

2008-2009
ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM JRA

The Start of a James River Renaissance

We typically measure the health of the James River's ecosystem by the number of nesting pairs of bald eagles, a healthy population of brook trout, or the restoration of oyster beds. Another important measurement of the river's improving health is the return of people to the river.

This year the James River has been the subject of more positive media attention than most of us can remember. Up and down the length of the James people are being drawn to the river for recreational opportunities, as a venue for events, or simply because they are looking for a way to reconnect with nature close to their home.

At JRA we welcome this renewed focus on America's Founding River because it means that more Virginians now realize that the health of the river is in their hands.

Others are also noticing JRA's commitment to restoring the James to full health. This fall the Royal Bank of Canada awarded a two-year Blue Water Project Leadership Grant to JRA in support of its Watershed Restoration efforts. Thirty-one recipients were selected out of 159 applicants from around the world. Aside from cross-border projects, JRA was one of only two U.S. conservation organizations chosen to receive the award.

We share this honor with our members and supporters whose dedication has made it possible for JRA to maintain its focus and continue its programs during these difficult financial times.

As you will see in this report, the James River renaissance includes a range of JRA influenced programs, from sturgeon restoration to stormwater regulation, new programs, new partnerships throughout the watershed, and new ways to help people enjoy and protect the James River for future generations.

Wilson Enochs
Chairman

Bill Street
Executive Director

RIVER ADVOCACY

For everyone who is concerned about the health and future of the James River, JRA provides a strong voice for the James River. In this role, JRA has focused its efforts this year on two key policy issues to address the primary sources of polluted runoff to the river: agricultural operations and stormwater pollution.

Agricultural Funding – Funding to help farmers implement conservation practices to reduce pollution from farm fields was once again JRA’s top priority in the Virginia General Assembly. Over the past two years, JRA has worked through a partnership of five conservation groups and five farming groups to secure funding in the state budget for the Virginia Agriculture Cost Share Program. In spite of the most difficult budget climate in many decades, JRA and its partners were able to maintain level funding of \$20 million for the program. While still short of the full funding needed, this funding will help continue key practices that improve the health of local streams and the James River.

Stormwater Regulations – JRA spearheaded a consortium of conservation groups to advocate for stronger protections for river and stream health as Virginia updates its stormwater regulations for new development. As a result of JRA’s work, Virginia has proposed one of the most advanced stormwater programs in the country incorporating the latest science and practices. When adopted, these regulations will provide a structure to allow Virginia to continue to grow and still have healthy waterways.



Looking at our watershed in a whole new way with JRA.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM

W.E.B.S.

Watershed Education by Students (W.E.B.S.), a program developed by JRA and Virginia Commonwealth University, connected high school students with middle school students in peer-led outdoor learning experiences. Twenty-five students from Richmond's Open High School presented outdoor, natural science-based activities for all 160 sixth grade students at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School. Activities included in-class presentations, watershed lessons, map interpretation, food chain study, chemical water testing, stream velocity experiments and macroinvertebrate collection and identification.

Education Partnerships

JRA and Maymont launched a new week-long summer day camp program called Wild About Richmond that featured outdoor adventure and learning experiences that connected them to the James River. Twenty-three campers between the ages of 10 and 13 experienced activities around Richmond such as canoeing on the James, tours of Pump House Park, tree climbing, fishing, canal boat trips, trolley rides and hikes.

More than 172 children attending the Children's Museum of Richmond and Riverside Outfitters summer camps experienced a visit from our education staff and reptile ambassadors, who shared the importance of protecting the health of the James River. Through these sessions children learned about watersheds and the creatures that depend on the river for survival.

P.E.E.P.

The innovative *Nature & Child Reunion* program was officially renamed Presquile Environmental Education Program or P.E.E.P., to better reflect its purpose. The program continued to provide hands-on, educational camping trips for urban youth groups including Girl Scout troops and local Boys & Girls Clubs. Steps have been made to improve facilities on Presquile National Wildlife Refuge so that future groups can keep having positive outdoor experiences, despite the weather.

Students paddle through history on the new Captain John Smith Water Trail.



EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAM

Captain John Smith Water Trail

In a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service, JRA began developing an interpretative education and stewardship program for the Captain John Smith Water Trail, part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network. The Education & Outreach staff provided training, materials and subsidy funds to three guide and outfitter services who have reached the public with at least 14 affordable trips on the water trail. Through trips conducted by JRA partners, Chesapeake Experience, Riverside Outfitters, and Captain Mike Ostrander's Discover the James, JRA has provided water trail experiences to more than fifty people.

JRA Awards First Certificates for Full James River Rundown

Andy Lee, Earl Swift and Ryan Williamson received the first certificates in JRA's new recognition program for paddling the entire 340-mile length of the James River. Modeled after the Appalachian Trail's "2000-Miler" recognition program, the Full James River Rundown consists of paddling the James from its headwaters at Iron Gate to Fort Monroe at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. There is no time limit and paddlers can chart their progress on JRA's Run-Off Run-Down map on the website.

New JRA Website is Launched

JRA launched the initial phase of its newly revamped website in June. The new site is designed to be more user-friendly and to provide information to help individuals of all ages enjoy the river and learn ways in which they can help protect the James. An evolving and ongoing project, the website will continue to be updated regularly and new interactive features will be added.

THE RIVERKEEPER® PROGRAM



While patrolling a tributary, David Sligh investigates an oil slick on the Upper James.

Photo courtesy of Mason Basten

UPPER JAMES RIVERKEEPER – David Sligh

River Monitoring

In his first year, the Upper James Riverkeeper has served as an ambassador for the river, meeting people at boat landings, local events and through speaking engagements. His vehicle with the JRA logo and kayak on the roof rack became a familiar site in the Upper James. To date, he has covered all but 26 miles of the mainstem of the river above the falls in Richmond. In addition, as part of his monitoring duties the Upper James Riverkeeper has investigated 29 pollution violations. All but four were successfully resolved and those involve long-term problems that require additional investigation and evidence gathering.

Fish Kill Task Force

Sick and diseased fish continued to be reported on waterways in the Upper James during spring 2009. As a member of the Virginia Fish Kill Task Force, the Upper James Riverkeeper conducted stream investigations to identify problems and report findings to agency partners. To enlist the support of river users, he created and posted signs at marinas and outfitters that showed examples of what to look for and encouraged people to report any sightings. He continues to advocate for additional funding to enable further scientific work to identify and isolate the causes.

Poultry Litter Regulations

Excess nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural use poses one of the greatest threats to the health of the Upper James and each year more than 350,000 tons of poultry waste is transported from production sites to landowners in the region. These activities are largely unregulated. In an effort to develop new regulations to require proper handling and storage of this high nitrogen fertilizer, the Upper James Riverkeeper served on the Technical Advisory Committee, presented comments on draft regulations, attended public hearings and submitted op-ed pieces to local newspapers.

LOWER JAMES RIVERKEEPER – Chuck Frederickson

Sturgeon Restoration

After more than three years of habitat study and active tracking of Atlantic sturgeon in the James River, JRA and its partners in Atlantic sturgeon restoration are preparing to construct two artificial spawning reefs in the river near Hopewell and Presquile National Wildlife Refuge. In September, a huge 300-plus pound female measuring 8 feet in length was netted and tagged in the proposed reef area. Construction on the reefs is scheduled to begin in January 2010. This marks the first project of its kind on the Atlantic coast.

River Monitoring

During January, the Lower James Riverkeeper monitored the clean-up at the site of a sinking barge carrying approximately 1,200 tons of ammonium sulfate fertilizer. This accident introduced approximately 500,000 pounds of nitrogen into the river. Fortunately, the freezing temperatures prevented any immediate problems from this spill. The site continues to be monitored for fish kills, algal growth and ammonia levels. This was one of 24 violations on the Lower James that were reported and successfully acted upon.

Pollution Control and Public Education

To put more eyes on the river, more than 50 “MudBusters” were trained to assist in monitoring erosion and sediment control at construction sites. To promote awareness, the Lower James Riverkeeper made 13 presentations on the state of the James to local groups. In support of new stormwater regulations, the Riverkeeper provided on-the-water insight for revision of the regulations and served on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Construction Stormwater General Permit and also serves on the Hopewell Community Industrial Panel.

*Chuck Frederickson
with an Atlantic
sturgeon from the
James River.*



WATERSHED RESTORATION PROGRAMS

Codes and Ordinances

Building a Cleaner James is JRA's ongoing program of code and ordinance review to improve environmental protection practices. For its work, JRA received the **2008 Green Building Leadership Award** from the James River chapter of the U.S. Green Building Leadership Council.

Under this program, JRA continues to work with stakeholders in the counties of Powhatan, Goochland and Fluvanna. Kevin Pennock, a graduate student from the Virginia Commonwealth University Master of Urban and Regional Planning program worked with JRA to study the Crater Planning District Commission (PDC) region of Virginia. The result was the *Crater Planning District Watershed Protection Plan*, which analyzed the level of environmentally friendly development practices allowed in local codes and ordinances. From this, a survey was conducted among engineers, architects, developers, and other individuals in the development community to assess the level of acceptance and understanding of low impact development (LID) practices in the region that is being impacted by the expansion of Fort Lee.

JRA has also developed a manual to assist localities with revising local codes and ordinances to address Better Site Design practices that may not currently be allowed by a local government. These practices go hand in hand with low impact development that reduces impervious surfaces.

Extreme Stream Makeover

After an extensive year of planning, the *Extreme Stream Makeover II of Horsepen Branch* in Henrico County, culminated in a week-long event at seven sites. Over a span of five days more than 700 local volunteers (representing four garden clubs, 25 businesses, 8 schools, 3 local government agencies, a church and three other nonprofit organizations) planted 2,500 trees, shrubs and flowers; restored 1.8 linear miles of streamside buffer; removed trash from one mile of stream bank; installed five rain gardens and bioretention areas, and 972 square feet of permeable pavers. Fifty people were equipped to install rain barrels at their homes.

Plans were made for *ESM III* of the Blackwater Creek watershed in the Lynchburg area to be held in October 2009. This represents JRA's first major watershed restoration project in the Upper James.

Best Management Practices for Stormwater Regulations

In partnership with the Center for Watershed Protection, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, and Chesapeake Stormwater Network, JRA worked with local governments and engineers to help with the transition to the soon-to-be revised Virginia stormwater management regulations. JRA assisted with a multi-jurisdiction survey that evaluated existing water quality and quantity protection practices for design and pollutant-removal effectiveness. The findings of the survey and how they relate to the proposed revised stormwater regulations were presented to multiple jurisdictions in the James River watershed at a workshop held in June 2009.

Earth Day and James River Regional Cleanup

JRA celebrated Earth Day 2009 with two cleanups along the James River in downtown Richmond. The first cleanup took place at Great Shiplock Park, and the second at Belle Isle. Thirty-six bags of trash and 42 bags of recycling were removed by more than 80 volunteers. During the James River Regional Cleanup in June, JRA, Friends of the James River Park and more than 150 volunteers, on foot and in kayaks and canoes, came together at the Reedy Creek site of the James River Park System to remove trash from in and around the river. Working in partnership with the James River Advisory Council, 1,500 pounds of trash, recycling 20 bags of aluminum, 60 bags of glass and plastic and 14 bags of cardboard and paper were removed from the area.

Ducking Stool Point

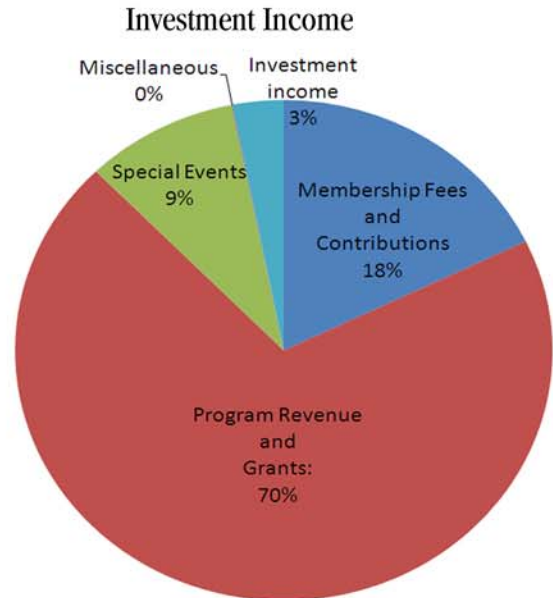
JRA oversaw the installation of a 1,825 linear foot stone berm at Ducking Stool Point in Charles City County, Virginia. The purpose of the restoration effort was to protect more than 500 acres of tidal freshwater marsh, located at the mouth of Herring Creek, a tributary to the James River. Stabilizing the shoreline will help protect habitat for anadromous fish, protect the recreational fishery in Herring Creek, and protect feeding sites for bald eagles and other important wildlife that nest and roost at the nearby James River National Wildlife Refuge. In the spring, volunteers planted 1,000 buttonbush, black willow seedlings and bald cypress trees along and behind the newly constructed berm to further stabilize the marsh.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT

OPERATING REVENUE

Membership Fees and Contributions	\$ 267,814
Program Revenue and Grants:	\$ 1,049,076
Special Events	\$ 138,216
Miscellaneous	\$ 985
Investment income	\$ 45,790

Total Operating Revenue **\$1,501,881**



Financial statement compiled by Gregory and Associates, PLLC of Petersburg, VA

The James River Association meets the Better Business Bureau's Standards for Charity Accountability.

A copy of the latest financial report and registration filed by this organization may be obtained by contacting the James River Association, 9 South 12 Street, 4th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219 or (804) 788-8811 or by contacting the Virginia State Division of Consumer Affairs, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P. O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218. Registration does not imply endorsement.

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services	
Education & Outreach	\$ 109,069
Watershed Restoration	\$ 472,356
James Riverkeeper	\$ 279,728
River Advocacy	\$ 95,364
Management and General	\$ 198,684
Fund Raising	\$ 137,975

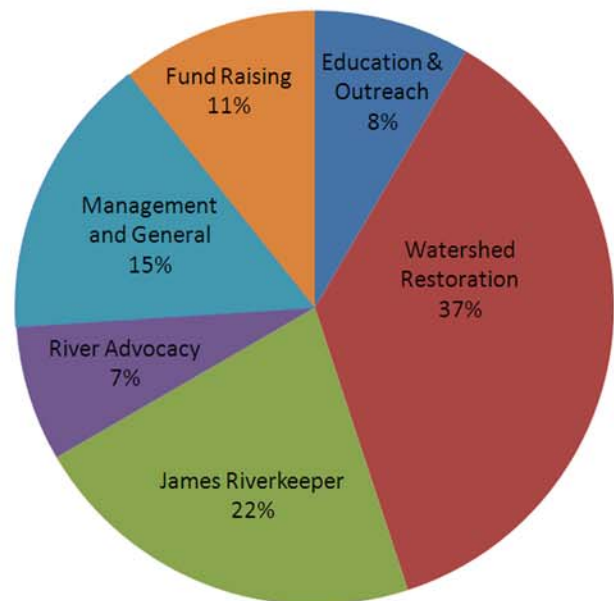
Total Operating Expenses **\$ 1,293,176**

NET SURPLUS (SHORTFALL) **\$ 208,705**
FROM OPERATIONS

NET CHANGE IN ENDOWMENT **\$ (65,865)**

NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR **\$ 1,455,187**

NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR **\$ 1,598,027**



CONTRIBUTORS

JRA is truly grateful for the generous support from all of its members and contributors. Each and every gift is invaluable to helping us fulfill our mission. Because space limitations prevent us from listing all of the gifts received this year, we have listed below those who have made special contributions to our efforts from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

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