



2023
ANNUAL
IMPACT
REPORT



CEO'S STATEMENT

2023 could very well be an inflection point for JRA and our work on the James River. The 2023 State of the James report shows that improvement in the health of the James River has stalled, but we are seeing signs that the river may be poised to make more substantial gains in the future.

Foremost among these signs is the that over more than half of the \$3.5 billion that Virginia has dedicated over the past 20 years to clean water programs over the last 20 years has been appropriated in just the last four years. JRA has been working for these types of investments for decades and as these funds are put on the ground through wastewater treatment upgrades, agricultural practices and stormwater controls, they will start showing results in pollution reductions, water quality improvements and ultimately a healthier James River for fish and wildlife as well as people.

JRA-led consortiums on forested riparian buffers and living shorelines have also caused a positive change in the implementation of these critical practices.

American shad continue to be the most alarming indicator in the State of the James and represent challenges facing all of our iconic migratory fish species. However, at JRA's urging, this year Virginia crafted a recovery plan for American shad in the James, and with swift action on this plan we are hopeful that the American shad population will also see progress.

2023 also marked our first river center opening with the Upper James River Center in Amherst County across the river from downtown Lynchburg. This new facility and the two that follow in Richmond and Williamsburg more to come will enhance our environmental education as well as serve as gateways to the James River for the entire community. With these new facilities, we believe that we will also see an increase for JRA in community engagement and stewardship of the James River.

Thank you for your generous support that has gotten us to this point. You have helped set a new trajectory for JRA and the James River and we look forward to seeing the results in the coming years.



BILL STREET,
JRA PRESIDENT & CEO



STATE OF 2023
THE JAMES



KEY CONCLUSIONS

The overall grade of the State of the James has improved to a B with a score of 66% from its failing health decades ago. Although the pace of progress has slowed, a grade-A James River is possible if we keep up our collective efforts and continue to address key issues together.

-Underwater grasses expanded to their highest total on record and tidal water quality also returned to its recent high. Both of these indicators are largely influenced by pollution from upstream sources, so their collective improvement signifies broader progress.



-The James River's American shad population remains at zero. To save this iconic species and other migratory fish in the James, Virginia must take swift action to address the threats identified in the American shad recovery plan provided to the General Assembly in November 2023.

-Strong investments by Virginia in clean water programs for wastewater, agriculture and urban stormwater has yielded direct improvements in pollution controls and helped to improve the overall health of the river. The more we invest in the river, the more improvement we see in the river's health.

-Climate change is making future progress for the State of the James more difficult. We all must do our part to safeguard the James River for future generations.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

AWARENESS

JRA continued gathering stories for their storytelling project, Stories by the James, and partnered with VPM News to broadcast weekly radio stories. The community collaboration harnesses the magic of river stories through the lens of diverse storytellers within the James River watershed. Stories by the James 22 stories of profound river connections and dives into 36 essays, artwork, and poems submitted by community members across the James.

APPRECIATION

JRA Educators provided hands-on experiential learning to 21 school districts engaging a record 19,261 students across the watershed. From paddle programs and field experiences, students had opportunities to connect directly with their James River from the headwaters to the mouth. Also, the James River Leadership Expedition launched its 13th year with a cohort of 32 high school students who completed a week of paddling and camping on the James during the summer along with quarterly sessions to complete their capstone community service projects during the school year.

ACTION

2023 was another year full of actions by the JRA Restoration Team to restore and protect the ecosystem of the James, and included the restoration of riparian buffers, storm water management, and living shorelines. Through the Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium, JRA engaged over 579 partners and volunteers in riparian buffer events and workshops and planted 31,198 trees 90 acres of newly restored riparian forest buffers and 1,011 acres of existing buffers! JRA also worked with 152 partners through our Living Shoreline Collaborative to create tidal marshes control shoreline erosions while also absorbing flood waters and pollutants and acting as a habitat for native animals. JRA expanded our River Hero Homes program by 25%, empowering households to take action to protect the state of the river and local ecology.

ADVOCACY

In 2023, JRA's Advocacy team played an integral role in the Commonwealth's adoption of a bipartisan budget that carried a record \$728 Million in water quality, resilience, and land conservation funding. In addition, Advocacy engaged with stakeholders, legislators, and the Governor's Administration to push forward conservation-minded priorities for the proposed 2024 budget including funding for Richmond's combined sewer overflow controls, freshwater mussel restoration at Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery, and critical agricultural best management practices.

63

MEDIA OUTLETS PUBLISHED
STORIES ABOUT JRA

175,000

WEBSITE VISITORS

30 Million

ESTIMATED
IMPRESSIONS

19,261

STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN JRA
PROGRAMMING IN THE '22-'23
SCHOOL YEAR

21

SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATED
IN JRA PROGRAMMING

90

ACRES OF RIPARIAN BUFFERS
RESTORED IN 2023

1,101

ACRES OF RIPARIAN BUFFERS
MAINTAINED

31,198

TREES PLANTED

336

VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED

1,445

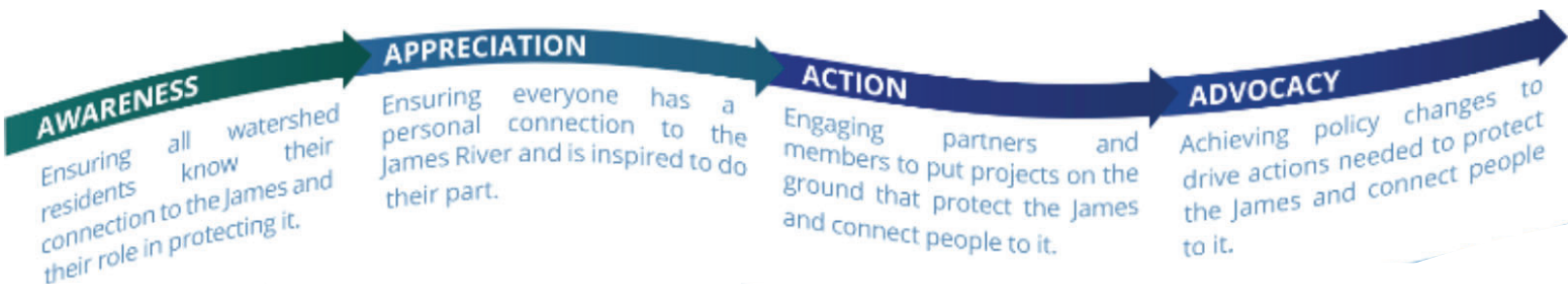
FEET OF LIVING
SHORELINE INSTALLED

3,358

PLANTS INSTALLED ON
LIVING SHORELINES

\$728 Million

SECURED IN CLEAN
WATER FUNDING AT THE
VA GENERAL ASSEMBLY



FY 2023 ANNUAL ACTIVITY MAP

The Upper & Middle James Riparian Consortium, convened by JRA, hosted the 4th Annual James River Buffer Summit in October 2022 at Wildrock in Crozet. Over 60 participants had the opportunity to engage with presenters and each other, attend outdoor workshops, listen to music by Holy River and enjoy wild-crafted beverages made with riparian plants.

During 2023, volunteers collected 476 bacteria samples from 38 sites across the James River watershed, and included 15 rounds of weekly samples posted on the James River Watch website to help the public understand river conditions. Eighteen stations had exceptional results - Twelve stations had a 100% pass rate, while another six had only one test fail to meet the limits for safe recreation.

In September 2022, JRA began a partnership with Henrico County Public Schools to provide every 4th grader student with an environmental education trip to JRA's James River Ecology School. Over 3,700 students participated in 90 field experiences.

JRA worked with volunteers to plant street trees in neighborhoods around Richmond Public Library branches as part of our Greening Richmond Public Libraries project. Expanding tree canopy in urban areas of the James River watershed is a strategy to treat rainwater and reduce stormwater runoff. Tree canopy also helps to keep urban neighborhoods cool, improves local air quality, and provides habitat for wildlife.

Through a partnership with Hampton Public Schools and the National Park Foundation Junior Ranger Angler Program, JRA's Lower James Education Team provided 3 weeks of summer camp programming with 60 youth. The program introduced youth to recreational fishing and encouraged families to enjoy the national park system. At the end of camp students earned their official Junior Ranger Angler badges.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the Upper James River Education Team provided meaningful watershed educational experiences to every 7th grade student in Bedford County Public Schools.

JRA is assisting the City of Petersburg with public outreach to create the Petersburg Citywide Drainage Study. Through this outreach, we are documenting drainage issues reported by residents. Findings of the study will be used by Petersburg's Stormwater Management Program to improve its storm sewer system.

JRA'S LOWER JAMES EDUCATION MANAGER LEADING STUDENTS ON A PADDLE



TREE SHELTER MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP AT THE JAMES RIVER BUFFER SUMMIT



-  JRA FACILITIES
-  RIVER WATCH SITES (37)
-  LIVING SHORELINES (3)
-  BUFFER MAINTENANCE SITES (91)
-  # SCHOOLS ENGAGED (197)
-  STORMWATER PROJECTS (5)
-  RIPARIAN BUFFERS (45)
-  RIVER HERO HOMES (297)
-  JRA VESSELS

THE FUTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ON THE JAMES

JRA seeks to ensure that everyone has a personal connection to the James and is continuously inspired to maintain its health and ensure a bright future for the James. Our new River Education Centers will provide present and upcoming generations with opportunities to learn, engage, and love the river, which is guaranteed to have lasting ripples into the future.

FLOATING CLASSROOM - THE LONGVIEW

The floating classroom, named the Longview, is a Coast Guard certified vessel that provides a unique on-the-river teaching platform. This vessel adds to our existing floating classroom, The Spirit of the James, and allows JRA to continue to grow its environmental education program to meet the different needs of area students and school systems. The Longview offered the Anne Worrel Education Programs, which began in Spring of 2022.



UPPER JAMES RIVER CENTER (LYNCHBURG)

JRA celebrated a huge milestone with the grand opening of our Upper James River Center in November of 2023. Located at Riveredge Park across from downtown Lynchburg, this new river access point provides a dock for JRA's batteau and a launch for paddle craft. The River Center will provide more students in the area with opportunities to engage and learn about the river and ultimately help to change perceptions of the river in the greater Lynchburg community.



JAMES A. BUZZARD RIVER EDUCATION CENTER (RICHMOND)

JRA broke ground on our new cutting-edge River Education Center in downtown Richmond in May of 2023. This River Education Center will advance Richmond's riverfront revitalization plans, attract new visitors to the river, and create a central high-profile opportunity to build appreciation for the river. The River Education Center will feature an accessible experiential ramp with educational and interpretive signs and 'riverquarium' including species from the James. Other features to the James A. Buzzard River Education Center will include a green roof and a dock granting direct access to the river which will include a floating paddle craft launch for canoes and kayaks. The new River Education Center is named after former JRA Board Chairman, James A. Buzzard.



LOWER JAMES RIVER CENTER (WILLIAMSBURG)

Through a partnership with the National Park Service, JRA established our Lower River Center on the Colonial Parkway across from Jamestown Island. JRA will begin working with design firm, 3North, in 2024 to create a master plan for the facility which will include the addition of a dock at the River Center. These building improvements will greatly enhance our school and public education programs by providing additional outdoor learning spaces, as well as complement the Historic Triangle's history and cultural attractions.



Learn more about the progress of JRA's new River Education Centers at jameschanger.org

FY'23

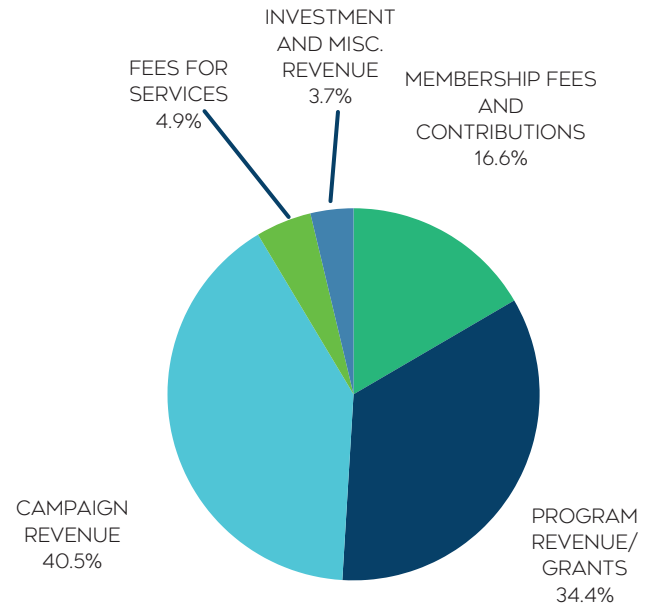
SUMMARY OF FINANCIALS

JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

REVENUE

Membership Fees and Contributions	\$1,265,683
Program Revenue & Grants	\$2,623,169
Campaign Revenue	\$3,087,079
Fees For Services	\$370,169
Investment and Misc. Revenue	\$284,764
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 7,630,864

INCOME

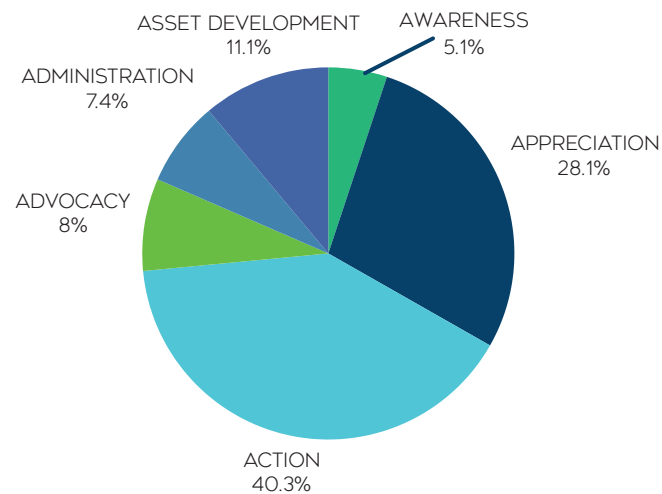


EXPENSES

Program Activities	
Awareness	\$271,480
Appreciation	\$1,497,224
Action	\$2,142,784
Advocacy	\$426,924
Subtotal Program Expenses	\$4,338,412
Administration	\$392,977
Asset Development	\$590,759
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 5,322,148

Change in Net Assets	\$2,308,716
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year	\$10,263,934

NET ASSETS AT THE END OF THE YEAR \$12,572,650



EXPENSES

RICHMOND

16 S. 17th Street, Suite 100
Richmond, VA 23219

LYNCHBURG

150 Rocky Hill Road
Madison Heights, VA 24572

SCOTTSVILLE

531 Valley Street
Scottsville, VA 24590

WILLIAMSBURG

1335 Colonial Parkway
Williamsburg, VA 23185

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