, are important links in the food chain, and also are prey for insectivorous birds that are raising young.

Remember that even in areas of infected mosquitoes, chances are slim that you will contract West Nile virus, and that the vast majority of people who do become infected have no symptoms and don't even know they have it. The best defense against West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne diseases is to avoid areas of mosquito concentration and to always wear insect repellent.

The most effective chemical repellents contain DEET. DEET has been around for 60 years. During this time fewer than 50 cases of significant side effects have been reported. Oil of Eucalyptus (30 percent concentration) and solutions containing two percent soybean oil can also be effective repellents but do not last as long.

Community Development

By Mike Harwood

NAPS co-sponsored a meeting on January 6, 2005 attended by delegates from several of the local civic and governmental organizations that sponsored Mr. Ed McMahon's Models for Development Workshop held on September 16, 2004, to begin organizing and planning for local community development initiatives. These organizations include: Chesapeake Bay Garden Club, Master Gardeners, Garden Club of the Northern Neck, Audubon Society, Northumberland County Government (Kenny Eades), Northumberland County Board of Supervisors, Northern Neck Tourism Council, Northumberland Community Center, Reedville Fishermen's Museum, Hewlett Tavern Foundation, NAACP, Chamber of Commerce and NAPS.

The NAPS board had met earlier to select a set of Mr. McMahon's projects that seemed appropriate for Northumberland County to consider. We discussed those and built on them, asking the civic group representatives to discuss them with their organizations and come back for further discussion at the next meeting, scheduled for Monday February, 14 at 10:00 AM at the Northumberland Library. We asked the attendees to bring back ideas for a name for this new organization along with a mission statement and draft bylaws. Attendees were asked to identify people in their organizations with interest in community planning to work on the projects. We were also asked to bring back biographical information to be used to establish a list of planner qualifications to provide to the Board of Supervisors and each other.

One of the key issues discussed was to try to get the new organization recognized as an official part of the County planning process. We also discussed how we might connect the "Virginia 2007 Community Program" with our community development program.

We have since learned that there is a similar regional Northern Neck initiative being started. Some of us were scheduled to meet with the organizers on January 26, weather permitting.

All NAPS members who have background in community planning and related fields and would like to participate in this long range initiative are asked to contact Lee Allain (529 5491) or Mike Harwood (580-4801) for further details.

Middle School

By Lynton Land

The NAPS Board supports the construction of a new Middle School rather than the expensive renovation and expansion of the existing sprawling structure. Following is the letter we wrote to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, and which was published in the January 12 issue of the Northumberland Echo.

The Board of NAPS (Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship) strongly urges the Northumberland County Board of Supervisors to replace

the existing middle school with a new building. We further urge the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission to consider the advantages of consolidating all the schools at a single location.

Our reasons for building a new school rather than renovating the existing structurally unsound and poorly designed, inefficient building (at 3/4 the cost of a new building!) are:

1. A new two-story building could be designed to be energy-efficient, an important consideration given the certainty that fuel costs will rise substantially within the projected lifetime of the building. A two-story building, with a smaller "footprint" would be much more architecturally appealing and cheaper to maintain.
2. A new building could be designed with safe entrances and exits and separation of grades would be simple. Keyed hydraulic elevators can provide inexpensive access for impaired persons.
3. A new building could contain well-lit classrooms equipped with modern communications (wire and wireless) technology and the provision for future innovations in teaching.
4. A new building could incorporate an acoustically satisfactory auditorium and a (sound?) stage that could be used by other schools, and by the community for social/administrative/cultural events outside of school hours.
5. **A new building could be sited to allow for the inevitable construction of a new high school as well as the possibility of an athletic complex, including an indoor swimming pool, available to the community outside of school hours.**

A new building sends the message to students, parents and teachers that "We care. We want students to learn, for the betterment of their future and the future of Northumberland County."

We hope NAPS members will communicate their views to the Board of Supervisors. The existing Elementary School was constructed only after citizens overcame initial opposition. The quality of a school system is a major consideration for people with children. If we want to attract new high-quality services and businesses, to achieve "Growth with Order and Beauty," people must not be discouraged to moving here because of a less-than-satisfactory school system. The NAPS board does not believe that a "hand-me-down" school is in the best long-term interests of the County.

Comprehensive Plan

By Lynton Land

The Northumberland County Comprehensive Plan is undergoing review this year. The Comprehensive Plan is mandated, by the Code of Virginia, to be reviewed every 5 years. There are two broad objectives:

- Identify long-range and strategic community needs of the growing population, and
- Provide a planning framework designed to guide physical change in response to growth.

The existing Comprehensive Plan along with proposed changes is available from the county at its web site www.co.northumberland.va.us, and it is on reserve at the Northumberland County Library. The plan will be reviewed chapter-by-chapter in 4 “cycles” followed by a final public hearing and review of the entire revised plan by the Planning Commission (PC). A final public hearing before the Board of Supervisors is scheduled for November. Here is the proposed schedule:

	Public
Meeting PC Review	
Chapter 1: Physical and Environmental Conditions,	
Chapter 2: Issues, Goals and Strategies,	
Appendix: Demographics	January
02/12	
Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Services	March
04/21	
Chapter 5: Water Quality Protection Plan	May
06/16	
Chapter 3: Land Use Plan	July
08/18	
Draft Plan	September
10/20	
Hearing	November

Mark your calendars! The Planning Commission meets the third Thursday each month at 7:00PM in the old courthouse. The public is encouraged to read the plan, attend the meetings, and submit written comments to the Planning Commission. It is not an onerous task to read one chapter every two months, and we encourage all NAPS members to make their opinions known to the Planning Commission and their representative on the Board of Supervisors. The “Land Use Plan” is likely to be the most contentious, and it is important to begin dialog on this issue as soon as possible.

Do we want to adhere to the “Village Concept?” If so, how can we strengthen zoning ordinances? Should more “Villages” be designated? Do we want a continuous “Village” from Callao to Reedville, and from Burgess to Kilmarnock? How do we allow growth, respect property owner’s vested rights, and retain the rural character of the County? NAPS encourages every citizen to become actively involved in charting our future and guiding current and future elected officials. Get involved or don’t complain!

Join NAPS Now

Northumberland Association
for Progressive Stewardship
P.O. Box 567, Heathsville, VA 22473

Membership Application

My check for \$_____ is enclosed
made out to NAPS

Check membership category desired*

- _____ \$15 Individual
- _____ \$25 Family
- _____ \$100 Sustaining
- _____ \$250 Patron
- _____ \$50 (or more) Business
- _____ \$1 Student

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-Mail _____

FAX (_____) _____

Please check activities in which you would like to participate:

- _____ Adopt-A-Highway
- _____ Environmental Education
- _____ Finance
- _____ Fund Raising
- _____ Grass Planting
- _____ Monitoring County Boards
- _____ Membership
- _____ NAPS Exhibits
- _____ Phragmites Problems
- _____ Publicity and Newsletter
- _____ Special Events Coordination
- _____ Any Project Assignments
- _____ Other _____

***The Internal Revenue Service has determined that NAPS qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the code. As such, dues and contributions to NAPS may be deductible by donor for tax purposes.**

Editorial

The NAPS annual meeting will be held February 12 at St. Stevens Church in Heathsville. Coffee and cookies will be served at 9:30 AM. At 10:00 AM Albert Pollard will show a video on two VA counties, which may have great value in our considerations of the Plan.

My favorite line in the California sludge article is “We can monitor and test for years, but the day the test says the water isn’t usable anymore it will be too late to do anything about it.”

Education is very important to NAPS. We must do what we are able in addition to the scholarships. There is work to be done on the new trails.

Are you able to aid our community? Please, send in your bio!

Awareness is the name of the game in Marshgrass Planting and Phragmites Control. NAPS has made big contributions to this, but is still in the game.

The format of *Bug Zappers Revisited* was dictated by using the question and answer section of the magazine.

Community Development offers more possibilities for members of NAPS to do some of the work.

Have you told the Supervisors about your thoughts on a school building?

Similarly, have you told the Supervisors and/or the Planning Commission your thoughts on the Comprehensive plan?

NAPS 2005 Calendar

The NAPS board meets at the Northern Neck State Bank in Burgess at 9:00 A.M. each month on the Wednesdays immediately preceding Northumberland Board of Supervisors meetings (second Thursday). NAPS members and prospective members are always welcome. Join the group and find out about all NAPS accomplishes.

February

9 NAPS Board Meeting
12 Annual Meeting

March

9 NAPS Board Meeting

April

13 NAPS Board Meeting
18 Newsletter

May

11 NAPS Board Meeting

June

8 NAPS Board Meeting

July

13 NAPS Board Meeting
18 Newsletter

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