



The Blue Heron Times (December, 2025 Issue)

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Chapter website: sniwla.org
WebMaster: webmaster@sniwla.org

IWLA State/National
IWLA Virginia Division
IWLA National

Backyard Conservation News
AskHRgreen.org
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Department of Conservation & Recreation
Division of Wildlife Resources
Hoffler Creek Wildlife Foundation
Nansemond River Preservation Alliance
SCCC - Suffolk Clean Community Commission
Recycling
TerraScapes Environmental Consulting
The Wildlife Society
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Master Naturalist

Classifieds
Chuckatuck Trading Post
(757)255-9295
5969 Goodwin Blvd, Suffolk, VA 23452

Suffolk Radio & TV Service
Radio/Television Repair
(757)539-2110
536 W. Washington Street
Suffolk, VA 23434

Appomattox River Company
(757)890-0500
3009 W. Mercury Blvd, Hampton, VA 23666

Azzillo Recycling (Scrap Metal)
(757)539-8593,
Locations: Suffolk & PTMS Blvd

Meetings

There are no meetings scheduled for December.

Board of Director meetings usually are held on the second Monday of each month. Next month's meeting will be at 7pm on **Monday, January 12th** at the Constantia House behind Baker's Funeral Home in Suffolk.

Chapter Members Dinner meetings usually are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. The next one will be held at 6:30pm on **Wednesday, January 21st** at the Oakland Church Community Life Center located in Chuckatuck at 5641 Godwin Blvd, Suffolk, VA 23434. The dinner menu/guest speaker is unknown at the time of this publication.

Calendar of Events

You can review our full chapter website calendar online at <https://sniwla.org/sniwla/calendar> for the most recent information about meetings and upcoming events. A courtesy extract of a preliminary 2026 calendar is shown below:

MON 1/12 at 7pm - Board Meeting.
WED 1/21 at 6:30m - Dinner Meeting.

HOLIDAYS:

THR 1/1 - New Year's Day.
MON 1/19 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

*Note: Events marked with an *asterisk count towards work hour credits for meeting the chapter's annual membership [volunteer participation requirement](#).



Season's Greetings!

Happy Holidays to all our chapter Members and their families!

New Committee Chairs Announcement

President Chris Ferguson has filled two committee chair vacancies.

James Bull is the newly appointed Adopt-A-Road Chair, and **Shawn Bailes** is the newly appointed Long Range Planning/Sustainability Chair.

Thank you both for volunteering to serve as committee chairs! For their contact information, see [Committees](#) under the Members menu on our chapter website.

President's Note

Well, another year draws to a close. I hope this message finds you happy and healthy as we enter the holiday season and prepare for the coming new year. I wish everyone the best and a very Merry Christmas.

We recognize that this season can bring both joy and reflection and our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with any members who may be experiencing hardship or loss. *"December is the toughest month of the year. Others are July, January, September, April, November, May, March, June, October, August, and February."* -- Mark Twain.

Respectfully Yours,

Chris Ferguson,
Chapter President,
Suffolk-Nansemond IWLA

2026 Membership Dues and 2025 Service Participation Hours

Message from Alan Ferguson, Membership Chair

Membership renewal notices were mailed in October. If you haven't received yours, please contact me at SNIWLA.mdr@gmail.com. Dues may be paid by USPS mail using the address label included with your renewal notice. Please note dues paid after the January 21st dinner meeting will incur a \$20 late fee.

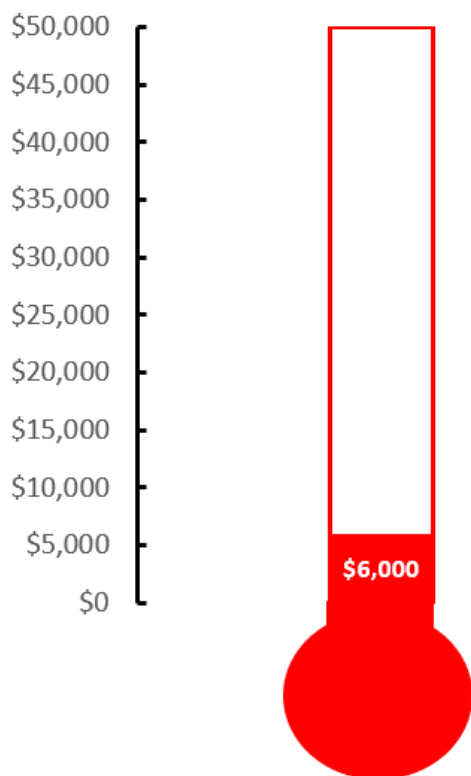
Each member is asked to complete 8 hours of service for the Chapter. The full participation policy is on the Chapter website <https://sniwla.org/> under Members → Member [Participation Policy](#). Participation forms are to be received by December 1st.

Hours earned in December will be applied to 2026.

Invoices for the participation fee will be mailed during the first week of December. If you already know you will not meet the 8-hour requirement, you may include the \$150 participation fee with your dues payment.

Please send any outstanding participation forms or checks (payable to S-N IWLA) via USPS mail to: Alan Ferguson, 3231 Matoaka Road, Suffolk, VA 23434.

Thank you for helping keep our Chapter strong, active and engaged!



Chapter Capital Campaign Tracker

The graph to the left shows that we've accumulated \$6,000 in donations thus far towards our goal of raising money for expenses related to repairs and/or alterations of our chapter park dam.

We are asking members to consider making a contribution to the Capital Campaign. This tracker will be included in future newsletters and updated at members' monthly meetings.

Please contact our Treasurer if you are willing to make a donation. Any help is very much appreciated. Contributions may be tax deductible; see your tax professional.

CAUTION: BE SURE TO MONITOR YOUR EMAILS CAREFULLY FOR POTENTIAL SPAM/PHISHING ATTEMPTS. The chapter will not send emails to members asking for any type of payment or donations.

Recipe of the Monthy - Zuppa Toscana

Source Credits: OLIVE GARDEN ZUPPA TOSCANA

<https://www.cooks.com/recipe/7y3e777t/olive-garden-zuppa-toscana.html>

Submitted by: Chapter Ike Elaine Doxey

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. bulk ground sausage (Italian)
- 1 1/2 tsp. crushed red peppers
- 4 tbsp. bacon pieces
- 1 large diced white onion
- 2 tsp. garlic puree
- 5 cubes chicken bouillon
- 10 cups water
- 1 lb. sliced russet potatoes (or about 3 large potatoes)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 of a bunch of kale

Cooking Instructions:

1. Sauté Italian sausage and crushed red pepper in pot. Drain excess fat, refrigerate while you prepare other ingredients.
2. In the same pan, sauté bacon, onions and garlic for approximately 15 minutes or until the onions are soft.
3. Mix together chicken bouillon and water, then add it to the onions, bacon and garlic. Cook until boiling Add potatoes and cook until soft, about half an hour.
4. Add heavy cream and cook until thoroughly heated. Stir in the sausage. Add kale just before serving.

Recap of Suffolk Public Works Tire Amnesty Recycling Event



Early on a beautiful Saturday morning on November 15th at the Litter Control facility on Carolina Road in Suffolk, representatives from the Suffolk Public Works Operations Center gathered, along with several S-N IWLA Chapter volunteers, for a Tire Amnesty Day Recycling Drive for Suffolk citizens. Over 800 tires were collected and stacked for later recycling. In addition, there were other recycling stations available for paper shredding as well as collection of hazardous materials, batteries, etc. to give Suffolkians the opportunity to bring special items that can't be discarded through regular curbside pickup.

As evidenced by the photograph shown everybody on the work crew enjoyed spending time with each other while stacking tires, and there was some good natured bantering and lots of camaraderie. Also, it was a good workout exercise-wise; hoisting heavy tires to waist height, some filled with rain water that sloshed all over, is a task that is not for the faint-hearted!

THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR VOLUNTEERING THEIR TIME AND EFFORTS TO HELP OUT AT THIS EVENT.

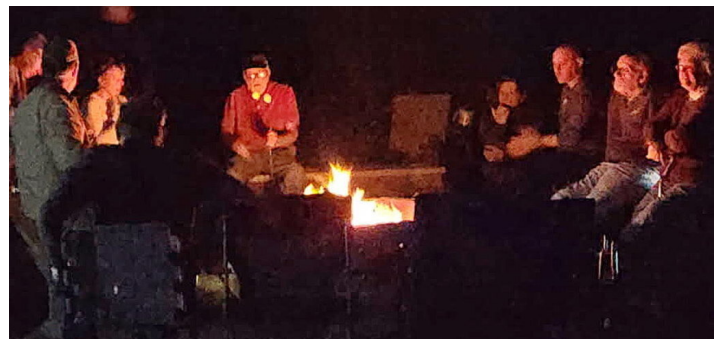
For more photos, see the full article posted on our chapter website entitled [Recap of Suffolk Public Works Tire Amnesty Recycling Event](#) under the News menu.



Recap of November Chapter Campfire Roast

About a dozen Chapter Ikes showed up on Saturday, November 8th for the 2nd annual Members-Only Campfire Roast. The chapter provided the hot dogs, buns, condiments, and ingredients to make delicious chocolate & marsh mellow s'mores.

As the sun began to set, everyone cooked their own food over a roaring campfire using wooden sticks or metal prongs. As dusk turned to dark, lively marching band music filtering through the trees from the adjacent school's regional band competition added to the ambiance. A good time was had by all!



Recap of November Chapter Dinner Meeting



The November members meeting was held at the Oakland Christian Church Community Center. Our chapter's guest speaker for the meeting was Julia Hillegass, City of Suffolk Agriculture Specialist. Julia has been with the City since January of this year and has been in the agricultural field since childhood. She grew up on a small farm in Virginia Beach. One of her primary objectives is promoting balance between small homestead farms and the large commodity farmers. She encouraged us to find local growers who sell directly to the public. She spoke about the K-5 STEM program at Booker T Elementary school as a first in Virginia. Birdsong Peanuts is one of the program's sponsors.

She also discussed the importance of engaging the City in a timely fashion when there is damage to property, especially during construction to ensure issues can be properly and promptly resolved. For more information, see the full news article entitled [November 2025 Members Meeting](#) posted on our chapter website under the News menu.

Two new members were sworn in during the meeting by President Chris Ferguson. They were James Bull (left) and Austin Culp (right). Welcome to the chapter gentlemen!



Local Conservation News - Virginia's 1st Climate Assessment

Source Credit: [WHRO](#), article by Katherine Hafner

A new, comprehensive climate assessment coordinated by George Mason University's Virginia Climate Center brings together decades of scientific research to paint a detailed picture of how climate change is already reshaping conditions across Virginia. More than two dozen researchers from across the state — including Old Dominion and William & Mary — contributed to the report. Rainfall is becoming more intense increasing the risk of flash floods and standing water. At the same time, short-term droughts are becoming more common during Virginia's drier seasons. Hotter temperatures put stress on electrical grids, roads, and bridges. A warming, more humid climate favors disease-carrying species like ticks and mosquitoes. The Virginia Climate Center plans to update the assessment over time, incorporating feedback from residents and policymakers. The goal is to use the report as a foundation for resilience planning by giving people both the big-picture context and region-specific data about how the climate has already changed. For more information, see

<https://www.whro.org/environment/2025-11-19/virginias-first-climate-assessment-highlights-how-conditions-are-changing-across-the-state>.

IWLA National Conservation News Links

Source Credit: [IWLA Natonal Website](#)

A good source of information about conservation issues is posted on the IWLA National web site, see:

- [Conservation Priorities](#)
- [In the News](#)



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