

February 2023 Newsletter

Falls of the James Group



Love is in the air. A mating pair of eagles in a tulip poplar near the James River. Female eagles are always larger than the males. Photo courtesy of Andrew Peacock.

Advocacy Updates from Lee Williams, FOJG Advocacy Chair



Senator Ghazala Hashmi, Delegate Nadarius Clark, Sierra Club Virginia Chapters Young Leaders Council and other environmentalists speaking outside the Bell Tower at the state Capitol on Friday 1/13/23 to more than 50 people during the Livable Rally. Photos Courtesy of Tim Cywinski of the Sierra Club VA Chapter.

Rally for a Livable Future at the Bell Tower at the State Capitol. On Friday January 13, Sierra Club and our partners in this climate war - Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Appalachian Voices and CCAN - hosted a Rally for a Livable Future at the Bell Tower to support and DEFEND existing environmental policy in the 2023 legislative session. Several Democratic House and Senate elected officials spoke and promised to fight efforts by the governor to drag Virginia backward by ignoring codified law and removing us from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and Clean Cars standards. Watch this recording of the Facebook livestream to hear their remarks. [Livestream from Sierra Club Va Chapter on Facebook](#)

Joe Brancoli, FOJG Chair, was also at the rally. Here is his take on the event! On the beautiful sunny day of January 13th, a dozen legislators joined environmental minded citizens and community advocates on the Capitol grounds for the Rally for a Livable Future. Paige Wesselink of Sierra Club introduced speakers ranging in age from teens to octogenarians, from high schools to non-profits to the halls of the General Assembly. The theme of the day was expressed in many voices as one message: **time is urgently short to take massive actions to cut emissions, cease exploitation of resources and preserve human and animal life on our shared planet.**

Attacks on Virginia's Climate Laws are Front and Center at the General Assembly. Here is a link to Ivy Main's take on what's going on in the General Assembly in the Virginia Mercury. Ivy is the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter Grassroots Renewable Energy Co-Chair. [Attacks on Virginia's climate laws are front and center at the General Assembly - Virginia Mercury.](#)

Richmond City Budget Recommendations. Support our [FY2024 Clean Energy and Climate Justice Budget Recommendations](#). Send a letter of support to both Mayor Stony and to your Richmond city council representative. You can access this action alert [here](#).

Methane Gas monitoring. The FOJG has submitted a grant application for a methane monitoring device. If funded, FOJG and community groups aim to increase accountability of Richmond Gas Works by detecting gas leaks and compelling Richmond Gas Works to repair the leaks.

Electrify RVA Advocacy Group. Kevin Cianfarini continues to push for the city to implement the Solar App to expedite rooftop solar permitting in Richmond City.

Environmental Justice Actions! To decrease urban heat islands in Richmond City, we have advocated for an urban forestry position to help increase tree planting and maintenance of trees. [Urban Forestry position was posted over the holidays](#) and deadline is Jan. 31. Salary \$83,446.00 - \$133,293.00 annually.

Contact Lee Williams, FOJG Advocacy Chair to get involved with Advocacy efforts! lee.sierraclub.greennewdealva@gmail.com

Other Environmental News

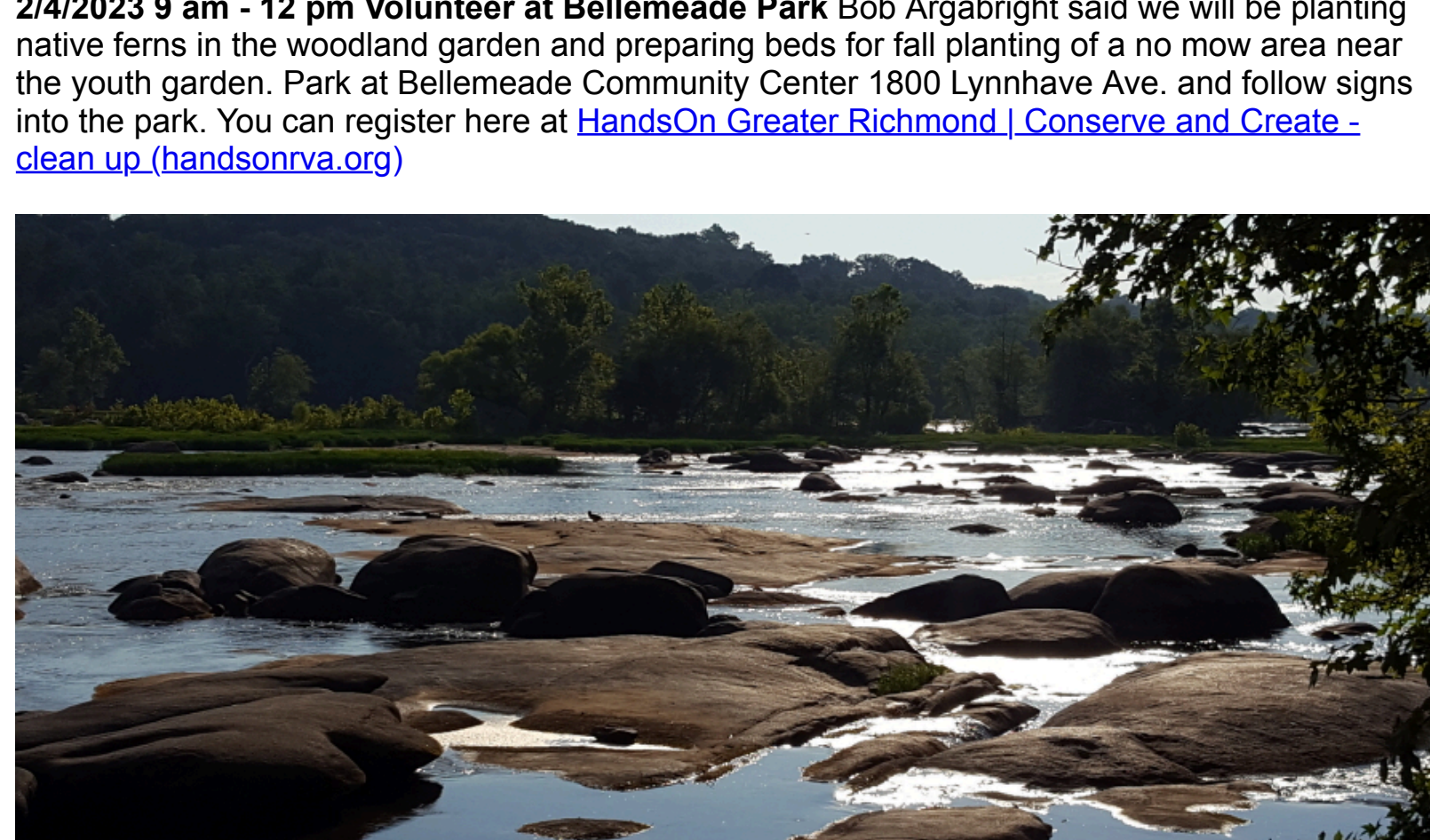
Please mark your calendars for the return of the **RVA Environmental Film Festival** from **March 10th through 21st**, with all events **free and in person**. Opening night at the Science Museum of Virginia will feature a reception and screening of the highly acclaimed new film **Wildcat** by local filmmaker Melissa Lesh. [Wildcat - Official Trailer | Prime Video - Bing video](#)

On Saturday and Sunday March 11th and 12th multiple films will be shown at the beautiful Byrd Theater in Carytown, including the Local Film Contest on Sunday. Please go to [Richmond Environmental Film Festival \(RVAEFF\)](#) for schedule and information.

May 2023 - The University of Richmond has expressed willingness to hold the **Big Yard Sale** at its former time in May. Stay tuned for more information and call for volunteers

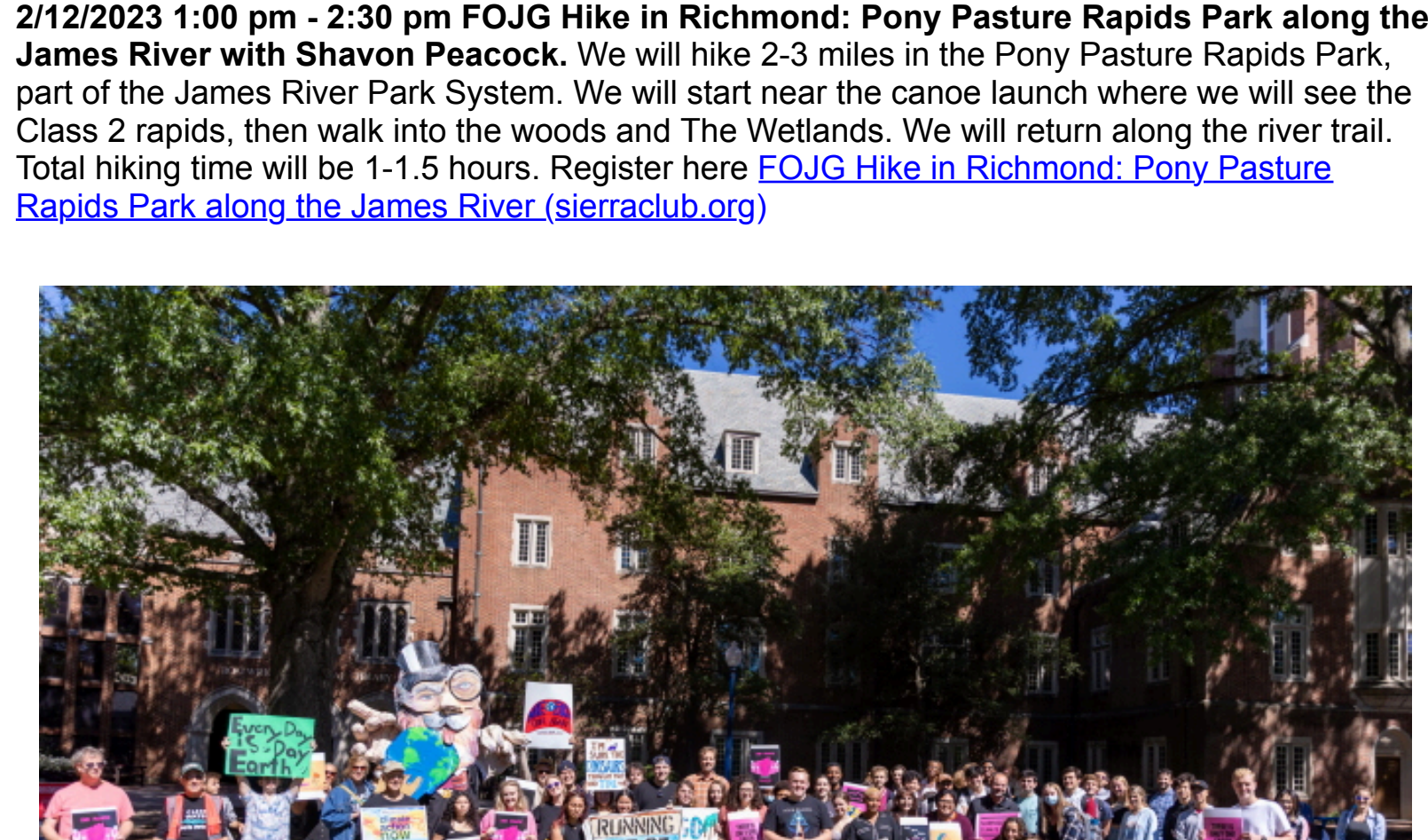
Register for our FOJG Outings and Programs

2/4/2023 9 am - 12 pm Volunteer at Bellemeade Park Bob Argabright said we will be planting native ferns in the woodland garden and preparing beds for fall planting of a no mow area near the youth garden. Park at Bellemeade Community Center 1800 Lynnhave Ave. and follow signs into the park. You can register here at [HandsOn Greater Richmond | Conserve and Create - clean.up.\(handsonva.org\)](#)



Pony Pasture Rapids. Photo courtesy of Shavon Peacock.

2/12/2023 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm FOJG Hike in Richmond: Pony Pasture Rapids Park along the James River with Shavon Peacock. We will hike 2-3 miles in the Pony Pasture Rapids Park, part of the James River Park System. We will start near the canoe launch where we will see the Class 2 rapids, then walk into the woods and The Wetlands. We will return along the river trail. Total hiking time will be 1-1.5 hours. Register here [FOJG Hike in Richmond: Pony Pasture Rapids Park along the James River \(sierraclub.org\)](#)

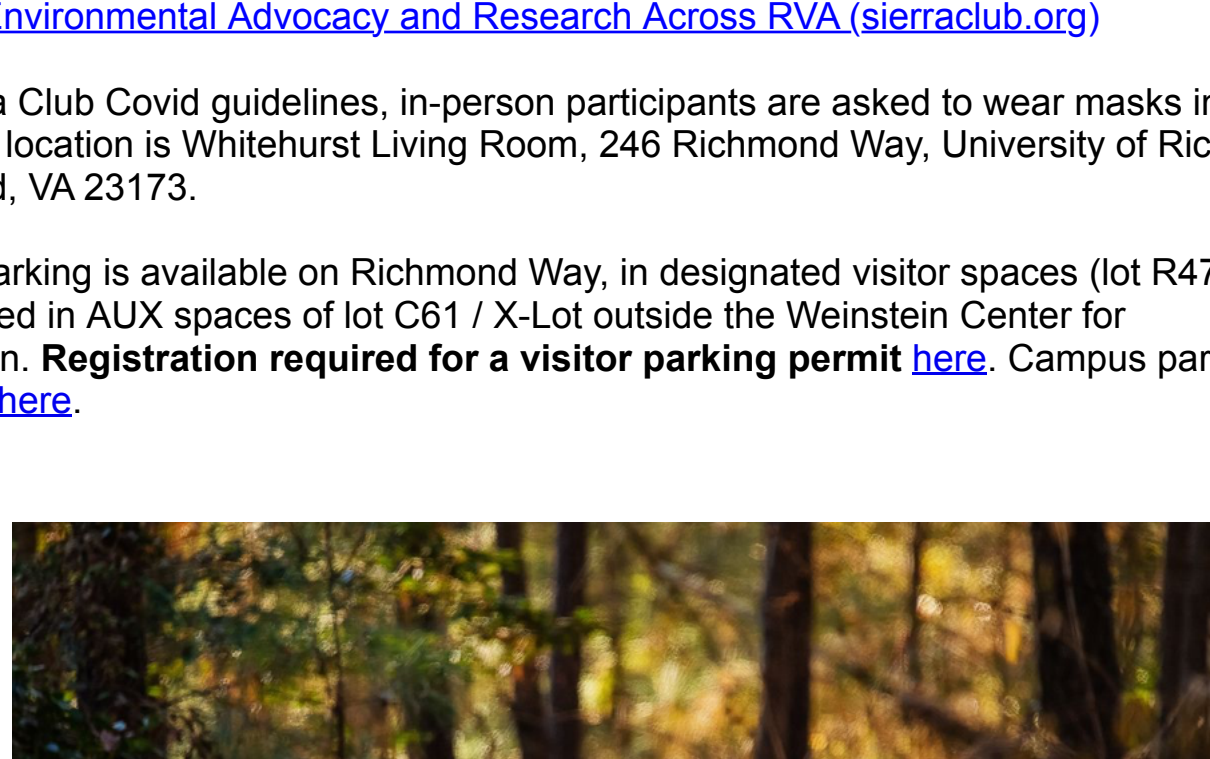


The first GreenUR and Fridays For Future Global Climate Strike Rally at the University of Richmond. Photo courtesy of Mason Manley.

2/21/2023 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Virtual/In-Person Program: Student Environmental Advocacy and Research across RVA: Learn how University of Richmond and other college campuses in Virginia are identifying common goals, creating partnerships, building solidarity, and learning from one another. Register here. [FOJG Program: Student Environmental Advocacy and Research Across RVA \(sierraclub.org\)](#)

Per Sierra Club Covid guidelines, in-person participants are asked to wear masks inside. The in-person location is Whitehurst Living Room, 246 Richmond Way, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173.

Limited parking is available on Richmond Way, in designated visitor spaces (lot R47). Parking encouraged in AUX spaces of lot C61 / X-Lot outside the Weinstein Center for Recreation. **Registration required for a visitor parking permit** [here](#). Campus parking map available [here](#).



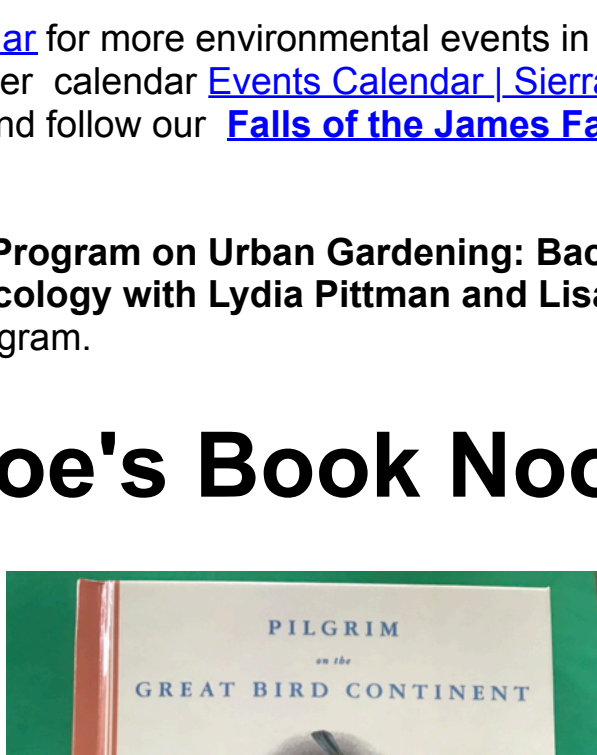
Deer crossing road and Courtney Hayes with a friendly salamander. Photos courtesy of Courtney Hayes.

3/14/2023 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm Virtual Program: The Importance of Habitat Connectivity and Protecting Virginia's Wildlife Corridors with Courtney Hayes Preserving habitat connectivity helps keep ecosystems healthy and intact. Specifically, preserving wildlife corridors, or connections between patches of important habitat, protects public health, reduces wildlife-vehicle collisions, allows wildlife to move to more suitable habitats, and makes our state more resilient in the face of a changing climate. We will discuss the importance of wildlife corridors, what work is being done to protect them in Virginia, and what work still needs to be done. Courtney Hayes is the Habitat Connectivity Program Director at Wild Virginia. Register here. [The Importance of Habitat Connectivity & Protecting VA's Wildlife Corridors \(sierraclub.org\)](#)

Check out the [FOJG Calendar](#) for more environmental events in the Richmond area. Also check out the Virginia Chapter calendar [Virginia Chapter Calendar | Sierra Club](#) for Sierra Club events around the state. Also like and follow our [Falls of the James Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for updates.

Missed our 1/10/23 FOJG Program on Urban Gardening: Backyard and Community Growing our Health and Ecology with Lydia Pittman and Lisa Thompson? Go [here](#) to see the recording of this program.

Joe's Book Nook



Hello eager readers,

Sometimes you just fall in love with the personality and perspective of an author, as expressed in their work. I experience this with every reading of Lyanda Lynn Haupt's books who I believe has been featured here before. Her other works *Crow Planet*, *Rare Encounters with Ordinary Birds*, and *The Urban Bestiary* encourage a sense of wonder at the wild creatures to be found near our homes, or hers, in Seattle. But in *Pilgrim on the Great Bird Continent: The Importance of Everything and Other Lessons from Darwin's Lost Notebooks*, she goes further afield and back to the 1800s for an affectionate, wry and informative look at how Charles Darwin's trip as naturalist on the around the world voyage of the HMS Beagle shaped his life and theories. Of the many books about the great thinker, this one connects deeply with me, through the funny, readable prose of Haupt. Please take a trip back in time with a most congenial and winning host, in *Pilgrim on the Great Bird Continent*.

And please support your local bookseller with this and other purchases!

Join the Sierra Club!

Not a member of the Sierra Club yet? You can join the oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization in the nation for as little as \$15. [Join Today. Become a champion.](#) [\(sierraclub.org\)](#)

How the Sierra Club Does It!

Since 1892, we know actions speak louder than words. That's why we've built a national community of volunteers, advocates, and grassroots activists who show up when and where it counts. Our supporters have the tools and resources to make themselves heard in nearly every district in every state across the country. From securing protection for 439 parks and monuments, to winning passage of the Clean Air and Endangered Species Acts, to fighting over 281 coal plants on the path to replacement with clean energy, to securing the right of every kid in America to visit a national park, we have an unmatched record of success and impact.

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet.

Thank you!
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