



THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Suffolk-Nansemond Chapter



The Blue Heron Times February, 2026 Issue

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 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

[Arzillo Recycling](#) (Scrap Metal)
 (757)539-8593,
 Locations: Suffolk & PTMS Blvd

Meetings

Chapter Board of Directors meetings are held on the second Monday of each month. They last met at 7pm on **Monday, February 9th** at the Constantia House behind Baker's Funeral Home. The next month's Board meeting will be at 7pm on **Monday, March 9th** at the same location.

Chapter Members Dinner meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

This month's dinner meeting will be the **8th annual Chapter Chili Cookoff at 6:30pm on Wednesday, February 18th** at the Oakland Church Community Life Center located in Chuckatuck at 5641 Godwin Blvd, Suffolk, VA 23434.

Signup slots are nearly full to bring food for this Chili Cookoff, but we have a few still open; if you want to help fill them, see the *8th Annual February Chili Cookoff article* posted later in this newsletter.

The cost will be \$10 for those who didn't signup to bring any food items. There will be no guest speaker for this meeting.

Chapter Scholarships

See the article entitled *2026 Chapter Education Scholarship Applications Are Open* posted later in this newsletter for more information on how to apply.

President's Note

So, once again Punxsutawney Phil has seen his shadow indicating six more weeks of winter. Hopefully he is wrong; the last couple of weekends with ice and snow are quite enough.

We have a full schedule coming up this year so be sure to sign up to assist in our many functions. It is fun, gets you outdoors and fulfills your volunteer work hours.

February is the second month of the year in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars. The month has 28 days this year. Also, February is the third and last month of meteorological winter in the Northern Hemisphere.

"If January is the month of change, February is the month of lasting change. January is for dreamers ... February is for doers." --Marc Parent

Respectfully Yours,

Chris Ferguson, Chapter President, Suffolk-Nansemond IWLA

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 1st quarter courtesy extract is shown below:

MON 02/09 at 7pm - Chapter Board Meeting.
WED 02/18 at 6:30pm - Chapter Chili Cookoff Dinner Meeting.
SAT 02/21 - IWLA National Mid-Winter Meeting at the IWLA Fredericksburg Chapter.
SAT 02/28 - Prospective Member Orientation.
MON 03/09 at 7pm - Chapter Board Meeting.
SAT 03/14 9am to 12pm - *Suffolk St. Patrick's Day River Cleanup
SAT 03/14 10am to 12pm - *Youth Build-A-Birdhouse Event (Open-to-the-Public).
SUN 03/15 - Deadline for Submittal of Chapter Tobin Award Nominations to the Chapter Award Chair.
WED 03/18 at 6:30pm - Chapter Dinner Meeting.
SAT 03/27 - *Suffolk Great Cleanup (Keep Suffolk Beautiful) event.
SAT 03/28 - Prospective Member Orientation.
SUN 04/01 - Chapter Scholarship Submission Deadline.

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

HOLIDAYS/COMMUNITY EVENTS:

SAT 02/14 - Valentine's Day.
MON 02/16 - President's Day.
SUN 02/08 - Daylight Savings Time Begins.

2026 Membership Cards & Gate Code

Message from Alan Feguson, Membership Chair

The Chapter Park Manager will change the park gate code just prior to the February 18th dinner meeting. For those members who paid their membership dues prior to or at the January dinner meeting, your membership has been renewed. New 2026 Membership Cards will be given out at the February dinner meeting with the new gate code printed on the back. If you will not attend the dinner meeting your membership card will be mailed to your home address. For those who renewed their memberships after the February dinner meeting your membership renewal is in process and your membership card will be mailed to you when they are received.

Recipe of the Month - Confederate Bean Soup

Source Credits: Paula Dean's "The Lady & Sons Savannah Country Cookbook"
<https://www.food.com/recipe/confederate-bean-soup-114491>

Serves: 3



Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound smoked sausage, sliced in rounds 1/4 inch thick
- 2 slices bacon, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1/2 green bell pepper, diced (optional)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups leftover baked beans (or one 16-ounce can Bush's Baked Beans)
- 1½ cups half-and-half (blend of whole milk/light cream)

Cooking Instructions:

1. Sauté sausage, bacon, garlic, onion, and pepper (if desired) in butter until bacon is cooked.
2. Add beans and simmer for a few minutes over medium to low heat.
3. Add half-and-half (Increase or decrease half-and-half for preferred thickness).
4. Serve with piping-hot corn bread.

8th Annual Chapter Chili Cook-off on February 18th

*Note: This article was reprinted from the January newsletter issue, (with a **correction** to the date which was mis-printed there; and also a **status update** is inserted about the remaining sign-up slots needing to be filled.*

Members, once again, we're planning to hold the annual chapter Chili Cook-off on **Wednesday, February 18th at 6:30pm** at our monthly chapter dinner meeting.

Status Update on Sign-ups to bring food: As of the date of this publication, all dessert signup slots are filled. **However, there still are two (2) empty signup slots remaining to bring a pot of chili, and one (1) empty signup slot remaining to bring a plate of cornbread (12 servings).** To help us fill these remaining signup slots, please click on this link: [SignupGenius](#) where you can enter your contact information and what you plan to bring.

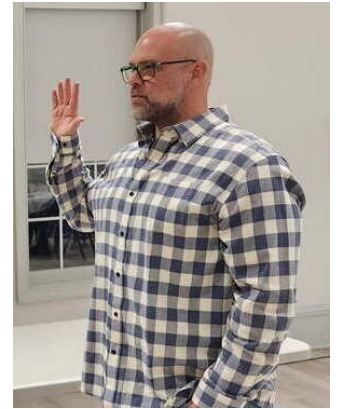
We'll be voting on gold (1st place) and silver (2nd place) ladle awards for the best chili. Any questions, please contact Food Chair Claudia Powell at powelcje@gmail.com or 757- 504-8159 (m).

Recap of the January, 2026 Dinner Meeting

About 40 chapter members showed up at the January 21st monthly dinner meeting.

The Kitchen Crew served up a delicious meal of pork barbeque, buns, baked beans, cole slaw, potato salad, tea, and a variety of homemade desserts.

After the Treasurer's report, new Chapter member Nick Rhodes, pictured here, was sworn in by President Chris Ferguson. Welcome to the Chapter, Nick!



The guest speaker for the evening was Peter Acker, District Terrestrial Biologist of the VA DWR (Department of Wildlife Resources), shown here. His presentation was everything you ever want to know about bears, nutria, coyotes, and feral pigs. Regarding black bears, he discussed what they eat, how they hibernate, their population growth and territorial ranges. As for nutria, he revealed that they were first imported into California in 1899 for fur farming, and discussed their population growth and the damage they cause from burrowing which weakens banks, dams, roadbeds. They also damage crops such as strawberry fields in Virginia Beach.

He explained that populations of coyotes became established in southwestern Virginia in the 1970's and are now found in every county of the state. He said that the effects of coyotes on deer populations in most areas of Virginia are believed to be minimal. They may benefit ground nesting game birds by reducing mid-sized mammal predators. Although relatively few coyotes prey upon livestock, the economic impact of these losses can be very significant to individual Virginia farmers. Regarding feral pigs, he pointed out that their population can triple in a little over 1 year, and to stabilize it you must remove 70% each year which means once established they are almost impossible to control. Crop Damage is estimated at \$1.5 billion annually nationwide, and they spread numerous diseases and parasites.

For the full article posted on our website under the News menu, see <https://sniwla.org/sniwla/recap-of-the-january-2026-chapter-dinner-meeting/>.

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2026 Chapter Education Scholarships Applications are Open

Message from David Perdue, Chapter Scholarship Chair

Members, application submissions for 2026 Chapter Education Scholarships are Open as of February 1st, 2026 and are due no later than April 1st, 2026. This year we are awarding 2 (two) \$1,000 scholarship awards.

See <https://sniwla.org/sniwla/scholarships/> for qualifications and instructions on how to make your submission.

If you have any questions you can reach me via email at davidkperdue@yahoo.com.

Thank you,
David Perdue, Chapter Scholarship Chair

Nominations for Annual Chapter Tobin Award Are Due March 15th

Message from Virginia Wahab, Chapter Award Committee Chair

Members, every year, Izaak Walton League chapters across the country present the IWLA National Judge John W. Tobin Volunteer Appreciation Award to one of their members. This award is a singular and distinct honor because it represents a chapter's acknowledgment of a dedicated member whose outstanding volunteer contributions to the chapter have made a difference throughout the previous year.

Award Criteria: Who is the dedicated Ike among your chapter members—the one who shows up for all meetings, signs up first for work crews, serves on committees, helps maintain chapter grounds, and makes the organization run more smoothly? Who is the key volunteer for your chapter's conservation projects or outdoor activities? Give your chapter's outstanding volunteer a hearty "thank you" by nominating her or him for the Izaak Walton League's annual Judge John W. Tobin Chapter Volunteer Appreciation Award.

So, please consider nominating a deserving fellow chapter member to receive this award by sending an email with your nominee choice ASAP via email at wahabv@cox.net so that our Chapter Award Committee has ample time to meet the submission cutoff of March 15th.

Thank you,
Virginia Wahab, Chapter Award Committee Chair

2026 *Build-A-Bird House Chapter Youth Event Open-To-The-Public

Message from Chris Trimpey, Youth Program Coordinator and Board Member.

The first Chapter Youth event for 2026, *Build your own Birdhouse*, will be conducted on **Saturday, March 14th from 10am to 12pm Noon**. This activity is focused on Tiny IKEs from ages 3-10 and is OPEN TO THE PUBLIC this year.

To register for the event, please contact: Mr. Milton Chalkley via email: mdchalk3@msn.com or call: (757) 774-2629.

To print or share through social media the flyer image shown below, click on it to access the chapter news article posted at:

<https://sniwla.org/sniwla/build-your-own-birdhouse-youth-activity-scheduled-for-saturday-march-14th-2026-open-to-the-public/>.

Note: Other scheduled Chapter Youth events for later in 2026 are shown on the flyer's right-hand sidebar.



THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Suffolk-Nansemond Chapter





Upcoming Event

Build Your Own Birdhouse

- **Date:** 14 March 2026
- **Time:** 10am to 12pm Noon
- **Max. # of participants:** 15
- **Age:** 3-10
- **Cost:** free
- **Tools provided**
- **Birdhouse Kit provided**

To Register:
Milton Chalkley
Email to: mdchalk3@msn.com
Call: (757) 774-2629



About Us

Chartered in June of 1954
501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Our Mission

Conservation, maintenance, and protection of the soil, forest, water, and other natural resources of the city of Suffolk, VA and surrounding areas.

Contact Us



Visit Us:
480 Kings Fork Road, Suffolk, VA



Email:
info@sniwla.org

Chapter Website
<https://sniwla.org>



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM 2026

- **14 March:** Build your own Bird House
- **18 April:** Teddy Bear Hunt
- **20 June:** Scavenger Hunt
- **12 September:** Fishing Rodeo

For More Info or Registration:
info@sniwla.org OR <https://sniwla.org>

What We Offer

- 45 acre park
- Fishing Pond
- Archery Range
- Walking trails
- Picnic area
- Bird Observation

*Suffolk St. Patrick's Day River Cleanup Event March 14th

Message from Samuel Chambers, S-N IWLA Chapter SOS (Save-Our-Streams) Chair

WHEN? March 14th, 2026 9AM-Noon

WHERE? Constant's Wharf Park and Marina

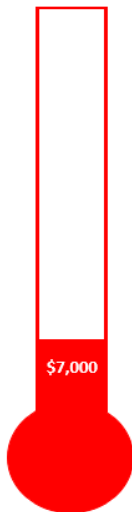
The St. Patrick's Day River Cleanup welcomes individuals, families, or groups for a comprehensive public cleanup on both land and water. The primary focus will be the Nansemond River in the Downtown Suffolk area. Participants opting for river cleanup need to bring their own kayak or canoe. On-site, we'll supply cleanup essentials, including reflective vests, grabbers, gloves, and bags. For those cleaning from the river, longer grabbers will be provided.

If you choose land-based cleanup, you can work from the wharf or be guided to specific nearby sites that require attention. It's crucial to tackle litter before it reaches the river!

For more information, see <https://www.suffolkva.us/1289/St-Patricks-Day-River-Cleanup>. Contact our [Chapter SOS Chair Samuel Chambers](#) if you have questions.

**Note: Although this event is not coordinated by our S-N IWLA chapter, our members can earn chapter volunteer work credit hours towards accumulating the required annual minimum volunteer participation hours. See <https://sniwla.org/sniwla/membership-info/membership-participation-policy/> for more information.*

\$50,000
\$45,000
\$40,000
\$35,000
\$30,000
\$25,000
\$20,000
\$15,000
\$10,000
\$5,000
\$0



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TRACKER

The graph to the left shows that we've accumulated **\$7,000** 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.

IWLA National Deadline February 21st for Conservation Policy Resolution Proposals

Message from Jared Mott, Interim Executive Director & Conservation Director

"Over the past 100 years, the League has developed extensive policy on a wide range of issues. As you consider potential resolution topics, it would be useful to review current policies to determine if issues are already addressed or where gaps may exist. You can access the complete and updated version of the League's Conservation Policies on the national website.

With the Midwinter meeting coming up in February, the deadline for resolution proposals is nearly upon us. Resolutions must be submitted **[See Note 1 below]** by **February 21 – the date of the 2026 Midwinter meeting** – for consideration at the 2026 convention. Resource committees will meet virtually in March and early April to consider proposed resolutions. Proposals approved by the relevant resource committee and the Resolutions Committee will be sent to chapters no later than May 4. This gives chapters time to debate the proposals and instruct their delegates on how to vote. IWLA National 2025 Conservation Policies can be reviewed at:

<https://iwla.org/resource/2025-izaak-walton-league-conservation-policies/>."

Note1: *S-N IWLA Members, please review these policies referenced above, and feel free to reach out to any of our [chapter board members](#) well in advance of the February 21st deadline so that they can relay your concerns upline to the IWLA National leadership regarding gaps in the current IWLA National policies.*

Wintry Nature Photos

Submitted by Chapter Member/Photographer Jim Anderson



Local Conservation News - Salting Virginia Roads is a Growing Source of Pollution.

Source Credit: Katherine Hafner, WHRO Published January 22, 2026

Virginia officials are looking for alternatives for different de-icing strategies. When icy weather descends, snow isn't the only white stuff that appears on local roads. Virginia officials coat roadways with rock salt, or sodium chloride, to prevent people from sliding off slick sheets of ice. The U.S. uses between 10 to 25 million tons of salt each year. But once the storm clears, these de-icers often end up where they shouldn't be, creeping into rivers, groundwater and drinking water systems.

"This is becoming one of the fastest growing sources of freshwater pollution in the country," said Joe Wood, senior scientist with the nonprofit Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The General Assembly is considering legislation to investigate options for safely treating roads. Many options [See **Note2** below] have been proposed around the country, such as calcium or magnesium chloride and mixtures including sand, cat litter and even beet juice. But they all have tradeoffs, Wood said. In the meantime, the focus is on minimizing the amount of salt used, Wood said. The cost of roadway maintenance is more than \$600 per ton of salt applied.

For the full news article, see <https://www.whro.org/environment/2026-01-22/salting-roads-for-snowstorms-is-a-growing-source-of-pollution-virginia-officials-are-looking-for-alternatives>.

Note2: In addition to rock salt, VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation) also dumps liquid brine, calcium chloride, and magnesium chloride as well as sand onto our roads for added traction.



Suffolk-Nansemond Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America

w: <https://sniwla.org>

e: info@sniwla.org

Our USPS mailing address is: S-N IWLA, P.O. Box 351, Suffolk, VA 23439

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