

Regional Update

A Monthly Report of Activities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia

January 2007

PDC Completes Phase II of the Ecotourism Public Access Improvements

The PDC has completed the installation of a new floating dock in the Willis Wharf Harbor. The Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program, part of DEQ, and NOAA provided funding for various improvements planned at the site.

The floating docks provide improved public access to the Seaside Water Trail. This trail connects the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge with the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge. The entire trail is over 70 miles long. There is a link to

the Trail guide at www.a-npdc.org.

Previously, the Phase I improvements included a floating dock installation at Chincoteague's Eastside Landing and Wachapreague's Town Marina. Both installations were completed in early 2006. Over the spring and summer, PDC staff worked with County officials, Willis Wharf residents, DEQ staff, and other state officials to site improvements at the harbor. Besides the floating dock, an observation deck will be built over the current berm and an interpretive sign attached to the deck will provide information on the Seaside Water Trail. Local Willis Wharf residents are also considering adding a wheelhouse design to one section of the deck to provide bird watching opportunities.



New Floating Dock in Willis Wharf Harbor

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Groundwater Committee Public Educ. Campaign

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Ground Water Committee is raising awareness of the threats to the Shore's Groundwater. A public educational campaign has been prepared to educate school age children. The campaign was funded by a Wellhead Protection Grant, which was received from the Water Resources Division of the Department of Environmental Quality.

The sixth and ninth grade science classes in the Accomack and Northampton County Public School Systems are receiving educational material such as The JUG: Just Understanding Groundwater kit, lesson plans, a diagram of the groundwater system and a Chesapeake Bay fact sheet. The lesson plans and a link to view the Chesapeake Bay fact sheet are available at www.a-npdc.org

Wallops Research Park

Governor Kaine recently announced that Accomack County would receive \$700,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds for development of the Wallops Research Park. The funds will be used to develop a master plan for the park, extend the water and wastewater lines, and improve the roadways. The search for a project manager is currently underway, and a request for qualifications has been advertised in order to begin the process of selecting an engineering firm.

The A-NPDC prepared the Community Economic Development Fund prospectus to secure the funding and facilitated an Industry Agreement between Accomack County and BaySys Technologies, the park's first tenant.

At the county's direction, A-NPDC staff is also organizing a public meeting planned for January to update citizens on the park's progress.

County Comm. Supports Exmore Development

Northampton County's Community Housing Committee has adopted a resolution supporting the affordable housing development proposed by the Accomack-Northampton Regional Housing Authority on Occohannock Neck Road in Exmore. The Authority has proposed a mixed-income development of homeowners and renters on the 54-acre site.

The Community Housing Committee is appointed by the Northampton County Board of Supervisors. Composed of leaders and providers of housing services, the Committee is chaired by County Supervisor Jeff Walker. The Committee is charged with identifying solutions for the lack of affordable workforce housing in the County.

The resolution cites the Authority's excellent management record of its rental properties, assurances that homeowners will keep homes on good condition through deeds of trust, and the Authority's plan to provide homes for average income families, not just low income families, as reasons for the Committee's support.

The Public Involvement Plan is Available

The Public Involvement Plan on the Proposed Regional Long-Range Plan for Transportation is available for public review and input at the Planning District Commission, 23372 Front Street, Accomac, Virginia.

The plan will be considered for adoption at the public meeting of the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee on Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.



Wallops Research Park Master Plan

Exmore-Belle Haven Committee Selects Engineer

The engineering firm of O'Brien & Gere has been selected by a management team appointed by the towns of Exmore and Belle Haven to prepare engineering studies for expanding water and sewer service to Belle Haven and unserved portions of Exmore. The Virginia Beach firm was one of nine that expressed interest in preparing the studies. The Water and Sewer Management Team has been working since October 2006 under a planning grant funded by a Department of Housing and Community Development Community Development Block Grant Planning Grant.

Section 8 Staff Strives for Communication

The staff of the Housing Choice Voucher Program is opening up new avenues of communication with Section 8 landlords and participants. In December staff sent their first newsletter covering the most frequently voiced questions and concerns regarding recent program changes. Revamping the program to bring it in compliance with HUD regulations and expectations has been a complicated process, but change is easier with clear communication.

The staff will also hold a meeting with landlords to discuss their concerns and questions in January



How to Contact the A-NPDC

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