



Winter 2022
Editor: Sydney Covey



The Heron Chronicle

Welcome to the winter newsletter from the Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council (CEIC)!

We are an eighteen-member, mayor-appointed advisory group formed in 1983. Our purpose is to promote interest in improving Chesapeake's environment, thereby making Chesapeake a greener, cleaner and healthier city in which to live, learn, work, farm, and play. We accomplish this purpose through outreach, education, and volunteer efforts. Our key focus areas include litter and pollution prevention, waste reduction and recycling, beautification, and conservation landscaping. We're an active group and generally meet monthly. If you're interested in joining the CEIC, please apply at: <https://boardscommissions.cityofchesapeake.net/namebank/>

New Year, New Habits: Is the End of Curbside Recycling a Wake-Up Call?



In light of City Council's December 14th decision to end Chesapeake's curbside recycling contract with TFC Recycling, effective July 1, 2022, now is a great time to take a hard look at how we, as individuals and households, generate solid waste. Whether it goes in a blue bin, brown bin or on the curb, the City currently spends \$23 million per year to get rid of it, a cost which is projected to rise next year.

Reflect on these sobering statistics from www.upstreamsolutions.org about American waste:

Nearly 1 trillion disposable food service products are used each year in the U.S. Unfortunately, there are costs to all these disposables; environmental costs from extracting natural resources and detrimental impacts on the climate caused by plastic pollution, procurement and waste management costs to food-service businesses supplying disposables; and costs to governments and taxpayers dealing with solid waste and litter removal.

Today, most food and beverage packaging either ends up in a landfill, an incinerator, or the environment.

More than 36 billion disposable utensils are used every year in the U.S. Put end to end, they would wrap around the Earth 139 times.

In the U.S., the only plastic materials that have historically been economically recoverable at scale are clean PET (#1) and HDPE (#2) plastic – mostly bottles. Since 2017, the commodity prices on recyclables have declined an average of 41%. >>>CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Michael E. Ornoff

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New Year; New Habits: Is the End of Curbside Recycling a Wake-Up Call? (Continued from Cover)

While it's still important to recycle and build better systems for it, more recycling will not solve plastic pollution or our overconsumption and waste problems. Somewhere along the way, we forgot that the first two R's - reduce and reuse - are way more important for the environment than recycling. Below are some tips for reducing your waste.

Start with how you shop. Bringing reusable bags is the first step, but consider the below suggestions to have a greater impact:

- Bringing reusable bags for your produce, or skipping the bags for things like bananas, citrus and avocados.
- Purchasing dairy products from companies that use refillable containers on deposit where you can return empty containers at the store or market.
- Buying products like dry goods and nuts in bulk with your own bags or containers.
- Supporting companies that are using reuse and refill systems and minimizing unnecessary packaging. Search "zero waste stores near me" to find local options.

Ditch zip-top bags for disposable-free lunches, and BYO bottle and cup.

- There are so many reusable, washable lunchbox, tote, bag, and container solutions out there.
- Bringing your own water bottle just makes sense environmentally and economically.
- Drinking out of your own to-go coffee or smoothie cup is such a better experience than drinking out of disposables.

Rethink your cleaning and personal-care products. For most of these products, the main ingredient is water. Look around your house and you'll probably notice how many plastic containers you go through by cleaning your bodies and your homes. It doesn't have to be that way; you can keep clean and fresh and cut down on unnecessary waste.

- Make your own personal care products. There are so many resources online for how to do this.
- If you don't want to DIY, subscribe to a personal care product service where you can send back empty containers to be washed and refilled.
- Use toothpaste tablets or toothpaste in aluminum tubes (which you can cut open, clean out and recycle) instead of toothpaste in plastic tubes. Zero waste stores carry these.
- Use a reusable straight razor (they last forever) instead of throw-away plastic razors.
- Use shampoo and conditioning bars instead of more water in plastic.
- Try plastic-free deodorants with safer ingredients and less packaging.
- Loop, sells some of your favorite brand-name personal care products in reusable, refillable containers that you can return for washing and refilling.

What about COVID-19? Despite the misperception that single-use is somehow safer than reuse, evidence presented by [Upstream Solutions](#) shows that reusing is safe across a wide variety of applications, and is likely safer than single-use.

Bottom line: Whether they are made from fossil fuels (plastic) or plants (compostable/biodegradable), reducing our consumption of single-use products will impact our environment in positive ways. Make 2022 the year you examine how your household contributes to Chesapeake's waste management problem, and take action to reduce, reuse and save money! Find out more at [upstreamsolutions.org](#)

Chesapeake Environmental Awards Luncheon and Conservation Conference

SAVE THE DATE for Wednesday, March 9, 2022. The 39th Chesapeake Environmental Awards Luncheon and 2nd Chesapeake Conservation Conference will take place at the Chesapeake Conference Center. The annual awards luncheon is our chance to recognize the many heroes in Chesapeake making a difference and inspiring others to be good stewards of our environment. The 2nd Conservation Conference will focus on urban forestry and will highlight ways to enjoy the multitude of benefits that trees bring to our community. We'll learn about efforts underway in neighboring communities and receive an update on Chesapeake's urban forester position.

It's not too late to nominate an environmental hero in our community. Follow the link to complete the online form by January 15th to nominate an individual, group or organization. <https://bit.ly/CEIC-EAP>



Upcoming Events

January 2 — Park Shelter Reservations Open for 2022

January 26 — 12:00 p.m. CEIC Meeting*

February 5 — Fly Fishing at Northwest River Park

February 23 — 12:00 p.m. CEIC Meeting*

March 9 — Chesapeake Environmental Awards Luncheon and Chesapeake

Conservation Conference

March 19 — Chesapeake Recycles Day, South Norfolk

March 23 — 12:00 p.m. CEIC Meeting*

March 24 — Nature Academy at Chesapeake Arboretum

March 25 & 26 — Great American Cleanup

*The public is welcome to join CEIC Meetings. Meetings are held at River Crest Community Center located at 1001 River Walk Pkwy, Chesapeake, VA 23320

Find more events at:

<https://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/city-departments/departments/parks-recreation-tourism/calendar.htm>

2022 Keep Chesapeake Beautiful Photo Calendar Contest

The 4th annual CEIC Keep Chesapeake Beautiful Photo Calendar Contest has concluded with another successful year.

Over 100 photographs of outdoor spaces around Chesapeake were submitted and reviewed by the CEIC and guest judge photographer Jim Knox. 13 winning photos (12 months and a cover photo) were selected by the judges. Each month offers an environmental tip and showcases events happening around Chesapeake.

2022 Calendar Cover Photo:
Northwest River Park, Teresa Lane



This year's winners are:

Teresa Lane	James Talley
Christopher Smith	Cammy Huston
Maggie Lamay	Angela Powers
David Gibson	Jamie Geressy
Erin Rafferty	Erin Morris
Rogard Ross	Melanie Roberts
David Bostic	

Eligible winners received a \$100 prize!

Calendars are available at the Chesapeake Visitor Center and at all Chesapeake Community Centers. A \$5.00 suggested donation goes to support future environmental projects and programs.

Record Demand at Fall Chesapeake Recycles Day

Chesapeake Recycles Day was held on Saturday, November 6th at Tidewater Community College in Chesapeake. The day was a huge success with a record turnout of 555 cars. Recycling stations included Goodwill, SPSA, Shred-It, and TFC Recycling. They accepted electronics, clothing, household items, sensitive documents, and household hazardous waste for recycling and proper disposal. 6,800 pounds of electronics, 2,180 pounds of clothing, textiles, housewares (Goodwill), several hundred pounds of general recycling for TFC, and 6,000 pounds of documents for paper shredding, were all safely disposed of in only a few hours!

Mark your calendar for the 2022 recycling events: March 19 in South Norfolk, April 23 in Western Branch, October 15 in Greenbrier, and November 12 in Great Bridge.



New Year, New Landscape Habits

This issue's theme is "New Year, New Habits" so consider the ways in which you might apply conservation landscape management practices to your own yards and other outdoor spaces that you maintain. Conservation landscaping involves working with nature to reduce pollution by minimizing polluted runoff (stormwater) and carbon emissions from fertilizers and gas-powered equipment. Environmental stewardship of land and water is the most effective tool residents have to protect our many waterways in Chesapeake.

Here are some ways you can make changes to your landscape management practices and have a positive impact on our environment:

- Relinquish some lawn space to a woodland garden or pollinator and bird habitat.
 - Switch your gas-powered equipment to electric equipment where possible; not only is electric/battery-powered equipment easier to maintain, it is quieter!
 - Leave some leaves in the fall and winter – mow them into your turfgrass or rake them into flower beds to insulate plants over winter and provide habitat for beneficial overwintering insects.
 - Remove invasive plants from your landscape—English ivy, Chinese privet, periwinkle, Mimosa and Bradford Pear are some of the more common ones.
 - If planting a new bed or replacing aging foundation plants, select native plants.
 - Reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers.



From the home of the author behind "New Year, New Landscape Habits" Lauren Ragsac, CEIC Member. Lauren noted: "The large oak tree on the right was once surrounded by weedy turf grass (as well as the entire area around the shed) so I let the whole area around the tree and beyond become more of a woodland garden, seen in the photo in early spring."

For more information on some of the techniques of conservation landscaping practice and design, consult the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council's (CCLC) website at www.chesapeakelandscape.org. The CCLC is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that works to advance conservation landscaping practices for communities throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. You can download their Eight Essential Elements of Conservation Landscaping for free.

Walmart Moves Beyond Plastic Bags

Across the country, Walmart is beginning to shift away from plastic bags. In 2020, Walmart joined the Closed Loop Partners' Consortium to Reinvent the Retail Bag, collaborating with CVS Health, Target and other major retailers to lead the industry in finding alternatives to traditional plastic shopping bags. In California, customers and associates are testing a program that allows shoppers to "check out" reusable bags for free if returned them to the store within 30 days. In Vermont, Walmart stores are entirely bagless with customers only using reusable bags. Walmart has launched a similar pilot program in Maine.

In Chesapeake, shoppers at the Grassfield Walmart are greeted at checkout by the sign at right regarding plastic bag usage and fees. It is worth noting the sign references the Virginia Disposable Plastic Bag Tax ordinance which authorizes any county or city to adopt by ordinance the Virginia Disposable Plastic Bag Tax on disposable plastic bags provided to customers in grocery stores, convenience stores, and drugstores in the locality. Six municipalities in Virginia have passed ordinances: Fairfax, Roanoke, Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, and Fredericksburg, but Chesapeake has not yet passed an ordinance instituting a plastic bag fee. To avoid fees, shoppers should get in the habit of always using their reusable bags!

Learn more about the legislation here: www.tax.virginia.gov/guidelines-virginia-disposable-plastic-bag-tax

Learn more about Walmart's Beyond the Plastic Bag initiatives here: [Walmart Continues To Progress Beyond the Plastic Bag](#)



Great American Cleanup: March 25-26, 2022

Be a part of the Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest community improvement program, which takes place annually in an estimated 20,000 communities nationwide. Hampton Roads communities, through askHRgreen.org, are partnering together to host a two-day cleanup in honor of the Great American Cleanup. Join volunteers across the region to organize or participate in a community improvement initiative.

Businesses, Civic Leagues and School Groups: Form a small team (or two) within your group and transform a cleanup site through the power of teamwork.

Individuals and Families: Clean your block! Gather your family together and challenge your neighbors.

Register at: www.askHRgreen.org/cleanup and be sure to choose your city and project preferences.



CEIC-led Great American Cleanup 2020

In 2021, across community volunteering and litter cleanups, Chesapeake Parks, Recreation, and Tourism documented 98 events/spaces, 12,377 pounds of litter collected, 2,302 acres cleaned, 751 volunteers, 1,515 volunteer hours, \$40,412 volunteer value!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered in 2021!

Another License Plate Fund Success Story

One of the projects funded by the Chesapeake License Plate Fund this year improved a public median at Oaklette United Methodist Church in Indian River. Volunteers spread compost to create healthy soil and mulch to support the growing plants, and planted five trees and nine shrubs where only weeds and grass existed before.



Many hands made for light work. Thank you to the Navy Aviation Ordnance for assisting in the planting!



Do you know of an area in need of conservation and beautification like the project above? Any resident or employee of the City of Chesapeake, including Chesapeake Environmental Improvement Council (CEIC) members and community/civic organizations, may submit a project request to use license plate funds to beautify City-owned property. Applications for project funding are due by **March 31** each year. Find the application here:

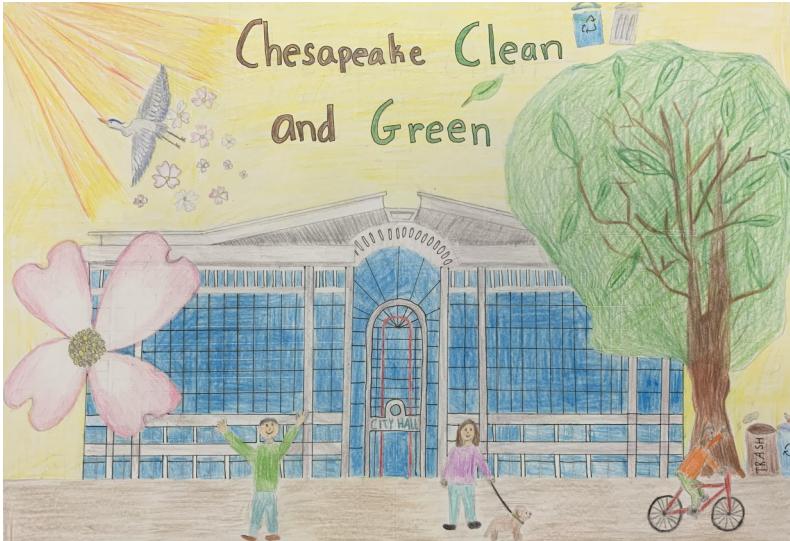
[https://www.cityofchesapeake.net/Assets/forms/departments/parks_rec/
License+Plate+Funds+Request.PDF](https://www.cityofchesapeake.net/Assets/forms/departments/parks_rec/License+Plate+Funds+Request.PDF)

Email the completed form to SpecialPrograms@CityofChesapeake.net

You can help beautify Chesapeake without getting dirty! For every "Chesapeake City" license plate sold, \$15 goes into the License Plate Fund, which City Council has earmarked for beautification and conservation projects. To order the plate, just go to dmv.virginia.gov and select "Chesapeake City" under the special interest license plate tab. Spread the word!



Clean and Green Poster Contest Registration Now Open



Register an individual or classroom from December 1 – March 1, complete poster by March 25, winners chosen in April. Prize packs will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner in each grade category and to the teachers of the 1st place winners. Open to all Chesapeake students (public, private, homeschool) K – 12. Find more information, contest rules, and sign up at www.CityofChesapeake.net/CEIC

Lina Billie 6-8 Grade, 1st Place, 2021

In 2021, CEIC members volunteered over 915 hours of their time to Chesapeake environmental improvement and awareness! Pictured from left to right: Vikki Barnette, Amy Weber (Secretary), Lauren Ragsac, Jerry Ivory, Sandy Madison, Lacy Shirey (Vice Chair), Rogard Ross (Associate Member), Heather Barlow (Associate Member), Jim Haluska, Sydney Covey, Mike Hoffman, Becky Greenwald (Chair), Mike Perry

Not pictured: Allison Schweitzer, Adrienne Sawyer, Jennifer Williams, Jared Hoernig



New Habit: Productive Walks!

On walks, carry a small trash bag so you can pick up any stray litter that you come across along our roads, parking lots, and in our parks. Every piece of trash collected is one less that causes harm to wildlife in our natural areas and waterways. And just as important, reduce your use of single use packaging to not create litter in the first place. Take The Pledge to keep Virginia Litter Free at <https://loversnotlitter.org/pledge/>

Be sure to tell your friends and neighbors about the Heron Chronicle and look for the next issue in a few months!