

# Parks & Recreation



## Annual Report FY 2019

### James City County

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[jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation](http://jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation)



# Parks & Recreation

James City County Parks & Recreation welcomed more than 4.6 million visitors last year, a 59% increase over the last five years. From participation in our programs to getting fit in our centers to playing in our parks, we strived to provide learning, healthy, fun and fitness opportunities for all ages and abilities.

Our mission is to work in partnership with citizens to ensure responsive programs, facilities and open space which promote personal growth, social development and healthy lifestyles. This can only be accomplished with the support of our residents, the entire County staff and the many volunteer organizations and individuals who support us.

Please spend a few minutes reading this annual report which details many of our community accomplishments over the past fiscal year (FY), which spanned July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

A special thank you to the James City County Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission and our professional and caring staffs in Parks & Recreation and General Services who work hard every day to provide outstanding customer service, clean and attractive parks and facilities and cost effective programs and services to our community.

John H. Carnifax Jr., CPRE, Director, James City County Parks & Recreation

## By The Numbers

### Customer Satisfaction Rate

94% (voted excellent/good, 2018)

### Direct Financial Recovery Rate

62.26%

### #Households Receiving Discount Assistance

147

### Volunteers/Hours

3,784 Volunteers

76,482 Hours

### Official Partners

36

### Partnership Participants

270,880

### Programs Offered

3,387

### Civic Engagement

34 events attended (neighborhood meetings, public presentations & community outreach)

### Parks & Recreation Attendance

4,686,381

Programs: 234,900

Parks: 3,997,042

Centers: 431,581

Legacy Hall: 22,858

### Parks

17

### Miles of Trails

48.56

### #Acres/Parks & Facilities

1,592

## Exceptional Customer Service

Almost 3,400 **customer-driven programs** serving some 235,000 citizens and visitors were offered, with a 95%

program make rate and high customer satisfaction. Forty new programs were implemented - each diverse, cutting-edge and responsive to community needs. New features included the State Park Passport Series, 3 v 3 World Cup Soccer Tournament (left), Half Century Senior Games and Inclusion's Ooey Gooey Fun



Sensory Play series.

Investing in quality family time and making connections with the community, over 6,400 citizens and visitors participated in Parks & Recreation **special events** such as the annual Live Well Expo, Breakfast with Santa, Family Fun Fest (right), the Park to Park Bike Tour, the Capital Color Ride and a variety of neighborhood events.



Promoting the importance of PLAY, **Project Five**

**FortySeven** offered fun and free recreational activities to residents, visitors and neighboring localities on June 21—the longest day of 2019. Nearly 300 participated in 20 structured recreational activities from 5:47 a.m. to sunset, while others participated in self-directed activities in our many parks and facilities. Parks and facilities opened early and stayed open late



for a variety of new and favorite program offerings such as sunrise yoga, paddling, nature walks, pool battleship (upper left), four-square tournament and a family Zumba party!

Participation in **The Lounge** programming was up 25% over last year with more than 9,000 adults ages 55 and older taking part in daily and monthly activities and an overnight excursion. The Lounge, located in the James City County Recreation Center, offers social, educational and fitness outings and activities.



## James City County 2035 Strategic Plan Goals

- Exceptional Public Services
- Modern Infrastructure, Facilities and Technology Systems
- Expanding and Diversifying Local Economy
- Fiscally Efficient Government
- Protected Community Character and an Enhanced Built Environment
- High Quality Education
- Sustainable Long-Term Water Supply

For more information, visit <http://www.jamescitycountyva.gov/2708/Strategic-Plan>

### OUR MISSION

We work in partnership with citizens to ensure responsive programs, facilities and open space which promote personal growth, social development and healthy lifestyles.

### VISIT US ONLINE

[jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation](http://jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation);  
find us on Facebook,  
Twitter and YouTube.

### WRITE US

[parks.rec@jamescitycountyva.gov](mailto:parks.rec@jamescitycountyva.gov)

*The Annual Report is produced by James City County Parks & Recreation Communications. For more information, please contact: [veda.mcmullen@jamescitycountyva.gov](mailto:veda.mcmullen@jamescitycountyva.gov), 757-259-5415 or [parks.rec@jamescitycountyva.gov](mailto:parks.rec@jamescitycountyva.gov).*

## Exceptional Customer Service



More than 750 **aquatic** programs, classes and co-sponsored events were offered in FY19, reaching 43,686 customers to promote swimming proficiently and fun fitness in the pool.

**Health & Wellness** offered 875 programs reaching over 35,000 participants, a 16% increase in participation through activities such as TRX Circuit, Sunrise Cycle, Align & Flow Yoga, Chair Fitness, Barre Express, Yoga for Stress Relief, Youth Intro to Weights & Functional Training Camp and Busy Bodies Youth Fitness Fun Camp.

### Continue to expand services to lower income neighborhoods:

Provided **neighborhood outreach partnerships and free programs** in the Grove, Lafayette Square/Village Apartment and Forest Glen I and II neighborhoods. Over 3,000 participated in activities such as RECN' It Out Spring Break and Summer camps, Learn to Swim, Neighborhood Block Party, Neighborhood Winter Carnival, Cookies and Cocoa with Santa, the Easter Egg Extravaganza and STEAM Saturdays, resulting in a 62% increase in total participation over the same period last year.

In collaboration with Bacon Street Youth and Family Services, department staff served on the **Healthy Williamsburg Youth Collaborative team**, a consortium of local non-profits and neighborhood stakeholders who work to address obesity prevention in local youth. Prevention based programming such as Strengthening Families and the Jump Into Summer camp were offered to more than 30 at-risk teens in the Burnt Ordinary, Lafayette Square/Village and Grove neighborhoods.

Assisted local non-profit organizations and churches in providing **summer meals and self-directed recreation** activities to 56 youth living in the Longhill Grove and Powhatan Apartments neighborhoods as well as those precariously housed in local motels.

Completed 42 new **ADA participant assessments/ reassessments**, providing year-round accommodations for successful inclusion in recreational programs, facilities and services to over 400 participants with special needs.

## James City County Parks & Recreation

is comprised of four divisions:

### Administration

Oversees discount assistance and budget initiatives, volunteerism, communications, marketing, information technology and sponsorships.

### Parks

James City County's outdoor community features 17 parks encompassing more than 1,500 acres of park land and natural settings boasting historic, scenic and recreational sites.

### Recreation Centers

James City County's two recreation centers offer year round opportunities to stay fit and achieve overall health and wellness goals.

### Recreation Services

Almost 3,400 customer-driven programs were offered providing opportunities for exercise and recreation, social interaction and learning, and growth and relaxation, all while maintaining a 95% program make rate and high customer satisfaction.

### We're Here to Help:

Administration: 757-259-5410

Parks: 757-259-5360

Recreation Centers: 757-259-4200

Recreation Services: 757-259-5351

Sponsorships: 757-259-5412

Volunteer/Advertising:

757-259-5403

Activity Hotline: 757-259-3232

REC Connect Info Line:

757-259-3170

[jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation](http://jamescitycountyva.gov/recreation)

## Exceptional Customer Service

To help save lives, a **free life vest loaner station** was acquired at Chickahominy Riverfront Park.



Boaters can stop by the Park's Guest Services Office on their way to the boat ramp to sign out lifejackets in the event they or their guests need one. Wes Batten, a volunteer from US Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 67, helped the park secure the jackets through the Seatow organization.

An **unfenced off-leash dog area** opened at Jamestown Beach Event Park in May, a trial initiative to assess its use and effectiveness. The opening followed the March code amendment by the James

City County Board of Supervisors to allow for the evaluation of designated areas in County parks. Citizen, participant and visitor surveys are being conducted to determine if the program should continue or if additional areas should be considered for the program.



The **mountain bike trail** at Upper County Park reopened in February for citizens and visitors to enjoy. The trail, which was previously located on private property, was redesigned and features lots of hills and turns on a natural surface along two miles of wooded area. The project was completed in partnership with the Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association.

A **primitive camping area** designed for youth groups was established at Upper County Park in response to citizen feedback received during the Parks & Recreation Master Plan Update process. Youth groups can rent the primitive camping areas from September to May annually.

## Modern Infrastructure, Facilities and Technology Systems

To continue to play a significant role in attracting tournament groups and boosting sports tourism for the region, replaced seven **synthetic turf fields** at the Warhill Sports Complex park and the Sanford B. Wanner Stadium. The original turf fields were nearly 11 years old and had reached the end of their useful life cycle. Synthetic turf was also added throughout the common areas between each of the fields and walkways creating a cleaner look throughout the park and more comfortable seating areas.



Work began on the upstairs expansion of the **James City County Recreation Center**. A design to incorporate the vacant Sentara Hospital space was created to include areas for a group fitness studio, personal training room, new stretching area, and the relocation of the strength training equipment. The plan was finalized, a contractor hired, and completion of the space is anticipated by spring 2020.

### Park & Facility improvements included:

- **Jamestown Beach Event Park:** a concrete pad (10' x 5') was installed to improve access to the once graveled ADA-accessible picnic area. A floating beach wheelchair was also added to aid guests who request water access accommodations during the summer season.



## Exceptional Customer Service

### Park & Facility improvements included:

■ **Little Creek Reservoir Park and Ironbound Park:** to meet playground safety standards and extend the life of the equipment, multiple pieces of equipment at these parks were replaced including one slide, four swings, two decks, one climber, one arch, two mats and new mulch.

■ **James City County Recreation Center:** a new display TV was installed at the Recreation Center where visitors can view a continuous rotation of the latest information on programs and events. QR codes appear on many ads so viewers can scan them and link directly to the appropriate webpage for more information. In addition, improvements were made to the Center parking lot to enhance visitor and staff safety including the upgrade of outdoor lights to provide more illumination at night and parking bay numbers were added to assist guests in locating their vehicles faster as well as make it easier when communicating with fire and police in an emergency.



## Expanding and Diversifying Local Economy

More than 1,600 participants took part in the first **Ironman Triathlon**, held in May at Chickahominy Riverfront Park. The entire park was closed for the event with overflow parking and shuttle service available from Jamestown Beach Event Park. The total economic impact of the event was estimated at \$1.2 million.



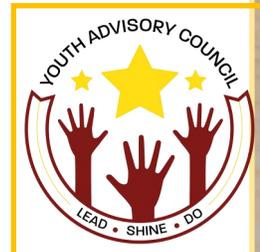
To help reduce the use of **fossil fuels** and decrease the workload of the County's Fleet Maintenance division, Park staff continues to replace gas-powered equipment with battery-powered equipment, such as handheld blowers and trimmers where appropriate. These lightweight, noise reducing equipment operate more efficiently and over time will be a cost-savings initiative.

## Fiscally Efficient Government

The RECN' It Out and other neighborhood outreach program costs were offset by over \$18,300 in **partnerships, sponsorships, grants, donations** and the **Seamless Summers meal subsidy**, which provided free lunch and snacks to youth.

Growing in job and leadership knowledge, skills and abilities, 26 teens participated in the **Teens Toward Success** program, volunteering nearly 2,700 hours in 10 parks and recreation program locations. As a result of exceptional performance in this job training program, a total of 36 teens have been hired over the years as County employees.

Actively involved and learning about government processes, leadership development and community service, an eight member **Youth Advisory Council** in grades 8-12, volunteered 75 service hours, participating in monthly meetings to learn about leadership development and to promote anti-bullying, child abuse prevention, citizen engagement and government processes.



## Protected Community Character and an Enhanced Built Environment

To maintain facilities and keep them viable in serving the needs of our community, a County-wide team lead by Parks & Recreation began the process of updating the **Shaping Our Shores Master Plan**. This plan, first adopted in 2009, guides the future development of three of the County's waterfront parks – the James City County Marina, Jamestown Beach Event Park and Chickahominy Riverfront Park. The public engagement portion of the plan was completed in FY19, and feedback received will be incorporated in the draft plan, and then reviewed by the James City County Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee, the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Once approved, a prioritized action plan will be developed and implemented based on need and available funding.



James City County, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the City of Newport News entered into a cooperative agreement in May to jointly operate **Diascund Reservoir Park** for a 25-year period, from 2019 to 2044. Responsibilities for the County include maintaining the entrance road and parking area, keeping the boating access site open to the public and establishing rules and regulations in cooperation with the City of Newport News.



Learning about the importance of conservation and preservation and gaining an appreciation for the outdoors, 489 youth participated in interactive **environmental educational** activities including water quality testing, water conservation, recycling/pollution control, animal ecosystems and preservation of natural resources. Youth participated in off-site fieldtrips to include Paradise Creek Nature Park, First Landing State Park, Three Lakes Park and Nature Center and the American Rover and Jamestown Discovery Boat Tours.

## Award Winning Staff & Certifications

Parks & Recreation received top service awards in two categories at the 63rd Annual Virginia Recreation & Park Society (VRPS) Conference, held in November 2018 in Henrico. In our population category of 50,001-100,000, the new **Capital Color Ride** earned top honors as the **Best New Special Event** and **The Historic Rivers Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists** were recognized with the **Distinguished Private Sector Service Award**. The Virginia Master Naturalists were chosen for their significant organizational service, successful special events and programs, and contributions toward park resources.



L-R: Gary Driscole, Chapter Board Member; Adrienne Frank, Chapter President; and Kyle Loving, County Park Operations Manager.

Their activities encompassed more than 2,500 volunteer program and event hours, including 410 hours of direct educational instruction. Recognized for its outstanding program elements of creativity, funding, promotion, execution, use of resources and satisfaction of community needs, the **Capital Color Ride** (right) featured families receiving different colors along the way as they biked up to 15 miles along the Virginia Capital Trail. The event promoted fitness and introduced (or reminded!) families of the recreational opportunities at one of their local parks. The event was sponsored by 15 local businesses and supported by community volunteers.



## Award Winning Staff & Certifications



Park Operations Manager Michelle Lightfoot, was named 2018 **Employee of the Year**. The award recognizes employees who consistently perform at an outstanding level throughout the year. Lightfoot was recognized for successfully completing a variety of new projects, especially the first season of operation of the new Splash Pad at the Chickahominy Riverfront Park pool. Sometimes working sunrise to sunset daily,

Lightfoot was also responsible for the opening of Upper County Park pool, the training of lifeguards for both pools, the reopening of the Upper County bike trail, the opening of the youth primitive camping site at Upper County as well as adding two new Adopt-A-Park groups who support County staff in the maintenance of our outdoor park facilities.

Aquatics Coordinator Mark Aker (right) was presented with three awards from the **American Red Cross** recognizing the Recreation Center's commitment to safety by participating in the Aquatic Examiners Program, being a 2018 Gold Level Learn to Swim Facility and for certifying over 200 new lifeguards in 2018.



Senior Program Coordinator /The Lounge Amy Fiedor (left) was honored by Williamsburg Landing and presented with the **Outstanding Service to Seniors** award for her service to the senior population in James City County. Fiedor oversees the wide variety of daily Lounge activities including local outings and multistate excursions.

Operations Managers Jerrod Hurr (left) and Shawn O'Keefe (right) and Program Coordinators, Sarah O'Reilly (center) and Greg Tarbox (not pictured) received national certification as **Certified Park and Recreation Professionals (CPRP)** from the National Recreation and Park Association. The crew join a select few statewide to complete certification which also supports the department's efforts to remain an accredited department.



## Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission 2019

The Commission serves as a liaison between the Director of Parks & Recreation and the Board of Supervisors, the County Administrator and the community on recreation and park matters. For more information including the Commission meeting schedule, email

joan.etchberger@jamescitycountyva.gov or call 757-259-5410.

Michael C. Hand.....757-345-6950  
 Linda Knight.....757-221-3312  
 Jay H. Lipscomb Jr.....757-566-3152  
 Kevin Radcliffe.....757-768-2563  
 Larry Walk Sr.....757-565-0699  
 Linda Wallace-Cody.....757-229-9332  
 Scott VanVoorhees.....757-869-1181



Above, 2018-19 Commissioners, l-r: Larry Walk; Michael Hand; Kevin Radcliffe, Vice Chair; Linda Knight, Chair; Scott VanVoorhees; Linda Wallace-Cody; and Jay Lipscomb.

## Thank You Volunteers

More than 3,780 volunteers donated over 76,482 hours of time and expertise to parks and recreation to support special events, maintain parks and trails, coach and instruct our youth, teach environmental programs, develop teen leadership skills and help those with special needs to participate in department programs, a gift valued at more than \$2.1 million.