



## Urban Agenda Report

Richmond, Virginia

April 2015 – April 2017

### Partner Initiatives that Align with the Urban Agenda



#### **Capital Campout: June 28-29, 2016**

Worked with Virginia State Parks to expose underserved youth in urban areas to the world of camping while also giving an opportunity for the Governor to show his support for parks. Involved 4<sup>th</sup> graders who go fishing, kayaking and hiking along the James River at the NPS RICH Tredegar Ironworks site, and then to the State Capitol for the campout. NPS interpreters gave a Civil War themed program.

Partners: State of Virginia, State Parks

Youth # - 30



#### **Groundwork RVA and Urban Archeology Corps: June 8-August 19, 2016**

To foster and awaken the potential of underserved neighborhoods through a series of neighborhood-focused programs and projects utilizing youth volunteers. An urban archeology dig at Chimborazo Medical Museum in the Church Hill neighborhood, in the City of Richmond. Public Day dig at Chimborazo Medical Museum July 30; Public Archeology Day on August 19. Urban Fellow and RTCA Fellow will work with UAC/Groundwork RVA to promote the public days to the community as well as assist with general social media promotion throughout the entirety of the summer program. The Urban Fellow spoke to the incoming program participants on their first day about the Urban Agenda and how their UAC/Groundwork RVA program is a great example of the Urban Agenda principles.

YouTube link to wrap-up video: <https://youtu.be/Kt5qLwUHGEY>

Funding: NPS, RTCA

Partners: NPS, RTCA, Groundworks, City of Richmond

Youth # - 20



#### **PARK(ing) Day: September 16, 2016**

Created a park-like trail scene within a metered parking space in a busy downtown urban setting during lunchtime hours to promote Richmond's national parks: where they are, why they're important, and that it's the Centennial year. The RTCA Fellow and Centennial Ambassador worked with the Urban Fellow to organize and lead this effort. PARK(ing) Day is a nationwide event, and many model urban cities participated.

Partners: City of Richmond

Funding: Urban Agenda



### Capitol Square Fair: September 24, 2016

Working in partnership with the State Historic Preservation Office to highlight the story that Virginia's Capitol Square is the oldest urban park in America. NPS will assist with multiple interpretations during the day-long event. Urban Agenda will pre-promote the free event to youth in surrounding urban neighborhoods through social and online media.

Partners: VA SHPO, State of Virginia, State Parks

Funding: Urban Agenda

Est. youth # – 100

### James River - Bridging the Watershed (BTW): Spring 2017

The James is one of the most significant rivers in Virginia; with a watershed that encompasses over 10,000 square miles. Although it travels through the City of Richmond, many city youth have never been to or explored its banks. BTW is a community outreach program of the Alice Ferguson Foundation, in partnership with the National Park Service and area schools, to promote environmental stewardship through hands-on curriculum-based outdoor studies. This will be the first time the program is being assessed for the Richmond area. The RTCA Fellow will research and compile information, and work with park staff to develop curriculum, sites, and partners for a pilot program focused on stewardship of the James.

Partners: Alice Ferguson Foundation, RTCA, Richmond Public Schools, Henrico County Schools

Funding: Alice Ferguson Foundation

Est. youth # - TBD

## Centennial Projects that Demonstrate the Urban Agenda

### “Every Kid in a Park”

President Barack Obama created Every Kid in a Park so fourth graders and their families could discover our wildlife, resources, and history for free. NPS in Richmond received over \$10,000 in NPF transportation grant funding for FY 2016, and a second round of NPF transportation grant funding for FY 2017 for \$14,800. Bringing Richmond Public Schools and Henrico County fourth graders to Tredegar, Fort Harrison and Maggie Walker.

Ordered qty. 750 logo'd "FindYourPark.com" lanyards to hold each "Every Kid in a Park" pass.

Ordered qty. 1200 logo'd "FindYourPark" backpacks for all 2016 programs.

Funding: ONPS, NPF, Urban Agenda

Partners: Richmond Public Schools, Henrico Public Schools

Youth # – 1400 for FY2016





**“Every Kid in a Park,” Event with Deputy Director Peggy O’Dell:  
March 22-23, 2016**

Educational engagement program celebrating Women’s History Month in conjunction with Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site. Deputy Director O’Dell directly engaged with urban youth at a Richmond City School EKIP program (Carver Elementary) with regalia buttons and EKIP passes and lanyards.

Funding: NPF, Urban Agenda

Partners: Richmond Public Schools

Youth # - 90



**Premiere of Richmond’s Film at the “National Parks Adventure” IMAX Debut: April 18, 2016**

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, the IMAX movie takes viewers on a trek through more than 30 national parks. In Richmond, the premiere of the film debuted at the Science Museum of Virginia with a lightly catered reception as a private event with 175 people in attendance.

In order to showcase and introduce RICH/MAWA parks, NPS with Richmond Region Tourism produced a 60-second film clip that will play at the beginning of the IMAX film through August 31, 2016. This short clip of Richmond NPS parks will also be used for social media and website promotion.

YouTube Link Here: <https://youtu.be/l1PlbAjqTkA>

Funding: Urban Agenda

Partners: Richmond Region Tourism

**First Lady’s “Let’s Move Outside”: June 7, 2016**

DOI and YMCA partnered with NPS to create a summer Play, Learn, Serve, Work outdoor program for thousands of low-income, minority youth to have their first National Park experience. At Chimborazo Medical Museum in Church Hill, we held a press conference with DOI, NPS, YMCA, and City of Richmond, as well as a 30-minute service project for youth on NPS property: a beautification of all park entrance signs that involved planting and mulching that naturally frame the NPS signs.

Partners: DOI, NPS, YMCA, and City of Richmond

Youth # - 12



**“Find Your Park Night” at the Diamond: August 20, 2016**

National Park Service in partnership with the Virginia State Parks and Richmond Region Tourism sponsored a night at the local baseball stadium in an effort to reach as many as possible in the region with the Centennial message and the “Find Your Park” campaign. “Find Your Park” youth giveaway item includes FYP logo’d backpacks and t-shirts. The Buddy Bison mascot was on hand for the event. The local baseball team donated 50 tickets to the local YMCA to bring underserved youth on this night, and the Urban Agenda paid for their green “Find Your Park” t-shirts.

Funding: NPS, Urban Agenda

Partners: Richmond Region Tourism, State of Virginia, State Parks

Est. youth # – 2500





## Richmond National Battlefield Park BioBlitz: October 1, 2016

A Bioblitz is a rapid biological survey in which scientists and volunteers work together to collect field data and compile a "snapshot" of biodiversity at a national park site. As part of the NPS Centennial, parks have been hosting Bioblitz events throughout the year to discover and document biodiversity. The Richmond RTCA Fellow has been working alongside park staff at Richmond National Battlefield Park to engage local college students from Virginia Union University to participate in the event. This new partnership with a diverse and young audience helps to develop a foundation for an on-going relationship between the park and VUU students.

Partners: Virginia Union University, RTCA, National Geographic

Est. youth # - 5

## New City-Specific Initiatives that Demonstrate the Urban Agenda



### Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) Enhanced Connections at Historic Tredegar, Belle Isle, James River, and the Community

The physical proximity of each offers an opportunity to expand on existing community collaboration among the NPS, the City of Richmond, the James River Park System, and many other partner organizations, to include:

- Interpretive Programing and Materials, • Signage and Wayfinding, • Multi-Modal Access Improvements,
- Youth Engagement and Stewardship, • Promote Healthy Outdoor Recreation

The initial kick off meeting with primary partners and RTCA was March 3, 2016.

Through the Urban Agenda, the park service will build alliances with local government and with community partner organizations that help to identify and achieve shared goals and accelerate collaboration and implementation; and leverage the full suite of NPS programmatic and park assets.

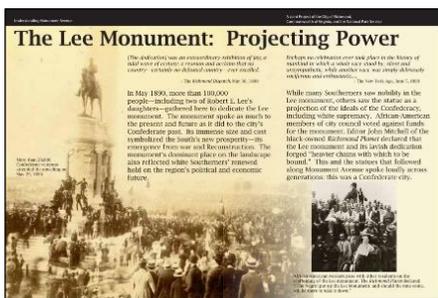
It has been estimated that nearly one and a half million visitors explore these sites or attend special events in this area, while a tiny fraction of these visitors are from the urban population. This diverse committee will decide the most important aspects of new enhanced connections and move forward with implementation.

Estimated project completion: April 30, 2017

Funding Sources: ONPS, RTCA, Urban Agenda

Partners: NPS, RTCA, Valentine Richmond History Center, City of Richmond, American Civil War Museum, Venture Richmond, Sports Backers, Greater Richmond Transit Company, Groundwork RVA, James River Association, YMCA of Greater Richmond

RTCA Rep, Ursula Lemanski, plays a technical support role. RTCA Fellow, Renesha Chiles (full-time, 1 yr)



### Confederate Statues and Monument Avenue Interpretation

Monument Avenue includes a series of monuments that were put in place at the turn of the twentieth century that depict Virginians who were Confederate participants of the Civil War as well as tennis legend Arthur Ashe. Project components will include NPS historians from RICH and FRSP working with the University of Richmond to develop waysides to interpret the historical context of each of the monuments. The University of Richmond will also develop digital media in support of this initiative. Eight signs total: six monuments, and two contextual nodes.

Estimated project completion: TBD 2017

Funding sources: ONPS, Urban Agenda, City of Richmond

Partners: State of Virginia, University of Richmond, VA Fine Arts Museum, VA Historical Society, general public



## Programmatic Support for the Urban Agenda

### **NER One NPS Workshop: July 2015**

Introduce the Urban Agenda to NER Program Managers and discuss NPS programs and collaborative opportunities to support the Urban Agenda.

### **NER One NPS Workshop: November 18-19, 2015** in Philadelphia.

Discussion of NPS programs, assets and collaborative opportunities to support the Urban Agenda. Share work and ideas. In attendance from Richmond: David Ruth, Kristen and Erika

### **Virginia Subcluster Meeting: January 21, 2016** in Richmond, VA

Urban Agenda PowerPoint presentation to all VA Superintendents by Erika Gay

### **Foundation Document Workshop: Richmond National Battlefield Park: January 12-14, 2016**

Urban Fellow participation

### **Foundation Document Workshop: Maggie Walker National Historic Site: February 2-4, 2016**

Urban Fellow and community participation

### **Urban Agenda Model City Host Meeting: February 22-23, 2016** in Atlanta, GA

In attendance from Richmond: David Ruth

### **National Community Assistance Training Conference: May 8-13, 2016** in Jacksonville, FL

Urban Fellow participation

### **ASALH Conference Speaker, What is the Urban Agenda?: October 5, 2016** in Richmond, VA

Urban Fellow participation, and park staff participation

## Participation in the Urban Fellows Cohort

Participate in monthly Urban Fellows conference calls, monthly NER Fellow conference calls, webinars, conventions, meetings, etc.

**Urban Agenda Urban Fellows Conference: November 9-13, 2015** in New Orleans, LA

**Urban Agenda Urban Fellows Conference: June 13-17, 2016** in Washington, DC

## What We Have Learned in Richmond

### **BRIGHT SPOTS**

- Fostered greater collaboration with new and existing community partners.
- Hired diverse candidates for the "Play, Learn, Serve & Work" initiative, including a new SCA Intern and RTCA Fellow.
- Confirmed that the National Park Service is viewed as a valuable partner, and the community is eager to work with us.



- Saw increased attention and positive reinforcement from the community and the media in the Centennial year.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Urban Agenda funding has been important to leverage new projects as match or in-kind.
- Urban Agenda is not just about new projects and implementing the three principles through large-scale, one-time activities, but about embedding the three principles into long term park and partner programs that will continue to embody the Urban Agenda for many years to come.
- There is a lack of capacity within the NPS staff to effectively collaborate, communicate and facilitate. Urban Fellows have been essential tools to assist park staff.
- The National Park Service doesn't always value communication as a top priority: communication with media, surrounding communities, partners, and the people who visit their parks.
- Park staff is not always accustomed to thinking about reaching new audiences, developing new narratives, or being relevant. They need to be taught how to do that. Not just through new methods of communication within projects, programs or community events, but also in how they communicate with each other and to the public.
- Park staff is not always comfortable in gathering, holding, or running collaborative community meetings. They need to be taught how to do that, through example and repetition.
- There's no lack of interest from park staff or from the community to engage directly in collaboration or discussion of relevancy or inclusion. It's most often a lack of experience or expertise in how to make that dialogue take place – whether it's in a meeting room or on a live Facebook broadcast.

## Recommendations for the Future of Urban Agenda

It is our recommendation that a person who is qualified and trained in community relations with a specialty in media relations, and who embodies the three principles of the Urban Agenda, is hired at each national park.

This person would be an asset to all park staff and a liaison to the community.

The position description for this new community outreach coordinator will be written in part by all ten Urban Fellows in a joint effort to play a role in the legacy of the program.

The Urban Fellow from Richmond, VA is taking a lead in moving this recommendation forward.