

## Friends of the James River—June 2015 Notes

### Present:

Adrienne Cox  
Penelope Davenport  
Phil Dawson  
Molly Dellinger-Wray  
Warren Foster  
Nancy Fowler  
Myrna Hartley  
Matt Mason

Betsy Slade  
Larry Socha  
Mary-Helen Sullivan  
Karen Thomas  
Lisa Townsend  
Vicky Shivy  
Greg Velzy  
Ralph White and guests

### May minutes were passed.

**Larry Socha**—invasive species project update: reached out to Diane, Dorothy Gayer, and Tim Blumenschine, and received responses from Tim and Dorothy. Tim from the National Park Service at the Petersburg National Battlefield said that he used VHB on a couple of contracts to remove invasive (grasses?) from 40 acres by spraying (fusion?). They used ATV's and hand sprayers over a 3-4 week period of time. He told them what he needed and he said that they were easy to work with.

Dorothy said that she is waging an ongoing battle on wisteria / privet / bamboo in the 8000 plus acres that she is responsible for. She said that she would use volunteers for monitoring and inspection, but would not ask volunteers for mass removal of her mix of invasives. However, she might consider using them for removal of English Ivy. To remove invasives her department employs a variety of proprietary chemicals. Costs ranged from 400-500/acre for arial spraying, and \$200-300/acre to \$1000-1400 acre for hand spraying. She considered goats but said that they eat everything and would likely only be good for the removal of low height plants. With regards to replanting she added that they do not replant because in most cases whatever is left will be the native seeds. Once the invasives are removed one has to monitor the sprayed areas and be vigilant to remove any new growth. Dorothy enjoyed working with VHB and has used them for spraying projects. She added that VHB uses subcontractors for this work, and that she looks to find the best price for spraying projects (Note: I did not ask her who else has she used).

Both references liked working with VHB. However they used them only for spraying projects and not to perform an Environmental Natural Resource Assessment / habitat restoration planning.

**Ralph White and friends Audio Tour presentation:** Gave a presentation for funding for audio tours that people can click onto through a GPS system to access Ralph White tours of the James. The Board discussed and decided to allocate \$6,000 to the project. We passed a motion to allocate \$4000 from the signage budget in this fiscal year and \$2K in July. This money will be used for five James River audio tours (two are already funded and Vaughan will make 3 new tours). These will be easily accessible to river enthusiasts. Phil will write up a proposal for Vaughan, the vendor, and will work with the communications committee to identify the subjects of the other three tours. If three are identified, he will get in touch with Vaughan to make sure he is okay with the proposal. The tours will be ready by September in time for UCI bike race viewers to enjoy and will credit Friends of the James River as the funder (maybe include the website).

**Budget**—Moving \$1000 from signage to for trash grabbers. Discussion and presentation is delayed due to some changes that Nathan would like to make to the budget. A motion was passed to give Penelope \$200 for the Solstice party.

**Adrienne**— Said that 63 hikers are coming to the picnic. The board with Molly's lead decided to organize the picnic signups for food and volunteers, give Adrienne a break, and invite her to come as a guest and enjoy the picnic in appreciation for all of her hard work this year with events.

**Fundraising**—Nancy report—New membership levels decided by the Board

Original vs. "Decided" Member/Annual Fund levels:

\$5 to \$15—student

\$15 to \$30—individual

\$25 to \$50—family

\$10 to -\$250—Friend of the Falcon (one gratis ticket to the Hero event)

Lifetime \$500+—James River Eagle (two gratis tix to the Hero event)

\*These levels were approved by the Board beginning July 2015 and stickers will be printed for brochures

\* Gifts to the P&P fund will be recognized as legacy/lifetime gifts

\* Nancy talked about possibility of recognizing these gifts on a recognition wall outside the Park office.

**Karen report** on the calendar collaboration with other groups. Everybody's on board with our river calendar including JOJRP, rva More, JROC, JRPS, JRA all have account and will add events to the calendar. JR Hikers have not replied. JROC agreed to pay half the set up fee--\$150.

**Nathan's Report (e-mailed in)**

- **Habitat Restoration Plan**

The contract has been signed and a kick off meeting will be set for the week of June 16<sup>th</sup>. I have been working with Chris (VHB) over the past week to establish all needed baseline documents as it relates to boundaries and locations within the park to be included in the plan. This information will be presented at the kick off meeting as well as the establishment of protocols, deadlines and selection of preferred service areas by each group involved.

- **21<sup>st</sup> Redevelopment**

Construction has begun as of June 1<sup>st</sup> on the Redevelopment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Access. The project is expected to take about 3-4 weeks to complete. During this time access to the tower will be maintained with detours that route visitors around the construction via Riverside Drive. Look for info in the coming weeks on a grand opening!

- **Park issues**

The elephant in the room is the op ed sent to times dispatch about lack of police presence and amount of trash on the dry rocks area of Belle Isle. Below are the efforts that have been taken and new initiatives that are quickly moving forward.

RPD and Fire have over time units that are assigned to Belle Isle on the weekends. RPD folks are there from 3-9 and RFD folks are there 11-7.

Stacy Rogers has been reassigned to the Park along with an officer from 1<sup>st</sup> precinct to patrol areas of the park from Tredegar St. to Huguenot Flat water Monday – Friday from 10am - 6Pm. They will focus their attention on the Dry Rocks as well as North Bank Park (Texas Beach).

The Parks Department will be shifting some seasonal funds from JRPS budget to pay for two additional over time officers to assist with patrols on weekends from 10am -6pm.

The Parks Department is also exploring the idea of bringing on RMC staff to do bag checks at the gates of Tredegar St., 21<sup>st</sup> tower, and North Bank Park. This is still in the works.

Park staff routinely patrol the Dry Rocks area of the park to collect trash and paint over graffiti on a weekly basis. In addition to this we coordinate volunteer groups to do the same on a weekly basis (there was 3 last week alone).

- **Park Funding for FY15**

Thanks to John Baliles and Kathy Graziano the park will receive an additional \$100,000 for permanent staff and \$450,000 in Capital Improvement funds in Fiscal Year 2015. These funds will allow me to hire two additional permanent staff (1 Recreation Program supervisor and 1 Maintenance Tech). Capital funds will be used to purchase needed equipment (Park and Trail), make needed repairs to the North Bank Tower, install additional water fountains around the park, Recreation equipment and hopefully a secure area for equipment storage here at the office. I would ask that FoJRP send the two above council members a thank you letter for supporting the City's most important asset!

- **Park Awards**

We have been recognized for a number of things since our last meeting. Below is the list.

1. Virginia Living Magazine “ Best Outdoor Adventure” and “Best Place to Fish”
2. Style Weekly “Best Place to Hike, Bike and Run” we received 1<sup>st</sup>,2<sup>nd</sup>,and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in this category
3. Outside Magazine “Best City for Stand Up Paddle Boarding”

- **Park Programming**

Penelope will be at the meeting and can fill you all in on where we are with programs and grant opportunities.