

Minutes:

**Historic Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
Zoom**

Meeting: June 15, 2023

Greg Velzy Chair – Presiding

Call to Order: 12:05 PM

Attending Committee Members: Ralph Hambrick, Leighton Powell, Tricia Pearsall, Jim Hill, Greg Velzy, Lynn Crump, Anne Wright, Alex Dahm.

Minutes: Minutes of February 16, 2023 and May 18, 2023: Move to approve-Ralph Hambrick, Seconded-Leighton Powell, Approved.

Current Issues:

- **Riverfront Development Updates:** Kevin Vonck, Director, Dept. of Planning & Development Review, City Of Richmond: Kevin not present.
- **Mayo Bridge:** Tricia sent a letter to Will Wheeler (VDOT) outlining all our suggestions and considerations for the Mayo Bridge conceptual plans. See his response below. In addition, I sent him a map of the designated boundaries for the Falls of the James Scenic River, a list of Committee members and the Code of Virginia Scenic River Act for the Historic Falls of the James.

Re: Suggestions for Mayo Bridge Concept Design from Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee

1 message

Wheeler, William (VDOT) <William.Wheeler@vdot.virginia.gov>

Tue, May 30, 2023 at 8:07 AM

To: Tricia Pearsall <pearsalltricia@gmail.com>

Cc: "Bobby.Vincent@rva.gov" <Bobby.Vincent@rva.gov>, "Fisher, Scott P.E. (VDOT)" <Scott.Fisher@vdot.virginia.gov>, "Behringer, Rebecca (VDOT)" <Rebecca.Behringer@vdot.virginia.gov>

Tricia

We would like to thank you for your input and these thoughts will be shared with our design team as the concepts are developed. I have also shared your concerns with our Environmental group for their awareness. For your reference, VDOT has published a project website to share information about the project. As more details are developed, we will update the website. Please see the link below:

<https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/richmond/richmond-mayos-bridge-superstructure-replacement.asp>

As part of our community outreach we have developed a Stakeholder Record sheet to help us track everyone who has a shared interest in this project. I was able to fill in some information from the Facebook page and would like to request your assistance completing our record for your committee. Can you provide additional contact information (highlighted) for the committee. Also, if your committee has a better map of your responsible area, please share that as well.

Again, thank you for reaching out.



William C. Wheeler, PE, PMP, LEED AP

Sr. Eng. Project Manager / Richmond District L&D

Virginia Department of Transportation

804-609-5280 (office)

804-573-8135 (mobile)

william.wheeler@VDOT.Virginia.gov

- **Brown's Island Improvement Plan:** Alex Dahm: Operations Manager, Venture Richmond, Inc.
 - Alex reported that Venture Richmond had been working closely with Dominion Energy to rework their stage etc. in the wake of the expansion of Dominion's substation. The Canal Walk will be blocked off as well as the access stairs. Venture Richmond will put up QR codes to give pedestrians information concerning the best path to get around this work. (Suggestions were made concerning a floating dock). Alex said that the Federal Reserve Bank will allow access by the public to their private 'park' from 7th to 9th and this will make the trip around the construction easier.
 - Venture Richmond is working to remove invasives from the bay-scape garden and to get rid of the Ailanthus on the bank along Tredegar Street.
 - In response to request to move the heavy equipment (generator) along Tredegar Street, the answer is probably, 'no'. Too heavy and Louis Evans (DPU) said it will be there for the foreseeable future. But, sidewalk improvements are coming along, where they will address pedestrian safety measures.
 - CoStar has done a great job of keeping rads and area clean during construction and truck drivers have been slowing down (once they realized how much pedestrian traffic existed along Tredegar Street).
 - When asked what he thought about the new JRP ramp on Tredegar Street, Alex stated that they need to keep pouring. The ramp is too short.
 - Also concerning the new amphitheater proposed along 2nd Street behind Tredegar Ironworks, Alex said that it will be unique to Richmond but understood the concerns of the Oregon Hill Community and that it would need to be properly maintained. It's a whole other venue than Browns Island which rents for \$5500/event.

This place will probably be at least 4 times that amount, and all agreed that access will be crazy. (These two articles provide more information concerning this development:

- <https://richmondbizsense.com/2023/01/30/riverfront-amphitheater-target-date-pushed-back-a-year-as-prep-work-continues/>
- <https://www.axios.com/local/richmond/2023/05/24/riverfront-amphitheater-tredegar-river-venue>

When asked about the ownership of the land, thought it would be a multi-year lease from New Market.

- Alex said he was still hopeful that the JR & K Canal could be reopened. Park Hydro at the foot of Oregon Hill needs to be repaired and relocated and the city is still not there. This is essential plus the removal of that dike in order to have water at the same level. If opened it could provide water access (a Blueway and perhaps a footpath) from Oregon Hill to Maymont Park.
 - Moving forward on the Browns Island Improvement Plan. Now trying to raise funds to pay for the improvements. Also includes reworking the sidewalk access to the T-Pott on Browns Island.
 - Canal Cruises are going well. Considering disembarkation point near the Great Shiplock Park, particularly as the River Center gets nearer to completion. Venture Richmond could have combined programs with JRA – one focusing on the history of the dock area, the other on the science, etc. of the river.
 - Venture Richmond has begun having quarterly meetings of River Stakeholders to share information.. They're working on procuring access for under the Railroad on Tredegar Street.
- **CRLC Updates:** Parker Agelasto and Jane Myers were not present.
 - In an email from CRLC, they wanted to make certain we understood that the National Park Service is not a co-holder of the easement. The property was acquired by The Conservation Fund on August 2, 2021. In March of 2022, 0.85 acres were purchased from The Conservation Fund by the JRA. On May 12, 2023 a conservation easement was recorded between The Conservation Fund as Grantor and Capital Region Land Conservancy/VA Department of Conservation and Recreation as Grantees on the remaining 4.33 acres. On May 12, 2023 after the easement was recorded, the remaining 4.33 acre property was purchased from The Conservation Fund by the City. The National Park Service is not one of the co-holders of the easement. The purchase of the property by the City was in part made possible by a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (Dept of Interior, National Park Service) which means that the National Park Service was named in that deed and making it a requirement that the property not be converted from public recreational uses.
 - Also, the easement allows for up to 10,000 square feet of impervious surfaces, though does require a minimum of 35' vegetated buffer along the James except for in the area of the dock.
 - After 50 years since first protecting the land at Huguenot Flatwater and facilitating a gift of more than 31 acres to the City of Richmond to become part of the James River Park System, the Historic James Greenbelt Corporation has transferred its real estate interests to the Capital Region Land Conservancy, including the original protections for scenic views and public access: <https://mailchi.mp/.../historic-james-greenbelt-press...>
 - **Virginia Scenic Rivers:** Samantha Wangsgard was not present.
 - Lynn said that the MOU between VCU and DCR to train students to do Scenic River evaluations was not renewed for the upcoming year. VCU did produce a Training Module for River Evaluation and this should be published soon.
 - **Scenic Virginia:** Lynn Crump is hoping to establish Viewshed Analysis modules with VCU (Central Virginia) and the William & Mary Institute of Integrated Conservation in order to get a study going in Tidewater and with the Nature Conservancy in order to reach Southwest Virginia. She would also like to discuss with Justin and JRA as part of an interpretative effort with 3North Architects and the River Center.
 - **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle was not present but sent a report as follows:
 - **James A. Buzzard River Education Center:** Construction activities are proceeding as planned. I am in close contact with Cat Anthony of the Virginia Capital Trail Foundation to ensure the safety of Virginia Capital Trail users during construction. Dock Street will be temporarily closed for a period of time this summer.
 - **Canal Walk Improvements:** Richmond's Urban Design Committee recommended approval of the [first phase of a project to improve the Canal Walk for use by bicyclists](#). This project is largely funded by

a [Transportation Alternatives Program grant award the city secured a few years ago. The James River Association and other organizations advocated for funding to support this project back in 2019.](#) Alex Dahm of Venture Richmond may have additional details to share about the project.

- **James River Watch:** Water quality monitoring associated with [James River Watch](#) is underway. Water samples will be collected on a weekly basis until Labor Day.

- **James River Park:** Giles Garrison, Superintendent, James River Park. Giles' report is attached as an addendum to the minutes

- **DPU:** Grace LeRose not present but work is ongoing on the interim CSO projects.

- **Friends of James River Park Report:** Josh Stutz not present but Greg Velzy reported:
 - Purchased new Jeep and Gator for Urban Ranger to use.
 - Have conducted inhouse FoJRP cherettes with Marvel Designs concerning the future direction of the structures on Belle isle
 - New Ranger is Aimee Bushman former manager of environmental education at Maymont. She will report to Shamar Young, Deputy Director of Parks Recreation & Community Facilities, City of Richmond.

- **Falls of the James Bridge Signs:** Tricia met with Theresa Simmons ,RMTA ,and she accepted the blue signs designed for the city bridges and will place on either end of the Boulevard Bridge. She also accepted VDOT's design for the James River – A Scenic River sign for the Powhite Bridge. Those two signs are being fabricated by P. D. Brooks . All of these new signs have been produced with funding by JROC. Hopefully the 6 City Bridge signs and the RMTA signs will be in place by July 2023.

New Business: There was discussion of names for new members of the Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee. They included: Lynn Crump, James Vonesh, Megan Black, Grace Lumsden-Cook, Mike Ostrander, John Bryan, Nathan Burrell and Matt Perry.

Reports:

JROC – work project at Huguenot flatwater this weekend.

Open discussion: None

Adjourn: 1:10 pm

Next Public Meeting: June 20, 2023

Meetings begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall and/or conducted via Zoom. 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 to velzyg@verizon.net. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.

Tricia Pearsall – Secretary

Superintendent Report

Highlights from May 2023

UPDATES / ANNOUNCEMENTS

Safe Swim Day

Join JRPS Outdoor Education and the Richmond Fire Department on Saturday, June 10th from 12 PM – 3 PM for Safe Swim Day. JRPS will teach park visitors of all ages to safely swim in the James River at First Break Rapids, located at the western-most tip of Belle Isle. The event is free and no registration is required. Wear river shoes! Life jackets and swimming support provided.

Urban Ranger

Aimee Bushman, most recently Manager of Environmental Education at Maymont Park, began with PRCF as Urban Ranger Supervisor on June 5, 2023. The next urban ranger position will soon be listed on rva.gov.

Jubilation in June

The City of Richmond's Jubilation in June festival is Sunday, June 18th at East Riverfront/ Intermediate Terminal Park (3101 Wharf Street) from 3 PM – 9 PM. Road closures will impact Wharf Street. Ancarrow's Landing, including the ramp, parking lot, and Slave Trail, will be closed from Friday, June 16 – Monday, June 19th for event fireworks.

PARK PROJECTS

Dock Street Property

On May 11, 2023, the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities (PRCF) acquired 4.33 acres of riverfront property located between Intermediate Terminal and Great Shiplock Park. This is the result of a decades-long effort to conserve green space and the "view that named Richmond" by partners including Scenic Virginia, the Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC), and the James River Association. Next steps include community engagement on the landscape design of the park site, which must remain planted area according to the conservation easement, which is held jointly by CRLC, Department of Conservation & Recreation, and National Park Service.

North Bank Tower

PRCF Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) team is working with WRA LLC to develop a design for the repair of the North Bank Tower and Bridge. The timeline for the repair of the bridge is 12-18 months.

Potterfield Bridge Repairs

The Potterfield Bridge is now undergoing major repairs, including the installation of new fasteners and stiffeners to eliminate side-to-side movement and bowing of bridge grates. The bridge will remain open, as repairs will be made to the underside of the structure.

Reedy Creek Bypass Trail & Turn-Around

The Reedy Creek Bypass Trail, which will create a safe pedestrian path parallel to the Reedy Creek Operations driveway, goes to City Council for final approval on June 12.

Pony Pasture Parking Lot

Final improvements to the Pony Pasture parking lot will take place in June 2023. These include adding an asphalt apron to the entrance and exits, as well as curb bumps to the 100+ parking spaces in the lot. The lot will remain open during this work.



Park visitors can now use RVA 311 to report JRPS Trail issues. The RVA 311 app can be downloaded onto your smart phone or visit <https://www.rva311.com/rvaone/> to make a report online.

Operations Report

JRPS Park Operations: May, 2023

Park Visitation in April, 2023:

191,453

585,507 Year-to-Date

Updates:

5/2 – 7 JRPS employees completed TILT training course.

5/18 – JRPS staff repair T-Pot bridge boards prior to Dominion River Rock festival.

Projects

- ADA Access Parking Spaces 5/29
- Brush Removal 5/13
- Welding Demonstration 5/23
- Z-dam portage 5/10
- Boesher's portage 5/20
- Jute Matte project 5/31

5/29 – ADA Parking

JRPS continues to implement ADA access parking spaces for its parking lots. Tredegar parking and The Great Shiplock parking lot now meet the standard access space requirement.



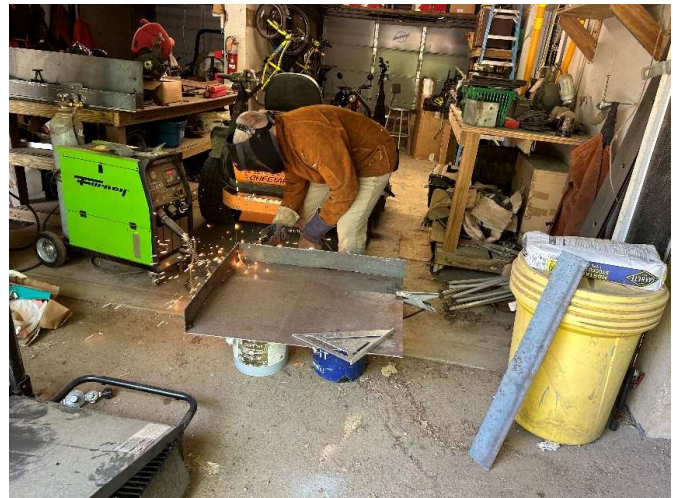
5/23 – Brush Truck Operations

Invasive Species Task Force provides an immensely beneficial service to the park by manually removing invasive trees deep in the wood line. In their wake, they leave behind huge piles of brush that JRPS staff can now quickly dispatch of with the use of heavy vehicles like this brush truck and other commercial motor vehicles. Featured here is Shae Jackson, who can now pilot the knuckle boom of this vehicle!



5/13 – Welding Demonstration

Josh Feola, Superintendent of Forest Hill, made a trip down to JRPS to demonstrate staff how to use a MIG welder. This metal piece was then used to repair an outdoor grill at Forest Hill Park.



5/31 – Belle Interpretive Signage

A collection of new and updated interpretive signage can be found on Belle Isle. These signs were made possible with the collaboration of many groups. The design overhaul was conducted by Rocket Pop Media, the content was provided in house by outdoor recreation specialist, Tyler Twyford, the wooden podiums were built by JRPS staff and assembled with volunteer groups. All of which were funded by Friends of the James River Park.



Z-Dam Portage Signage

James River Park has a complex balance of natural resource, conservation, and recreational spaces. It is particularly difficult to manage these resources with obstacles like low head dams such as Z-Dam, located just East of Huguenot Flatwater. Luckily we have friends to help us install safety signage and increase awareness of these hazards for the general public. This time we reached out to RVA Paddlesports to provide rafts and help with transporting these signs to Williams Island for installation. The goal is to bring awareness to these hazards in our park to reduce further incidents from happening. For continuity and uniformity, specially curated signage has been designed and is being implemented in multiple locations this year. The next step for Z-dam will be to clear vegetation and expand the portage trail to allow users to get out of the river sooner to avoid the dam.



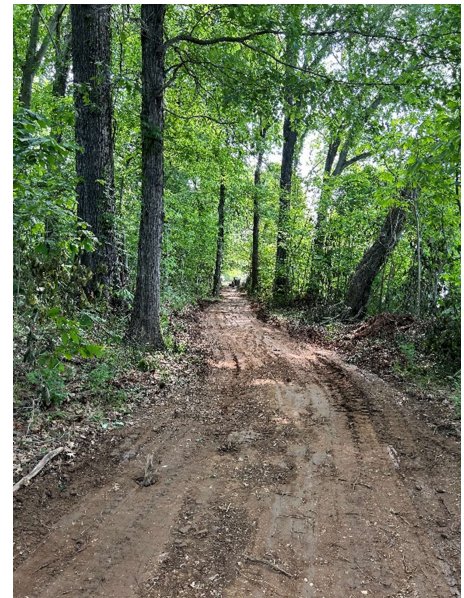
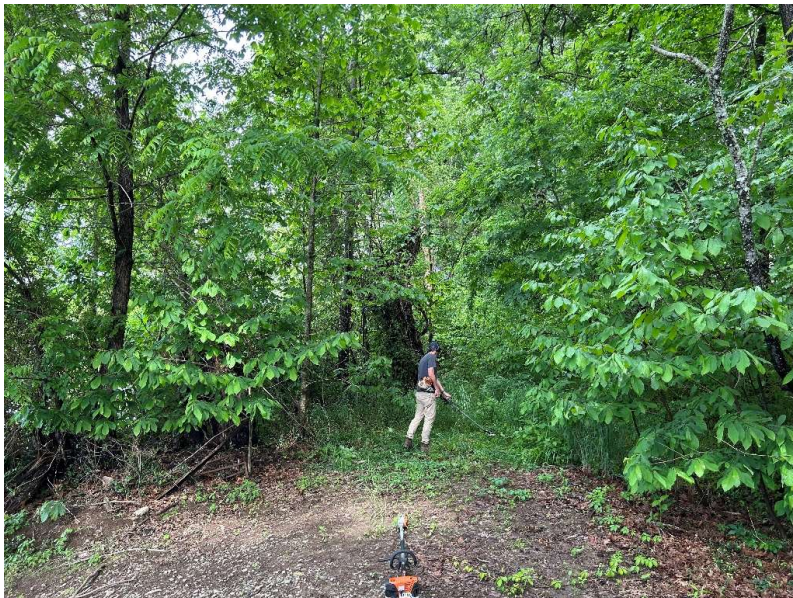
5/20 – Boesher’s Dam Portage

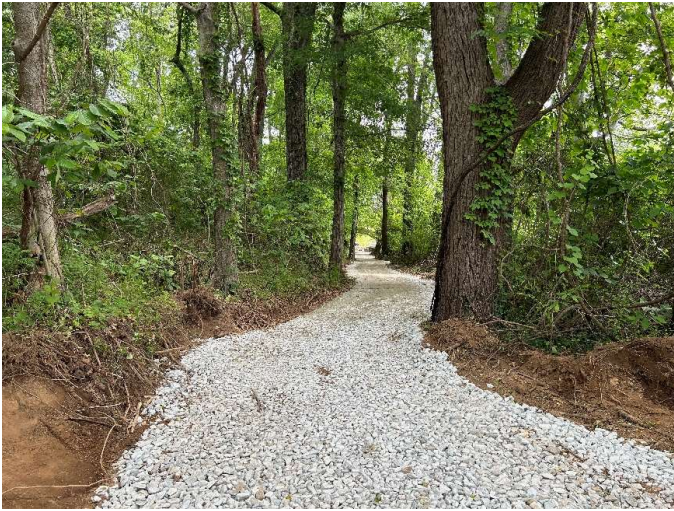
Boesher’s Dam is a low head dam west of Huguenot Flatwater. In response to last year’s Memorial Day Tragedy, JRPS develops a three phase plan: Create a 425 foot portage trail to connect the dam to the Dominion easement, install a 15 foot bilingual portage sign and create a stone step terrace for emergency river exits.



Phase I – Portage trail

The first step is to clear the forest west of Boesher’s Dam to create a service road that spans 425 feet to the Dominion property - this allows a path for vehicles and foot traffic. This trail is made out of mostly aggregate material that should sustain in flood levels and will allow for equipment to move material westward. With this trail, paddlers will have a first and second chance to exit the river before approaching the dam.

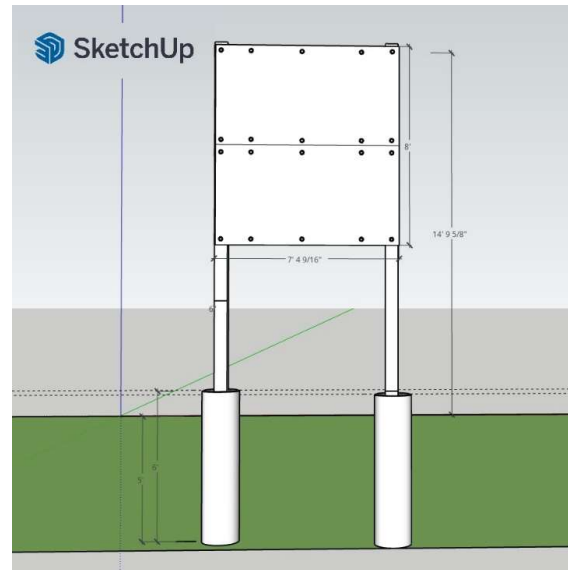




After clearing a path of vegetation, park staff use machines to create sub grading for 60 tons of gravel and tamp for completion.

Phase II – Portage Sign

This massive sign is made of 20' aluminum posts, which will be anchored into 6 feet of concrete and installed along the Dominion property. Two signs, one in Spanish and English will warn paddlers to exit the river and utilize this trail in emergencies. This will be installed in the beginning of June, 2023



Excavation for phase III stone steps will begin shortly after the sign installation in the following weeks.

5/31 - Jute Matt erosion control on Buttermilk

Lastly in this busy month of projects is the Buttermilk erosion control mats. To assist Anne Wright, an invasive task force specialist, who has been busy working on invasive removals in the 42nd st area, park staff help her install Jute matting to help slow down the erosion issues caused from invasive removals. The plan is to carefully plant natives inside the matting to retake the steep slopes of this trail system.



Trails & Greenways Monthly Report

Highlights from May 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

Trails and Greenways Division officially launches the RVA 311 reporting system. This is acting as a pilot for Parks, in the hopes of eventually expanding department wide. Park users are able to submit trail related reports/concerns and receive updates along the completion process. This has streamlined the way reports are submitted, and creates accountability and transparency for the park user.



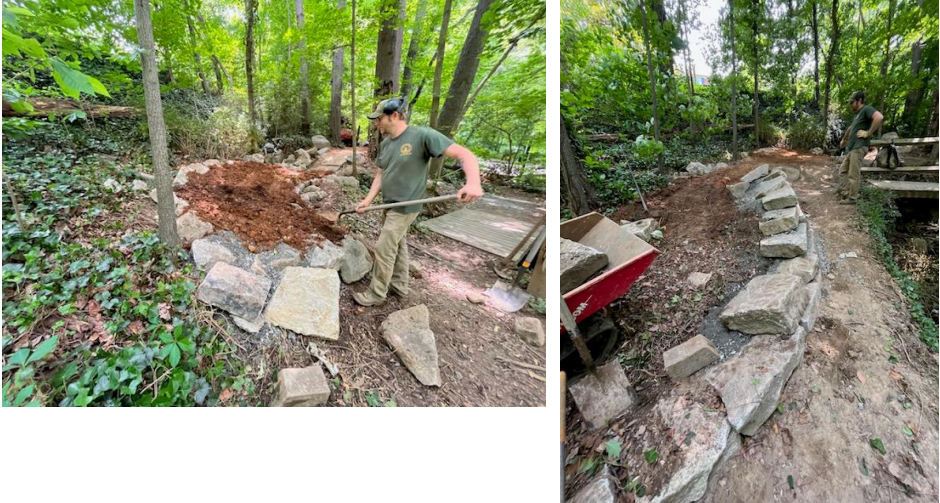
TEXAS BEACH

Trail Crew has assisted with the closure of the Texas Beach Tower. The tower has been deemed unsafe and trail crew aided with the welding of the bridge door to keep users safe.



BUTTERMILK TRAIL

Trail Crew has initiated work on a planned reroute on the western end of the Buttermilk Trail. This work involves building a switchback and extensive rock work. This reroute addresses an unsustainable eroding section of trail. By moving this section of trail, a mature Beech tree will have its roots protected from further damage, while also being safer for trail users.



CANNON CREEK TRAIL

Trail Crew has assisted in the relocation of a veteran memorial along the Cannon Creek Trail. The construction of a new affordable housing development has forced the memorial to move. This memorial was constructed by a local church group. Groundwork RVA assisted with the bed planting (photo below). Planning is moving forward on the Crooked Branch trail bridge and trail, which will be put out to bid this summer.



UPDATES

Construction on the Gillies Creek Greenway begins this summer.

Invasive Management Report for May 2023

Submitted by Laura Greenleaf

Park staff (Laura Greenleaf and Gera Williams), JRPS AmeriCorps member Megan Lowe, and two JRPS Invasive Plant Task Force volunteer project leaders (Anne Wright and Catherine Farmer) organized and led 32 volunteer events at project focus sites in seven park units plus two events at Crooked Branch. Seasonal management activities are primarily Free-A-Tree, vine groundcover removal, and removal of understory shrubs including cut-stem treatment as appropriate.



Free-a-Tree events at Huguenot Flatwater have made an impact! About 1,200 trees in Huguenot woods are now free from Wintercreeper, which restores the tree canopy and allows native plants to flourish.

Park staff initiated planning for a third year of control of Japanese knotweed populations impacting ten park units. This includes site monitoring, recommendations, and development of management tracking tools as well as early control methods. Past treatment has been extremely successful with most areas showing regrowth below 20%. Knotweed treatment occurs in phases and ends in late summer/early fall.



Knotweed is an exceptionally ecologically and economically destructive invasive plant on a global scale, forming monocultures that destroy riparian habitat along rivers and their tributaries.

Park staff also initiated treatment of surviving ash trees infested with the invasive Emerald Ash Borer. The Virginia Department of Forestry has supported this effort by supplementing the JRPS supply of mectinite.

ChemTreat, one corporate volunteer group, assisting in invasive removal at Huguenot Woods.

James River Park System Volunteers - May 2023

Hours of Service **757** **Events Completed** **42** **Total Volunteers** **327**
Average Hours per volunteer 2.3 *Avg. Volunteers per event* 7.8

NorthStar Academy helps with Dell Meadow



Invasive Management on Buttermilk Trail



Volunteer Coordinator Matt Mason with Altria Volunteers



Metric Summary

	Cleanups	Invasives
Hours of Service	376	381
<i>Average Hours per volunteer</i>	2.10	2.57
Events Completed	14	28
<i>Avg. Volunteers per event</i>	12.79	5.29
Total Volunteers	179	148

Date	Number Volunteers	Duration	Hours Served	Project	Invasive (Y/N)
5/3/2023	7	2	14	James River Cleanup	No
5/6/2023	12	2	24	James River Cleanup	No
5/10/2023	30	2	60	Altria - Floodwall Graffiti Removal	No
5/12/2023	8	2	16	Mercer Cares - James River Cleanup	No
5/13/2023	2	2	4	James River Cleanup	No
5/16/2023	60	2	120	Belle Isle Cleanup	No
5/17/2023	10	2	20	James River Cleanup	No
5/18/2023	6	2	12	James River Cleanup	No
5/19/2023	12	2	24	Hodges Partnership - JPRS Cleanup	No
5/20/2023	2	2	18	Maggie Walker HS Cleanup	No
5/20/2023	13	2	26	Moody Middle Cleanup	No
5/24/2023	6	2	12	James River Cleanup	No
5/27/2023	8	2	16	James River Cleanup	No
5/31/2023	5	2	10	James River Cleanup	No
5/5/2023	10	3	30	Ancarrow's Invasive Management	Yes
5/12/23	1	3	3	Ancarrow's Invasive Management	Yes
5/19/23	9	3	27	Ancarrow's Invasive Management	Yes
5/26/23	2	3	6	Ancarrow's Invasive Management	Yes
5/4/23	2	3	6	Belle Isle Invasive Management	Yes
5/11/23	5	3	15	Belle Isle Invasive Management	Yes
5/18/23	5	3	15	Belle Isle Invasive Management	Yes
5/25/23	4	3	12	Belle Isle Invasive Management	Yes
5/6/23	3	2	6	Buttermilk Invasive Management	Yes
5/13/23	4	2	8	Buttermilk Invasive Management	Yes
5/20/23	5	2	10	Buttermilk Invasive Management	Yes
5/27/23	4	2	8	Buttermilk Invasive Management	Yes
5/10/23	3	2	6	Free a Tree	Yes
5/18/23	1	2	2	Free a Tree	Yes
5/31/23	4	2	8	Free a Tree	Yes
5/9/23	2	2	4	Pony Pasture Invasive Management	Yes
5/17/23	3	2	6	Pony Pasture Invasive Management	Yes
5/23/23	2	2	4	Pony Pasture Invasive Management	Yes
5/30/23	5	2	10	Pony Pasture Invasive Management	Yes
5/3/23	9	2	18	Reedy Creek Invasive Management	Yes
5/10/23	4	2	8	Reedy Creek Invasive Management	Yes
5/17/23	8	2	16	Reedy Creek Invasive Management	Yes
5/24/23	4	2	8	Reedy Creek Invasive Management	Yes
5/31/23	2	2	4	Reedy Creek Invasive Management	Yes
5/6/23	11	3	33	Wetlands Invasive Management	Yes
5/13/23	15	3	45	Wetlands Invasive Management	Yes
5/20/23	8	3	24	Wetlands Invasive Management	Yes
5/27/23	13	3	39	Wetlands Invasive Management	Yes



Volunteers plant native plants at Pony Pasture



NorthStar Academy (left) and St. Michael's Middle School (right)



ChemTreat helped free 76 trees at Huguenot Flatwater

James River Park System Outdoor Education - May 2023

New JRPS Visitors **3** **Number Participants** **308** **Number Programs** **7**

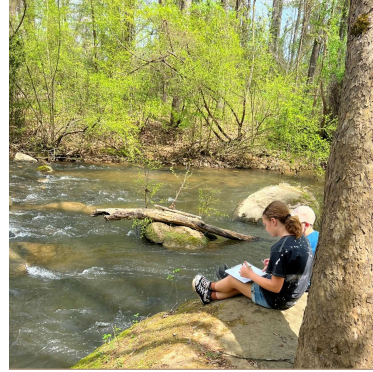
Supervisor: Penelope Davenport

Program Specialists: Tyler Twyford and Willa Maffatt

Em, a VCU alum, performing spoken word poetry for the Armstrong Leadership Program.



Students nature journaling next to Reedy Creek



Date	Number Participants	Program Title	Audience	Organization/ Group	Activity
5/3/2023	35	Nature Journaling	Private School	Pine Camp Homeschool Groups	Science Lesson
5/5/2023	65	First Grade Field Trip: Animal Adaptation	RPS Field Trip	Mary Munford Elementary School	Science Lesson
5/10/2023	56	Kindergarten Field Trip	RPS Field Trip	John B. Cary Elementary School	Adventure Hike
5/18/2023	10	Pumphouse Tour	Seniors	Seniors	Interpretive Hiking
5/24/2023	65	First Grade On-Campus Field Trip	RPS Field Trip	J. L. Francis	Science Lesson
5/30/2023	15	Journaling and JRPS Orientation	RPS After School Program	Armstrong Leadership Group	Journaling and Meeting
5/31/2023	62	High School Field Trip	RPS Field Trip	George Wythe High School ESL Classes	Adventure Hike and Volunteer Engagement

JRPS Outdoor Education Initiatives

BWET

Summary

Progress Reports were submitted at the end of April
Interviews with School Board members
Document Drafting has begun

James River Risk Mitigation

Summary and upcoming events:

River Safety Press Conference on May 19
2 PSAs filmed, more to come
conversation and collaboration with community partners
sign improvements: Dam and portage signs printed, additional signs to come in June
Safe Swimming Day: June 10th

Public Programming

Summary

Upcoming Events

Collaboration with the Therapeutic Recreation group is about to take a big step up. Meetings and planning took place in May