



James River Reach

The James River Advisory Council Newsletter

Volume 9 No. 1 Fall/Winter 2009



Bald Eagle on the James River

James River Advisory Council

Vision Statement

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

Mission Statement

To promote and protect the James River as one of Central Virginia's greatest assets and one of America's unique Rivers, the James River Advisory Council serves as a forum for the diverse interests along the River and communicates with public officials and the public 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.

JRAC's Fall/Winter 2009-10 Calendar of Events

October: Parade of Lights Online Boater registration available at www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com

October 5, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Parade of Lights Committee Meeting

October 29, 2009, 8:30 a.m.

JRAC Fall Quarterly Meeting

November 5, 2009, 9:30 a.m.

Regional River Cleanup 2009 Brainstorm Session

November 6, 2009 10:00 a.m.

Parade of Lights Committee Meeting

December 8, 2009, 10:00 a.m.

Parade of Lights Committee Meeting

December 11, 2009

James River Days 2010 Event Submissions Deadline

December 12, 2009, dusk

7th Annual James River Parade of Lights

January, 21, 2010, 8:30 a.m.

JRAC Winter Quarterly Meeting



Phone: (804) 748-1567
www.jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com

This is why “Cleaning Up The Source” is so important!

***Estimated at over 300 pounds,
‘Inger’ is the first female sturgeon
netted during a fall season in the James River.***



Virginia Commonwealth University Ph.D student Matt Balazik holds Inger, a 300+ pound Atlantic sturgeon

By Matt Balazik, VCU

Here is Inger. This fish is the first hypothesized spawning female Atlantic Sturgeon caught in the freshwater part of the James River. Numerous males have been caught over the past three years from August to October, which indicated a possible fall spawn, and the inclusion of a female in the fall sampling helps fortify that possibility. The fish was more than 7 feet long and was estimated to weigh around 300 pounds. Hard to believe but this was likely her first time spawning and that there are bigger females out in the river right now.

Inger was apparently struck by something, possibly a boat prop, years ago in the caudal peduncle area. We couldn't get her into the boat, so we towed her to shore. We didn't get eggs! Rubbed her a couple of times but we didn't want to jeopardize her health or spawning run anymore than we had to. We really needed a laparoscope.

Two males were caught right behind her, both running milt and were very feisty. Both males were about 6 feet long and weighed about 70lbs (32 kg) each.

Events through
October 2010

James River Days 2010

The James River Days 2010 is a calendar brochure that offers programs, events, and activities along, around or about the James River from April through October. The event submissions for the calendar brochure are due by Friday, Dec. 11.

For criteria and a submission form, visit

jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com

EDUCATION - ENVIRONMENT - HISTORY - RECREATION - SOCIAL

Adjusting to Big Catfish in the James River in Richmond ... or ...

By **Ralph R. White**

Manager, James River Park System

Is Bigger Always Better?

In banking and budget allocations, it's a truism that bigger is better. In the river in downtown Richmond we now have enormous Flathead Catfish. They are easy to catch and sometimes possible to touch. Their presence helps support a half dozen professional fishing guides. For an urban setting, they are a huge, unnatural, and a highly distinctive form of wildlife. They certainly give us a reputation. The question is: Do We Want It?

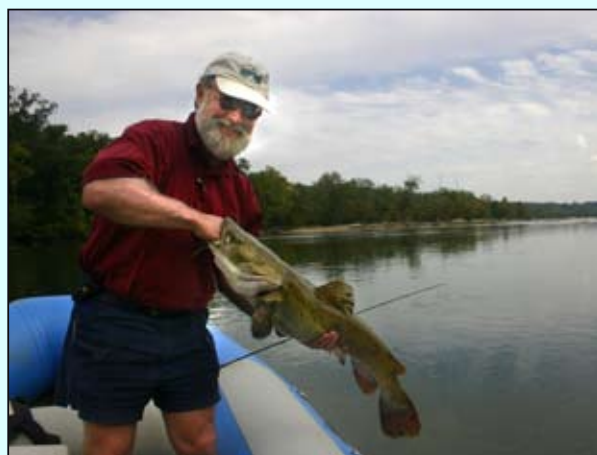
The argument against: They are not native, they eat large numbers of other fish, and may make restoration of desired species such as American shad and blueback herring difficult. They also may be hurting the population of smallmouth bass, which, although also a non native fish, are considered a highly desirable game fish.

The argument for: They are the biggest wild animal in the river that anyone in an urban setting can ever hope to capture or touch, they have as much right to be in the river as the smallmouth does, they support the economy by bringing in fishermen and providing employment for guides, and they have the potential to change children's lives by being a thrilling but safe connection to the natural world.

Some academics oppose them as interlopers who are altering the ecosystem. Some recreational and wildlife management agencies support them for the sport-fishing values. Some environmental educa-

tors straddle the fence - expressing concern over an alien invasion, but seeing value in bringing young people into close contact with nature. At least one park manager is worried about the unintended impact on fishermen's behavior as people go out with spears, sticks and nets to stab, bludgeon and trap fish under rocks in shallow water - a blow to the idea of sportsmanlike behavior and a sure way to ultimately destroy any kind of wildlife in a concentrated, urban environment.

It's happening here in the Falls of the James. What do you think we ought to do? Send your responses to the newsletter, mike@jamesriver-fishing.com



Ralph White holding a James River flathead

Member Focus ...

George Bruner

by Sue Cecil, JRAC Member

On every trip to the James, JRAC members should be aware of and thankful for the enthusiastic and supportive work of George A. Bruner Jr.

Mr. Bruner is a native of Richmond's historic Oregon Hill. He says that his earliest memories revolve around going to the river's edge to visit the canal lock master and walking a half mile up the river so he could float back down to the Albemarle Paper sluice. He built his first boat when he was 9. The fact that it sank when launched in the James did not discourage him from a lifelong love of boating. In fact, he has owned boats large and small (not self made) for more than 50 years and has boated on all the major rivers, lakes and bays in Virginia.

All of his contributions toward protecting the James and its shores and promoting its recreational use are too numerous to list here. Highlights include serving as chairman of the Virginia Boating Advisory Commission under two governors, being an active member of the Kanawha Canal Restoration Committee as well as the Richmond Floodwall Dedication Committee, and serving as an active member and instructor for the Richmond Sail and Power Squadron.

George currently serves on Virginia's Clean Marina Committee and the JRAC Board. He has been



Mr. George Bruner

the announcer for the James River Parade of Lights since its inception, and also has been the coordinator for the water boats in the tidal area for JRAC's annual James River Regional Clean up.

In 2007, George Bruner sold his company, Bruner and Associates, so he could concentrate on using his passion for researching Virginia's history. He also wrote and published three books on Richmond landmarks, "Celebrating 100 years, a Journey of Faith," "The Byrd Theater," and "St. Joseph's Villa." In 2008 he received JRAC's "Stewards of the River Award."

Today, his biggest concern is property development that restricts river access for citizens and tourists, who come to the shores of the James in Richmond to fish, launch their boats, or just to enjoy a hike along its edge. Perhaps his next book will explore ways to keep access to the James available for all.



Safe Boating On the James River

Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Preston Bryant and JRAC Executive Director Kim Conley are pictured at the recent presentation of Governor Tim Kaine's "Safe Boating Proclamation." JRAC member Richmond Sail and Power Squadron coordinated the presentation and luncheon held at the state capitol. JRAC and the squadron promote and engage in safe boating activities on our historic James River.

RED-TAILED HAWK

By Mark Rich, Zoologist

Buteo jamaicensis

The red-tailed hawk is the most common hawk in North America and is found in all U.S. states except Hawaii. They are very common in Virginia and are readily seen along the James River. They often hunt from high perches (the top of an oak tree near a meadow or on a telephone pole) but prefer to soar and watch for prey movement below. While not fast fliers, they have excellent vision and are very quick and strong when attacking prey. They are excellent parents and vigorously repel intruders to their territory. While red-tails do not feed or hunt together, they do form lifelong pair bonds. They tend to return to the same territory every year. Their nests are usually large bowls of sticks on cliff edges or in a tall trees - lined with bark, green branches and twigs. Their preferred habitats are deciduous forest and adjacent open areas, which are good for hunting. Their diet consists primarily of mam-



The author with a Red-Tailed Hawk

mals such as rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, mice and voles, but they will occasionally take snakes and carrion. Two or three brown-spotted eggs are laid in the spring. Be sure and see the red-tailed hawks in their aviary at Maymont's new Bald Eagle Habitat & Raptor Valley.

James River's Kanawha Canal Voted to USA Today's Top Ten Great Places to Stream Through A City



Richmond, Va.

Passengers on the River District Canal Cruises tour through Richmond's past and present. Towering stone abutments from a railroad bridge destroyed in the Civil War are phantom reminders of the city's role in history. Sleek skyscrapers representing major corporate headquarters symbolize its importance today. Richmond had the first tow-path canal system in the USA. And today, pedestrians enjoy a 1 1/4-mile canal walk and historical exhibits along the way. Call 804-649-2800 or visit venturerichmond.com

Parade of Lights is a holiday treat not to be missed!

The James River Advisory Council's hallmark holiday event, the James River Parade of Lights, will set sail down the James on Saturday evening, Dec. 12.

Event planners began their work for this year's boat parade during the dog days of summer and currently are focusing on boater participation and activities and entertainment at the various parade-viewing sites along the river.

"We're working diligently to increase the number of boats for this year's parade," JRAC Executive Director Kimberly Conley said.

Traditionally, the parade route has been traveled by mostly large vessels, many of which have returned year after year and become fan favorites for those lining the shorelines to watch. The boaters string hundreds of lights and other decorations on their vessels, creating a shimmering holiday spectacle on the water that shouldn't be missed.

"Now we're working to make sure that owners of smaller power boats, such as those transported on trailers, know that the parade is open to them, as well, and that we absolutely

encourage their participation," Conley said.

"Having more boats, big and small, will make the parade even more spectacular for the thousands of spectators who attend the parade. And it seems the boaters have just as much fun as the spectators."

The parade begins at Richmond and travels downriver to below Henricus Historical Park in Chesterfield County. No matter where someone lives in the Richmond metropolitan area, there's a viewing site within an easy drive. Some sites also include additional entertainment.

JRAC realizes and appreciates the work and effort of the boaters to put on the show. To show its appreciation, JRAC holds a special after-parade celebration for participating boaters, and presents awards in several categories. For more information, including boater registration and a list of planned viewing sites and directions, visit jamesriveradvisorycouncil.com. Information also is available on the James River Parade of Lights Information Line at 804-717-6681.

2009 VIRGINIA WATER RESEARCH CONFERENCE WATER RESOURCES in CHANGING CLIMATES

October 15-16, 2009

Trani Center for Life Sciences, Monroe Park Campus, Virginia Commonwealth University

The conference program is posted at

<http://www.vwrrc.vt.edu/2009conference.htm>

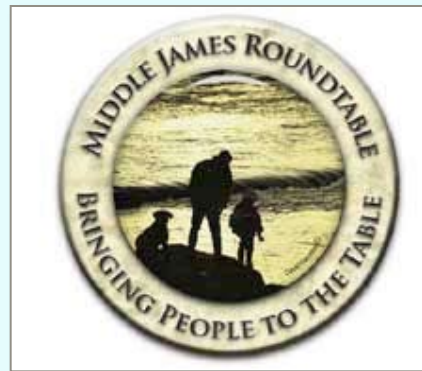
Middle James Roundtable

The Middle James Roundtable, MJRT, is a non-profit organization that brings people together to discuss issues and identify opportunities that will improve water quality throughout the middle James River watershed. Several regional organizations and localities participate in the MJRT, such as the James River Association, Chesterfield County Environmental Engineering Department, City of Hopewell, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District, the Monocan Soil and Water Conservation District, and many more. The MJRT holds annual meetings to provide information to the public, engage citizens and offer technical resources.

The MJRT has more than 400 members and elects Committee members to represent their issues and manage implementation of various projects. The Steering Committee has most recently worked on establishing goals for the MJRT focusing efforts on improving communication and coordination between citizens, governments and groups that impact, use or benefit from the river and its tributaries. The MJRT strives to be



The Roundtable is supported by funding from the Chesapeake Bay Program and Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.



a resource for governmental and non governmental decision-makers, conducting education and demonstration projects, and working with other James River advocates. The MJRT has created and distributed informational materials, such as drink coasters and print media packets, to educate citizens on ways to protect the Middle James River watershed.

The next annual MJRT meeting will be held in March 2010. As the meeting draws closer, details will be posted on our web site www.mjrt.org. The latest edition of the MJRT newsletter can also be viewed at our web site, or by clicking on this link.

Membership in the Middle James Roundtable is open to local government officials, soil and water conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, business and industry groups, educators, environmental organizations, state agencies, and local citizens. Check out our web site to see upcoming events in the Middle James watershed, to see our past newsletters, to join our mailing list, and to become a fan of MJRT on Facebook!

For more information about how you can become a part of the Middle James Roundtable contact:

Leigh Isaac
Roundtable Coordinator
info@mjrt.org

Fall and winter is the time for River Education

By **George A. Bruner Jr.**, JRAC Member

Richmond Sail and Power Squadron is offering boating educational courses by experienced volunteers. The cost is for materials only. Members of your organization are welcome to

attend, or you can arrange for a private session of eight or more persons through the contact listed below. Help keep our rivers and bays safe.

October 7, 2009

Onboard Weather Forecasting

Deep Run Recreation Center

9910 Ridgefield Parkway
Henrico, VA 23233
7 p.m., two hours - \$10

October 8, 2009

Onboard Weather Forecasting

Rockwood Park Recreation Center

3401 Courthouse Road
Richmond, VA 23236
7 p.m., two hours - \$10

October 8, 2009

Using VHF/DSC Radios

Gander Mountain

10150 Lakeridge Pkwy
Ashland, VA 23005
7 p.m., two hours - \$10

October 13, 2009

Using GPS

Lee Davis High School

7052 Mechanicsville Turnpike
Mechanicsville, VA 23111
7 p.m., two hours - \$30

**For additional information, contact Bob Palmer:
email r2pmhp@mindspring.com or call 804-794-2620.**

Join Chesapeake Bay Foundation for a Cleanup in Bryan Park this Fall!

The weather is crisp and cool and perfect for enjoying a day in the park. We meet in Bryan Park and spend the late morning collecting trash brought into Jordan's Branch, a creek in Bryan Park, by runoff and heavy rains.

Cleaning up this floodplain will prevent the debris from clogging storm drains and traveling farther downstream into the Chesapeake Bay.

Saturday, October 10, 2009

10 a.m. – noon

Joseph Bryan Park located on the north side of Richmond

Volunteers are welcome to stay and enjoy the park after the cleanup.

There are many nature trails and a great frisbee golf course.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Goodman & Company Partner on Earth Day Projects on the James River

Story by **Chuck Epes**, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

As part of the firm's partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, CBF, staff from all of Goodman's offices took part in several simultaneous Earth Day volunteer service projects across Virginia.

The projects included shoreline clean-ups, habitat improvements, and plantings along stream and river banks. Planting native grasses, shrubs, and trees along waterways is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce pollution in local rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. On the James River, more than 120 Goodman employees gathered on site at the James River National Wildlife Refuge to clean up debris, reclaim habitat, and plant hundreds of native trees and shrubs along the James River shoreline.

"The environmental goal of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, "Saving the Bay for Future Generations" ties in nicely with our own branding, "Accounting for Your Future", and the bay's watershed closely fits the footprint of our operating regions," said Tom Wilson, Managing Partner of Goodman & Company. "We're delighted that this partnership allows employees from our many locations to participate in activities that support the health of the bay and to get energized about our commitment to CBF."



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

Join CBF on a Canoe Trip on the James!

You are invited to join CBF for a lovely canoe paddle along the James River and into Four Mile Creek. The trip will be led by CBF's exceptional Environmental Education team and is sure to be a treat for all!

We will start our venture at Deep Bottom Park on the James River in eastern Henrico County.

The park is located where Four Mile Creek enters the James River. As we paddle we will have the chance to bird watch, observe wetland ecology, learn about pertinent water quality issues, and explore actions you can take to help protect these valuable resources.

Saturday, October 10, 2009

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Costs: \$25 for non members and \$10 for CBF members

For more details or to reserve your spot, e-mail Jbarton@cbf.org

This trip is for those aged 10 and older only please.

Fall events for James River State Park

October 17, 2009

Annual Fall Festival and Haunted Wagon Ride

Join us on Oct. 17, from 4-9 p.m., for some old fashioned fall harvest fun.

From 4 p.m. until sunset, enjoy live music by Worm Patterson and All Problems Solved, good food, old-time games, wagon rides, and several activities including pumpkin painting, apple pressing, candle dipping, butter churning, corn-husk doll making, face painting, fresh pressed apple cider, apple bobbing, fortune telling, a candy maze for the kids and more!

After sunset, there will be a bonfire and haunted wagon rides!

\$3 parking fee, \$5 wagon rides. Pumpkins for painting and state park merchandise will be available for sale.

Further questions, call James River State Park at 434-933-4355.

We always need volunteers for this event to either help run daytime events or to dress up and scare the folks on the haunted wagon!

All volunteers will receive a free night's camping and dinner the night of the festival.

Interested persons should call the park by Oct. 4 at 434-933-4355 or e-mail jamesriver@dcr.virginia.gov

December 5, 2009

Trim-A-Tree for Wildlife & Nature Holiday Craft Workshop

Bring the family and make edible decorations for wildlife! Hot cider will be provided while we create delectable decorations to trim a tree at the nature center.

Join us for some hot cider and camaraderie while you try your hand at making natural, decorative crafts such as centerpieces, wreaths and swags. No children please at Craft Workshop.

Chesterfield County Riparian Stewardship Program

The Department of Environmental Engineering is pleased to announce that it will partner with the Friends of Chesterfield's Riverfront to sponsor a Riparian Stewardship Program.

The program will develop outreach materials for land owners who have property next to creeks, stream, rivers and lakes. The program will educate owners about the functions and benefits of healthy vegetated buffers along waterways, and it will establish a Riparian Stewardship Fund for the replanting and maintenance of healthy buffer zones.

This program will include three riparian plantings at areas identified by a newly created Geographic Information System, or GIS, layer that shows all riparian areas in Chesterfield County. This GIS layer and the Riparian Stewardship Program are supported by Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants.

For more information please contact:

Lorne Field
Environmental Outreach Coordinator
804-748-1920
fieldl@chesterfield.gov

Did you Know ?

CVWMA (Central Virginia Waste Management Authority) offers curbside recycling programs to approximately 250,000 eligible households in Central Virginia. Call the Recycling Hotline at 340-0900 or visit www.cvwma.com <www.cvwma.com> for more information. You can start recycling today it's that EASY!

ANNOUNCING A NEW ADVENTURE ON THE JAMES RIVER

Discover the James by pontoon boat, near Richmond Virginia. Listen to the wondrous calls of hawks and bald eagles as they fill the air with sounds and sights. Slowly cruise around Jones Neck, near Deep Bottom boat ramp and view great blue heron, pileated woodpeckers, cardinals and other songbirds.

Imagine watching an eagle swoop into view from a tree-lined shore as you listen to your guides talk about Capt. John Smith's travels and his map of 1612. Listen as a Virginia Indian tribal member describes the 17,000-year history of living with the James River. All this with binoculars in hand and the rich history of the James laid out before you.

This new river adventure, the Capt. John Smith Trail Tour, is a partnership between the James River Fishing School/Discover the James, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the James River Association and the National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail.



Call or email for schedule.

**Capt. Mike - 804-938-2350
Mike@JamesRiverFishing.com**

Two hour river adventure. \$30 per person.

Maximum number per trip is six onboard the Discovery Barge II, a 24' covered pontoon boat.

Through organizations, such as JRAC, programs on the James River continue to expand.

If you have a vision of something you would like to see on the James River, please submit them to the JRAC newsletter at mike@jamesriverfishing.com.

The Newsletter Committee (Nancy Drumheller, Dave Goode, Kim Conley, Sue Cecil and Mike Ostrander) will compile all the suggestions into the Spring/Summer newsletter.

Maybe yours will be selected as the top one!

Virginia Scenic Rivers

Scenic River Program Celebrates 40th Anniversary - July 2009-December 2010

A small group of people sits on the banks of the Rivanna River next to the remains of the Woolen Mills Dam in Charlottesville. The group is debating the scenic quality of this river. Who could deny that Virginia's rivers are beautiful? But is this river one of the best Virginia has to offer?

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2010, Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program honors the highest quality, natural waterways in the state, limiting views of development.

The team floated a length of the river from Route 29 to the dam. Six boats carried 11 people through a quiet stretch with just a few small rapids. The team was to identify and record details about vegetation on the banks, human modifications to water flow, signs of development, parallel roads and places where a road crosses the river. The details gathered are added to collected information, including water quality, presence of endangered species, quality of fisheries, historic features and river access points.

Group members gave each criterion a score and came to a consensus within the group. That score is weighted against an ideal to see if the river even qualifies to be in the program. In this case, the score allowed it to be added to an adjacent downstream stretch already in the program.

To get to the field study, each locality adjacent to the river or river segment must agree on and submit a request for the study. After it's complete, it takes an act of the Virginia General Assembly to add the river into the program.

"This program would never exist without community involvement and government support at all levels within the state," said Lynn Crump, manager of the Scenic River Program. "But mostly, it's amazing to see all of the communities around the river come together to honor their beautiful natural features. So far, there are 24 rivers or river segments in the program, and the number grows almost every year."

The Scenic Rivers Program also has an associated governor-appointed board to enhance and promote the program. Virginia Scenic Rivers Board members make recommendations on the stewardship of scenic rivers and advise on the addition of river segments.

Richard Gibbons, chair of the Scenic Rivers Board, stated, "It's an honor to work for the promotion of Virginia's finest scenic features. The team of dedicated board members comes together from across the state to give local residents a voice in river-related issues."

Inclusion in the Scenic Rivers Program encourages protection and preservation of the river, but does not give the state control over land use decisions. Nor does the state commercially promote designated rivers or give public access to private lands. Designation is truly just a celebration of the wonder and beauty of the resource.

For more information about the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, please visit http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/srmain.shtml.

2009 Richmond Folk Festival October 9-11

The Richmond Folk Festival is one of Virginia's largest events, drawing visitors from all over the country to downtown Richmond's historic riverfront. The Festival is a FREE three-day event that got its start as the National Folk Festival held in Richmond from 2005-2007. The Festival has announced the performers who will grace the stages of the annual festival that will take place October

9-11, 2009, in downtown Richmond. In the tradition of the National, the Richmond Folk Festival features more than 25 performers, on 6 stages with continuous music and dance performances, along with a Virginia Folklife Area, an interactive Family Area produced by the Children's Museum of Richmond, a folk art marketplace, regional and ethnic foods, festival merchandise and more.

More information is available at www.richmondfolkfestival.com

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Preserving the James River

The James River Advisory Council (formerly the James River Task Force) serves as a forum for the diverse interests along the James River in Central Virginia and communicates with public officials regarding issues and challenges facing the river and its resources. The Advisory Council's vision is to unite the community by supporting and promoting the James River as a common resource and preserving its health.

In March 1993, a resolution was adopted at the first Regional Summit by area localities, to create the James River Task Force to study the development of the James River as a regional tourist attraction. In May 1999, the Task Force transitioned to the James River Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council's vision is to unite the community by supporting and promoting the James River as a common resource and preserving its health, beauty, heritage, economic vitality and recreational value.

JRAC has a membership of more than sixty members, with representatives from eight local jurisdictions, including the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent and Powhatan, and the city of Richmond, local businesses and industries, civic organizations and citizens. JRAC leads regional river groups and sets the tone for positive and interactive relationships among various organizations.

JRAC sponsors the James River Parade of Lights in December, James River Days during the summer, and the James River Regional Cleanup in June. The co-chairs of the Council are Jim Donati of the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, Varina District, and Ralph Hambrick of Falls of the James Scenic River Advisory Council and the Southampton Citizens Association.