



Updates From Virginia Institute of Marine Science

CMP Best Management Practice of the Quarter: Contain Sanding Dust

This quarter's Best Management Practice (BMP) is to contain dust from sanding. Sanding over the water can cause pollutants to enter the water and may harm shellfish. Vacuum sanders can help prevent these pollutants. For more information and additional tips, visit [Michigan Sea Grant's Clean Marina Resource Guide](#).

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 – Portsmouth Boating Center

This quarter's highlighted marina is Portsmouth Boating Center! Portsmouth Boating Center, a full-service marina, is locally owned and operated and has been serving boaters both local and from all points up and down the East Coast for over 40 years. Conveniently located 600 yards off the ICW on Scott's Creek in Portsmouth, VA at Mile Marker 0, the facility offers brokerage and mechanical service, as well as dry storage and slips in the water. The 70-Ton Travelift can accommodate beam widths up to 25 feet. Over the years, Portsmouth Boating Center has gained the reputation of having very reasonably priced fuel, and many boaters travelling the ICW stop in to buy fuel and catch the staff up on their travels since their last visit.

Just a short ride away, visitors can find numerous restaurants in Olde Towne serving all types of food. The Commodore Theater, a beautifully restored Art Deco style theater, offers a very comfortable and relaxing atmosphere to enjoy lunch or dinner while watching a first run movie. A grocery store and drug store are just a few blocks away. In addition, Portsmouth boasts a beautiful 6,500-seat

pavilion-style performance venue on the waterfront which hosts many big-name entertainers and groups. There are several antique shops and art galleries, an interesting nautical shop and kitchen shop on the High Street corridor, and numerous museums are scattered around town. Transportation to and from the many eateries, and all these fun and interesting places can be provided by cab, Uber, or Lyft. The Olde Towne Shuttle offers free service in historic Olde Towne during the summer.



Industry News

At 18, this Virginia teen helped 70 young volunteers to restore the Chesapeake Bay. They removed nearly 5,000 pounds of debris in a year

From Shawn Dass, *The Economic Times*, September 8, 2026

Recycling at home or participating in the occasional clean-up are two ways that many teenagers can contribute to environmental protection. James Hemphill, a youngster from Virginia, turned it into a six-year campaign that involved oyster reefs, muddy creeks, abandoned tires, and scores of other youthful volunteers. The organization he co-founded had cleared about 5,000 pounds of trash from marshes and streams in a single year by the time he was eighteen.

Hemphill started working on environmental issues years before he was acknowledged nationally. He planned a tidal creek cleanup close to his Virginia Beach school when he was still in middle school. According to the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, Hemphill and his classmates eliminated nearly 6,000 pounds of pollutants from that stream over the course of three years.

Eventually, the experience expanded into something far more significant. As a seventh-grader, Hemphill, with the help of local elders, co-founded Project Green Teens. Nearly 70 teens were employed by the organization by 2015 to preserve and repair the Chesapeake Bay in the Tidewater region of Virginia. The group's work went beyond picking up rubbish. Hemphill helped organize marsh restoration, beach clean-ups, dolphin counts, public education programs and even "dumpster dive" waste audits. In one year alone, Project Green Teens removed nearly 5,000 pounds of debris from waterways and marshes. The teenager explained his motivation simply: "I decided to protect what I loved." That commitment earned Hemphill recognition as one of the 2015 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes winners.

When Hemphill was awarded the Barron Prize, the organization believed it would grow into the biggest oyster reef in the world built entirely by youngsters. According to plans, the finished reef could serve as a habitat for over 200 species and filter about three million gallons of water every day. Because they filter suspended matter from the water and their reefs provide habitat for other organisms, oysters are especially important to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Years later, the teen's effort tackled an issue that still exists. With a watershed that extends to six states and Washington, DC, the Chesapeake Bay is the biggest estuary in the country. Although the Bay's long-term health trend has improved during the 1980s, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science awarded it a C grade in 2025. Regional restoration initiatives, such as gains in dissolved oxygen and aquatic grasses and decreases in nutrients, were acknowledged by scientists.

Hemphill's story is now more than a decade old, but the scale of what he accomplished as a teenager remains striking. What started with cleaning a creek beside a middle school eventually grew into nearly 70 young people restoring marshes, removing tons of pollution and attempting to rebuild oyster habitat. Sometimes, it starts with a teenager noticing rubbish in the creek next to his school and deciding to pull it out.

Public will get to weigh in on proposed changes to Chesapeake Bay menhaden harvest

From Katherine Hafner, *WHRO*, August 6, 2026

Fishery managers are considering cutting the bay's catch limit by up to 50%.

Officials who regulate the Atlantic menhaden industry have debated in recent years how to balance the historic fishery in the Chesapeake Bay with growing concerns about the ecosystem.

On Wednesday, they took their latest step. The Menhaden Board of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission advanced a document for public comment with potential changes to harvesting menhaden in the bay.

The commission helps manage fisheries along the East Coast, including 15 states from Florida to Maine.

The proposal outlines options for cutting the amount of menhaden the industry can catch by up to 50% and spreading the harvest more evenly throughout the season.

Environmental groups lauded the move after Wednesday's meeting.

"The Chesapeake Bay is sending out an unmistakable call for help," Will Poston with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation said in a statement. "Fisheries regulators are hearing the warning by wisely advancing new measures that could protect the bay's menhaden."

The industry, meanwhile, maintains that there is no scientific evidence to warrant changing the status quo.

Ocean Harvesters, the company that harvests menhaden in the bay, said in a statement that the proposal is "a solution in search of a problem."

“The addendum assembles observations, uncertainties and hypotheticals but never demonstrates that Chesapeake Bay menhaden availability has declined because of the reduction fishery or that the proposed measures would produce any biological benefit,” the company stated.

Ocean Harvesters, which operates a fishing fleet to supply Omega Protein, harvests up to 51,000 metric tons of menhaden in the bay each year using large walls of netting called purse seines. Omega processes, or “reduces,” them into fishmeal and fish oil at a plant in Reedville.

Environmentalists and sportfishers believe purse seines are removing too many menhaden, affecting species that rely on them, such as striped bass and osprey. They want the reduction industry to be banned from the bay or more heavily restricted.

The addendum now heading to the public is the culmination of more than a year of deliberations by the Menhaden Board and workgroups.

It centers around the Chesapeake Bay cap, the amount of menhaden the industry is permitted to catch each year. The limit, first established in 2006, is currently set at 51,000 metric tons.

The board will consider reducing the cap by up to 50%, or linking it to the coastwide Total Allowable Catch, or TAC, which is also set by the commission. (Last year, the board voted to temporarily reduce the TAC by 20%.)

Virginia is allocated about 75% of the total because it's the last East Coast state that permits menhaden reduction fishing. Others, such as Maryland, allow fishermen to use stationary traps called pound nets to catch menhaden for use as bait.

Under the proposal, future changes to the coastwide catch limit would automatically translate to the bay cap via the same percent reduction or increase, with some caveats.

Another section lays out options for establishing “quota periods,” or dividing the annual bay cap into specific timeframes.

The industrial menhaden harvest currently happens in the late spring and summer, “when both osprey and crab fisheries need menhaden the most,” according to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Advocates say spreading out the harvest could ease stress on the system.

The changes are intended to be precautionary.

“The commission has been using proactive measures to manage this species in the face of uncertainty and to support both ecological and fishery objectives,” officials wrote in the addendum.

Virginia was the only state that voted against the measure.

Company representatives argue the Reedville area is economically dependent on the industry, and that cuts to the harvest would threaten local jobs.

Board member and state Del. Adele McClure (D-Arlington) said she believes in “trying to find a way to strike that fair balance” between the environment and employment.

“I've heard a lot of, ‘I think.’ Uncertainty,” McClure said. “Versus, ‘We know this is happening, and we know this is the cause and the correlation.’”

She said advancing the proposal is “putting the cart before the horse” of gathering more data.

Getting accurate science has become the heart of the debate over managing the fishery.

Menhaden are particularly difficult — and expensive — to study, scientists say, because they're hard to catch with traditional survey gear and migrate seasonally out of the bay.

After many failed attempts by state lawmakers to fund a study of menhaden in the bay, Gov. Abigail Spanberger this year [allocated \\$2 million to William & Mary's Virginia Institute of Marine Science for research](#) over the next two years.

A separate research project was also launched last fall by the National Science Foundation's Science Center for Marine Fisheries, which is funded by industry members, including Omega Protein and Ocean Harvesters. That project focuses on studying the Chesapeake Bay cap and developing a “research roadmap.”

New Hampshire board member Dennis Abbott said officials can't keep waiting.

“If not now, when? We've been fooling with this for many years,” he said. “We've been working on menhaden since I've been here so many years ago, and I'm of the opinion that we'll never have adequate science to back up any position that we take. It's so variable, and it changes over time.”

The public comment period will run through September and October, with the board meeting again in November to consider final approval, [according to the commission's website](#).

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 2027 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.

