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## James River Advisory Council recognizes 'Stewards of the River'

**CHESTERFIELD COUNTY, VIRGINIA** — Four individuals and a regional public-service authority today were awarded the James River Advisory Council's Steward of the River award. Established in 2006, the annual awards go to people or groups who've made measurable, positive impacts to the James River and surrounding communities. The awards were presented during JRAC's spring meeting at the VCU Rice Rivers Center.

*Photos of awardees are available at the links below.*

### **Education Award**

#### **[Bob Argabright](#)**

#### **Volunteer, Goodes Creek Watershed Coalition & Board Member, Groundwork RVA**

Argabright has worked within the Richmond community, specifically the Oak Grove-Bellemeade area, for over a decade. He spends a significant amount of time working with the Green Team, a group of approximately 20 youths, focusing on expanding outdoor education and the connectivity of waterways to communities downstream. Argabright helps to provide after-school programs for children and devotes weekends to working with youths. He has collaborated with partner organizations to develop a scholarship program for Green Team members.

### **Communication Award**

#### **Mark Battista**

#### **Naturalist, Chesterfield County**

Battista passionately and tirelessly promotes the diverse natural resources and cultural history of the James River. He develops, schedules and leads public programs to connect youths and

adults with the river. Battista's efforts have helped build an entire generation of residents that appreciate and protect the watershed. In addition to his work with Chesterfield County, Battista mentors scouts and participates in outreach with the Richmond Audubon Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **Community Partnership Award**

#### **[Central Virginia Waste Management Authority](#)**

For more than a decade, CVWMA has reported a 50 percent recycling rate in the Central Virginia region. In 2013, more than 500,000 tons of material was recycled rather than reach local landfills. CVWMA works not only with local governments but also with businesses, nonprofit organizations and collaborative groups to promote the importance and benefits of recycling. The authority reaches an estimated 30,000 people annually with its educational efforts.

### **Guardian Award**

#### **[Dick Gibbons](#)**

#### **Volunteer, Scenic Virginia**

Gibbons has been a guardian of the James River for years, starting with his work in the 1960s as a landscape architect with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. Gibbons coordinated the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, which recognizes the most outstanding rivers in Virginia. His long-time work as a fellow with the American Society of Landscape Architects, and as past president of the Virginia chapter of the ASLA, includes work to conduct a community-based watershed analysis of the James River in Richmond as a basis for planning. His work with the state, professional organizations, local governments and citizens ensures the river's scenic qualities remain intact and will be preserved for years to come.

### **Leadership Award**

#### **[George Bruner](#)**

#### **JRAC Co-chair and Richmond Sail & Power Squad**

Bruner has served as co-chair of the James River Advisory Council since 2011. During his tenure, he has been actively involved with the leadership, planning and organization of annual signature events, including the Parade of Lights and Regional Cleanup. He leads by example as an avid boater and promotes river safety to boaters and citizens. Bruner has used his leadership capacity to foster partnerships with other organizations, such as the Capital Region Collaborative.

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***The James River Advisory Council's mission is to promote and protect the James River as one of Central Virginia's greatest assets and one of America's unique rivers. JRAC brings people from throughout the region to a common table where representatives from local, state and federal government, businesses and industry, community organizations, as well as citizens, share ideas and talk objectively and constructively about river issues and education.***