

# Superintendent Report

February 2024

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

James River Park System is working with the Invasive Plant Task Force to develop a scope of work with Biohabitats, a Baltimore based firm, for a natural resource management plan within the park boundary. The project is grant-funded through Friends of James River Park.

## PARK PROJECTS

### Belle Isle

Development of a Belle Isle gateway area conceptual plan is underway. This includes extensive conservation landscaping, adaptive reuse of the Old Dominion Iron and Nail Works shed, improvements to the bike skills area, and construction of a nature play space. JRPS is working with FOJRP and Marvel Designs to produce the conceptual plan, with a goal of presenting to stakeholders, easement holders, and appropriate city review boards in the first half of 2024.

### Belle Isle Archeology

JRPS is developing a scope of work for an archeological assessment of Belle Isle with Black Start Cultural Resources to help guide interpretation of the park's cultural sites, as well as preservation of historic resources.

### Dock Street Site

Development of an opening plan for the Dock Street park site in Richmond's East End is moving forward in collaboration with the James River Association and FOJRP with Marvel Designs providing design work. JRPS aims to open the Dock Street site to public use in June 2024.

### Mayo Island

The City of Richmond is working with Capital Region Land Conservancy and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation on a new conservation easement that will guide the development of Mayo Island as a floodable natural park area with boating access. This is a long-term project that will overlap with the reconstruction of the Mayo Bridge superstructure.

### Pump House Ramp

An ADA ramp will be constructed at the Historic Byrd Park Pump House by MF Build with engineering and landscape design by Timmons Group. Construction is slated to begin in March 2024 with the removal of trees in the construction area. The project is funded by the Virginia Recreational Trails Program grant. Trees removed will be replaced at a 1:1 caliper inch ratio and all plantings will be native to JRPS and appropriate for the riparian area.

## GET INVOLVED

Volunteer opportunities recur weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Visit [cfengage.com](https://www.cfengage.com) to find out about events. From litter clean ups, to visitors center hosting, to invasive plant removal, there is a role for everyone to play to protect the James River Park System.

<https://www.cfengage.org/organization/001A000000aAvPSIAO>

# Operations Report

JRPS Park Operations: February 2024

Park Visitation in Feb 2024:

74,370

2023 – 119,914

2022 – 111,983

2021 – 82,550

2020 – 113,074

Year to date: 161,477

Critical data missing from Pony Pasture and Tpot.



## Updates

- Pressure valve reducer installed at JRPS HQ
- JRPS will be getting supplies through Fastenal Industrial Supply Co - This is a supply delivery service that restocks the park with safety supplies, hardware, and janitorial supplies.
- JRPS is seeking to hire two seasonal operations staff.
- 14<sup>th</sup> st. changing blind complete.
- Park staff invited to participate in Richmond INSPIRE, a citywide park masterplan. The masterplan is in early development stage asking PRCF staff and partners to gather perspective and guidance for the vision of parks. Details on community engagement to be revealed later.
- Ancarrow's Landing dredged thanks to Lewis Evans, and DPU staff. Park needs to renew dredging permit.
- Working with contractors to install a backflow preventor to water spigot at JRPS HQ.
- Replacement gates have been ordered for 22<sup>nd</sup> st., 42<sup>nd</sup> st., and HFW park entrances. Old gates and left-over mechanical components will be removed.

## Projects

- 2/11 – 42<sup>nd</sup> st Roadwork
- 2/17 – 14<sup>th</sup> st changing blind
- 2/2 – CSO manhole cover replacement
- 2/20 - Outdoor Education Deck foundation work

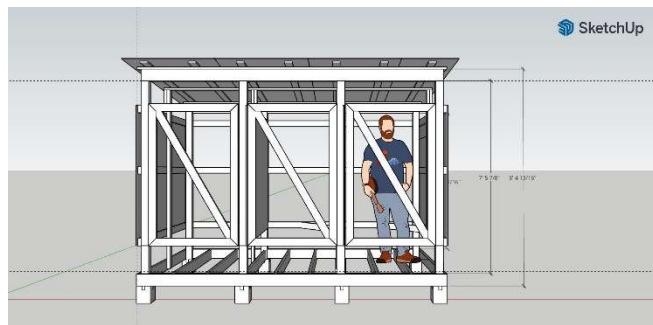
## 2/11 – 42<sup>nd</sup> st. Roadwork

Operations staff continuing roadwork along the service road heading west from Reedy headquarters. This work will add a suitable base of aggregate for drainage, followed by a smooth service for pedestrians to walk on.



## 2/17 – JROC Workday: 14<sup>th</sup> st Changing Blind

Park staff and JROC Volunteers complete a new changing blind at 14<sup>th</sup> st take-out.





## 2/2 – CSO Manhole Cover Replacement

A great example of interdepartmental collaboration, DPU and PRCF work together to replace a critical component of the CSO system at 22<sup>nd</sup> st location.



## 2/20 – Outdoor Education Deck

Ground preparations are underway for JRPS Outdoor Education Deck.

- Excavated surface to make room for minimum 18" deck height.
- Created 4" of stone subgrade at a 2% slope.
- String line and batter boards established for marking footers, and deck framing.
- Water spigot contracted to be removed outside of workzone.



## Coming up:

**3/16 - JROC Workday: Huguenot Bridge. Move existing bridge on to new concrete abutments.**

### **Dock St. Prep:**

- Tree planting/landscaping
- Trail building
- Invasive treatment and removal
- Seeding a wildflower meadow
- Removing fence

This new park location set to come online with the opening of the JRA facility in June 2024



## **JRPS Invasive Species Management – February 2024 report**

**Management activities including volunteer events** (does not include events led by volunteer task force members)

- *Weather conditions and impacts from flooding canceled several volunteer events.*
- Staff conducted a total of fifteen management events in seven park units.
- This included a total of 81 volunteer participations (could include repeat volunteers) contributing 189 volunteer hours.

### **Primary management targets**

- Shrub and evergreen woody vine removal and treatment, including Free-A-Tree, are primary activities with volunteers.
- It is currently the optimal season to treat *Ficaria verna* (fig buttercup). The team began with several days of scouting early in the month followed by three full days of foliar spray treatments in Pony Pasture and Wetlands. Treatments will continue into March.

### **Education and Outreach**

- The R.K. Mellon Foundation grant program Qualtrics online survey is complete. Em worked with Rocketpop to design the survey postcard, source a printer, and get it approved by VCU for distribution. Postcards to be mailed 3/5/24. Four workshops are scheduled for the last two weekends in March and all site location details are confirmed.
- Gera began working with Rachel Hill's Biology 497 Ecological Service students on invasive shrub removal.
- Laura Greenleaf gave a presentation on invasive management to the 2024 training class of Hanover Master Gardeners with IPTF member Bill Shanabruch, of Reedy Creek Environmental and LERN (Local Ecotype Richmond Natives) covering native plant conservation landscaping.

### **RISAW preparation**

- Gera Williams led efforts to prepare for this year's Richmond Invasive Species Awareness Week. Collaborations with IPTF members, Westover Hills Library, Studio Two Three, and JRPS Programs have led to several new RISAW community events and local nurseries donated gift cards for prizes. Digital assets were created by Em and Gera, and communications were sent to news outlets, city council members, local outdoor organizations, the FOJRP network and more.

### **Other projects**

- Em, Gera and Megan treated invasive trees surrounding the nail shed at Belle Isle following a site visit of the area.
- The Natural Resource Management Plan development efforts are progressing. Biohabitat is working on a revised Statement of Work, dividing the park per the IRA Climate and Economic Justice map, with plans to begin field work mid April, pending contract negotiations. This is a collaboration of JRPS and members of the Invasive Plant Task Force.

- The ISM team, with IPTF member Emily Gianfortoni, developed and hosted an invasive management field trip for the 2024 training class of the Riverine Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists. Field trips are a component of the VMN training requirements.

### **Professional Development**

- Megan Lowe was accepted into the 2024 training class for the Riverine Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist program (January-April 2024).
- Earlier this year Laura Greenleaf completed the Terrestrial Invasive Plant Management certificate course with NAISMA (North America Invasive Species Management Association).

Below: BSA troop 54s from Mechanicsville, participate in wintercreeper ground removal at Rapids Restoration area of Pony Pasture. This event was rescheduled from a rain-out in September.





# Trails and Greenways February Report

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## Highlights:

Pine Camp Trail construction has been making great progress. We held multiple workdays with RVA MORE, where we hand built large sections of trail. The trail is making its way back towards the community center, with the final connections to be made once the creek restoration is complete.





**The Petronious Jones Park walking trail has been fully resurfaced and will provide better drainage and erosion resilience. Resurfacing on these walking trails will continue with Canoe Run Park next on the list.**





Construction has begun on the new North Bank boardwalk. This is replacing the worn existing boardwalk. The new boardwalk will be slightly wider than the older one and also will have an extended deck for river views. This project is being paid for by the Friends of James River Park.





A new trail-head kiosk has been constructed at the upper Dogwood Dell trail entrance. This was an Eagle Scout project and was built to meet the new kiosk design standard.





A new bike rack was installed at Bryan Park near the farmers market location. This rack was paid for by Outpost bike shop.



## Other notable events:

**Andrew Alli and Ross Newcomb graduated from the NRPA Maintenance Management School program**

**Kitt West and Ryan Cahoon completed their first year of Maintenance Management School.**

## 311 Reports:

### Number of requests opened by month

Year	DPR	Total
<b>2023</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>121</b>
April	3	3
May	17	17
June	18	18
July	11	11
August	13	13
September	25	25
October	11	11
November	14	14
December	9	9
<b>2024</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
January	13	13
February	6	6
March	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>141</b>

### Number of requests closed by month

Year	DPR	Total
<b>2023</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>109</b>
April	1	1
May	13	13
June	14	14
July	15	15
August	8	8
September	17	17
October	8	8
November	24	24
December	9	9
<b>2024</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>
January	5	5
February	3	3
March	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>122</b>

## Beautification of Parks & Greenspaces - February 2024

**Hours of Service**      **361**      **Events Completed**      **20**      **Total Volunteers**      **158**

*Avg. Hours per Volunteer*      2.3      *Avg. Volunteers per Event*      7.9

Date	# Volunteers	Duration (hrs)	Hours Served	Project		
2/3/24	5	2	10	James River Park Cleanup		
2/10/24	15	2	30	James River Park Cleanup		
2/14/24	3	2	6	James River Park Cleanup		
2/17/24	13	2	26	James River Park Cleanup		
2/21/24	4	2	8	James River Park Cleanup		
2/24/24	18	2	36	James River Park Cleanup		
2/28/24	3	2	6	James River Park Cleanup		
2/1/24	3	3	9	Belle Isle Invasive Management		
2/8/24	3	3	9	Belle Isle Invasive Management		
2/15/24	2	3	6	Belle Isle Invasive Management		
2/22/24	4	3	12	Belle Isle Invasive Management		
2/29/24	4	3	12	Belle Isle Invasive Management		
2/3/24	8	2	16	Buttermilk Invasive Management		
2/10/24	10	2	20	Buttermilk Invasive Management		
2/16/24	8	2	16	Buttermilk Invasive Management		
2/17/24	12	2	24	Buttermilk Invasive Management		
2/24/24	14	2	28	Buttermilk Invasive Management		
2/3/24	10	3	30	Wetlands Invasive Management		
2/10/24	8	3	24	Wetlands Invasive Management		
2/14/24	11	3	33	Wetlands Invasive Management		
158			361			