

Agenda/Minutes for
Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
Training Room 730 East Broad Street • Richmond, VA 23219
June 18, 2026

Call to Order: Attendance:

G. Velzy, S. Shade, W. Isenberg, A. Alli, B. Kells, R. Hambrick, J. Heerwald, L. Crump, T. Pearsall, C. Spohn, J. Hill

Minutes: May 21, 2026 - not approved due to late dispersal via email - will approve next meeting

Current Issues:

- **CRLC Richmond Updates:** Parker Agelasto, *Executive Director, Capital Regional Land Conservancy*
 - Presented the city with the amended JRPS easement, waiting for COR comments. Would add Williams Island & Roger's Woods ("buttermilk west") and a few other pieces to increase the total easement area to 400+ acres. No timeline yet. Will go back to the city council for approval. Vauxhall is currently city property w/ deed restrictions, and will also be added to JRPS easement. Looking to get the city attorney to do some title clarification for 40 acres of islands. Goat Island is not COR property.
 - No other JRPS updates
 - Closed on the ¼ acre piece of Mayo Island, so now the entire island is COR property and will be in JRPS. Did not use community flood preparedness fund, so the building there can remain. It does have a septic tank, so there is an ability to have running water there (not large enough for a public restroom). A concessionaire could function there, a visitor center, a park office, etc.
 - Mayo - hoping to have some kind of park presence in that building. Groundbreaking for demolition for the existing buildings to begin July 6.
 - Some concerns about trash around the island, and impacts that a concession would bring.
 - RVA H2O plan from years ago stipulated to add 100 acres of conserved land into the city. CRLC just acquired 13 more acres, bringing the 5 year total up to 72 acres.
- **VA Scenic Rivers Update:** Joshua Bateman, *Environmental Program Planner, DCR*
 - Some confusion about our role coming from the DCR staff
 - There was a change in law about the management of state scenic rivers
 - [VA Code section - 10.1-400](#)
 - Will can follow up with Joshua Bateman later in the summer, and hope to present to the full DCR board at some point in the near future (Fall 2026?)
 - Next DCR Board meeting is October 7-9 at Breaks Interstate Park.
- **James River Park Update:** Andrew Alli, *JRP and Richmond Trails Superintendent*
 - Constantly hoping for more staff - is an eternal conversation in the budget talks.
 - Dock St., scoping for the next phase is moving forward. Focus on ADA compliant ramp at the dock.
 - Texas beach - progress is moving along! Stair tower is almost done, all projected to be done by later summer/fall. Trail crew is rebuilding the boardwalk, and also a new trail down to the top of the tower from the parking area.
 - Crooked Branch ravine park has a new bridge! 42nd st. to Crutchfield, connects to the James River Branch trail. Helps folks get from the park to the south side. Just got news of a grant award to build an ADA compliant boardwalk to connect on both sides of the bridge. The bridge has stairs w/ bike ramp.
 - Belle Isle gateway project is underway - working with Dominion to move the fencing/gate to allow better access to the suspension bridge. Eventually more paving & landscaping there. The budget is about \$30k. Fence removal is funded, pavers funding is TBD (but is a phase II issue)
 - NEA is a hit!
 - DPW will manage gates (including all gated parking lots) starting July 1 - sunrise & sunset are the contractual obligations. All park hours are now consistent and are sunrise to sunset.
 - Pony Pasture has some parking enforcement. Pony is getting a self-serve clean up station, lots of visitors are using the existing clean up stations!
 - Huguenot work is happening this week - fleximat is being installed instead of sandbags
 - Need more map holders for kiosks at Wetlands, 22nd St. and Pony - river safety & trail maps. Add more info about bathrooms at the Pony kiosk.

- o Found a contractor to get a quote on the removal of the rusted sewer pipe on the south side of Cooper's Island (just upstream of Nickel Bridge)
- **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle, *Director of Community Conservation, James River Association*
 - o CSO Funding Advocacy
 - o Not in attendance, no JRA updates.
 - o Sailfest was well attended. The sandbar was used as a beach, so many fireworks!
- **American Rivers:** Katie Schmidt, *Director, National Dam Removal Program, American Rivers*
 - o Not in attendance, no updates
- **DPU/RVA H2O Updates:** Brad Kells, *Department of Public Utilities*
 - o A. Alli report - T Pott bridge debris removal - DPU funded phase (pilot phase) is over. Set up a skid steer on Belle, had a jet ski attaching a cable winch to the logs, then the winch on land pulling it off. Removed 17 tons of materials. Potentially looking into high capacity lift helicopters? The river is too low currently to float a barge out there. Proof of concept is a good thing. B. Kells had no more additions to these updates.
 - o Moving stones at Floodwall entrance to 14th st gravel lot. Need to get out rocks to be 6-8" away from the pavement to allow for raft buses. Currently the contractor says that they would need to remobilize. Could JRPS do this? Maybe.
 - o What is happening at Dock St. CSO project? They are increasing the capacity of the storage basin and adding the ability to open & close individual lines at the same time, to allow for in-line capacity adjustment during rain events. Still pumped to go across the river to the water treatment plant. The line is gravity fed to some extent, and then also pumped up at Brander St., to get it into the treatment plant.
 - o Some planned DPU maintenance at Rattlesnake creek, so the trail will have a reroute.
- **Scenic Virginia Updates:** Lynn Crump, *Viewshed Project Manager*
 - o The photo contest is closed. Still looking for coastal views to be registered to the state system.
- **Friends of James River Park Report:** Shawna Shade, *Office Administrator, Friends of the James River Park*
 - o Printed 10,000 copies of maps, already running low. Lots of folks are using them and not much litter from them! Next printing will also have more info about Mayo acquisition. Entirely funded by FOJRPS! Request to add more info about CRLC and Leave No Trace.
 - o Got a grant for work at Wetlands for ash tree removal and reforestation. The timeline is to start summer 2026.
- **James River Outdoor Coalition:** Greg Velzy, *Vice President*
 - o Huguenot flatwater - planter is replanted. Trails looking great.
 - o Music at Maymont has been going well, one more added for September.
- **Brown's Island Renovation Update:** Alex Dahm, *Operations Manager, Venture Richmond*
 - o Lots of construction going on! Will get an update next time.

New Business:

- DPU Training Room #2 is reserved for the October 15 meeting, lower level room - 730 E. Broad St. Parking is not included - please plan accordingly.
- Encourage us to talk to elected officials in Chesterfield and Henrico about expanding the scenic river designation upstream & downstream of our current boundaries. Potentially more politically viable than in past years. With Henrico's acquisition of Wilton and Varina Farms.
 - o Chesterfield - Appomattox river being a state scenic river has had a huge impact on the region. Talking to the board of supervisors (new supervisor coming in soon) may assist.
 - o If we extend the Historic Falls section, would it be more amenable for the national designation? Talk to American Rivers.
 - o Route 5 corridor initiative folks may be good to bring in as well. CRLC is a member organization of the Route 5 Corridor Coalition. Have not been able to get a national scenic byway - is currently a state scenic byway.

- Local tribes are looking to put a Traditional Cultural Place (TCP) designation down near Henricus. Acts like a historic district, but with tribal backing.
 - “Jefferson Reach” section of the river is from Henricus to Turkey Island.
- Our role may be more education of elected officials to get their buy-in so they can take it to the General Assembly.
- Conceptual talks have begun for the Three Notched Trail - a connection between Richmond and Charlottesville. There are potential routes already identified in the JRP master plan. There is a lot of incentive for connectivity.
- Looking for better ways to plug into permitting and developments around the riverfront.
 - Will is now on a notification email list from PlanRVA about permit applications for riverfront development. If anything comes up, Will will share with us.

Reports:

Open Discussion:

Adjourn: 12:59pm

Next Public Meeting: August 20, 2026

Meetings usually begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall. Meetings are scheduled for the THIRD Thursday of each month. All meetings are open to the public. If you are not now receiving e-mail meeting notices and wish to receive them, please provide your name and e-mail address tospohncl@vcu.edu. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.