



February 2024 Newsletter

Falls of the James Group

Dear Sierra Club Falls of the James Group (FOJG) members and other interested environmentalists,

In lieu of an FOJG newsletter this month, here is a brief update on upcoming events. Please join us for our upcoming February and March programs and outings.

Thank you!

Joe Brancoli
Sierra Club FOJG Chair

Shavon Peacock
Sierra Club FOJG Membership Engagement Chair

February 13, 2024 7:00 PM FOJG Program



Radhika Barua - Top Photo Courtesy of Radhika Barua and Emily Smith - Bottom Photo Courtesy of Emily Smith.

2/13/24 7:00 - 8:30 pm FOJG program - Workforce Development for a Circular Revolution in Critical Materials Research with Dr. Radhika Barua and Emily Smith. Join us in person at Congregation Or Ami at 9400 W. Huguenot Rd Richmond VA 23235. Register here if you want to participate via Zoom. [FOJG Workforce Development for a Circular Revolution in Critical Materials \(sierraclub.org\)](#)
It is time for a circular economy. Through design and innovation, we can make new products for wide-ranging consumer, building and industrial applications using raw materials that are recoverable and regenerated at the end of their service life, thus eliminating waste and pollution while creating an economy that benefits people, businesses, and the natural world.

Under the umbrella of VCU's Institute of Sustainable Energy and Environments, faculty affiliated with VCU's Schools of Engineering, Business, and the Arts are collaborating on a unique interdisciplinary curriculum that will train students on the new skills necessary to make a circular economy a reality. The program focuses on effectively designing, promoting, and implementing concepts of sustainable materials development and green manufacturing. Join us for this exciting February 13th program!

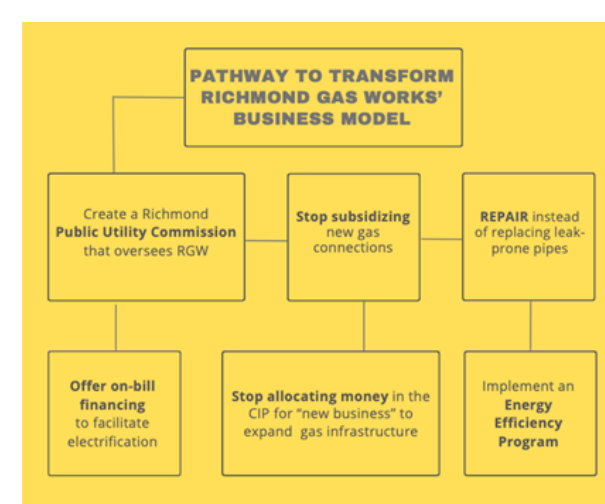
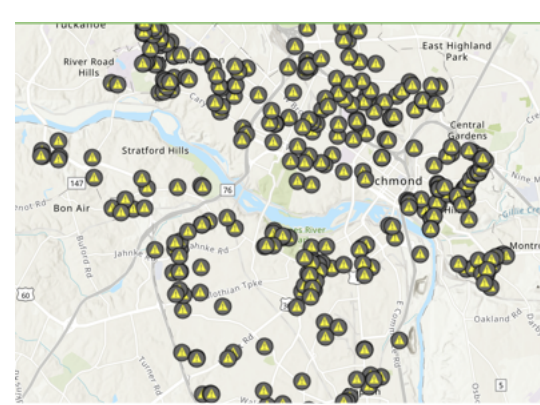
Radhika Barua is the Director of the Advanced Magnetic Materials Processing Laboratory in the College of Engineering at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. She holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering (specializing in Materials Science) from Northeastern University in Boston, a M.S. degree in Biotechnology from State of New York at Buffalo and a B.E. degree in Chemical Engineering from Visveswaraiiah Technological University in India.

Emily Smith, VCU Assistant Professor of Interior Design and Certified Interior Designer. Emily Smith is an assistant professor with VCU Interior Design and a certified interior designer.

2/24/24 - 9:30-12:30 Cumberland Marsh Hike in New Kent County with Doug Couvillion. Purchased by The Nature Conservancy in 1993, Vandell Preserve at Cumberland Marsh is a mixture of freshwater tidal marsh and wooded upland. We'll be looking for bald eagles, ospreys, great blue herons, egrets, black ducks, wood ducks, mallards and Canada geese.

The hike is a relatively flat 3-5 miles through woods and marshes. Plan on spending 3 hours at the nature preserve. Register here [Cumberland Marsh Hike \(sierraclub.org\)](#)

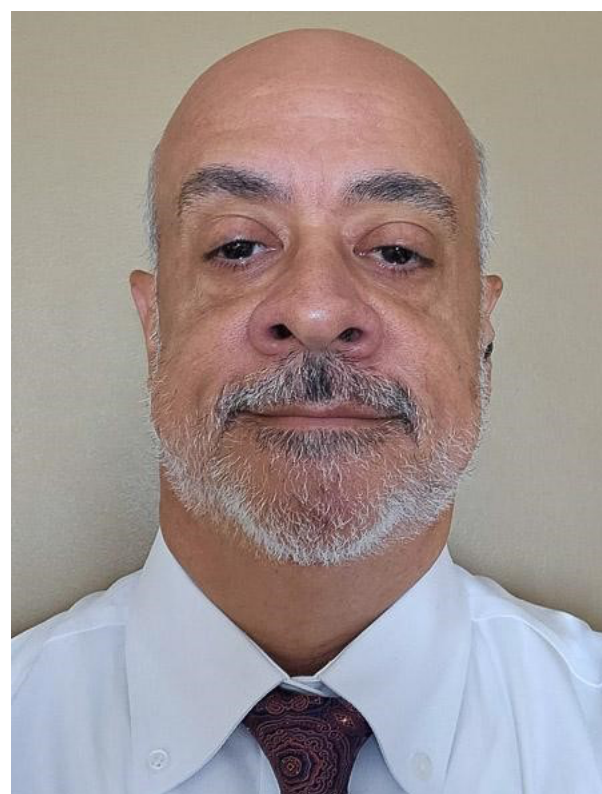
3/9/2024 10:00 am - 12:00 pm FOJG Hiking 101: Pony Pasture with Doug Couvillion. Embark on a journey of discovery with our Hiking 101 outings! Designed for novice hikers, these outdoor adventures in the Greater Richmond area can be completed in under 90 minutes without any special gear. To build your confidence, each outing begins with a short discussion of hiking basics before we hit the trail. Hiking 101 outings provide a friendly and supportive environment for those eager to explore the great outdoors, one step at a time. Join us to experience the wonders of nature, meet other hikers, and build your confidence on and off the trail. After our introductory discussion, we'll explore a flat, 2 mile circuit to the Wetlands Park and back. The route takes us along the river, to an open meadow, through wetlands, and back through the forest with plenty of opportunities to see wildlife. Register here [Hiking 101: Pony Pasture \(sierraclub.org\)](#)



3/12/24 7:00 - 8:30 pm FOJG Program - Think Beyond Methane: The Plan to Transition Richmond Gasworks to a Renewable Energy Provider presented by Lee Williams. Join us in person at Congregation Or Ami at 9400 W. Huguenot Rd Richmond VA 23235. Register here if you want to participate via Zoom. [Beyond Methane: Transitioning Richmond Gasworks to a Renewable Energy Provider \(sierraclub.org\)](#)

The Richmond Gasworks (RGW) is facing serious infrastructure problems that are causing the loss of significant amounts of methane gas. These leaks are not only causing economic losses but also pose health and safety concerns for customers. The Sierra Club FOJG's "Beyond Methane RVA" project has identified over a thousand gas leaks within the RGW's service area, with many of them being severe enough to be ignited. In November, the Richmond City Council approved the creation of a Public Utilities and Services Commission as a first step towards transitioning away from gas in accordance with the city's master plan and 2021's climate and ecological emergency resolution. Now, the question is, what does the next decade look like for an old city that has accepted the challenge of being a renewable energy provider?

Lee Williams is a Sierra Club Falls of the James Group (FOJG) Executive Committee member and FOJG Advocacy Committee chair. Additionally, Lee is one of the leaders of the FOJG initiated Electrify RVA campaign, which then developed the Beyond Methane RVA group. [Home - Beyond Methane RVA](#) Lee is also co-director of the Green New Deal Virginia.



4/9/24 7:00 - 8:30 FOJG Program - The Chickahominy Indian Tribe's Acquisition of Ancestral Lands and Their Importance to Cultural and Environmental Preservation with Reggie Stewart, 2nd Assistant Chief, Chickahominy Indian Tribe. Join us in person at Congregation Or Ami at 9400 W. Huguenot Rd Richmond VA 23235. Register here if you want to participate via Zoom. [The Chickahominy Indian Tribe's Acquisition of Ancestral Lands \(sierraclub.org\)](#)

Prior to joining the Chickahominy Indian Tribe staff, Reggie retired from the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond after 31 years of service. In his role as Business Technology Consultant in the Supervision, Regulation and Credit department, he was a liaison to examination staff in assisting with the use of automated systems and databases, provided MIS reporting from various data sources, provided help desk support for end-users, identified emerging technology to assist examiners in performing their job, managed IT related projects, and provided information security services for the department. Currently, Reggie serves as IT Director and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Manager for the Tribe. In his role as IT Director, he provides end-user support for Tribal staff, purchases and deploys IT equipment, manages IT projects, monitors data integrity within IT software solutions, and develops and enforces information security policies. Reggie has been a member of the Tribal Council since June 2004 and has served as 2nd Assistant Chief since June 2011. In addition, Reggie served as Chair of the Virginia Indian Advisory Council (VIAC) for the Jamestown 2007 Commemoration. The Council was responsible for the planning and execution of all the Virginia Indian related events during the year.

Join the Sierra Club

If you are not a member and are interested in joining the oldest, largest grassroots environmental organization in the country, you can join for as little as \$15 here. [Join Today. Become a champion. \(sierraclub.org\)](#) Once you join the national Sierra Club, you are automatically a member of the Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club and the Falls of the James Group Sierra Club.

Add your voice to the hundreds of thousands of Americans committed to leaving our children a living legacy — clean air, safe drinking water, and natural grandeur. From Yosemite National Park to the Grand Canyon, since 1892 the Sierra Club has been instrumental in preserving nature's most splendid wild places. Thank You!

Shavon Peacock
Sierra Club Falls of the James Group
Membership Engagement Committee Chair, Outings Leader, and Newsletter Editor

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