

Agenda & Minutes for
Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Committee
Training Room 730 East Broad Street • Richmond, VA 23219

April 16, 2026

Call to Order:

Attendance: W. Isenberg, S, Shade, R. Hambrick, G Velzy, G. LeRose, J. Heerwald, L Crump, A. Dahm, K. Schmidt, P. Davenport Gorman, C. Spohn

Guests: S. Morris, N. Richardson, B. Kells

Minutes: March 19, 2026

Current Issues:

- **DPU Guest Speakers:** Scott Morris & Nissa Richardson, *Director & Assistant Director, Department of Public Utilities*
 - o Reporting on the debris pile removal at the T Pott bridge. DEQ finished inspections, and is going to begin ASAP. \$42,000 for debris removal.
 - Under a 90 day clock. Notice to proceed got through on Monday – 90 day clock started 4/13. Has not decided where it is starting. John George is the contractor. M&B did decking for TPott and Brown's island. John George did the flex mat at Tredegar. Don't call him for updates.
 - Giles reached out to JROC and FOJRPS for funding for TPott debris removal recently to 4/16. They asked for \$50k from each org – both orgs denied because it was too much of the total operating budget.
 - T Pott bridge debris removal. ...Protect "X's" opening.
 - DPU response is to have Andrew Alli and contractor have a pre construction meeting so that they can plan for keeping paddler passage open. Make sure that the openings for paddlers don't shift. Scott chooses which logs come out.
 - Openings for paddles to go through? 2-3 sections cut out? Yes – close to the debris pile. Greg recommends marking them so the contractor knows about paddler passage.
 - X's was blown out as a fish passage. Richmond raft company painted the pylons years ago. Don't want to advertise it because it's a more challenging run.
 - o Who is responsible for vehicles driving on the Southside floodwall (under I-95)?
 - Lots of driving trucks around on the road down there. Is there a desire to have a kayak or canoe launch there, currently lots of people fishing and driving along the access road on the floodwall? Scott needs to talk to DPW. Send pictures to Scott in DPU.
 - Some concern about bike vs ped vs car traffic. A kayak launch would not be of interest to the floodwall. They do have informal agreements with parks to have walking trails (also helps protect infrastructure).
 - o Belle Isle water main break repairs
 - The beach on Belle Isle is gone – the water scoured it away. Parks had filled it with riprap. DPU would fill it with aggregate if they think it is a priority.
 - o Can you remove the dam under TPott and leave the bridge?
 - Cost prohibitive at this point, what is the relationship between the dam and the piers for the bridge? Would need to take in consideration the footings for the bridge support. Not no, just lots to research.
- **CRLC Richmond Updates:** Parker Agelasto, *Executive Director, Capital Regional Land Conservancy*
 - o Not present, but will be attending RVA GreekDrinks if you want some facetime.
- **VA Scenic Rivers Update:** Joshua Bateman, *Environmental Program Planner, DCR*
 - o Joshua Bateman not present. Lynn Crump shared some information.
 - o Will has a note to reach out to Josh Bateman to talk about what they want.
 - o Lynn recommends to reference that there have been some modifications/clarification for the scenic river program, and ask him to come present it to us. He did make a presentation to DCR, but we didn't get any info from him. He will be at the scenic roundtable in Western VA this spring.
- **James River Park Update:** Andrew Alli, *JRP and Richmond Trails Superintendent*
 - o Andrew is not present, as he is on Belle isle today with true timber arborists to install the nature exploration area. Everyone is excited. Hopefully installed by Mid May.

- o Mayo island – announcing mayo island bid for asphalt removal and phase 1 plans (demo, soil remediation trail, seed mix, etc.) in the next week.
- o Texas beach - on schedule! Using a similar decking to TPott, but PDG reports that they say it will last longer than TPott decking. Assured it is good for dogs- space between the boards is smaller. The stiffener is stronger than the TPott one.
- **JRA Update:** Justin Doyle, *Director of Community Conservation, James River Association*
 - o Justin not present
 - o CSO project at Buzzard Center / Dock St. Park is underway.
 - o CSO Funding Advocacy is still happening at the state and federal level.
 - Need more \$\$ from the state to finish the Shockoe Project (\$500 million!). JRA does a lot of lobbying at the state level to look for this. The state gave \$50mil to the city for CSO in the current budget, but the budget isn't passed yet.
 - City has a deadline of 2030, we need the money by 2027/2028. If there isn't enough money, either Richmond utilities will have to pay for it or they will extend the timeline. The interim project is the current Dock St CSO project. Final Shockoe plan is in minutes for this group. Richmond, Alexandria and Lynchburg are the 3 municipalities that are looking for CSO funding. Alexandria got 50% of their funding, Lynchburg got some \$ but their city and CSO is so much smaller. The state pulls the \$ from the general fund for this – Lynchburg & Alexandria should finish their projects in 2 years. It will either be good for Richmond to not have competition or not. \$20-\$50 mil to update brick sewers.
 - No one can connect to a CSO now – if you build a new connection, they have to go to another sewer. They plan for this when building. Manchester is a nightmare. Chesterfield put in 8" stormpipes in the 1920s, so they are often overwhelmed.
- **American Rivers:** Katie Schmidt, *Director, National Dam Removal Program, American Rivers*
 - o Potomac is the most endangered river this year. Looking for congressional funding for state revolving funds. Low Head Dam Public Safety Awareness month. Katie will share an updated website with us. The Corps of Engineers has a database of lowhead vs non lowhead dams, it is the basics but it will continue to have more information added. Looking to add lowhead dam regulations in the state – looking at housing it in a state agency, using Indiana as a state model.
 - o Still looking at Wild and Scenic River designation for Hopewell to Smithfield – takes 10-20 years. There is still kepone there? Pat came to our meeting in December – he also wanted to see if the study wants to continue up to Richmond. There are no federal wild and scenic rivers in VA. You need a congressional study approved and done, then you need a congressional designation. NPS used to be the ones who did the survey. Funding comes with the designation to protect the river. We have been looking for a state scenic destination eastward, but meeting resistance in Henrico and Chesterfield.
 - o Ideas on where the proposal should start? Bottom of the fall line? Top of the Fall line? Boshers and down? Powhite Parkway and down? What's in it for the counties- \$\$? Can they work concurrently to have federal and state protections? Currently Charles city and down isa state scenic river section. Wild and Scenic rivers have 8 designations (historic, cultural, recreational, water quality) - can have impoundments, as long as the other qualities are strong enough to override the dam's impact. Has to do with the curtailing of the river flow. Application was put out 30-40 years ago for a WSR for the James, but it failed. The new river was put out in early 2000's and it also failed.
 - o Do we have access to the documentation of the previous proposal?
- **DPU/RVA H2O Updates:** Grace LeRose, *outgoing, Brad Frills, incoming DPU - committee liaison*
 - o Brad is a new hire for DPU and will be our new contact (working alongside Grace to help fill her shoes). Brad will attend our meetings. If we need to get in touch, we can always email Scott from DPU too.
 - o Bryan park dams are coming out! RVAH20 has a webpage about the project. 90% design to be done by EOY. Summer 27 work to begin. Helps Chickahominy water quality, which helps James river quality.
 - o
- **Scenic Virginia Updates:** Lynn Crump, *Viewshed Project Manager*
 - o Lynn is now on the VA Outdoors Plan technical advisory committee. They are looking to put scenic views on

the next VOP. Yay!

- **Friends of James River Park Report:** Penelope Davenport Gorman, *Executive Director, Friends of the James River Park*
 - Wood River Run is 4/25! Pony Pasture will be busy, come out. Proceeds help the park and the Christian wood scholarship fund for passages summer camp.
 - 4/24 Riverside Outfitters is doing a popup benefit - \$25 benefit to JRPS. 4
 - /23 fundraiser at ORVIS store.
 - PDG is one month in as ED
 - Shawna has been really helpful (and is often under credited!).
 - ISM team will reforest the Wetlands area- just got a grant. Did a big project with VCU class to remove bamboo at Northbank and replace the stairway to heaven ramp with a dirt/rock trail feature.
 - How is the NRMP being implemented these days? Looking for a report from Andrew/Penelope.

- **James River Outdoor Coalition (JROC):** Greg Velzy, *Co- President*
 - 4/25 gear swap.
 - Funded the flexmat at Tredegar, hopefully can also be used at Huguenot as well to get rid of the sandbags. Going to test it for 1 year at Tredegar to see what happens.
 - Music at Maymont – 5/20,21,29.
 - Reedy Kiosk update – they feel confident about kiosk design and are overwhelmed with other projects. It's on the list, just less time sensitive. Repave the entrance before replacing the kiosk to mitigate some of the potholes.

- **Brown's Island Renovation Update:** Alex Dahm, *Operations Manager, Venture Richmond*
 - still constructing away. Lots of dirt! The dirt has to be remediated but not sure where it goes.

New Business:

DEQ Supplemental Projects list:

If we have ideas for projects, we can submit ideas for supplemental environmental remediation projects. If people have compliance issues and they need a project to do for compliance, they can pull from these projects. They can offset 90% of civil penalties through these projects. They always want more projects – they always need more. @will will send the link for us to submit projects. Link o [DEQ page](#) where you can submit ideas like the Richmond Parks did for the T Pot strainer. You will find the form to submit ideas near the bottom where it says "[SEP Survey](#)"

Reports:

See emails for JRPS Superintendent Report

Open Discussion:

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned 1:16pm.

Next Public Meeting: May 21, 2026

Meetings usually begin at 12:00 noon in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of Richmond City Hall. Meetings are scheduled for the THIRD Thursday of each month. All meetings are open to the public. If you are not now receiving e-mail meeting notices and wish to receive them, please provide your name and e-mail address to wisenberg88@gmail.com and spohncl@vcu.edu. If you would like to be removed from the list, so indicate at the above e-mail address.