



James River Advisory Council

# James River Reach

**SPECIAL EDITION**

Volume 4, Number 1

Spring 2003

## ***New Scenic River Legislation***

*By Ralph Hambrick*

Late last summer, a long and detailed questionnaire about the activities of the *Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Board* arrived in my mailbox. Noting that the return address was the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), I resisted the temptation to deposit the questionnaire in the circular file. Little did I know that the questionnaire marked the beginning of a major revision of Virginia's Scenic River legislation. HB 1627 unanimously passed both houses of the General Assembly. The Governor's signature is expected.

Virginia's Scenic Rivers program had its origin in 1970. Over the years, 19 segments of rivers have been designated as "scenic" by acts of the General Assembly. A board has been established by statute to oversee each segment of river designated as scenic. These local boards vary in size and statutorily required composition. The Governor appoints most board members, although there are some exceptions like the Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Board with four members appointed by the Governor and five appointed by the Richmond City Council.

The JLARC (HJR 159 Subcommittee) study was part of a government streamlining effort initiated by the legislature (perhaps to match the streamlining commission launched by the Governor). Boards and commissions in many program areas - from health care to job training - were part of the study. The Scenic Rivers program became a clear target for consolidation when the study revealed that many of the 19 boards are inactive. Indeed, the membership on many boards is depleted, in large part because no gubernatorial appointments have been made for years.

The JLARC proposal was to eliminate all 19 local scenic river advisory boards and replace them with a single statewide board. The Falls of the James and the Goose Creek Boards, two boards that have been consistently active since their creation, were strongly opposed. The reason for opposition was the recognition that the primary action on scenic rivers occurs at the local level and the original proposal would have eliminated local boards. We expressed this opposition to the HJR 159 Subcommittee and to Tayloe Murphy, Secretary of Natural Resources.

Over a sequence of meetings involving Secretary Murphy, Joseph Maroon, Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Delegate Kirk Cox, Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, and others, the bill was revised from one we vigorously opposed to one the Falls of the James and the Goose Creek Boards could strongly support.

The primary features of HB 1627 are:

- Maintain all existing scenic river designations
- Eliminate all current local scenic advisory boards
- Create the Virginia State Scenic River Board composed of the Director of the Department of Conservation and Recreation and 15 at-large members appointed by the Governor
- Require the DCR Director to appoint local Scenic River Advisory Committees of "not less than three members to consider and manage scenic river interests and issues."

*(Legislation continued on page 2)*

## *Call for Articles*

*Is there something about the river that you know? Does your organization have an event that may interest our readers? If so, let us know! Contact Dan Caston at 501-5807 or e-mail [cas12@co.henrico.va.us](mailto:cas12@co.henrico.va.us) and we'll work toward getting it published in an upcoming edition of the REACH!*

## James River Regional Cleanup 2003

*It's Your River...Enjoy it...Care for it!* The James River Advisory Council hopes with your support to have a successful cleanup as in the past. JRAC invites families, groups and individuals to clean the river, banks, shore and park areas on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Volunteers can participate in the cleanup at coordinated sites covering more than fifty miles of the James River. This year, the sites include Lawrence Lewis, Jr. Park in Charles City County; Robious and Dutch Gap Boat Landings in Chesterfield; James River Park System (Reedy Creek) in the City of Richmond; Osborne Boat Landing in Henrico County; Maidens and Cartersville landings in Powhatan and Goochland Counties; Percival's Island in Lynchburg; and hopefully a new site in James City County.

In the past, families, scout troops, civic organizations and individuals have come out for a morning of environmental fun. Last year, we had over 600 participants and collected 216 bags and 20 barrels of trash, 23 bags and 7 barrels of aluminum, 28 bags and 8 barrels of plastic, and 5 bags and 8 barrels of glass in addition to numerous miscellaneous items such as bathtubs, carports, hobby horses and a Packard Bell PC.

Pre-registrants will receive lunch and a t-shirt. All participants are strongly encouraged to register and bring gloves, water, sunscreen and insect repellent. For more information or to register, please call 804-717-6688 or check out the website at [www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com](http://www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com). JRAC looks forward to seeing you and your friends along the river Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>.

*(Legislation continued from page 1)*

I believe the new legislation will be beneficial for four reasons. It...

1. Simplifies a statewide structure that had become unwieldy
2. Allows active local boards (which will become committees) to continue their work
3. Provides the potential through the new appointment process to re-energize local committees that had become inactive
4. Creates enhanced statewide attention to scenic rivers through the enhanced role of the DCR Director and the new Virginia Scenic River Board.

Note: Because of local objections, the Historic Lower James River segment is not included in HB 1627.

*Ralph Hambrick is Chair of the Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Board.*

Miss an issue of the Reach? Past issues are posted on the JRAC website:  
[www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com](http://www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com)

### 2003 James River Advisory Council Meeting Schedule

Thurs, April, 24-8:30 a.m.  
*Richmond Metro Convention Visitors Bureau*

Thurs, July 24-noon  
*Henricus Historical Park Education Center*

Thurs, Oct 23 - 8:30 a.m.  
*Richmond Regional Planning District Commission*

For more information, contact Kim Conley at 748-1567 or [conleyk@chesterfield.gov](mailto:conleyk@chesterfield.gov)

### *Reach Special Edition Editors:*

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## 2003 James River Sojourn Planning Underway

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's planning process for the second annual James River Sojourn is officially underway! The Sojourn is a week long canoeing and kayaking expedition that features environmental educational programming, riverside camping, restoration projects, festive meals, meetings with elected officials and much more. Novice and experienced paddlers alike enjoy a unique on-the-water experience that builds a strong environmental ethic and promotes stewardship for the invaluable resource of the James. The Sojourn aims to elevate awareness of the River's importance to the region and to encourage local residents to play an active role in its restoration.

Over the course of the Sojourn, families and individuals will enhance their on-river interpretive

and recreational experience by completing various demonstration restoration projects and through evening programs focused on river-related historical, cultural, and environmental topics. The evening activities are complimented by interaction with local watershed organizations, business, and government entities that often boost evening involvement to in excess of 100 people. All aspects of the Sojourn have prominent and frequent media coverage.

The 2003 James River Sojourn will begin on Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> at James River State Park in Buckingham County, VA and will continue, with overnight camping stops and occasional shuttling, ending at West View landing in Goochland County, VA on June 29<sup>th</sup>. Participants are welcome to paddle the entire week or a portion of the week. Non-paddling programs are offered throughout the trip as well.

Last year, the Alliance launched the "Maiden

*(Sojourn continued on page 4)*

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade of Lights Captures the Hearts of Thousands...

The 2002 Parade of Lights floated down the James River on a brisk December 14<sup>th</sup> evening. It was seen by an estimated 7150 people at the five viewing sites and many, many more along the shoreline of the river. This is a 20 percent larger attendance than last year with the greatest increase at Osborne Landing where over 4000 people watched the parade. Glow-in-the-dark necklaces were given out at the viewing sites to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this grand event.

Thirteen vessels participated in this years event, each gaily decorated with a holiday theme. Judging of the boats was moved from Henricus Park gazebo in Chesterfield County to Kingsland Reach Marina adjacent to Osborne Landing in Henrico County. The judges this year were Adam Stubbs from Lite 98 radio, Shelby Brown from Channel 6 WTVR, Kirby Brooks, General Manager of Comcast Communications, and Sue Sullivan, an supporter of JRAC. The Parade Chairman was Kevin Seeber and the Grand Marshal was the late Dave Folster represented by his family. Dave was a longtime Chesterfield Parks & Recreation employee who assisted JRAC each year in the preparation of the viewing sites at Drewry's Bluff and Dutch Gap.



Brian Coddington on *Sunken Treasure*, Robert and Ginger Fuleihan on *SeaHesper II*, and John Salyer on *Caribbean Queen* won the top trophies. Wally Shanks on *Chumslinger* won the novice award.

This JRAC event was acknowledged as one of Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events in 2001. 2002's showing was not a disappointment to this recognition as the James River Parade of Lights continues to be recognized as a must-see family holiday event.

## *Glory of the James Lecture Series at Maymont*

*Glory of the James* is the title of the new Maymont-VCU Discovery Institute's spring lecture series. The six lectures in the series are free and open to the public and run throughout May and early June. Beginning at 7 p.m. on Thursday evenings, all lectures take place at Maymont's Robins Nature and Visitor Center with the exception of the May 15<sup>th</sup> lecture which will take place at VCU's Trani Center. At press time, except for Mr. Maroon's lecture on May 8, specific dates for each speaker have yet to be finalized. Confirmed speakers and their lectures include:

- May 8-Our guest speaker is Mr. Joseph Maroon, Director of Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation. He is the former Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and a Wildlife Federation's Conservationist of the Year. Reception 6 p.m.
- *Historic Botany* by David Milarch, President of the Champion Tree Project.
- *Changes in North American Bird Populations: Implications on the Ecology of the Lower James River* by Charles R. Blem, Professor of Biology at VCU.
- *Virginia's Native Plants: James River - Mountains to the Sea* by Botanist Catherine Tucker, a Virginia Wildlife Federation's Conservationist of the Year.
- *Mysteries of the James* by John Bryan, Director of Sponsored Research and Development, School of the Arts at VCU, and author of a popular book about the James River and how we as a community can best appreciate the fabulous natural resource that is on our doorstep.
- Ann Woodlief, retired VCU English Professor and author of a wonderful book entitled *In River Time: The Way of the James*, which gives an historical yet poetic history of the James River.

Pre-registration is required. For more information and to register, please call 358-7166 x325.

*(Sojourn continued from page 3)*

Voyage" of the James River Sojourn, which was a great success thanks to many partnering organizations and willing volunteers. Some of the 2002 Sojourn partnering organizations included: Audubon Society, Blue Ridge Mountain Sports, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation, Dutch Gap Conservation Area, Friend's of Chesterfield's Riverfronts, Henricus Park, James River Association, Shirley Plantation, VA DCR, VA DEQ, VDGIF, and many others. Despite record low river levels and warm June days, over 100 participants experienced the majesty of the James first hand with informative educational programs, restoration projects, and fun-filled paddling. The Alliance hopes to establish a Sojourn tradition on the James River providing participants the opportunity to experience the James as a living entity full of beauty, history, and life and worthy of the great respect and stewardship she deserves.

**Save The Date! 2003 James River Sojourn June 22<sup>nd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>**

For more information on how to become involved in the Sojourn experience, please contact Hadley Milliken at (804) 775-0951 or [hmilliken@acb-online.org](mailto:hmilliken@acb-online.org). For general and registration information, please visit the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay web site [www.alliancechesbay.org](http://www.alliancechesbay.org).

## **James River Park Highlights...**

- The *Pump House Canal* is currently being dug out with the intent of returning water down to the Washington Arch. The effect? The Pump House will once again be surrounded by water and bateau travel can and will resume for the first time in 200 years on the old Richmond Canal-the first boat travel canal in the US!
- The roof repairs of the Pump House are nearly complete and public tours are expected to resume on Sat, April 12.
- One of the meadows on Belle Isle will be planted with *Sunflowers* this spring-its affordable and makes good wildlife habitat and is an excellent food source.
- *15 mph signs* have encouraged walking and jogging along Riverside Drive between Pony Pasture and Huguenot Woods and plans are to extend signage another 1/4 mile upstream!

## *Treasures of the River*

by Mary C. Kruse

“As a river, the James is distinctive only because the timing of its floods is so unpredictable; they are liable to come in any season. It is now exceptionally ‘flashy,’ able to go from drought to flood level within weeks, creating over time a water level profile with the jagged peaks of an electrocardiogram tracing.”

*In River Time: The Way of the James*  
by Ann Woodlief

Drought exposes treasures hidden from the eye by the gently flowing river. But one man’s treasures are another man’s trash. In today’s world, most of the exposed ‘treasures’ are trash, some recyclable, but still trash. During the last few years, drought years, the James River Regional Cleanups have collected varying amounts of discards.

While some trash pick-up variation may be due to drought, Some is due to the additional miles covered at new sites. Some is due to changes in the packaging of popular products. And all of it is due to the habits of river and park users.

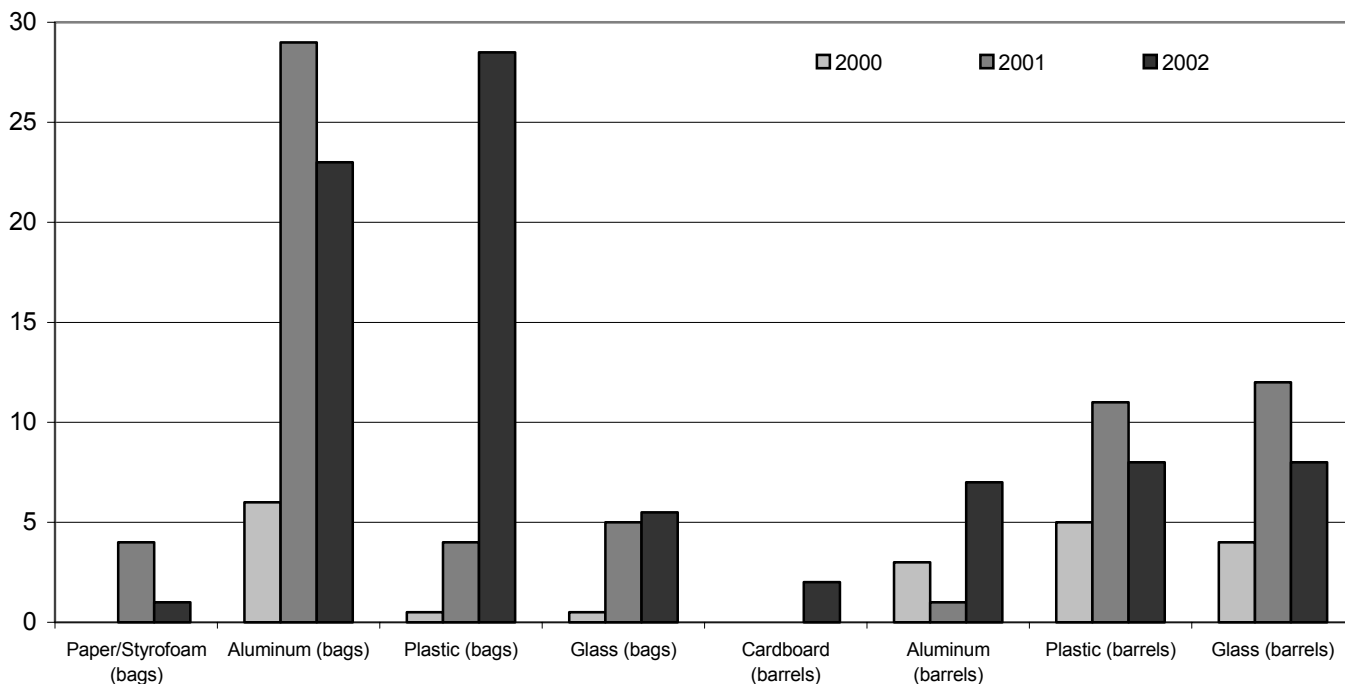
Last year more tires were removed from the shoreline than in previous years. The majority of those tires were found upstream at either the Cartersville, Maidens Landing, Watkins Landing or Robious Landing areas.

Changes in the amounts of trash collected, compared to prior years, were difficult to gauge because the type of containers changed. Although 50 percent fewer bags of trash were filled than in Cleanup 2001 James River Park used barrels in 2002, filling a total of 20.

Recyclables have seen an increase over the years. This is due in part to more sites separating the ‘treasures in the trash.’ The chart shows changes over the last three years in the types of recyclables collected. The amount collected during an annual cleanup should decrease as more parks provide recycling containers.

And now the ‘flashy’ James River has flooded its banks once again. Mother Nature cleansing its shores will bring forth treasures. As the waters recede there will be an accounting of our stewardship. Whether the ‘treasures’ increase or decrease the James River Regional Cleanup 2003 will continue to enhance the health and beauty of the waterway.

### Changes in Recycling Collections



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# James River Advisory Council



*Photo by Ray Williams. The James River off Belle Isle at 18.5 feet, Feb 24, 2003 (Flood stage is at 9 ft).*

*The recent flood season along the James is a welcome relief to the long standing drought. The down side? More trash from road sides and ditches dumped into the river-we can expect more in this summer's clean-up!*

## ***James River Advisory Council***

### VISION:

A united community supporting and promoting the James River as a shared resource and enhancing its health, beauty, heritage, economic vitality and recreational value.

### MISSION:

To promote and protect the James River as one of Central Virginia's greatest assets and one of America's most unique rivers, the James River Advisory Council serves as a forum for the diverse interests along the River and communicates with public officials regarding issues, challenges, opportunities, threats and possibilities facing the river, its resources, and adjoining communities. The council sponsors and facilitates activities and promotes public policy that focuses on the river, celebrates its beauty, and improves our use and appreciation of this extraordinary resource.