

June 2021 Newsletter

Falls of the James Group



The Indigo Bunting is a colorful songbird that migrates to Virginia during the spring and summer. Photo courtesy of Veronica Hayes.

Updated National Sierra Club COVID-19 Response



The National Sierra Club Executive Director Mike Brune, Chief Operations Officer, Jen Trahan, and Ramón J. Cruz, President, have made the difficult decision to extend our current COVID-19 response until **July 4th, 2021**. This means that all of our physical offices (national and chapter) will remain closed until this time, and travel and in-person meetings and outings will remain on pause.

Register for FOJG's Upcoming Programs



The Rights of Nature

Cost: Free
Date: Tue, June 8, 2021 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Location: Virtual, [register here](#)

Victoria Ronnau, Executive Director and Founder of VA Network for Democracy and Environmental Rights, will discuss the Rights of Nature Movement and how VNDER can assist counties, cities, and towns to create new legal, civil, and environmental rights to protect them against projects harmful to their communities.

The Pulaski County Clean Water Protection Ordinance (also known as the Claytor Lake and New River Bill of Rights) is a proposed new law for Pulaski County. This ordinance would give Pulaski County residents the right to clean water. It would also recognize the rights of Claytor Lake, The New River, and other waterways to "exist, regenerate, recharge, flow and flourish." [Click here to learn more.](#)



Proposals to Reintroduce Red Wolves to Virginia

Cost: Free
Date: Tue, Sept 14, 2021 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Location: Virtual, [register here](#)

Richmond-based journalist Stephen Nash has been looking into proposals to reintroduce red wolves, *Canis lupus rufus*, to Virginia. In the 1970s, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service caught the last 17 known representatives of this critically endangered species, whose range once extended from Florida to New York and the Atlantic states to Texas. The agency has worked to enlarge the captive population and reintroduce these animals to the wild, with varying success and gate-force political headwinds. Today, only a handful of red wolves remain in the wild in coastal North Carolina, and two hundred or so are in captive breeding facilities, nine of which are at Roanoke's Mill Mountain Zoo.

Please note that there will not be any FOJG programs in July and August.

Skip the Plastics RVA Updates



Plastic contributes tremendously to the world waste problem. Photo courtesy of Marc Newberry.

- Meetings moved from Sunday to Thursday nights. Next meeting **June 10th at 6:00 pm** on Zoom. [Click here to attend.](#)
- Current projects: Helping local restaurants move away from Styrofoam and single-use plastics- organizing a webinar and producing an easy-to-read handout for FOJG members to use when visiting restaurants to encourage plastic waste reduction.
- Open to other ideas and actions from FOJG members. Come join us and contribute your ideas.
- Sign these two petitions that are aimed at supermarket chains to reduce packaging
 1. [Greenpeace, Demand Supermarkets Reduce Plastic Packaging!](#)
 2. [U.S. PIRG, Tell Whole Foods: Move Beyond Plastic](#)

Skip the Plastics RVA Hosts Virtual Viewing of *Microplastic Madness* on June 8, 2021



Virtual movie *Microplastic Madness* is being hosted by FOJG's Skip the Plastics RVA Committee. The FOJG Skip the Plastics Committee is currently working on ideas to eliminate single-use plastic. This movie shows one way it can be done! *Microplastic Madness* is available for viewing on June 8th from 12:00 am - 5:00 pm and again from 8:30 pm - 12:00 am. The viewing is free and registration is required. [Register for the link here.](#)

The RVA Environmental Film Festival Wins Big



On April 29, 2021, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality awarded the RVA EFF with the 2021 Virginia Green Travel Award.

The eleventh consecutive RVA EFF was held from February 12th - 26th, 2021 with record-breaking attendance. Falls of the James Group is a major sponsor of the RVA EFF and many FOJG members volunteer with the RVA EFF time after time again. Thanks to the many dedicated volunteers and sponsors in the local community, the RVA EFF remains free and open to the public. The RVA EFF is a member of the Virginia Green Travel Alliance and was recognized for implementing distinctive green tourism practices.

Volunteer orientation for the 2022 RVA Environmental Film Festival to be held virtually on June 9, 2021

By Joe Brancoli

Hello Eager Readers,

Perhaps the memory lingers in your mind of the snow and isolation of February.

Perhaps like me, you were encouraged and pleased by the offerings of the Environmental Film Festival.

Perhaps you thought, "I would be interested to join the all-volunteer crew that brings this great event to fruition."

Well, your chance has arrived with the balmy winds of summer! On June 9th, an orientation for prospective volunteers is being held. Please RSVP and sign up using the links below, and check it out to see if you want to help with the 2022 RVA Environmental Film Festival. [Register here](#) for the RVA Environmental Film Festival Volunteer Orientation on June 9th at 6:30 pm. RSVP requested by [Google Form](#), or by email to gill.sigmon1@gmail.com

Joe's Book Nook



FOJG Executive Committee Chair, Joe Brancoli, recommends this book for the month of June. Photo courtesy of Joe Brancoli.

By Joe Brancoli

This month, I recommend a book that I purchased on a whim, simply due to the striking cover design. The book I recommend is *Vesper Flights* by Helen Macdonald. When first randomly sampling the selection of four to ten-page essays herein, I found the first few slightly underwhelming, compared to the force of last month's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard (I'm still high on that one- check it out if you haven't.) I soon came to appreciate the charm and insight of this volume, and find it worthwhile to slowly savor these bite-sized chapters.

As the cover promotes, Helen Macdonald is well known for her previous volume, *Hi is for Hawk*. I have not read that, but this 2020 collection of essays has made me a fan.

If you are in Richmond, Virginia, please consider patronizing a fine local bookstore such as Fountain Books in Shockoe Slip or Chop Suey Books in Carytown.

FOJG Member Spotlight

Tamara Smith, Gill Sigmon, Scott Burger, and Steve Yaris



Tamara Smith, Gill Sigmon, Scott Burger, and Steve Yaris (left to right) pose with the RVA Environmental Film Festival's 2021 Virginia Green Travel Leader Award. Photo courtesy of Tamara Smith.

We applaud Tamara, Gill, Scott, and Steve in their contribution to the RVA Environmental Film Festival. All of them have held leadership positions on the RVA EFF team and are dedicated FOJG members. Tamara and Scott were previous presidents of the RVA EFF. Gill is the current president of the RVA EFF, and Steve Yaris is the treasurer.

Get Featured in the Newsletter

Photo of the Month and Member Spotlights

Have you recently volunteered for a meaningful project? Photographed something beautiful outdoors? Stumbled upon an interesting trail, park, or historic site? Contact **Veronica Hayes** at veronicasydneyhayes@gmail.com with the subject "FOJG Newsletter" for a chance to be featured in the upcoming newsletter. Please email pictures, a blurp, and important information such as your name, the date, and the location by the 22nd of the month.

2021 FOJG Executive Committee

Joe Brancoli, FOJG Executive Committee Chair/Leadership Chair, & Acting First VA Sierra Club Chapter Executive Committee: omethid@hotmail.com

Glen Besa, FOJG Political Chair and Outings Leader: glenbesa@gmail.com

Steve Carter-Lovejoy, FOJG "Skip The Plastics" Committee Chair: scarterlovejoy53@msn.com

Carille Greenberg-Ribley, FOJG Executive Committee Member: carillegr@gmail.com

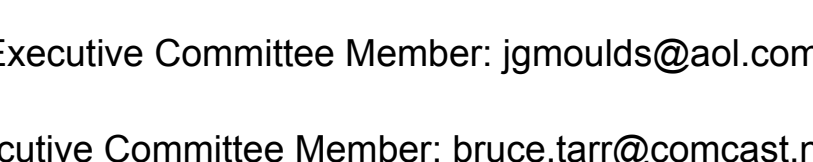
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Thanks for all you do for the environment,
Veronica Hayes
Newsletter Editor
Sierra Club Falls of the James Group

