

# MID-YEAR REPORT

JULY 2021 - DECEMBER 2021



Friends of the  
James River Park

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Opening Letter from President Mary K. Martin	3
Strategic Framework	4
Accomplishments	5
Upcoming Events	6
Analytics	7
Board Members	8



# DEAR FRIENDS,

The beginning of the year is a wonderful time to reflect on the successes that we've had and look forward to what's to come. You have contributed so much to our successes over this past year and I want to thank you and share what to expect in 2022! In 2021, your support made it possible for the Friends of the James River Park to hire an Executive Director, Josh Stutz. With Josh's help, we are able to expand our capacity to do what we love to do – preserve, protect and enhance the James River Park. Last year, your generosity improved the Reedy Creek entrance and the path between Reedy Creek and the Forest Hill Park. You helped us secure funding for an Outdoor Classroom being built at the Reedy Creek headquarters, where students from all over the City will be able to see and learn about the nature around them. You advocated with us in support of a portion of Richmond's American Rescue Plan funding going towards Richmond's Parks and Recreation facilities, with \$14 million of that money going towards JRPS

projects. Your generous donations help pay for seasonal Park employees, port-a-potties, Park maps, new Park signs and more “extras” that make the Park experience better.

While there is much to be thankful for in the past year, with your help we can do even more this year and in the years to come. I hope you will join us as we celebrate the 50 Year Anniversary of the James River Park System in 2022. As always, we will continue to use your donations to support JRPS programming, projects, and advocacy. We are looking forward to earning your support again this year as we rise to meet new opportunities and challenges.

Thank you for the difference you make in the James River Park System. Let's look forward to an exciting 2022!



Mary K. Martin  
*President,  
Friends of the  
James River Park*

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



The Friends of the James River Park Board of Directors recently adopted a new strategic framework that clarifies the goals and impacts of the organization. This framework will guide our decision making and allow us to more effectively achieve our mission now that we have an Executive Director.

## OUR PURPOSE

We believe preserving, advocating for and enhancing the James River Park System, fostering a sense of personal and community ownership, is essential to ensuring an inclusive, accessible and sustainable place of refuge, learning and beauty for Richmond and beyond.

## OUR VALUES

Collaboration, Community, Ownership, Results, Adventure.

## OUR IMPACT

- A robust, recognized and respected public park system
- A community that values, appreciates and advances our public park system
- An accessible, relevant and engaging park system
- An inclusive, beautiful, natural and responsibly managed park system

## OUR GOALS

1. Leading the Collaborative Implementation of the 10-year Master Plan
2. Expanding the Scale and Scope of the James River Park System
3. Engaging Diverse Representation of Residents, Businesses and Government to Support and Lead FOJRP
4. Educating, Informing and Inspiring Park Passion
5. Increasing Diversified & Sustainable Funding
6. Implementing the Operational and Governance Infrastructure to Deliver Our Mission Consistently

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HIRING

In July FOJRP hired our first Executive Director. This was an important step in establishing FORJP's full-time presence in support of the James River Park System.

## 1.96 MILLION VISITORS IN 2021

According to the JRPS visitor counting system nearly 2 million people visited the park in 2021. This is the second highest year on record, behind 2020.

## REEDY CREEK GREENWAY PAVING

In December 2021 the paving and improvement of a path from the Reedy Creek Parking Lot to Forest Hill Park was completed. This will eventually form part of the Reedy Creek Greenway.

## ARP FUNDING

In October FOJRP successfully advocated in support of the City's plan to dedicate \$78 million in American Rescue Plan funding to parks and community centers in Richmond. \$14 million will be going to JRPS Projects which include a new Texas Beach access tower, the new James River Branch Trail, and the Crooked Branch Creek bridge, which will become the Reedy Creek Greenway. These items are all listed in the JRPS Master Plan.

## INVASIVE REMOVAL WORK

The Invasive Plant Task Force continues to

work hard to protect the Park from the scourge of invasive plants. In 2021 the Invasive Plant Coordinators freed 944 trees, treated 2,021 stems, and logged 269 volunteer hours in the Park. The big targets this year were English Ivy, Winter Creeper, Japanese Honeysuckle, and Privet.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In October of 2021 FOJRP welcomed three new board members. Matt Rigby, Bill Draper, and Kendra Norell.

## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM FUNDING

In September FOJRP received funding from the Virginia Department of Forestry for the building of an outdoor classroom near the Reedy Creek headquarters. Work on the classroom will begin in the Spring, and it will be open for use for outdoor programs in the Summer of 2022.

## NEW PARK SUPERINTENDENT

In November and December of 2021 the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities (PRCF) began a search for their next JRPS Superintendent. They selected Giles Garrison, who previously worked to lead PRCF's workforce development efforts. Giles began her tenure as JRPS Superintendent in January of 2022.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## **FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022**

FOJRP will start construction on the new Reedy Creek Outdoor Classroom.

## **APRIL 2022**

FOJRP will host the inaugural Wood River Run, presented by Dominion Energy. This family friendly 5k is being held in honor of Christian Wood, a talented young kayaker who lost his life on the James in 2018. Proceeds from this fundraising and awareness event will be used to provide scholarships in Christian's name to Passages Adventure Camp and for the Park improvement work of FOJRP.

## **SPRING 2022**

In late Spring FOJRP will be announcing a project package that will address some needed improvements and updates to existing Park facilities.

## **MAY 2022**

FOJRP will be partnering with Legend Brewing to launch the Raging James Pilsner, a beer to benefit the JRPS. A portion of sales from this seasonal offering will go to FOJRP to be used to protect, expand, and enhance the JRPS.

## **SUMMER 2022**

FOJRP will be celebrating the 50th Anniversary of JRPS with a celebration and awareness campaign to support the Park. Stay tuned for more information.

# ANALYTICS



## WEBSITE ANALYTICS

**53,649**  
Total Users

**52,701**  
New Users

## FACEBOOK ANALYTICS

**7K**  
Page Likes

**208**  
New Page Likes

**2,063**  
Page Visits

**89,232**  
Page Reach



“Come help us preserve the James River Park...”

Reach: 4,307  
Reactions: 47  
Comments: 2  
Shares: 15



“The North Bank offers top-notch views of the James River...”

Reach: 1,860  
Reactions: 153  
Comments: 7  
Shares: 19



“More amazing news for the Park! Thank you Parker...”

Reach: 1,466  
Reactions: 137  
Comments: 4  
Shares: 14

## INSTAGRAM ANALYTICS

**3.8K**  
Followers

**320**  
New Followers

**1,465**  
Profile Visits

**3,834**  
Reach



“Some news if you’re planning to be on the water today...”

Reach: 2,216  
Likes: 181  
Comments: 7  
Shares: 50



“Who knew this was a thing? Comedy wildlife photo finalists...”

Reach: 2,006  
Likes: 209  
Comments: 3  
Shares: 29



“While you’re still advised to avoid Tuckahoe Creek, VDH has lifted ...”

Reach: 1,436  
Likes: 160  
Comments: 0  
Shares: 54

# BOARD MEMBERS



Josh Stutz – *Executive Director*

Mary K. Martin – *President*

Justin Doyle – *Vice President*

G. Jacob (Jake) Savage, III – *Secretary*

G. Dean Brunson – *Treasurer*

Giles Garrison – *Superintendent of the James River Park System*

Shawna Shade – *Office Administrator*

Catherine (Cat) Anthony

Madge Bemiss

David C. Broocke

Bryon Chafin

Scott Dickens

Bill Draper

Karen Garner

Jean Linnell

Kendra Norrell

Matt Rigby

Scott Silvester

Mel Smith

Kevin Tobin

Greg Velzy

Krista Weatherford

Brooks Whitten

Bryce Wilk, Ex Officio