

Parks and Recreation FY15 Annual Report



James City County Parks and Recreation thanks the countless individuals and the many groups, organizations and businesses who support us in meeting our mission – to work in partnership with citizens to ensure responsive programs, facilities and open space which promote personal growth, social development and healthy lifestyles.

Through the County's values, we work hard to achieve the vision our citizens set for us, working in partnerships based on civility, integrity, collaboration, excellence and stewardship.

The role of Parks and Recreation in our community is vital – we take the lead in preserving the natural resources in our parks that have real economic benefits, we are partners in combating some of the most complicated and expensive challenges our country faces such as poor nutrition, obesity and physical inactivity; and we know providing access to our programs, parks and facilities is more than a privilege, it is a universal right.

Parks and Recreation is uniquely positioned to help build upon our quality community. In this annual report to our residents and partners, our challenges and accomplishments are defined by our divisions as we strive to make James City County the best community in which to live, work and visit. Our professional and passionate staff is grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Please spend a few minutes reading this report which summarizes our community achievements between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. For their innovative leadership and guidance, thank you to the James City County Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. Under their stewardship and working in partnerships, we can take pride as a community in the positive impact of parks and recreation.

*John Carnifax Jr., CPRE
Director, James City County Parks and Recreation*

Parks

James City County's outdoor community features 22 parks encompassing 1,400 acres of park land—natural settings boasting historic, scenic and recreational sites.

Five County parks—Jamestown Beach Event Park, Chickahominy Riverfront Park, Mid County Park, Freedom Park and the Warhill Sports Complex, collectively welcomed over **two million visitors** who sought solace in the beauty, sport and recreational amenities of County parks, a 12% increase over FY14 attendance.

Improvements at **Jamestown Beach Event Park** resulted in the continued protection and restoration of an additional 500 feet of shoreline, the addition of a paddle craft launch

area and permanent restroom facilities and improved accessibility to parking and to observation areas. Almost 450,000 visited the improved park in FY15 including the 40,000 more who visited in summer 2015 than in summer 2014.



By The Numbers

Direct Financial Recovery Rate
59%

#Households Receiving
Discount Assistance
153

Volunteers/Hours
2,740 Volunteers
98,434 Hours

Official Partners
28

Partnership Participants
230,304

Parks & Recreation
Attendance
3,239,659

Programs: 211,665
Parks: 2,595,974
Centers: 400,367
Legacy Hall: 31,653

Programs Offered
3,424

Parks
22

Miles of Trails
47.5

#Acres/Parks & Facilities
1,400

Civic Engagement
66 events attended
(neighborhood meetings,
public presentations &
community outreach)

To assist in the **preservation and protection** of County park sites, five new Adopt-A-Park agreements were completed. One family and four organizations committed to volunteer monthly to assist in maintenance and beautification projects within Freedom Park, Powhatan Creek Park, Jamestown Beach Event Park, Chickahominy Riverfront Park and the Virginia Capital Trail.



To educate citizens on the impacts and effects of **stormwater**, an interpretive sign was installed at the Rain Garden within Mid County Park. The location of the sign and added bench provide park users the ability to learn how they can contribute to keeping the park and community clean as they enter the park.



To continue to educate citizens and visitors and in partnership with the Sons of the American Revolution, a **new interpretive sign** depicting the Battle of Spencer's Ordinary which occurred in the area of Freedom Park was donated to the park.

Phase IV improvements at **Freedom Park** were completed and included the addition of two shelters, a playground, additional parking and a raised patio area. The improvements resulted in a 79% increase in revenue from rentals by the public.

To meet **community requests** for more trails and pickleball courts, four miles of additional trails at the Warhill Sports Complex and Chickahominy Riverfront Park were completed; courts at Mid County Park were resurfaced with one tennis court converted to two pickleball courts and permanent lines were added to allow flexibility of play for tennis or pickleball.

Increased interest in **volleyball** resulted in two new volleyball organizations with more than 140 additional youth joining the over 5,800 already participating as partner affiliates.

In partnership with the Virginia Master Naturalists, Williamsburg Bird Club, the Master Gardeners and Williamsburg Botanical Garden, citizens received hands-on **educational programs** such as bird identification and nature camps designed to improve environmental awareness and connection to the natural world.



At the conclusion of the contracts with the **Jamestown Marina** and **Little Creek Reservoir Park**, James City County began operation of both facilities ensuring continued services to citizens and visitors to the area.

Mid County Park was selected as Best New Facility-Parks, Playgrounds, Blueways, Greenways and Trails, the highest honor from the Virginia Recreation and Park Society, awarded in the population category 50,000-100,000. Improvements at the park included a new park office, community meeting space and a renovated fully accessible Kidsburg playground. The enhancements resulted in a 124% increase in park revenue and a 120% rise in attendance over 2013 figures.

To provide an improved skating experience, the synthetic ice Skate Rink previously located at New Town was relocated permanently to Mid County Park. Rebranded "**Iceburg**," the rink featured a new mascot "**Glacier the Polar Bear**" who visited local schools and commercial businesses to encourage visitation. The rink featured exciting programs, new sponsors, lights and music and over 4,600 visitors during its three-month operation season.



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

Recreation Centers

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

Improvements and customer service enhancements at the James City County Recreation Center included the replacement/addition of 24 pieces of fitness equipment including a state of the art Cybex strength line; replacement of several roof portions, flooring in the free weight area and the indoor door track surface to a more beneficial exercise surface; and the installation of a new liquid pool cover which dissolves each morning, holding in heat to reduce Center utility bills.

To offer **Abram Frink Jr. Community Center** patrons a more formidable workout, the fitness area doubled in size with the addition of a squat rack, additional dumbbells, bars and benches and more space for core work and stretching.



The James City County Recreation Center became the only facility in James City County/Williamsburg to offer **indoor rowing classes**, a full body workout that improves core strength and posture. More than 900 participants took advantage of the new offering in its first year of operation.

Over 27,000 patrons participated in **Health and Wellness class activities** at the Centers, programming included fitness classes, free gait analysis services, nutrition talks, health screenings and Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program classes, a 12%

increase over last year.

Expanded **SilverSneakers** class offerings from five classes a week to 10 and offered classes at the Abram Frink Jr. Community; the changes resulted in an overall 20% increase over last year for Silver Sneakers center use and classes.

In response to requests from the ultra-running community, conducted the second annual **Singletrack Maniac 50k**, a unique running event for serious and novice athletes and an opportunity to establish Freedom Park as a destination for the running community across the country. Registrations increased by 45% over 2013 with 94 participants coming from 10 different states over the five states represented the first year of the event.

Created the first annual **Midnight Maniac** 13-hour Endurance Run overnight on the Warhill Sports Complex property, a fun wellness event to showcase County parks. Twenty-five runners completed the 3.5 mile Warhill trail loop multiple times from 8 p.m.- 8 a.m.

Offered the first **Neighborhood Block Party** at the Abram Frink Jr. Community Center to make the community more aware of the facility and everything it has to offer the Grove community. Over 150 area residents attended this new event which served as a link to County government and community resources and featured entertainment including arts and crafts, inflatables, and fitness class offerings demonstrations.



Recreation Services

Over 3,400 customer-driven programs are offered annually, providing opportunities for exercise and recreation, social interaction and learning, and growth and relaxation.

Received national and statewide recognition for **RECN' It Out!**, a unique community-wide outreach program to serve citizens living in lower-income James City County neighborhoods. The honors were received from both the National Association of Counties and the Virginia Recreation and Park Society. County staff, in collaboration with a host of community partners such as the Community Housing Partners were able to offer the outreach program again this year to 34 youth living in lower-income neighborhoods. To offset program cost this year, \$2,650 in partnerships, grants and donations were solicited from the community.

Continued to expand and **diversify program opportunities** through 31 new initiatives in special interests, special events, sports, outdoor recreation and therapeutic recreation. New offerings included Lil Kickers soccer skill development for pre-school children, Happy Hikers for ages 50+, Heart Healthy Cooking, Engineering Camps for pre-school and school age children and TopSoccer therapeutic recreation program for youth with disabilities.



Added **Club 55+** program area focusing on senior exclusive and multigenerational programs for adults ages 55 and older, serving over 10,770 citizens in total participation in Club 55 programs. Implemented the Senior Lounge pass program with 258 new members joining the program.

Nearly 8,400 citizens participated in parks and recreation **special events** over the last year. In collaboration with Williamsburg Area Bicyclist volunteers,

reinstated the Park to Park Bike Tour, featuring the 62 Mile Metric Century ride. Added the "Live Well Expo," a new event for adults ages 55+ with 385 citizens participating in the Expo which featured a variety of health and leisure service vendors, free preventive health screenings and vaccinations.

Growing in job and leadership knowledge, skills and abilities, 46 teens participated in the **Teens Toward Success** program, volunteering over 3,300 hours in 10 parks and recreation program locations. As a result of their exceptional performance as volunteers, 23 teens who have participated in the program over the last decade have later been hired as County employees.

Building on the importance of character traits and making positive choices, a **Character Counts** curriculum was implemented to over 500 youth in the REC Connect program.

Participated in the Chamber of Commerce's **Christmas Parade**, educating citizens about the County and special memories made from participation in parks and recreation programs, facilities and services. The parade float won 1st place in its General-Float category.



Thank You

More than 2,700 volunteers donated 98,434 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 participate in department programs, a gift valued at \$2.3



million in FY15. This is an 18% increase in hours from FY14.

- Over \$31,000 in sponsorship and advertising fees were contributed by local businesses to support parks and recreation programs, events and activities with highest thanks to Smallcakes: A Cupcakery and Busch Gardens Williamsburg.

Grants

To expand environmental and preservation educational offerings, the County was awarded a \$4,000 **Chesapeake Bay Grant** which allowed more than 275 youth to participate in interactive environmental learning activities and Eco Boat Tours.

To assist in improving the health of patron athletes and to reduce the number of plastic water bottles discarded within our parks, the County was awarded a \$1,789 grant from the **Williamsburg Community Health Foundation** to retrofit existing water fountains at the Warhill Sports Complex with water bottle filling stations.