



NAPS News

Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship

Helping preserve the "Northumberland way of life"

Summer 2026

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NAPS Awards \$4,500 in Scholarships

Three college-bound Northumberland High School seniors received scholarships from the Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship (NAPS) during the Senior Recognition ceremony at the school auditorium, April 27, 2026.

In recognition of their academic achievement and service to the community, Amiya Lee, Ann Rice, and Madison Jones were awarded \$1,500 each.

Lee is pursuing a career as a child psychologist and has been accepted to ten universities. Among her many volunteer activities in the community, she has crewed on NAPS' creek and highway cleanup teams.

Rice is pursuing a career in aquaculture. She has been accepted to three universities, and her many volunteer activities included three NAPS Creek Cleanup events and a "Parachutes for the Planet" presentation at a NAPS climate change awareness symposium in 2020.

Jones will be attending the University of Virginia with plans to study International Relations and Economics in pursuit of a career in public service. Her many volunteer activities in the community include crewing on NAPS' creek cleanup team.

"These three young women would stand out in any setting,"

said Roger Gruben, NAPS Scholarship Committee Chairman. "We were impressed by how hard they have worked individually, and how well they have leveraged the support of their schools and community."

Selection of awardees and scholarship amounts were based on a combination of environmental and community service, academic achievement, college interest, and financial need. An interview process played a critical role in the selection process. Ian Brownlee and Beth Novick also served on the NAPS Scholarship Committee.

To donate to the NAPS Scholarship Endowment

Fund, visit napsva.org/join-help – or mail a check payable to "NAPS" to P.O. Box 567, Heathsville, VA 22473. Please write "Scholarship Fund" in the memo line.



From left: Madison Jones, Amiya Lee, Ann Rice, NAPS president Mike Ahart.

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Two Successful NAPS Highway Cleanups

A crew of 21 volunteers cleared the roadsides and gullies during the Spring Highway Cleanup, Sunday, May 3. The team removed 23 large bags of trash from Route 200 between Wicomico Church and the Glebe Point Bridge to be disposed of or recycled.

"We had a great turnout and a very enthusiastic group," said NAPS Highway Cleanup Coordinator Denez Yancey. "Unfortunately the litter on our highways affects our safety and the health of our wildlife and waterways," she added.

During the previous NAPS Highway Cleanup, 11 volunteers cleared



The NAPS Spring Highway Cleanup crew (from left): Mike Ahart, Estrella Cruz, Don Imbur, Alice Imbur, Jeff Kuver, Martha Tallent, Kathleen Ennen, LaToya Bunns-Bea, Jen Sagan, Thom Ennen, Victoria Jett, Sadie Wirt, John Scherbenske, Michelle Scherbenske, Larkin Rea, Sharon Flick, James Scripture, Lee Flick, Denez Yancey, and Bob Yancey, and Claudia St. John (not shown)



The NAPS Fall 2025 Highway Cleanup was performed by (from left) Mike Ahart, Alice Imbur, Darnell Jayne, Shauna McCranie, Jack Yunker, Robin Blake, Mary Martha Stewart, Don Imbur, Martha Tallent, Laura Stone, and Bonnie Reif (not shown).

14 big bags of trash plus other large items. "We wish there was more pride for our beautiful Northern Neck," said Mike Ahart, president of NAPS. "This trash is mostly from people who live here, and it's not just an eyesore. Wildlife is attracted to the roadway causing a safety risk for them and for drivers and passengers, and the trash eventually washes into our creeks and rivers. Please keep your trash in your vehicle and dispose of it properly, and please cover your load."

NAPS Calendar

NAPS Board of Directors meetings are scheduled monthly, subject to change. Members are welcome to attend – submit agenda items to Stewardship@NAPSva.org – and please us know if you plan to attend so we can alert you of any schedule or location changes.

- Sept. 19, Sat. 2nd Annual Cardboard Regatta, 1pm, Reedville Market (*see article*)
- Sept. 23, Wed. ... NAPS Board of Directors Meeting, Northumberland Middle School, 3:30-4:30pm
- Sept. 26, Sat. NAPS Tent at Heathsville Farmers Market, 9am-1pm
- Oct. 3, Sat. NAPS Tent at NNLC Boots & BBQ, 326 Lawson Bay Rd., White Stone, 1-4pm
- Oct. 4, Sun. NAPS Annual Creek Cleanup, Ingram Bay Marina, noon-3pm (*see article*)
- Oct 18, Sun. NAPS Highway Cleanup, Wicomico Church, 2pm-3:30pm (*see article*)
- Oct. 26, Mon. NAPS Board of Directors Meeting, Northumberland Middle School, 3:30-4:30pm
- Nov. 8, Sun. NAPS Fall Social, Tavern Meeting Bldg., Heathsville, 2-5pm (*see article*)

Join the NAPS Fall Highway Cleanup, Sun., Oct. 18

Join the NAPS Fall Highway Cleanup Sunday, Oct. 18, starting at 2 p.m. and usually takes about an hour and a half. Volunteers will meet at the parking lot behind Wicomico Parish Church and be assigned to a team to cover a section of rte. 200. **Please register today at NAPSva.org or email Stewardship@NAPSva.org!**



Submit Your Nomination for the 2026 Northumberland Distinguished Citizen Award

The NAPS Nominations Committee is requesting nominations for the 2026 Northumberland Distinguished Citizen Award.

The award honors an individual, team, organization, or business in Northumberland County that advances the goals of NAPS:

- Improving the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries
- Fostering and preserving the county's rural atmosphere
- Promoting and monitoring land use policies
- Encouraging economic growth to promote jobs
- Cooperating with others through educational programs to target these goals.

The Distinguished Citizen Award will be presented at the NAPS Annual Fall Social, Sunday, Nov. 8 at the Tavern Meeting Building in Heathsville. Last year's award was presented to A. Mason Brent for his dedication to our community.

Previous awardees include Ida Hall, Bill Estell, Bob Parker, Lee Allain, Sue Lindsey, Jane Towner, Dr. Gregory Haugan, and Myrtle Phillips. The award has also been given to groups, including the Northumberland County Animal Shelter, Smith Point Sea Rescue, Reedville Fishermen's Museum, and the county's teachers, Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squads. See the complete list of past awardees at NAPSva.org/awards-and-grants.

If you know of an individual, group, organization, or business that merits either of these awards, email your nomination to stewardship@NAPSva.org, or by mail to NAPS DCA Nomination, PO Box 567, Heathsville, VA 22473. Please include a brief synopsis on how your nominee fits the criteria, and include your contact information. Please submit your nominations no later than October 13.



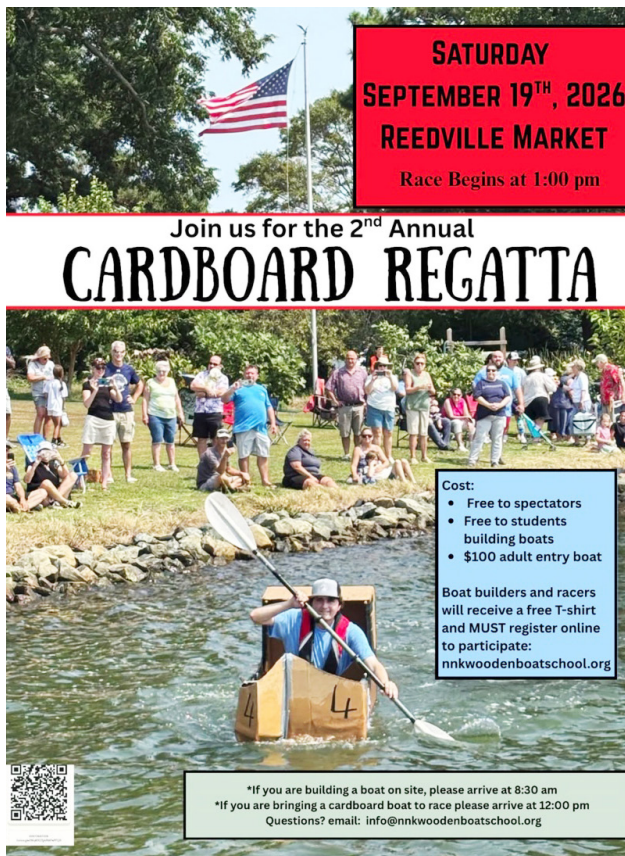
A. Mason Brent accepts the 2025 Northumberland Distinguished Citizen award, presented at the NAPS Fall Social Oct. 19, 2025.

Register Today For the NAPS Fall Social!



We hope you can join us at the NAPS Annual Fall Social on Sun., Nov 8 at the Tavern Meeting Building in Heathsville, 2-5 p.m. – information and reply envelope are enclosed in this mailing. You can also register online at NAPSva.org.

If you have any questions, comments or ideas, please email Stewardship@NAPSva.org. See you at the party!



**SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2026
REEDVILLE MARKET**
Race Begins at 1:00 pm

Join us for the 2nd Annual
CARDBOARD REGATTA

Cost:

- Free to spectators
- Free to students building boats
- \$100 adult entry boat

Boat builders and racers will receive a free T-shirt and MUST register online to participate:
nnkwoodenboatschool.org

*If you are building a boat on site, please arrive at 8:30 am
*If you are bringing a cardboard boat to race please arrive at 12:00 pm
Questions? email: info@nnkwoodenboatschool.org

NAPS' Andy "Sit" Sitison awarded "Volunteer of the Year" by VIMS

NAPS' Vice President and Ghost Pot Program Leader Andy "Sit" Sitison was awarded the Robert M. Freeman Volunteer of the Year Award by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).

William & Mary's Batten School & VIMS held their annual Awards Ceremony on Friday, May 1. The event honors students, faculty and staff for years of service to the institution, professional achievements and outstanding student-led research, with trivia and raffle prizes interspersed throughout.

"Through his leadership and volunteer service with the Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship and volunteer-based efforts in support of the TRAP Program's removal of abandoned fishing gear from local waterways, Andy Sitison plays a central role in advancing citizen science efforts that support the Batten School & VIMS," read the dedication at VIMS.edu

Congratulations, Sit!



Dean & Director Dr. D. Derek Aday presents VIMS' "Volunteer of the Year" award to Andy "Sit" Sitison

2nd Annual Cardboard Regatta Sat., Sept. 19, Reedville Market

Think you can build a boat and compete for these coveted prizes and bragging rights? Get some cardboard and start designing! Or just come down and root for your favorites, Sat., Sept. 19th at Reedville Market.

NAPS is proud to again sponsor the Cardboard Regatta and the NNK Wooden Boat School summer program. The program engages middle school students in hands-on learning, including maritime concepts, boat-building techniques, and nautical skills. Participants built and launched their own small rowboats, guided by expert instructor, David Clark.

See you at the regatta!



Join the Creek Cleanup Crew! Register Online Today!

This is NAPS' big community event to clean up our creeks & rivers! We need captains with skiffs, trash pickers (for on the skiffs and independently by land, kayak or canoe), and land-based volunteers to help with organization, lunch, and sorting trash. Participants get free lunch & NAPS "trash crab" t-shirt! Registration required.

<https://www.napsva.org/events/naps-annual-creek-cleanup-3>

Time & Location:

Sunday, Oct 04, 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Land base at Ingram Bay Marina, 545 Harveys Neck Rd, Heathsville

Special thanks to **Volunteer River Counties** and **Serve Virginia** for their support through a generous grant, **Omega Protein** for funding the lunch, **Smith Point Sea Rescue** for providing a safety boat, extra skiffs and crews, and **Clean Virginia Waterways** for providing gloves, grabbers, tongs, trash bags and other support.



NAPS' Andy Sitison and Mike Ahart named Volunteer River Counties "Volunteers of the Month"



Congratulations to NAPS' Andy Sitison and Mike Ahart for being named Volunteer River Counties "Volunteers of the Month" in April.

Many thanks to Chris Wright of 101.7 BAY FM and Bill Michaels of 104.9 WIGO Country for the on-air interviews, and Volunteer River Counties for the honors. Visit volunteerrivercounties.org

for a listing of volunteer opportunities.



Read Sit's "Story of Service" on the Volunteer River Counties Blog

Read Mike's "Story of Service" on the Volunteer River Counties Blog



NAPS 11th Annual Earth Day Festival Attracts Area Nature Lovers

A beautiful day greeted hundreds of visitors to the 11th Annual Earth Day Festival in Heathsville, Saturday, April 25, 2025, with dozens of exhibits, demonstrations, displays and activities. The event was free and open to the public.

Hosted by NAPS (Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship) and The Northern Neck Heritage Arts Center in conjunction with the first Heathsville Farmers Market of the season, the eco-friendly event celebrated the Northern Neck's natural beauty and showcased the area's environmental stewardship resources.

At the entrance to the festival area, attendees were invited to add a "leaf" to the "Earth Day Pledge Tree" by writing down their individual pledges to help the environment. Each person who made a pledge was offered a complimentary NAPS reusable grocery bag.

The Northern Neck Wooden Boat School showcased the success of the programs' last two years teaching students essential skills through woodworking and boatbuilding. Educators shared their plans for this year's efforts, including its 2nd Annual Cardboard Regatta scheduled for Sept. 19th.

The Northern Neck Land Conservancy shared the environmental and tax benefits of placing land into a conservation easement, preserving its beauty and ecological value in perpetuity. Its Boots & BBQ event is scheduled for Oct. 3rd.

The Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends' display of wildlife attracted both human and canine visitors. The organization's mission is to raise awareness of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge through education and support.

Keep Virginia Beautiful returned this year promoting the VDOT Adopt-a-Highway program and other anti-litter efforts. An offshoot of Keep America Beautiful, the Virginia organization also offers grants to support environmental and beautification programs and projects in the Commonwealth.

The Northern Neck Audubon Society educated attendees about area bird species and habitat to foster conservation for the benefit of future generations.

The Northern Neck Master Naturalists promoted their program of training volunteers as educators, citizen scientists, and stewards helping Virginia conserve and manage natural resources and public lands.



Callao Hometown Community Association displayed its revitalization plans, including an expansive new hometown park.

The Northumberland County Anti-Litter Committee urged visitors to create or join Adopt-A-Highway groups,

and informed them on the committee's initiatives, including "Secure Your Load" awareness providing free cargo nets to residents.

TOGA (Tidewater Oyster Gardeners Association) shared its dedication to promoting the cultivation of oysters as a keystone

species that can ensure the environmental health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, as well as a delicious and sustainable form of seafood.

A crew from the Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society showcased a variety of plants recommended for area gardens and landscapes. The use of native plants not only protects beneficial pollinators and other plant and animal species native to the Northern Neck,

but can save considerable time and money, as they tend to be hardy, low-maintenance, and require less water and pesticides.

Citizens' Climate Lobby returned this year to inform and engage visitors on their efforts to build support in Congress for a national bipartisan solution to climate change.

The NAPS tent featured information on several initiatives, including its new Ghost Crab Pot Program, Paddler's Guide, Annual Creek Cleanup, scholarship, STEM, and eco-tour programs. Visitors were invited to join its cleanup events and projects.

"A wonderful day all around! We sincerely thank all the exhibitors for their fun and informative displays, and we thank everyone who stopped by," said Mike Ahart, president of NAPS. "Please put April 24, 2027 on your calendars for the 12th Annual Earth Day Festival, and we hope to see you all there."



This year's Electric Vehicle exhibit included six all-electric cars plus a pickup truck. Local owners and members of Drive Electric RVA were on hand to answer questions about their vehicles and experiences



Forever Chemicals, Sewage Spill, and Ghost Pots discussed at NAPS Special Program & Annual Meeting

PFAS (“forever chemicals”), the Potomac River sewage spill, and NAPS’ Ghost Pot Program were featured topics at Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship’s (NAPS) Special Program & Annual Meeting, Sunday, March 29 in Heathsville.

Madeleine Green, Virginia Campaign Coordinator for Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN), presented a primer on toxic PFAS “Forever Chemicals” (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances used in manufactured products) and an update on recent state legislative efforts to require PFAS testing of sewage sludge biosolids before farmland application as fertilizer. The chemicals resist breaking down, bioaccumulate in fish, livestock, and humans, and has been linked to a wide array of diseases and health conditions. “PFAS are a migratory kind of chemical...they can move from biosolids to soils to crops where they get taken up into the food chain,” said Green, adding that runoff can carry them into surface waters and be absorbed into groundwater and wells. “Once they’re in the environment, it’s functionally impossible to remove these things, especially because they are toxic at such small, small levels,” said Green.

Six of seven PFAS-related bills passed in this year’s Virginia legislative session and are awaiting the Governor’s action, said Green, including HB1072 initiated by Westmoreland County to give jurisdictions the ability to test land-applied biosolids. Other legislation (HB1443/SB386, HB938/SB138) would require regular testing at wastewater treatment plants for PFAS discharged or provided as biosolids for land application. Green said the thresholds

NAPS Officers & Board Members

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(vacant).....(Term Expires 2/2028)		

in much of the legislation are not “particularly restrictive,” so PRKN, other organizations and concerned citizens still have some work to do. HB122 would prohibit the manufacture or sale of cosmetic products with certain PFAS ingredients in Virginia.

The one failed bill (HB348) would have provided \$3 million in a funding program for rural well testing, said Green. Cyclopure is one of the companies offering PFAS well water testing (\$85 according to cyclopure.com), but soil testing is considerably more expensive, said Green.

A member of the audience asked whether the blockade of fertilizer in the Strait of Hormuz could increase demand of biosolids application. Green said the permit process takes time, so unless the crisis continues for an extended period, it shouldn’t have much of an effect. She added that PRKN and other organizations continue to educate farmers and the public about PFAS risks.

Another attendee asked whether E-Coli levels in the application of bio-solids were an issue with land application. “They would have to have been treated for pathogens,” said Green, “although it is extremely nutrient rich” which can cause algal blooms and dead zones if not applied conservatively.

Green also presented an update on the January 19 collapse of a major sewage pipe near Washington DC that is estimated to be “one of the largest, if not the largest, sewage spills in US history.” An estimated 240 million gallons of raw, untreated sewage was released into the Potomac River basin, said Green. Despite the lifting of recreational advisories by many agencies and counties, PRKN continues to monitor levels on the river. Although the spill is not likely to have a significant effect in the Northern Neck section of the Potomac River or the Chesapeake Bay, the risk of damage to the reputation of local seafood is a concern, said Green.

NAPS Ghost Pot Program

Andy “Sit” Sitison and Eric Knudsen highlighted the second winter season of the NAPS Ghost Pot Removal and Loss Prevention Program. The team removed 100 derelict crab pots over the crabbing off-season, in coordination with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). Sitison will be presented the VIMS Volunteer of the Year award in May, and has been selected as Volunteer River Counties “Volunteer of the Month” along with NAPS president Mike Ahart.

(continued on p. 10)



Madeleine Green of Potomac Riverkeeper Network explaining health risks of PFAS “Forever Chemicals” at NAPS Special Program, Annual Meeting & Ice Cream Social

NAPS Special Program & Annual Meeting

(continued from Page 9)

Brent Stansbury, Pat Clement and Etienne Lavalée also participated as crew or guest crew in the Ghost Pot Program.

“The boat made a big difference,” said Sitison. NAPS was granted a 16-foot center-console skiff by Grace Episcopal Church before the winter season. “Last year we we had a few piles...” he said, showing photos of stacked crab pots, “this year we got a big set of piles,” adding that about half of the removed pots were functional, and “can still kill things.”

“There are two types of ghost pots,” explained Sitison. The team used side-scan sonar to locate “lost” pots sitting on the bottom with no float attached, and used a nail rope and other tools to grab and pull them from the water. If there is a float and it’s out of season...that’s called an ‘abandoned’ pot,” and can often be pulled up by the attached line – 33 of the 100 pots had floats attached. The permit from VIMS and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) allows NAPS to remove pots with or without floats from January 1 to March 15. Sitison and Knudsen spoke about the wide array of live and dead sea life found in the traps. Location and contents of each trap was documented and uploaded through the VIMS TRAP App and all contents returned to the water. A map and data of traps pulled as part of the program can be found at www.trapprogram.org.

Sitison and Knudsen talked about the challenges of the work, especially in freezing or windy conditions. Each of the team members wore survival suits when on the water, and the work was very physical and dirty. The 16-foot skiff was a significant upgrade from last year’s smaller vessels which could only hold a couple pots before having to shuttle back to shore, but an even larger skiff would be more effective and allow working in less-protected waters. “The water would be about an inch or two below the gunwale when pulling a 80-pound pot, so if we could get a 19-footer, and a little bit wider,” said Knudsen. Many pots are partially buried in silt and contain dozens of oysters and mussels adding to the weight.

Sitison demonstrated the process of identifying pots using side-scan sonar and how the team used a nail rope to retrieve a pot. He also showed how forward-scan sonar could be more effective since a boat can be driven directly to the pot and retrieved with a grappling hook. The next phase of the program is proving the concept that commercial crabbers can find and retrieve missing pots during the season at the time they discover one missing from a line of pots, allowing them to recover the \$60 pot and the catch. According to VIMS studies, ghost pots cause an estimated \$33 million in lost revenue in the Chesapeake Bay region, and commercial crabbers lose up to 20% of their crab pots each year.

The winter 2026 NAPS Ghost Pot Program was performed mostly on the Little Wicomico River, with a few outings on Indian Creek, Dividing Creek, and the Coan River. Brent Stansbury Visit <https://www.trapprogram.org/> for an interactive map plotting each ghost pot retrieved.

Northern Neck Wooden Boat School

Katie Wilkins presented a brief update on the Northern Neck Wooden Boat School as it plans for its third year. The program teaches essential woodworking and project skills to area students as they design and build a working wooden skiff. It also launched its inaugural Cardboard Regatta in Reedville last year, with several teams competing – this year’s regatta is scheduled for Sept. 19.

Boatbuilding “is part of our heritage here in Northumberland...we have so many boat businesses, so many citizens who enjoy the water, and it’s just so great in our community,” said Wilkins, adding that the program requires both volunteer and financial support. The Wooden Boat School’s building at the Northumberland Schools campus is now completed, and the organization has attained non-profit status as a 501(c)(3). Wilkins thanked NAPS for being a sponsor of the program each year. (cont’d p. 11)

Anti-litter Committee’s ‘Action Plan for a Clean County Culture’

The Northumberland Anti-litter Committee has updated Phase 2 of its action plan with the goal of creating and implementing a Northumberland Clean County Culture Campaign through five actions:

Action 1: Promote the cause of a clean county culture through education and publicity

- Participate in spring/April and fall/October Heathsville farmer’s market.
- Design logo/tagline and calendar of anti-litter events & VDOT roadway cleanups.
- Design committee business cards for distribution at anti-litter events.
- Provide quarterly updates to email distribution list - January, April, July & October.
- Publish articles in local newspapers to promote meetings, events, education, and actions items.
- Present annual progress report to Board of Supervisors.

Action 2: Host 2nd tire amnesty/recycling collection event

- Northumberland received \$4,740.90 in funding from the DEQ non-competitive litter grant to support the cost of the tire recycling event, but we were not able to schedule this event.
- The funds were used to support the Household Hazardous Waste event.
- The committee would like to host a tire recycling event in 2027 contingent upon funding.

Action 3: Encourage litter cleanups

- Distribute free cleanup kits/car trash bags at all anti-litter events and through the Northumberland Public Library. Use \$2,000 in funds allocated to committee from the County budget.
- Support additional wintertime cleanup on primary roads by VDOT funded by a portion of the DEQ non-competitive litter grant. (VDOT would not allow the funding to be used to pay clean-up contractors.)
- Alternative Event: Hosted trash pick-ups at Lodge Landing, Coopers Landing, Rowe’s Landing, and Hughlett Point April 18.

Action 4: Host “Stash Your Trash” education and outreach event

- Northumberland received \$1,156 in funding from the DEQ competitive grant to support the cost of this event.
- The event was held June 6, 2026, at each of the three county recycling centers.
- Funds were used to purchase car trash bags for distribution, free of charge, to County residents

Action 5: Explore ways to partner with NUCPS to educate elementary school students

- The committee sent letters to all three principals in Northumberland County Public Schools to enquire if they are interested in the “Our Chesapeake Bay” program.
- The committee has contacted the two NUCPS art teachers to see if they are interested in sponsoring a student art contest to design a tag line/logo for the committee.

The Northumberland Anti-litter committee is looking for a District 1 member, an At-Large member, and welcomes volunteers. Contact Stuart McKenzie at smckenzie@co.northumberland.va.us

NAPS Special Program & Annual Meeting (from p. 10)

Other NAPS Initiatives/NAPS Annual Meeting

NAPS president Mike Ahart outlined a few of the organization’s programs and events, including its 11th Annual Earth Day Festival in Heathsville, annual Creek Cleanup (Oct. 4), spring and fall highway cleanups (Oct. 18), scholarship program, Paddler’s Guide to Northumberland County, and Too-Good-To-Throw-Away Shed at the Horsehead waste disposal/recycling center.

After the presentation, attendees were treated to an ice cream social while NAPS members held a brief annual meeting. Ian Brownlee, Jen Sagan, Denez Yancey and Beth Novick were re-elected to the NAPS Board of Directors.

NAPS Ghost Pot Program Gears Up Early with \$8,300 Grant and New Sonar Technology

by Andy Sitison, NAPS Project Lead

The NAPS Ghost Pot Retrieval and Prevention Program is getting an early start on our upcoming 2027 winter season! While our team typically convenes in late autumn to prepare for our official January 1 launch, this year's timeline has shifted into high gear as we begin testing cutting-edge sonar technology.

Earlier this year, NAPS was awarded an \$8,300 grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund — supported by Virginia's popular "Friend of the Chesapeake" license



plates (please support – visit www.dmv.virginia.gov). This funding allows us to purchase state-of-the-art "Forward Scan" sonar units and outfit-

ting gear for local workboats. Unlike traditional side-scan sonar, this technology uses a bow-mounted transducer to scan 60 to 100 feet ahead of the vessel in real time.

Our Hypothesis

The team can use the forward-scan sonar to locate a derelict crab pot and navigate directly to it, deploying a grappling hook to snag it while passing over. We anticipate this approach will significantly boost recovery efficiency compared to standard side-scan sonar and nail-rope dragging alone. Now, our goal is to put that theory to the test.

Current Testing & Next Steps

In August, we acquired and installed our initial setup — a Garmin LiveScope Ultra 2 paired with an LVS34 transducer — on the NAPS project boat. Preliminary field trials are already underway to fine-tune system calibration and hone our retrieval techniques.

Rollout Schedule

- Fall 2026: Field-testing will continue throughout the autumn to refine operating procedures and optimize target acquisition.
- Winter 2027: The system will be integrated into our active winter ghost pot collection operations.
- Spring/Summer 2027: Apply our learnings with the industry. We aim to partner with a local commercial crabber to equip and test a second unit on their workboat—ideally aligned with the start of the crab season on March 15, and continue over the summer season.

Get Involved!

We are seeking a local waterman interested in collaborating on this technology trial, as well as volunteers looking to support the Ghost Pot Program. If you would like to participate or learn more, please contact Andy Sitison ("Sit"), NAPS Ghost Pot Project Lead – email Stewardship@NAPSva.org.



The NAPS skiff tricked out with new forward-scan technology

