August 2023 Newsletter

Falls of the James Group

Lower Bee Tribe courtesy of Andrew Peacock

Hello Falls of the James Group members,

Change is always occurring in, and sometimes defining, all our lives. One recent development is the departure in North Carolina of Dan Taylor, Executive Committee Co-Chair and Conservation Chair for our Group. Dan has been a tireless and effective leader for our Group for many years and we thank him for his service and wish him the best in his new home. We will miss his presence in our Group and in our Executive Committee.

The space that his leaves on our Com remains one to wave into CALL FOR CANDIDATES who wish to run for one of the four seats which will be up for election this fall.

All members of the Falls of the James Group are eligible to run, and Ex Com members are encouraged to run for another two-year term. Serving on Ex Com is a rewarding work year and supporting Group projects such as the Big Yard Sale, and meeting others who share our values and goals.

If you are interested in running to serve on Ex Com, please contact Joe Brancato at joebrancato@gmail.com and (804) 332-9922. Thank you.

Advocacy Updates

ELECTRIFY RVA

BEYOND METRANE RVA

In September Richmond City Council will consider an ordinance creating a Public Utilities Commission. This should provide a venue and forum for consideration of the utility monopolies' proposals, and for consideration of alternatives. We need to have supported and registered users, the support the commission, and the Virginia Chapter Sierra Club should be ready to provide testimony and information. We are working with them to sign a petition and letter to that Council member.

If you'd like to follow up on our Electrify RVA and Beyond Methane RVA Teams, contact Lee Williams at lee.williams.richmondvaclub@gmail.com.

Dominion taking coal plant out and about to dump fly ash on the James River - Dead Dominion

Sierra Club Opposes New Dominion Energy Gas Plant in Chesterfield County

Glen Boca

The Falls of the James Group has joined a coalition opposing Dominion Energy's proposed 1,000 megawatt (MW) gas plant in Chesterfield County. The proposed plant would be located near Dominion's Bremo Power Station on approximately 100 acres along the James River. The 1,000 MW plant would consist of a gas turbine power plant which Dominion claims are needed to address peak power demands in summer and winter months.

In opposing the methane fired power plant, Sierra Club has objected to the increased carbon emissions from expected reliance on methane which appears to violate the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA). Methane is a greenhouse gas with 84 times the emissions it can vent to CO2 (GWP, Wikipedia). Dominion's latest long-range plan would more than double its methane use by the end of the decade.

Another major concern is the environmental justice E.J. impact of the gas plant in the disfranchised community of Chesterfield County. Those residents already have a pollution associated with Dominion's coal plant, which was one of the largest air polluters in the state before it closed last year. The new methane fired plant would have its bottleneck with a new source of air pollution from the gas plant, and would increase the pollution burden on the community. Sierra Club has joined the Chesterfield Colored People (NAACP) to oppose the power plant as well.

Sierra Club believes that Dominion has failed to adequately consider alternatives to the gas plant including utility scale battery storage as well as efficiency investments, demand response, and renewable energy. The Falls of the James Group and Sierra Club also plan to advocate that Dominion focus on the gas plant cancellation, and Sierra Club will be working with its allies to develop a strategy to implement the Virginia legislative action to secure healthy communities in our state.

Cancer-Causing Chemicals Don't Belong Next To Schools

Locally, the FOJG Sierra Club and Sisu the House of Virginia Energy (SHVE) Coalition have been working with Chesterfield County Public Schools, the **Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) are having an in person community meeting for all residents in Chesterfield County to discuss the proposed Chesterfield Energy Center (CEC) on August 29 starting at 6:30 pm. The meeting will be in the Nelms Library at** 2023 Nice Street, Hopewell, Virginia 23860. **Please plan to attend.**

Hanover Should Adopt a Climate Action Plan Petition

If you are a Hanover County resident, please consider signing this petition asking the County to adopt a climate action plan. Hanover County is one of the few counties in Virginia without local carbon emissions while keeping residents safe from the impacts of climate change. Hanover County is also the home of the Virginia Department of Office of Sustainability, and empower it to implement the climate plan policies with the Hanover Climate Action Plan. - Petition - Hanover Should Adopt a Climate Action Plan - Change.org

Spring FOJG Outings

Bluebelly Hollow hosted a bonfire for members of Friends of James River Park (FOJRP) on April 29th

Bluebelly Outing: The Falls of the James Group (FOJG) and the Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC) hosted a bonfire at Bluebelly Hollow on April 29th. Bluebelly Hollow is a 20 acre property in Powhatan County that was recently protected by the CRLC. It is a Nature Conservancy Preserve. We want to thank Dave Nash and Kathleen Jones for their hospitality and for providing firewood for the bonfire. Dave and Kathleen are the owners of Bluebelly Hollow and are members of the Capital Region Land Conservancy. Dave and Kathleen have been very supportive of the Sierra Club and have hosted several events and projects which will further volunteer participation and clean up. Jackie Hill, Jack Gilliland and Chris Hill

A capsuled dragonfly and some of the wildflowers on Jerusalem Ford, Richard Crouser is an expert photographer and a member of the Sierra Club

Dragonfly Ramble: FOJG held a fun outing with Dr. Richard Crouser on 6/27/23 identifying dragonflies and damselflies at Courthouse Park in Henrico County. Dr. Crouser has been photographing dragonflies for 40 years and has photographed over 100 species. He also knew that dragonflies can cut around 30-50 mph! Lots of fun! We hiked the Jerusalem Ford Trail and Beach in the surrounding fields. Thus, the dragonflies were captured were hawks.

Enjoying the fun on the river during the Big Yard Sale at the University of Richmond

The Big Yard Sale at the University of Richmond

Wear the Green and it's Good like Kelly
I get lucky left, while it blue skyscraping
Wear the Green and it's Good like Kelly
Do you know what I can get rid of these things?
Lyrics by Joe Brancato

On May 20th, the sale of items left by students at the University of Richmond (Big Yard) have returned all to sale for the first time since 2019. In the intervening years, we have had to cancel the sale due to Covid. The Big Yard Sale is a great opportunity to work with staff of the University to collect, organize and sell large amounts of gently used items. The Big Yard Sale is a great fun day for our volunteers, Richmond, Goochland, Henrico, Louisa, Powhatan, Albemarle and William counties.

This year, Sierrans were dumped before the sale to local non-profits, backing to the University and Sierra Club. Thanks to Sierra Club volunteers, Habitat for Humanity, Goodwill Industries, Southern Women Veterans Alliance, Community Mission Partners, Richmond Area Community Food Network, Richmond Area Community Food Network, Andrew Peacock, Lydia Pittman, Linda Rosenberg, Gail Sigmon, Tamara Smith, and Joe Brancato.

Approximately 70 volunteers worked on the project, most being Sierra Club members, some University connected volunteers, and including the newest staff member of the Sierra Club, Jackie Hill.

Goodwill reciprocity bucket without unsold items, Thanks to Community Mission Partners, Richmond Area Community Food Network, Andrew Peacock, Lydia Pittman, Linda Rosenberg, Gail Sigmon, Tamara Smith, and Joe Brancato.

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