

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2022



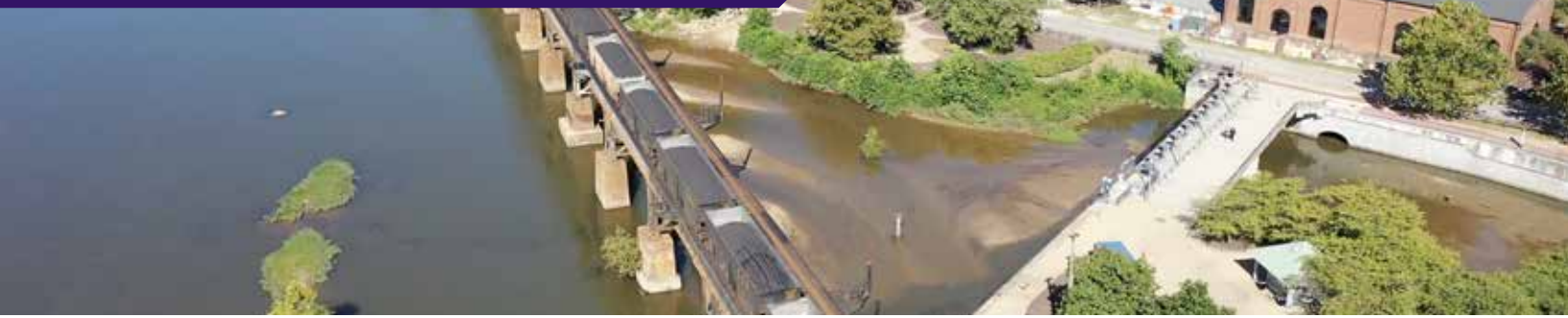
Friends of the
James River Park

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DEAR FRIENDS,



I started my job as Executive Director in early July of 2021. I have been hard at work every day since then executing the JRPS Master Plan and finding new ways that we can protect, expand, and enhance our Park. I am excited to share this report with you and offer an expanded look at what we were able to achieve this year.

Our relationship with the Park is unique because we work so closely together with the City of Richmond and the JRPS staff to support their daily work. At the same time, we focus on making more extensive strategic improvements to the park.

The main body of our work is centered around projects that protect, expand, and enhance the JRPS. In FY 22 we completed many major projects using the funds donated by our supporters. Among other projects, we built an outdoor classroom near Park HQ, revived the RVA Osprey Cam, improved the entrance to the North Bank Trail, improved pedestrian access to the park from Oregon Hill, improved access to Belle Isle from the Southside by upgrading the trail near the 21st street tower, developed a new standard for interpretive signage in the park, launched a new JRPS website (jamesriverpark.org), and we were able to provide more than \$40,000 in direct support to JRPS Staff. We were also excited to be integral to the advocacy pushes that directed \$78 million in ARP funds to Richmond's parks, and created the new Park Ranger program. We also support the Education Program of the James River Park System, to get children into the park and to

teach them about the environment.

In Fiscal Year 2023, which is just beginning, we will be celebrating 50 years of the JRPS by expanding our direct support of JRPS Staff, working on new river safety initiatives, adding acreage to the park, continuing our trail improvement programs with improvements around the Reedy Creek park HQ, expanding our interpretive signage program, and working to plan the next phase of JRPS Master Plan items.

This annual impact report will provide some more detailed information about the projects and programs we were able to support in FY 22. It is meant to be a snapshot of our work, and aside from the financials, is not comprehensive. We hope this will provide you with answers to all of the questions you might have about why you should support the work that we do. If you have additional questions or you would like to meet with me directly, please feel free to reach out to me at josh@jamesriverpark.org.

None of this would be possible without the support of our board members and generous donors. Thank you for your support, and for taking the time to learn more about what we do.



Josh Stutz
*Executive Director,
Friends of the James
River Park*

PARK TIMELINE



1676 - William Byrd I, father of Richmond's founder, buys Belle Isle. The Byrd family owns it for over a century.

1865 - As the Civil War draws to a close, President Abraham Lincoln enters Richmond from the James River, just below Mayo Island.

1960 - Friends Jack Keith and Joe Schaefer begin acquiring land along the James River for public recreation purposes.

1980 - Ralph White is hired by the James River Park System. He would become Park Superintendent, and would oversee a fantastic transformation over a 32-year career.

2018 - Friends of the James River Park System join with a group of local and regional stakeholders to create a "Park Master Plan" that will help to guide the maintenance, health, and improvement of the Park into the future.

1607 - When Europeans arrived in 1607 the Virginia Native American village of Powhatan was located in what is now Richmond's East End. The Powhatans referred to the Falls of the James as "Paqwachowng."

1814 - Industry comes to Belle Isle, with the opening of a small nail factory.

1939 - Old Dominion Iron & Steel begins making tank parts on Belle Isle for the United States Army.

1972 - Keith and Schaefer donate 380 acres to the City of Richmond for the establishment of a public park.

2009 - The City of Richmond joins with a group of advocates and stakeholders to place the Park in a conservation easement, preserving and protecting hundreds of acres from future development.

2020 - The 10-Year Park Master Plan is adopted by Richmond City Council as part of the broader Richmond 300 Master Plan.

FY 22 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

The Reedy Creek Outdoor Classroom was completed in March of 2022. We worked with volunteers from JROC, Maggie Walker Governor's School, The Richmond Tool Bank, and the Wounded Warrior Project to make this project a reality. The classroom seats about 30 kids and is an important part of JRPS outdoor education programming. This project was partially funded through a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry

NORTH BANK TRAIL WORK

We worked with JRPS staff to improve the Eastern entrance to the Northbank Trail by re-grading the hillside and paving the multi-purpose path from the Tredegar parking lot under the Lee Bridge to the Oregon Hill Overlook. This trail project improved biking and pedestrian access to the park from Oregon Hill and made it easier to identify the North Bank Trail. This work was completed in May of 2022 and paid for entirely by donations to FOJRP.

21 ST STREET TOWER TO BELLE ISLE

The 900 foot section of trail that runs from the 21 st street access tower to Belle Isle on the Southside of the River was improved in June and July of 2022. The trail was widened, leveled, and gravel was put down to ensure the trail stays dry. It also helps establish a better pathway through that section of the Park at high water when the lower trail is submerged. Thanks to our partnership with Norfolk Southern Railroad we were able to move the fence near the tower to allow for a wider path which makes this improved trail safer to use. This project was also funded entirely by donations made to FOJRP.

INTERPRETIVE SIGNS

We spent the whole year working closely with JRPS staff and other City of Richmond partners to develop new visual standards for interpretive signage in the park. This process produced a new set of interpretive signs for Belle Isle, which will be installed in September. New interpretive signs will be developed in accordance with these new standards throughout the park over the next few years. This project was funded by a generous grant from the Herndon Foundation.

WETLANDS RESTORATION PROJECT

We have been working on a DPU funded project to plant trees, remove invasive plants, and stabilize a stream bank at the Wetlands.

NEW WEBSITE

In coordination with our partners at Rocket Pop Media we launched a new JRPS/FOJRP website in June of 2022. This new site is visitor focused and provides up to date information about how to responsibly enjoy the park.

HQ REPAIRS

We provided emergency funding to purchase supplies to repair storm damage done to the Reedy Creek JRPS HQ and Education Center. We also purchased additional supplies to support an overhaul of the railing on the ramp leading into the building.

REEDY CREEK GREEN-WAY PAVING

In February we were able to support the paving of a small portion of the Reedy Creek Green-way. This path provides a safe way to go from the Reedy Creek Parking lot to the North end of Forest Hill Park. This project was designed by JRPS staff and paid for by donations made to FOJRP.

GOALS FOR FY 23



PROTECT

This year we are committing to several initiatives to support the protection of our park. As part of those efforts, we will be permanently funding the Invasive Species Coordinators that we have employed using grant money in the past. These part time contractors work directly with JRPS Staff and the Invasive Plant Task Force to help manage invasive species in the park. Our fiscal sponsorship of the Invasive Plant Task Force also supports these efforts.

We are also committing additional funding to environmental conservation projects this year. We are working with JRPS staff and other community partners to identify high priority projects related to protecting the natural condition of our park. These projects could include erosion control, habitat restoration, native species planting, and other environmental protection measures.

EXPAND

We are always working closely with our community partners on opportunities to add land to the park this year. We have several sights in mind and hope to support adding at least one new parcel to the park this year. Some of the land we are planning on adding to the park is City property already, and some of it is privately owned. We use our Preservation and Protection Fund, a designated fund designed to support park expansion, to pay for costs associated with adding acreage to the park.

ENHANCE

Our trail improvement work will continue this year in close coordination with the needs of the JRPS Staff. We have committed at least \$100,000 to park improvement projects this year and we will also begin the planning phase of our largest capital improvement project yet. We are excited to share more with you throughout the year.

As part of our park enhancement efforts this year we are also increasing our direct support funding for the JRPS staff. This line item in our budget is guided by the park superintendent and is used for equipment purchases, maintenance, small projects, signage, staff appreciation events, education programs and volunteer supplies, and emergency costs. The intent of these funds is to make sure that the Park management team always has the tools they need to get the job done.

WOOD RIVER RUN



In April of 2022 we hosted the Wood River Run at Pony Pasture Park, and it was a huge success! This family-friendly 5k was put together in memory of Christian Wood, a talented young kayaker who lost his life while boating on the James River in 2018. Together we raised close to \$50,000 in Christian's memory and more than 200 people came out to show their support. That money will be used to fund scholarships for Passages Adventure Camp, and for park improvement projects through Friends of the James River Park.

This event would not have been possible without our sponsors this year. Dominion Energy stepped in as our title sponsor and really helped to elevate the event. We are grateful for their continuing support of the park and all of the other work they do in town. C&F Bank was our "Finish Line" sponsor, and their volunteers helped hand out water as racers crossed the finish line. We are hoping to continue to grow our relationships with these sponsors, and more, as we work to make this race one of Richmond's premier family-friendly nonprofit events.

There will be a Wood River Run in 2023. We are proud to be associated with this great event and we are grateful to everyone that came out to show their support. If you missed your chance to donate, or if you want to learn more about Friends of the James River Park, visit jamesriverpark.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:



VOLUNTEERISM



Part of our work to improve the James River Park System involves finding new ways that we can support our City of Richmond partners with day to day management of the park. This means evolving our organization to fill any gaps that we find together along the way. One of the most important steps our organization made this year has been the development of a group-based volunteer program to provide park cleanup and maintenance in coordination with JRPS staff.

This program is aimed primarily at corporate and civic groups that wish to conduct larger volunteer projects in the park. We chose to work specifically with these types of groups because of the impact that a large group can have on the projects that we hope to complete, and we think it is a great way to strengthen the relationships between our community partners and the Park.

Our volunteer groups help with things like litter cleanup, graffiti removal, invasive species management, and other projects identified by the JRPS staff. We create a meaningful volunteer experience that connects people directly to the park and helps encourage long term involvement. If your company or group is interested in working on a project with us please contact friends@jamesriverpark.org

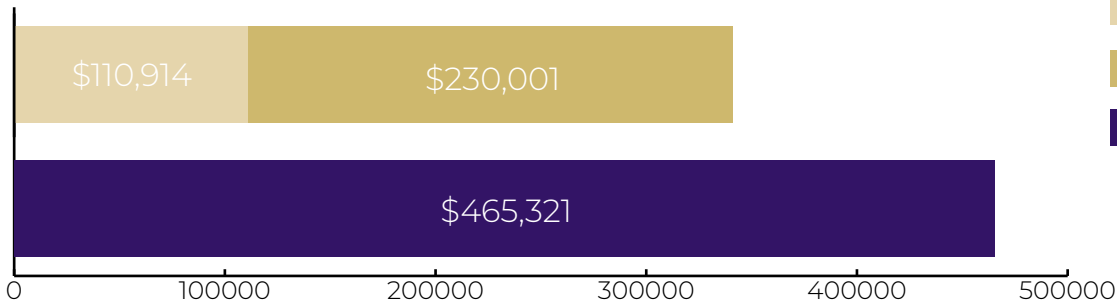
VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



FINANCES



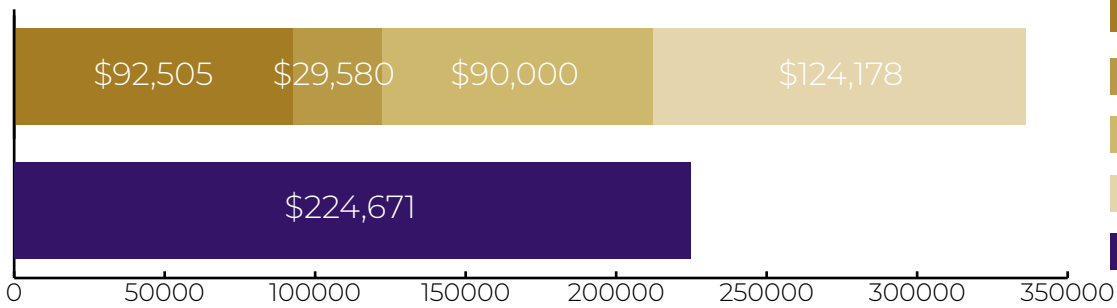
FY 22 REVENUE & EXPENSES



KEY:

- Operating Expenses
- Programs & Services
- Revenue

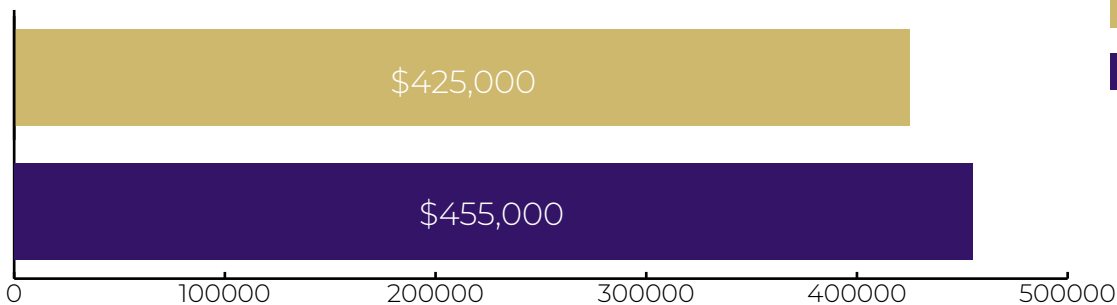
FY 22 ASSETS



KEY:

- Protection & Preservation Fund
- Fiscally Sponsored Organizations
- Other Restricted Funds
- Restricted Operating Funds
- Unrestricted

FY 23 BUDGET



KEY:

- Budgeted Expenses
- Budgeted Revenue

FY 23 BOARD MEMBERS



Josh Stutz – *Executive Director*
G. Jacob (Jake) Savage, III – *President*
David C. Broocke – *Vice President*
Matt Rigby – *Secretary*
G. Dean Brunson – *Treasurer*
Giles Garrison – *Superintendent of the James River Park System*
Shawna Shade – *Office Administrator*
Mary K. Martin – *Immediate Past President*

Madge Bemiss
Byron Chafin
Scott Dickens
Bill Draper
Karen Garner
Jean Linnell

Kendra Norrell
Mel Smith
Greg Velzy
Krista Weatherford
Brooks Whitten

ABOUT THE BOARD

The Board of Directors for Friends of the James River Park serve as the fiscal stewards and governing body for the organization. Among other duties, these dedicated volunteers meet monthly to review the organization's finances, provide input to the Executive Director, and help build an annual budget that aligns with the mission of the organization. They 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.

If you would like to learn more about our board of directors, or are interested in joining, please contact friends@jamesriverpark.org