

Smart Harbors



Summer 2025

Updates From Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Boating Infrastructure Grant

Stay tuned for updates about the upcoming Boating Infrastructure Grant cycle. If you are interested in applying or have questions about the grant, please email vabigprogram@vims.edu or call 804-684-7768.

Updated VA Clean Marina Recertification Checklists

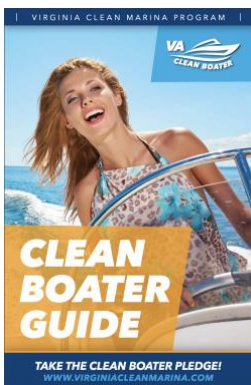
The updated VA Clean Marina Program Recertification checklists have been posted to [our website](#). Next time you recertify, please use the updated version. If you'd like a copy emailed or mailed to you, please email acclark@vims.edu or call 804-684-7768.

Request for feedback on the VA Clean Marina Guidebook

The VA Clean Marina Program is updating the [Virginia Clean Marina Guidebook](#). If you have any suggestions or comments, please email acclark@vims.edu by October 31, 2025.

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, click [here](#).



CMP Highlighted Marina – Lynnhaven Marine

This quarter's highlighted marina is Lynnhaven Marine in Virginia Beach!

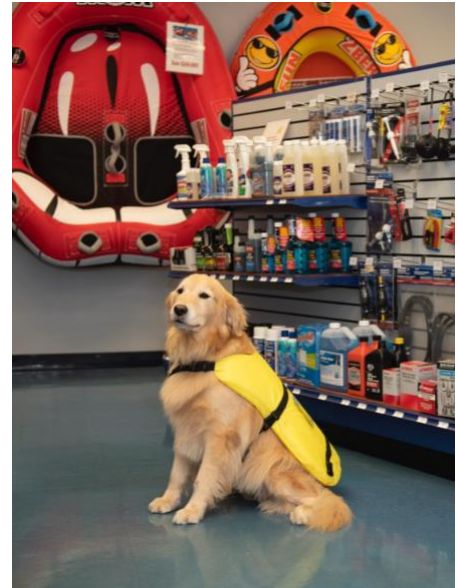
For the last 40 years plus, Lynnhaven Marine has been based in Virginia Beach, Virginia. We are conveniently located off Long Creek, with quick access to Broad Bay and Chesapeake Bay. The Boatel can accommodate over 600 dry storage customers as well as the many area boaters who come in to take advantage of our twelve fully staffed service bays. The Lynnhaven Marine Sales Department boasts well-known brands like Boston Whaler, Sea Ray, Sea Pro, Yamaha and Bayliner.

Boatel customers enjoy amenities such as daily in and out launching, fuel dock with pumpout station, in water dockage with power and fresh water and a fully stocked launch office store.

Over the years, we have taken many steps to help improve our environmental footprint. The use of Eco-Friendly soap, a stormwater capturing system and rain runoff monitoring are just a few of the ways we are helping to keep our waterways clean and enjoyable for all.



Credits: Lynnhaven Marine



Updates from External Partners

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

Discover Boating Releases New Safety Video Series Episode

From Marina Dock Age, March 28, 2025

Discover Boating, powered by the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) and the Marine Recreation Association of America ([MRAA](#)), in collaboration with [Progressive Insurance](#), rolled out the [first episode in its fourth safety video series](#). To educate and engage the next generation of boaters, whose path to purchase looks very different from previous generations, Discover Boating and Progressive strategically created short-form videos (in addition to longer form versions) that can be shared on social channels, such as TikTok and Instagram—popular platforms where target audiences consume digital content.

The latest safety video series covers essential safety topics, including preparing your boat for boating season, boating with kids, life jackets, float plans and sound signaling devices. This first episode in the new series, “[How to Prepare Your Boat for Boating Season](#),” can be viewed below and on [Discover Boating’s YouTube channel](#).

Discover Boating will continue rolling out new episodes in the video series throughout the spring months, ensuring boaters are equipped with expert safety tips as they get ready to hit the water. The brand will also promote the videos via consumer emails, blog articles, [DB TV section](#), and the [Discover Boating Industry Resource Center](#).

To provide customers with engaging safe boating content, industry stakeholders are also encouraged to share the safety videos on their own social media channels, consumer emails, brand website or play them in showrooms.

Heavy Metals Found in James River, Near Power Plant, Raises New Questions

From Whitney Pipkin, Bay Journal News Service, April 21, 2025

A researcher has found contaminants associated with coal ash present in another Virginia waterway, this time the James River, near a site where the waste product has long been stored in the ground.

Tyler Frankel, an associate professor of environmental science at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, began testing waters near coal ash storage sites a few years ago to help fill gaps in the data, he said. An aquatic toxicologist, he wanted to understand whether elevated levels of trace metals associated with coal ash might be found in the sediment or fish of nearby rivers, even if they are no longer present in the surface water.

In 2023, Frankel published [a study that found](#) contaminants associated with coal ash in Quantico Creek near the Possum Point Power Station in Dumfries, Virginia, where the waste product was stored in clay-lined pits near the Potomac River. He wanted to learn if this was an isolated incident or if waterways near other coal ash storage sites in the state might also contain such contaminants.

A subsequent [study, published early this year](#) in *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, reported elevated concentrations of some heavy metals in the sediment of the James River near Dominion Energy's Chesterfield Power Station.

The study did not confirm a cause-and-effect relationship between the coal ash pits and the presence of those contaminants. However, it did highlight "the potential localized impact of coal ash" on the surrounding environment. Other studies have shown that trace metals can have harmful effects on aquatic ecosystems and human health.

"Because coal-based power plants continue to fulfill the energy needs of most communities globally ... this study highlights the need for additional efforts to understand and address the impacts of coal ash ... on aquatic ecosystems," Frankel writes.

Dominion spokesman Jeremy Slayton called the study "incomplete," saying it "fails to acknowledge historical and current land uses in this area of the James River and their impacts."

"The report makes an inconclusive connection between metals concentrations in sediment and coal ash storage at Chesterfield Power Station contrary to years of data publicly available," Slayton wrote in an email.

Following state law, Dominion is in the process of permanently closing the unlined pits that have long stored ash at Chesterfield and other power stations along rivers in the region. Since it was built in 1952, the Chesterfield station has generated an estimated 15 million cubic yards of coal ash.

About 7 million cubic yards, or just under half of the total, will be transported offsite to be recycled into new materials, as required by [a 2019 Virginia law](#). The other half of the coal ash will be permanently stored in a synthetic-lined landfill at the Chesterfield site. The plant is south of Richmond along the banks of snake-like curves of the James River, near the Dutch Gap Conservation Area in Chesterfield County.

Once the largest power plant in Virginia, the Chesterfield station shut down its last two coal-fired units in May 2023.

Groundwater monitoring is required as part of the closure of the previously unlined or clay-lined pits from which ash is being removed. [Monitoring by a third-party contractor](#) so far has indicated elevated levels of certain heavy metals in the groundwater around the ash pits. In 2023 and 2024, the monitoring effort at Chesterfield revealed "statistically significant" exceedances of the state's groundwater protection standards for coal ash, or "coal combustion residuals," specifically for arsenic, cobalt and lead. Other elements, such as cadmium, were present in groundwater at levels elevated above a comparative background sample.

Frankel's study did not find significant increases in heavy metals in the surface waters of the James River, compared with what was present upstream of the power plant. (The study area was a little more than 10 miles downstream from the Richmond city limits.) But Frankel did find elevated concentrations of a handful of heavy metals in river sediment samples collected from the mainstem of the James River not far from the plant.

Those samples indicated elevated concentrations of aluminum, arsenic, cadmium, chromium, iron, lead and zinc. Some of those elements were found in elevated amounts both upstream and downstream of the plant as well, but levels of cadmium and lead, for example, exhibited high enrichment rates adjacent to the power station, compared with upstream and downstream samples.

The presence of trace metals, particularly in sediments, the study said, "poses a significant environmental threat as they can remobilize back into the water column and are persistent." The study also used environmental DNA to identify 22 species of fish that frequent the sample area, including species that have been identified as vulnerable or endangered.

Environmental groups have long advocated for energy companies to move coal ash stored at unlined pits either to lined landfills or to places where it can be recycled into concrete or other materials. Virginia has passed laws requiring such measures. But it's not clear what remediation might be required following evidence that groundwater surrounding the pits had already been contaminated.

Potential pleasure boat tax removed from Virginia Beach budget

From Nick Broadway, Wavy News, May 11, 2025

In response to community feedback, Virginia Beach City Council voted to remove a pleasure boat tax of \$1.50 per \$100 of assessed value from the FY 2025-26 budget.

From Pungo to Lynnhaven Bay, boaters in Virginia Beach love the dynamic waterways in the city.

"You could go in, you know, in the bays, in the inlets," Eric Frostad described. "You could go out to the bay, off shore. So there's just a wide variety of places to boat."

In the city budget was a proposal to reinstate the boat tax to cover the needs of the coastal section. If it had passed, a boat that is 18-feet or longer would have been taxed \$1.50 for every \$100 of assessed value. It is the same tax rate eliminated from the budget more than 20 years ago, though that tax applied to boats of all sizes.

Frostad said his boat is valued at roughly \$40,000, so he would have had to pay about \$600 in taxes on his boat with the new boat tax.

"This is just seems like another way to tax us for being boat owners," he said. "Totally against it. I think the city could find other ways to get income."

He is not alone. This has become the talk of the docks. Everyone WAVY spoke with was against the tax.

"I heard about it on Facebook," Dominic Loper said. "That's where it first started out. A friend of mine actually shared it, and I was like, well, that's a little disheartening."

"I would like to see it reevaluate it," he added. "You know maybe table it and or lower it or maybe not do it at all."

As the city budget draft notes, this and all other property taxes are assessed by the Commissioner of Revenue Office. They estimate about \$4.3 million would come from the proposed boat tax. Dredging projects and other capital improvement plans would be funded by the boat tax.

The budget had this topic listed on the agenda for the upcoming May 13 city council meeting, but a representative with the city confirmed to WAVY that a week earlier members of city council pulled the boat tax from the budget.

Read more [here](#).

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 Fall 2025 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.

