

## February 2022 Newsletter

### Falls of the James Group



After two warm winters, Central Virginia is finally experiencing a winter with moderate snow and cool temperatures. Photo courtesy of Veronica Hayes

### Register for our Upcoming Programs

#### Highlighting Conservation Projects moderated by Dr. Todd Lookingbill of University of Richmond



Photo courtesy of Dr. Todd Lookingbill.

**Cost:** Free  
**Date:** Tue, Feb 8, 2022 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
**Location:** Virtual, register [here](#)

University of Richmond students Will Heinle, Elizabeth Hatasz, Indya Woodfolk, and McKenna Dunbar will discuss environmental projects moderated by Dr. Todd Lookingbill.

#### Urban Farms with Duron Chavis



Photo courtesy of Richmond Magazine.

**Cost:** Free  
**Date:** Tue, March 8, 2022 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
**Location:** Virtual, register [here](#)

Hear Duron Chavis speak about his work as an urban farmer and community activist in Richmond. He is one of the recipients of the Green Giant Awards in 2021. His career began at the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia, where he founded the acclaimed Happily Natural Day Festival.

#### Wetlands - What Are They and What Value do They Speak?

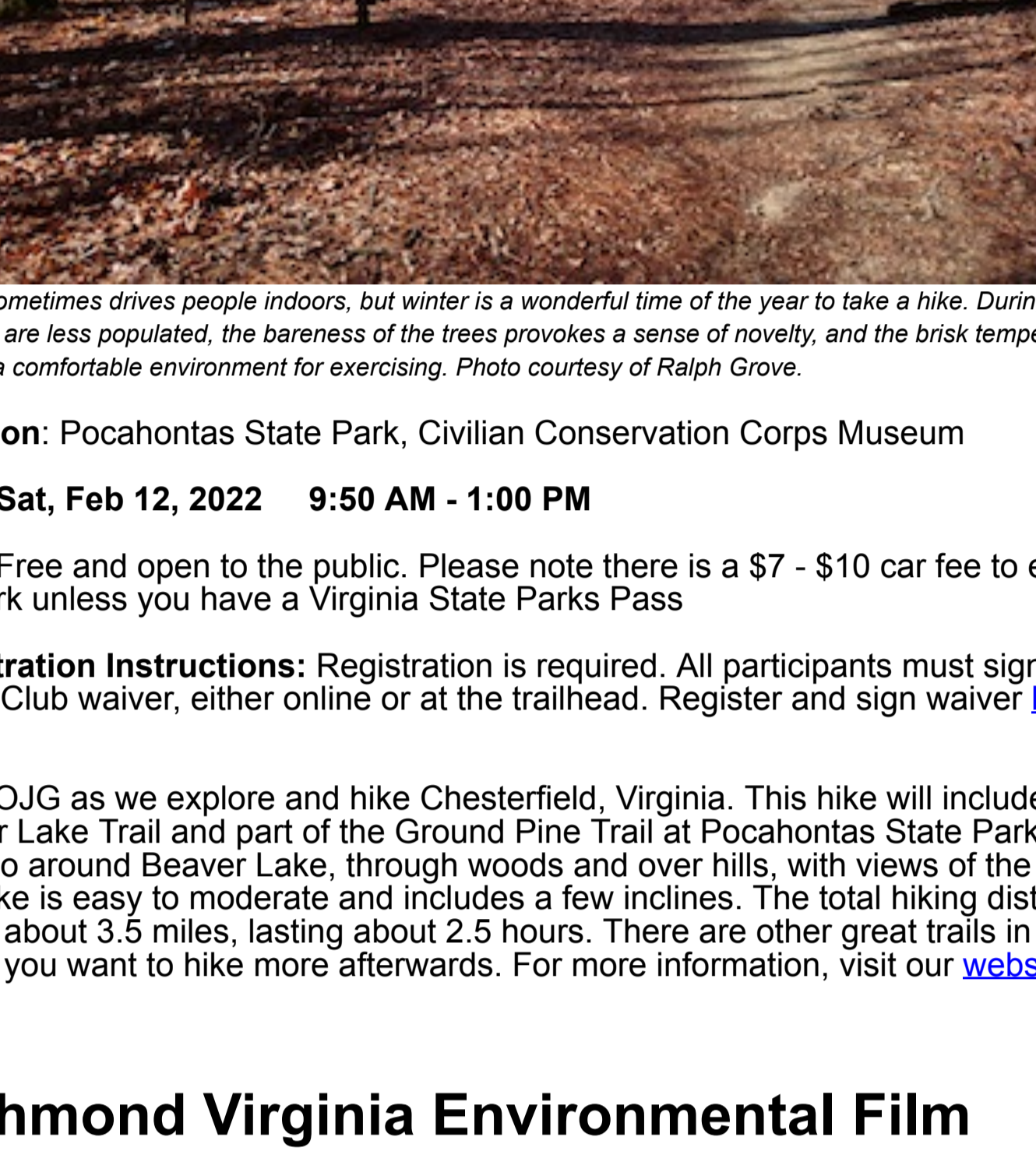
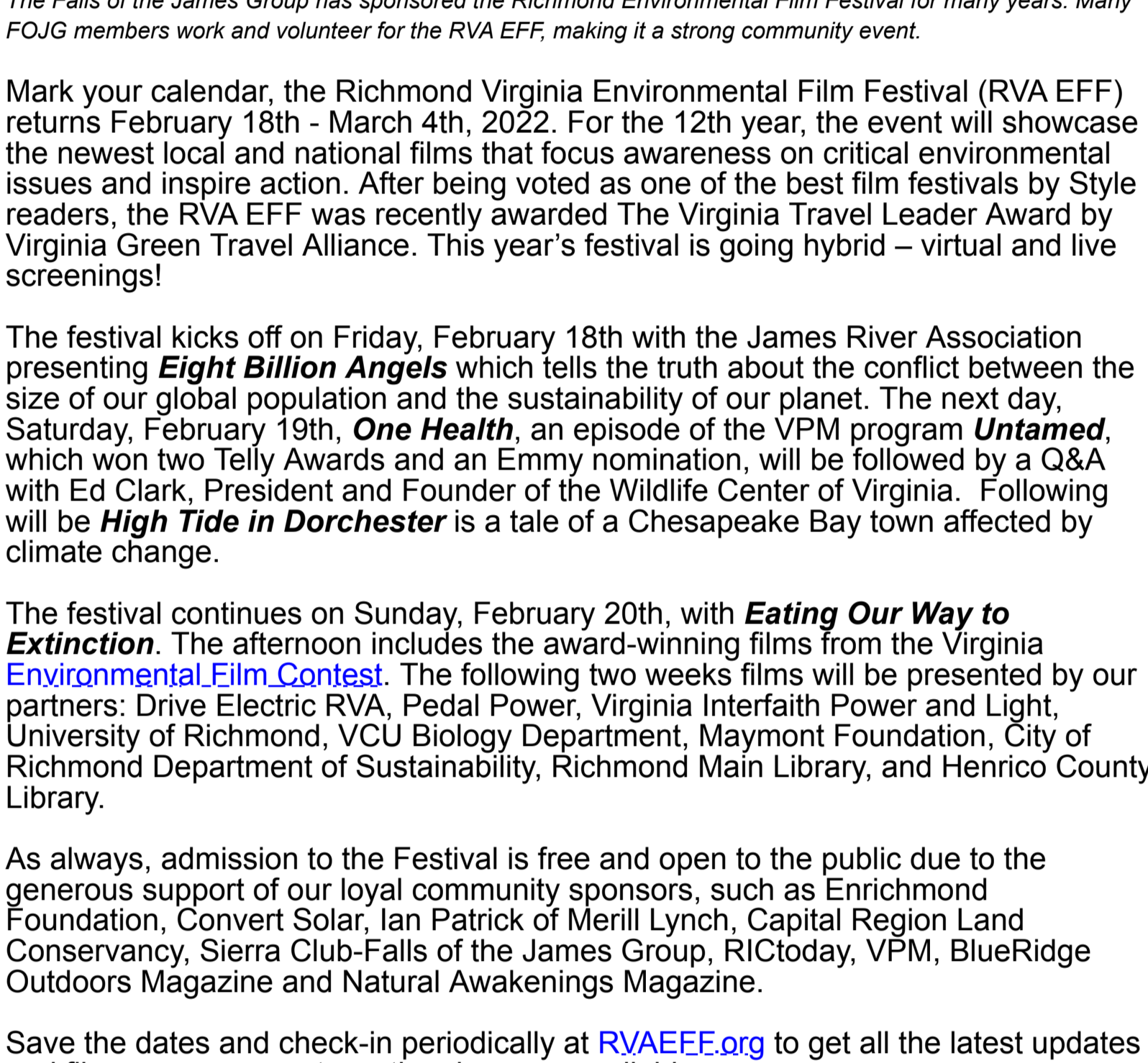


Photo courtesy Dr. Scott Neubauer.

**Cost:** Free  
**Date:** Tue, April 12, 2022 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
**Location:** Virtual, register [here](#)

Dr. Scott Neubauer, Associate Professor of Biology at VCU and wetlands specialist speaks about wetlands and their value and importance.

#### FOJG Outing, Hike Beaver Lake Trail



Winter sometimes drives people indoors, but winter is a wonderful time of the year to take a hike. During winter the trails are less populated, the bareness of the trees provokes a sense of novelty, and the brisk temperatures provide a comfortable environment for exercising. Photo courtesy of Ralph Grove.

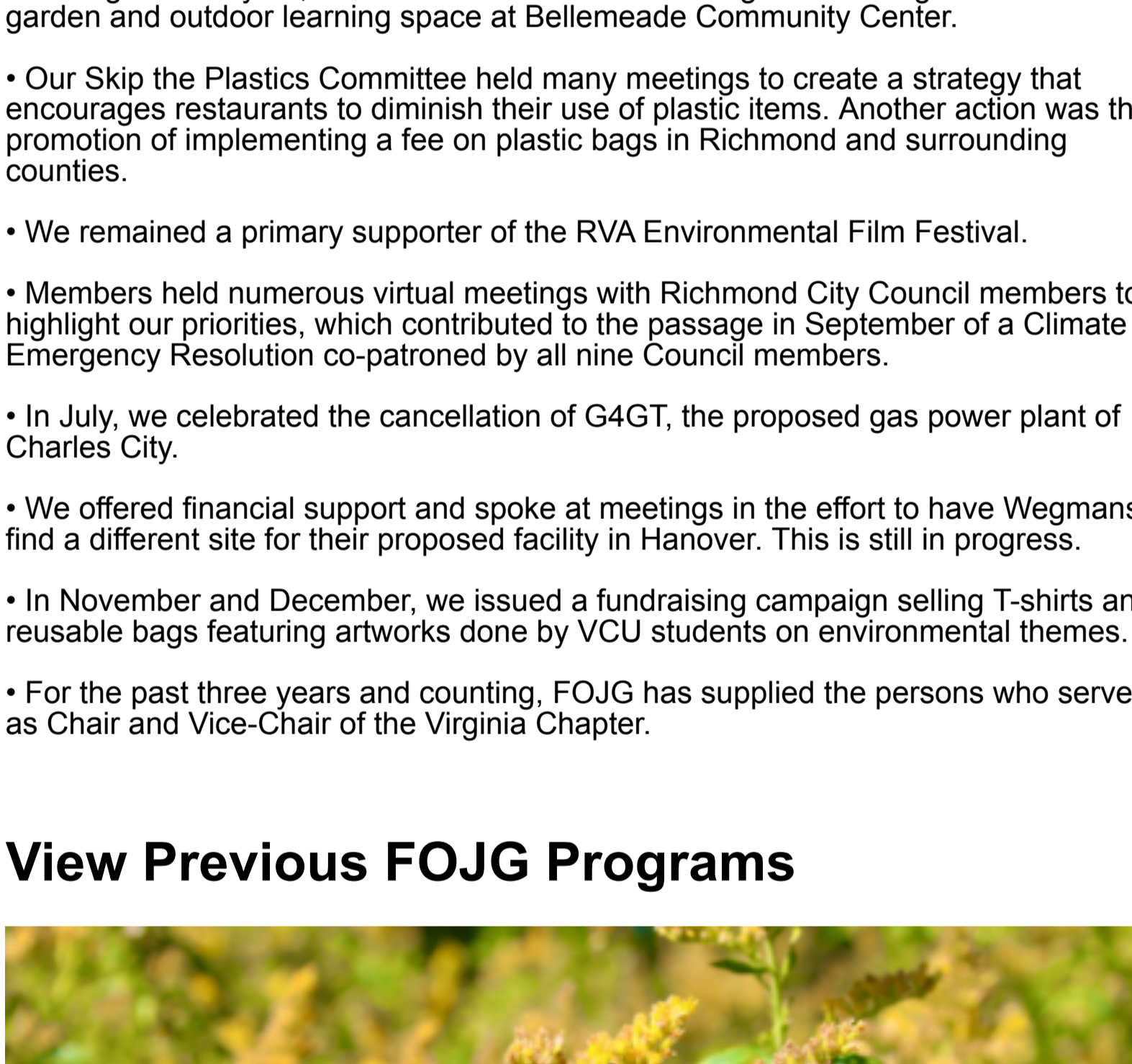
**Location:** Pocahontas State Park, Civilian Conservation Corps Museum  
**Date:** Sat, Feb 12, 2022 9:50 AM - 1:00 PM

**Cost:** Free and open to the public. Please note there is a \$7 - \$10 car fee to enter the park unless you have a Virginia State Parks Pass

**Registration Instructions:** Registration is required. All participants must sign a Sierra Club waiver, either online or at the trailhead. Register and sign waiver [here](#)

Join FOJG as we explore and hike Chesterfield, Virginia. This hike will include Beaver Lake Trail and part of the Ground Pine Trail at Pocahontas State Park. The trails go around Beaver Lake, through woods and over hills, with views of the lake. The hike is easy to moderate and includes a few inclines. The total hiking distance will be about 3.5 miles, lasting about 2.5 hours. There are other great trails in the area if you want to hike more afterwards. For more information, visit our [website](#).

#### Richmond Virginia Environmental Film Festival



The Falls of the James Group has sponsored the Richmond Environmental Film Festival for many years. Many FOJG members work and volunteer for the RVA EFF, making it a strong community event.

Mark your calendar, the Richmond Virginia Environmental Film Festival (RVA EFF) returns February 18th - March 4th, 2022. For the 12th year, the event will showcase the newest local and national films that focus awareness on critical environmental issues and inspire action. After being voted as one of the best film festivals by Style Readers, the RVA EFF was recently awarded The Virginia Travel Leader Award by Virginia Green Travel Alliance. This year's festival is going hybrid - virtual and live screenings!

The festival kicks off on Friday, February 18th with the James River Association presenting *Eight Billion Angels* which tells the truth about the conflict between the size of our global population and the sustainability of our planet. The next day, Saturday, February 19th, *One Health*, an episode of the VPM program *Untamed*, which won two Emmy Awards and an Emmy nomination, will be followed by a Q&A with Ed Clark, President and Founder of the Wildlife Center of Virginia. Following will be *High Tide in Dorchester* is a tale of a Chesapeake Bay town affected by climate change.

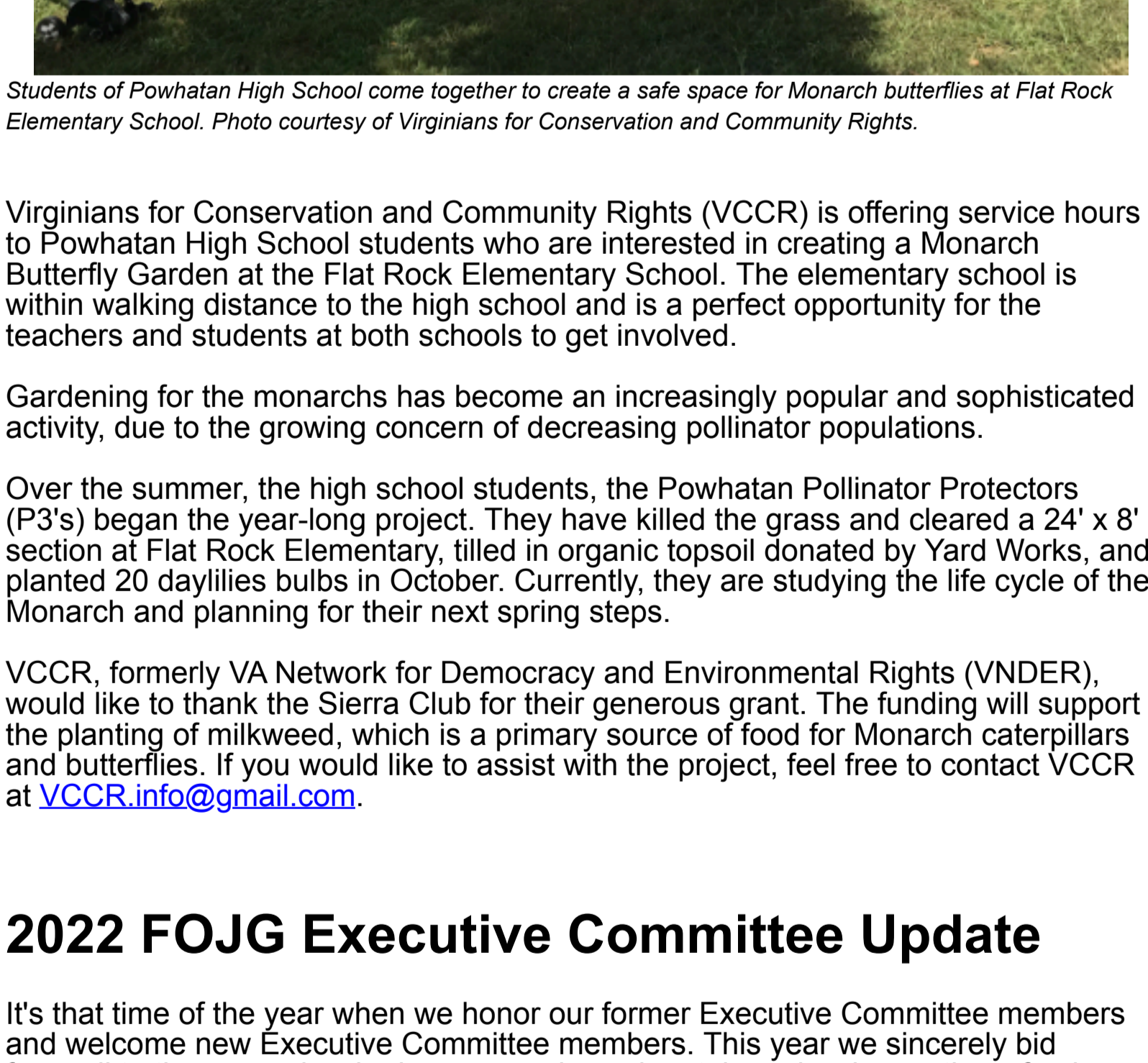
The festival continues on Sunday, February 20th, with *Eating Our Way to Extinction*. The afternoon includes the award-winning films from the Virginia Environmental Film Contest. The following two weeks films will be presented by our partners: Drive Electric RVA, Pedal Power, Virginia Interfaith Power and Light, University of Richmond, VCU Biology Department, Maymont Foundation, City of Richmond Department of Sustainability, Richmond Main Library, and Henrico County Library.

As always, admission to the Festival is free and open to the public; due to the generous support of our loyal community sponsors, such as Enrichment Foundation, Convent Solar, Ian Patrick of Merrill Lynch, Capital Region Land Conservancy, Sierra Club-Falls of the James Group, RicToday, VPM, BlueRidge Outdoors Magazine and Natural Awakenings Magazine.

Save the dates and check-in periodically at [RVAEFF.org](#) to get all the latest updates and film announcements as they become available.

Register [here](#) to watch the FOJG-sponsored film, *The Magnitude of All Things* on February 22nd, 2022 from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. Watch the trailer [here](#).

#### 2021 Accomplishments of FOJG

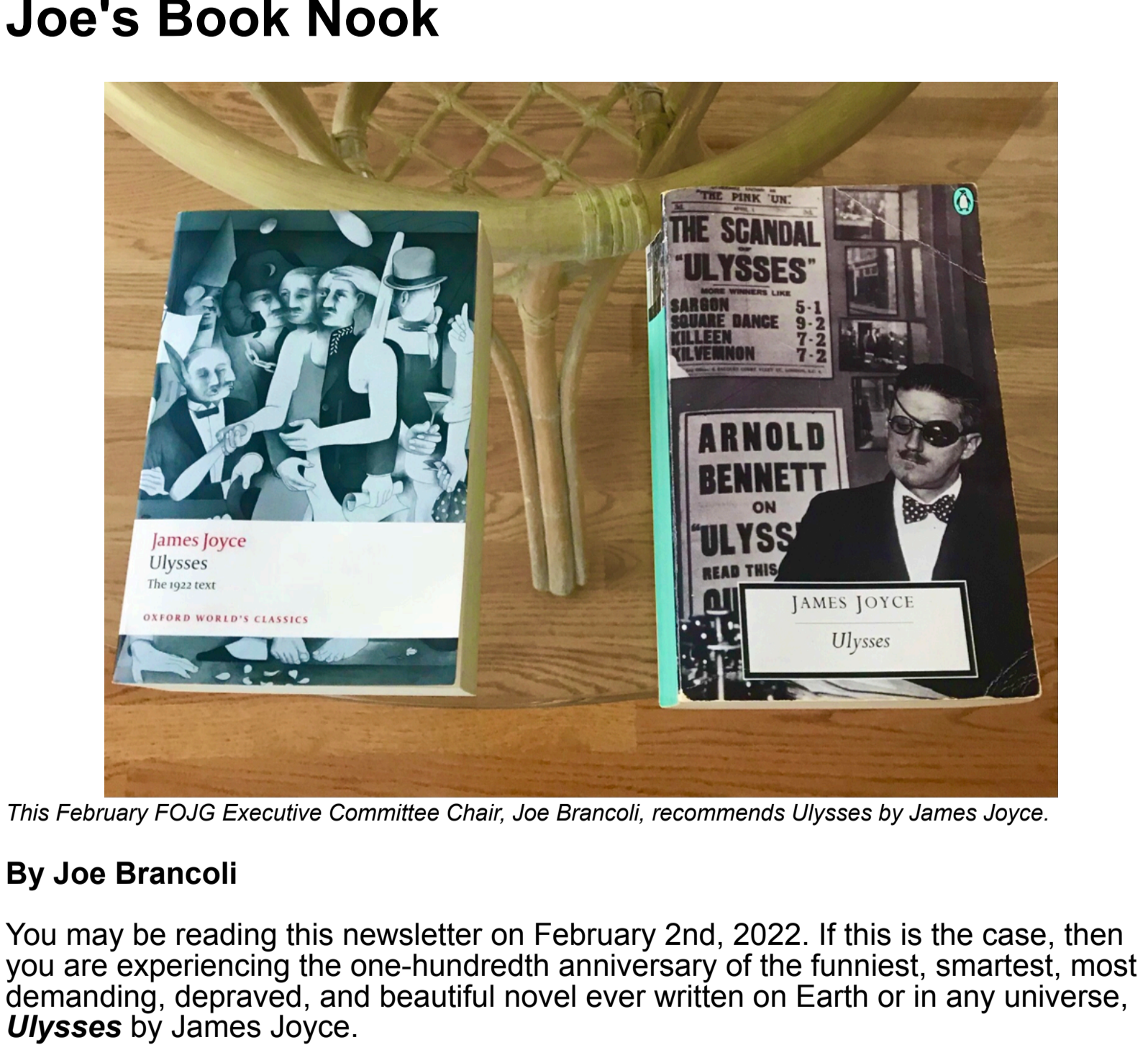


Many volunteers help make Bellemeade Park a great place. Photo courtesy of Sharon Peacock.

The Falls of the James Group can be proud of many things. In 2021, we accomplished the following tasks:

- FOJG advocated against the City of Richmond from embarking on a problematic 'restoration' of Rattlesnake Creek in Southside, which would have killed many trees and provided dubious water improvements.
- Throughout the year, members volunteered in tutoring and working to create a garden and outdoor learning space at Bellemeade Community Center.
- Our Skip the Plastics Committee held many meetings to create a strategy that encourages restaurants to diminish their use of plastic items. Another action was the promotion of implementing a fee on plastic bags in Richmond and surrounding counties.
- We remained a primary supporter of the RVA Environmental Film Festival.
- Members held numerous virtual meetings with Richmond City Council members to highlight our priorities, which contributed to the passage in September of a Climate Emergency Resolution co-patroned by all nine Council members.
- In July, we celebrated the cancellation of G4GT, the proposed gas power plant of Charles City.
- We offered financial support and spoke at meetings in the effort to have Wegmans find a different site for their proposed facility in Hanover. This is still in progress.
- In November and December, we issued a fundraising campaign selling T-shirts and reusable bags featuring artworks done by VCU students on environmental themes.
- For the past three years and counting, FOJG has supplied the persons who served as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Virginia Chapter.

#### View Previous FOJG Programs



Monarch butterflies are one of the most recognizable insects in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Photo courtesy of Veronica Hayes.

**1/11/22:** Chris Burnside and Karl Green present *Monarchs: Endangered but not Protected*. Click [here](#) to watch.

**12/14/21:** *Green Giant Awards and Two Travel Programs:* The Persids Meteor Shower in Joshua Tree National Park by Tamara Smith and Gill Seigmond and A Canal Barge Holiday in England: Two Weeks on the Avon Ring by Shavon Peacock. Click [here](#) to watch!

**11/9/21:** Katie Register, Executive Director of Clean Virginia Waterways of Appalachian Voices, and Dan Taylor of BlueGreen Alliance who is a former member of the West Virginia Chapter. We cannot wait to see their excellence shine through on the Executive Committee.

To access all of our previous programs, visit our Achieve section [here](#).

#### FOJG Grant Supports Monarch Butterfly Garden in Powhatan County



Students of Powhatan High School come together to create a safe space for Monarch butterflies at Flat Rock Elementary School. Photo courtesy of Virginians for Conservation and Community Rights.

Virginians for Conservation and Community Rights (VCCR) is offering service hours to Powhatan High School students who are interested in creating a Monarch Butterfly Garden at the Flat Rock Elementary School. The elementary school is within walking distance to the high school and is a perfect opportunity for the teachers and students at both schools to get involved.

Gardening for the monarchs has become an increasingly popular and sophisticated activity, due to the growing concern of decreasing pollinator populations.

Over the summer, the high school students, the Powhatan Pollinator Protectors (P3's) began the year-long project. They have killed the grass and cleared a 24' x 8' section at Flat Rock Elementary, filled in organic topsoil donated by Yard Works, and planted 20 daylilies bulbs in October. Currently, they are studying the life cycle of the Monarch and planning for their next spring steps.

VCCR, formerly VA Network for Democracy and Environmental Rights (VNDER), would like to thank the Sierra Club for their generous grant. The funding will support the planting of milkweed, which is a primary source of food for Monarch caterpillars and butterflies. If you would like to assist with the project, feel free to contact VCCR at [VCCR.info@gmail.com](mailto:VCCR.info@gmail.com).

#### 2022 FOJG Executive Committee Update

It's that time of the year when we honor our former Executive Committee members and welcome new Executive Committee members. This year we sincerely bid farewell to three people who have served passionately and welcome three fresh faces. Those who have earned our gratitude are **Steve Carter-Lovejoy**, **Bruce Tarr**, and **Steve Yarus**.

**Steve Carter-Lovejoy** served his four years on the Executive Committee but will continue as Water Issue Chair for the chapter.

**Bruce Tarr** served countless years in three separate spans of his time on the Executive Committee.

**Steve Yarus** served four years on the Executive Committee and remains our Transportation Chair.

We now excitedly welcome **Sheri Shannon** of Southside Release, **Jessica Sims** of Appalachian Voices, and **Dan Taylor** of BlueGreen Alliance who is a former member of the West Virginia Chapter. We cannot wait to see their excellence shine through on the Executive Committee.

#### Joe's Book Nook



This February FOJG Executive Committee Chair, Joe Brancoli, recommends *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

You may be reading this newsletter on February 2nd, 2022. If this is the case, then you are experiencing the one-hundredth anniversary of the funniest, smartest, most demanding, depraved, and beautiful novel ever written on Earth or in any universe, *Ulysses* by James Joyce.

From February 2nd, 2022, any author must accept that their best work can only take second place to the greatest novel ever written. I am unworthy to provide a synopsis; please embrace its 622 pages on paper, or on Audiblebook (26 discs unabridged, 8 discs for mp3s). It's probably on the internet too.

You might ask, "Joe, what is environmental about *Ulysses*?" Nothing, except that the whole world and everything in it is in this book! Happy reading!

#### Restoration National Sierra Club COVID-19 Response



The National Sierra Club Executive Director Mike Brune, Chief Operations Officer, Jen Trahan, and Ramon J. Cruz, President, as of August 6th, 2021, indicated that outings, meetings, and some events have resumed. All require a safety plan, written by the organizers, to be approved by the Virginia Chapter and National Sierra Club. In addition, all participants at any indoor event MUST be masked, regardless of vaccination status. These guidelines are extended through **February 28th, 2022**.

#### Get Featured in the Newsletter

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 [veronicahayes@gmail.com](mailto:veronicahayes@gmail.com) with the subject "FOJG Newsletter" for a chance to be featured in the upcoming newsletter. Please email pictures, a blurb, and important information such as your name, the date, and the location by the 22nd of the month.

#### 2022 Executive Committee Contacts

**Joe Brancoli**, FOJG Executive Committee Chair/Leadership  
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**Steve Carter-Lovejoy**, FOJG "Skip The Plastics" Committee Chair: [scarterlovejoy53@msn.com](mailto:scarterlovejoy53@msn.com)

**Carlie Greenberg-Ribley**, FOJG Executive Committee Member: [carllegr@gmail.com](mailto:carllegr@gmail.com)

**Shavon Peacock**, FOJG Secretary, Membership Engagement Chair, & Outings Leader: [shavonandrew@verizon.net](mailto:shavonandrew@verizon.net)

**Lee Williams**, FOJG Advocacy Chair: [lee.sierraclub.greennewdealva@gmail.com](mailto:lee.sierraclub.greennewdealva@gmail.com)

**Aileen Rivera**, FOJG Executive Committee Member: [jgmouids@aol.com](mailto:jgmouids@aol.com)

**Sheri Shannon**, FOJG Executive Committee Member: [sheri@southsiderelief.org](mailto:sheri@southsiderelief.org)

**Jessica Sims**, FOJG Executive Committee Member: [jessicaleesims@gmail.com](mailto:jessicaleesims@gmail.com)

**Dan Taylor**, FOJG Executive Committee Member: [dtaylor@bluegreenalliance.net](mailto:dtaylor@bluegreenalliance.net)

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

