

Focus on Bryan Park

Year End 2022



The Newsletter of The Friends of Bryan Park - Dedicated to the Preservation and Improvement of Bryan Park

2022 In Review

We are nearing the end of another productive year of work in beautiful **Bryan Park**. At the beginning of this year, we compiled a list of projects that we wished to address. Some of these tasks were suggested by our community, some suggested by the **Richmond Parks and Recreation Department** and some were felt by our board to be important.



- The restoration of the **Camp House** is almost completed. All electrical, carpentry and masonry work has been completed and it has been power washed and painted. Plans have been drawn for a pollinator garden in that area.
- We celebrated the 100th anniversary of the original opening of the **Camp House** in an October event.
- Work continues in the **Azalea Garden**. Board member and **Azalea Garden Supervisor** Janet Woody now says that some beds, now cleared of pesky invasives, are ready for planting new azaleas.
- Board member **Randy Smith** has organized our tree planting project. Randy and his volunteers have planted over 125 new trees and shrubs which have survived the hot dry summer. This is an ongoing project with new trees planned before the ground freezes.
- Another long term project is the restoration of the **Azalea Garden Pond**. We are working with the **Parks and Recreation Department** to coordinate this multiyear project which will reduce or eliminate the algae problem. This will involve a dedicated fund-raising project .
- Part of the **Fall Line Trail** will be coming through **Bryan Park**; the **Friends** have been involved with site selection of the path. This is an extremely important event for our **Park**, that will have major impact, and we will continue to have input as this process continues.
- The park now has new **Pickle Ball Courts** and the restoration of the **Tennis Court** across from the **Camp House** has been completed. The **Parks and Recreation Department** has begun construction on a new **Croquet Court** which will provide another activity for park visitors when completed.

For more information on any of these projects, our battle against invasives, and all things happening in **Bryan Park** please follow us on our website: www.friendsofbryanpark.org, or on *Facebook and Instagram*.

Rick Sinsabaugh, President, **Friends Of Bryan Park**

In 1994 Friends of Bryan Park was founded by a group of City and County residents to prevent the City from “developing” Bryan Park into a golf course. A few years later, we bought and installed Bryan Park’s first playground, partnered with the Central Virginia Soccer Association (CVSA) to build the Soccer Fields, and stopped the City from removing the Bellevue Bridge in 1999 for a highway flyover. We placed Bryan Park on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002, and continue to plant trees, fight invasive plants, and try to “go native”. As a non-profit, we promote environmental education, experiencing nature firsthand, and wholesome outdoor activities.

We protect and improve Joseph Bryan Park - won't you volunteer with us?

The Fall Line Trail to pass through Bryan Park



The **Fall Line Trail** in Richmond begins at **Joseph Bryan Park** and will guide users through Northside before reaching Downtown. Connections to the Virginia Capital Trail, a number of urban parks, and public transit stops like Main Street Station will allow users to reach a number of destinations. In addition, close proximity to Virginia Union University and Virginia Commonwealth University will make the trail accessible to approximately 23,000 students.

Bryan Park anticipates many benefits from the **Fall Line Trail**. Some of the improvements to the **Park** can include a new ADA compliant rest room, water to the **Butterfly Garden** at the **Nature Center**, more picnic tables, safety markings such as crossways and directional arrows, and parking improvements.

The **Friends** and **Richmond Parks and Recreation** are working with the **Virginia Department of Transportation** to ensure that the **Fall Line Trail** will enhance the park experience for all who visit. For more information, see <https://www.falllineva.org/>

Azalea Pond Restoration

The Board of the **Friends of Bryan Park** is committed to restoring the pond to good health and appearance. This will be a multi-year project that includes sediment removal, pond wall repairs and refurbishing the fountain. We rely on the **Richmond Parks and Recreation** department to complete some tasks, such as running electric service into the park near the pond.



The first step is to test the sediment for potential toxicity. This will determine if the pond can be safely dredged, and where the removed sediment can be placed.

Upon completion, we will then move on to the repairs needed to the walls of the pond.

Camp House Centennial Celebration

In October, the **Friends** invited the community to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Camp House.

In the 1920s, many Americans acquired cars and set out to see the country. Before motels and hotels existed outside of cities, Richmond created an auto camp in **Bryan Park** to assist travelers, providing rest rooms, laundry facilities, and a lounge area, all at no fee.



In 1924, 50,000 campers stayed at our park. By 1928, camp attendance was dwindling. The Depression was the final blow to camp houses across the nation.

Azalea Garden Restoration

Years of work on the Azalea Gardens is starting to pay off. Invasives have been removed and planting of new Azaleas will begin soon. Many visitors who enjoy the gardens during the Spring blooming season will soon see a revitalized **Azalea Garden**.

Our new pollinator bed is flourishing. Created by volunteers who work in the **Azalea Garden**, it is on **Rosina's Lane**.

Camden Konesco built a bridge across a boggy area of the garden for his Eagle Scout project.

These volunteers exemplify the ideals of neighbors helping the **Friends** in our efforts to beautify **Bryan Park**. Please consider joining our efforts by visiting our page:

<https://friendsofbryanpark.org/pages/volunteer.php>



Conservation Games and Team Streams



During the COVID-quarantine **The Capital Region Land Conservancy (CRLC)** invented a fundraising “game”, inviting supporters and conservationists to pick a preferred team (Team Forests, Team Fields, or TeamStreams), do clean-ups in each respective environmental regimes, and raise funds for **CRLC’s** important work of permanently protecting historic and natural areas of superior significance (<https://capitalregionland.org/>).



For the past three years, **FoBP** has hosted the Team Streams and its clean-ups. This year, led by John Zeugner, in five sessions, we collected 97.4 lbs. of trash: bottles, plastics, gloves, styrofoam, and cigarette butts. Most of this debris would float into the Chesapeake Bay and take decades, if not centuries to degrade. Imagine the potentially lethal impacts of this insidious poison plastic in the oceans, and consider that we have removed bags and bags of it – plus we raised \$7,205 for the **CLRC!** Bravo, Team Streams!

Tree Restoration

With 232 acres of park and forest land that became protected more than 100 years ago, we are engaged in an ongoing effort to not only respond to tree damage due to storms and disease, and also routine mortality due to age. Our focus involves planting, supporting, and sustaining the forest and the tree canopy, wildlife habitat, and benefits of clean air to our neighborhood. It’s a fact that the average mean high temperatures in **Bryan Park** and the adjacent neighborhoods is a few degrees cooler than most of Richmond.

Friends of Bryan Park is fortunate to have committed volunteers assisting throughout the year with the tasks required to help sustain and expand the tree population. In February of 2022, a grove of 15 year-old **Red Maple** trees just inside the gate were significantly pruned, resulting in a higher canopy and the expanded viewshed looking down the hill toward Princeton Creek.

In March, over 100 infant native trees were purchased and planted in the nursery, in pots or in permanent locations around the Park. These have had good growth, and will function as a source of new tree stock in the year 2023. Planting in April focused on the hill at the West side of the entrance, coming up the hill from Hermitage Road. **Black Cherry** trees were planted at the top, **American Elms** were planted at the mid-level, and **Red Maples** at the lower level.

In 2023 we will be planting several varieties of trees, especially **Oaks**, the dominant tree in the **Park**, and are currently identifying bare spots where large trees will thrive. We need volunteers to help our planting program in December, January & February, and if interested, contact randysmith768@gmail.com.



FoBP Elects New President and VP

Board elections were held in January. **Rick Sinsabaugh**, who had served as **Vice President** for 15 years, was nominated and elected as **President**, a role he had stepped into while **John Zeugner** was sidelined by a health issue. **Ed Knight**, **FoBP’s** newsletter editor and graphics guru, was elected **Vice President**; and **Janet Woody** was reelected as **Secretary**, which she has been doing so well for the past few years. Our **Treasurer** is **Bill Pilc**, a Bellevue resident who volunteered to help **FoBP** pro bono several years ago. He is a principal of Pilc & Moseley CPAs.

Special thanks to **John Zeugner**, who has served as **President** for 22 years. His steady leadership has proven invaluable over the ups and downs of stewardship of **Bryan Park**, and he certainly deserves a rest. Without his guidance and knowledge, Bryan Park would not be the gem of Northside that it is. A heartfelt **Thank You, John!!**

Want to be our Friend?

Visit our website: www.friendsofbryanpark.org. From the menu, pick **Volunteer**. Enter your name, email, and phone number (all required). You may indicate how you'd like to volunteer, but this is not required to become a **Friend**. Once you enter the 3 fields, you will be subscribed to our mailing list and receive notification of programs, news from the park, and volunteer opportunities. We promise to never share your information.

2022 was an exciting year for the **Friends of Bryan Park**, with many accomplishments. 2023 promises to be just a productive, and with many more challenges. We hope that you will put FoBP at the top of your list for a generous year-end gift in 2022. Your support has built this organization and allows us to address the many challenges that face Bryan Park, both now and in the future. **Thank You!**

We are a 501 (c)(3) volunteer organization that pays no salaries. All donations are reserved for park projects, improvements, equipment and supplies.

Friends of Bryan Park Board Members:

Rick Sinsabaugh, President Ed Knight, Vice President Bill Pilc, Treasurer Janet Woody, Secretary John Zeugner, Past President
Nancy Baker Marilyn Erickson Jean Hollings Donna Lacy Randy Smith Sue Ridd Bucci Zeugner
Jean Hollings & Janet Woody, VMN Riverine Co-Chairs

Other Important Contacts:

3rd District Council Representative: Ann Frances Lambert 646-5055
Christopher Frelke Parks and Rec Director: 646-5717 Vacant, Northside Parks Supervisor 646-0199
Office in Keepers House and Lost & Found 646-0199
Police Emergency 911 Police Non-Emergency 646-5100
Animal Control, M-F, 8AM-4PM: 646-5573 For weekends or emergencies: 646-5100

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