Smart Harbors

Fall 2025

Updates From Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Why become a Virginia Clean Boater?

By adopting pollution prevention measures, Virginia Clean Boaters can take satisfaction in knowing they are doing their part to keep Virginia waterways clean, preserve our waterways for the future, and learn/teach clean boating habits. For more information, visit our website.

Updated VA Clean Marina Recertification Checklists

The updated VA Clean Marina Program Recertification checklists have been posted to our website. Next time you recertify, please use the updated version. If you'd like a copy emailed or mailed to you, please email acclark@vims.edu.

CMP Highlighted Marina – Tidewater Yacht Marina

This quarter's highlighted marina is Tidewater Yacht Marina!

Tidewater Yacht Marina is proud to be recognized as a Clean Marina, reflecting our deep commitment to protecting the Elizabeth River and the greater Chesapeake Bay. Located at Mile Marker Zero on the Intracoastal Waterway, Tidewater offers a convenient and well-equipped stop for boaters navigating the East Coast.

Positioned in the heart of historic Portsmouth, Virginia, the marina provides direct deep-water access and a protected 22-acre basin that can accommodate a wide range of vessels. As a Clean Marina, we take meaningful steps to minimize pollution and reduce waste, because a cleaner marina means a healthier environment for our boaters, marine life, and the entire community that depends on these waters.

The marina features a high-speed fuel dock supplying both gasoline and diesel, metered shore power, free Wi-Fi and water, and a Marine Store. Additional amenities include an on-site restaurant and easy access to downtown Portsmouth, just steps away.

Whether you're stopping overnight or staying longer, the marina's experienced staff is available to assist with docking, local information, and other needs to ensure a smooth and comfortable visit. Reach out to us at tidewater@suntex.com or (757) 393-2525; we're here to help and look forward to welcoming you to the marina!

Updates from External Partners

Webinars / Training

- Stormwater Management (Ohio Clean Marina Program) (Recording)
- Clean, drain, dry: Protect the boating industry – prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (Recording)
- BoatUS S.C.A.N. (Search, Concentrate, Analyze, Navigate) course (Online course)

Chesapeake Bay Foundation – Oyster Gardening

Interested in Oyster Gardening at your marina? Please contact acclark@vims.edu or Jlutzow@cbf.org for more information if you would like to partner with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Industry News

Erin exposes asbestos pipe, contaminated soil at Buxton beach

From Nick Broadway, Wavy News, August 29, 2025

Hurricane Erin washed away a lot of the oceanfront at Hatteras Island, unleashing even more oil and structural pieces left behind by a decommissioned naval base.

For more than a year, local leaders and eventually the Army Corps of Engineers, have worked to remove this pollution from the past. But the swells from Erin made the already dynamic site even more challenging.

Pictures sent to 10 On Your Side by the Army Corps showed the mess left behind by the swells of Erin, and many chunks of asphalt were also a part of the mess. The Corps said they are containing oil contaminated soil newly exposed by the storm, but constant tidal flooding and a downed power line made this site hard to physically get to, as it changes daily.

“Every time you go to that site, due to the dynamic nature of the ocean and the shoreline, it is going to have changed,” said Dave Hallac with the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

A 100-foot asbestos pipe was revealed, but crews contained it and got it ready for disposal. They lost somewhere between 50 to 100 feet of their oceanfront to the hurricane waves, according to Hallac, and many pieces of infrastructure washed away and flowed into the southern part of the island.

The Army Corps is working on a second phase to this emergency response action to remove more petroleum-impacted soil and groundwater along the beach. They originally planned on doing comprehensive sampling at the entire site this fall. But now, they said this could be delayed, since the need for emergency removal keeps coming up. If sampling does get delayed, a spokesperson from the Army Corps said it would likely happen in December or January.

“It’s a very complicated place to work,” Hallac said. “It’s rapidly changing, but we’re working really well as a team with the Corps and we appreciate their efforts.”

Cambridge Gets First Trash Trap To Track Down Choptank Litter

From Bay Bulletin, Chesapeake Bay Magazine, April 22, 2025

Trash-intercepting devices have been steadily picking up steam in urban waterways on the Chesapeake Bay and around U.S. waters. Baltimore is well known for its “family” of personified Trash Wheels. (In fact, plans for a new Trash Wheel on Back River were just announced). Norfolk installed a floating Seabin at

the Nauticus waterfront some years back that captured a big haul in just the first few months. The Anacostia River got a litter trap of its own in Montgomery County, Maryland, in 2020.

These ingenious trash-stopping machines had generally been limited to big-city areas…until now. The smaller Eastern Shore city of Cambridge just got its first trash trap, thanks to a team of clean water and anti-litter organizations.

The City of Cambridge worked with riverkeeper group ShoreRivers, Trash Free Maryland, The River Network (which provided funding), and Osprey Initiative (which brought in the device), to install a trash trap in Cambridge Creek last month.

The partners targeted Cambridge Creek because it's a litter hot spot, evidenced by the trash cleanups ShoreRivers holds in that area. To underscore the need for a trash solution, volunteers held a cleanup on the same day the trap was unveiled…and gathered 15 bags of trash on that day alone.

Here's how it works: Two litter booms are stretched across the inlet, working in tandem. The first boom slows the flow of water rushing out during a storm event. The second boom, located further out at a wider part of the outlet, is where Doordan expects to catch most of the trash. The booms have rigid flotation devices to keep them at the surface of the water, and they expect about a foot underwater, raising and lowering with the tide. There is plenty of habitat available below the booms to allow animals and fish to pass easily, Doordan says.

It is low-tech, she admits, but that makes the project cost-effective. It is relatively easily maintained by the city of Cambridge or volunteers, who will clean out the trash and collect data about what's in there.

The boom setup is removable, too. That's because the partners in this program are hoping to have it in place for just two years. Doordan hopes that once data is collected about what kind of litter is ending up in the trash trap—and where that litter may be coming from—that the problem can be prevented and the trash trap no longer needed.

For up to two years, the city will clean out whatever accumulates at the trash trap and record data on it monthly. That data will be analyzed like clues in a detective story. The partners can learn a lot from the types of materials and how degraded they are. "Is this new litter, or has the material been really degraded, out in the environment for a long time?" If it looks quite old, but is still showing up in the trash trap, that could mean that the source is an old pile or even a dump in the riverbank. Doordan says since Styrofoam food packaging is banned in Maryland, if they find new Styrofoam, it's possible that intervention is needed.

Finding the source of the ongoing trash is important to reduce or stop it. Trash Free Maryland says studies find about 80% of trash found in waterways is generated on land. It deposits microplastics that can harm fish and birds, and ultimately, the recreational commercial value of our waterways. The stakes are high because any litter that ends up in Cambridge Creek could flow down the creek and into the crab and oyster-rich Choptank River.

If preventative steps do need to be taken, they would be most effective upstream to prevent the littering in the first place. Maybe there is a public trash can that frequently overflows, or a place where there isn't a trash can that one should be placed.

"Cambridge is looking forward to seeing the tangible improvement in Cambridge Creek," says Drew Koslow, the city's Environmental Program manager.

The city and ShoreRivers plan to hold the first cleanout of the Trash Trap on Saturday, April 26—the first opportunity for folks to see the litter, bottles, and whatever else has been rounded up. Doordan looks forward to getting a sense of the data that can be learned from the trap. "It will tell a story as it's collected," she says.

Feds Fund 'Abandoned Boats' Program Nationwide

From Gina Scala, The Sand Paper, August 13, 2025

More than 300 abandoned and derelict boats across six states and two unincorporated territories are earmarked for removal from local waterways under funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program.

The program will be administered through the BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water, according to a statement from the foundation last month. NOAA awarded $7.4 million to fund 10 projects in July.

"The ADV (abandoned and derelict vessels) grants will fund removal and education efforts in communities heavily impacted by ADVS and the navigation, safety and pollution hazards they pose," the July 31 statement said.

A panel of independent salvage experts, state boating advocates and nonprofit research groups and planning states selected the projects.

Projects include the Metlakatla Indian Community in Alaska; city and borough of Yakutat, Ala.; Sitka Conservation Society, Ala.; Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, La.; Makah Indian Tribe of the Makah Indian Reservation, Washington state; state of Maine; U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources; North Carolina Coastal Federation; Oregon Department of State Lands; and the Port Authority of Guam.

Please Share Your News!

If you have any news that you would like included in the Clean Marina Newsletter, *Smart Harbors*, please let us know! This is a quarterly newsletter with the next issue scheduled for Winter 2026 and we would like to include information from the marina community. If you have comments or questions, please email the Virginia Clean Marina Program: askVCMP@vims.edu or acclark@vims.edu or call (804) 684-7768.

Virginia Clean Marina
VIMS | William & Mary
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Marine Advisory Program
P. O. Box 1346
Gloucester Point, VA 23062
Sea Grant Virginia