



James River State Park  
104 Green Hill Drive  
Gladstone, VA 24553

# James River State Park

## Master Plan

### 2014 Executive Summary



**Department of Conservation and Recreation**  
Division of Planning and Recreation Resources  
600 East Main Street, 24<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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# James River State Park

## MASTER PLAN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2014 UPDATE

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*Presented for review at a public meeting on March 13, 2014, then recommended for adoption by the Board of Conservation and Recreation on August 21, 2014, and then reviewed for 30 days by the Virginia General Assembly.*

#### **Adopted:**

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/S/

Clyde E. Cristman, Director  
Department of Conservation and Recreation

\_\_\_\_\_  
October 15, 2014

Date



Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation

# **JAMES RIVER STATE PARK**

## **Master Plan Executive Summary**

### **2014 Update**

This James River State Park Master Plan Executive Summary is an update to the official unabridged master plan document adopted on October 29, 1998, by Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Director David G. Brickley. The plan was then renewed on December 16, 2004, by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. The plan was amended on February 11, 2008 by DCR Director Joseph H. Maroon. This master plan update is intended to set forth a clear vision for the future based on phased development. This 2014 executive summary represents the most recent five-year review described in §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*.

It outlines the desired future condition for James River State Park when it is fully developed.

James River State Park was purchased with money authorized through the Park and Recreational Facilities Bond Act of 1992. The park was an exciting addition to Virginia's State Park facilities as it is within relatively close driving distance of several high population centers, and it offers 1525 acres of wooded beauty with approximately three miles of James River frontage. Located ten miles north of Route 60 at Bent Creek in Buckingham County, it is across the James River from Norwood in Nelson County. The park has cabins, a campground, an equestrian campground, group camp, canoe launch/landing, picnic shelters and a system of trails.

This 2014 update places value on connecting James River State Park to other resources in the community. The park is located along the James River, a water trail and heritage corridor promoted by Envision the James. There is also a proposed bicycle route along the river, part of the James River Heritage Trail. The park's lake is a featured stop along the James River loop of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Birding and Wildlife Trail. Virginia's Midland Trail Virginia Byway is west of the park, and Lee's Retreat Civil War Driving Tour is south of the park. The Rockfish River Tour and the Blue Ridge Railway Trail are two trail opportunities in Nelson County north of the river. The Red, White and Brew Trail offers ten wineries, four breweries, one hard apple cidery, and a distillery in Nelson County. Both the Tye River and the Rockfish River near the park are designated scenic rivers. The James River State Park Regional Connectivity Map is an attachment to the full Master Plan document.

The lands purchased for the Park lie along the James River and have approximately three miles of river frontage. A wide floodplain blends into rolling hills with steep drainages and broad terraces. Most of the floodplain and gently rolling uplands were farmed or used for pasture by previous owners. The steeper slopes and upland areas were maintained in timber, and a number of loblolly pine stands have been planted over the years. The forest land that is not in pine plantations is comprised of mixed upland hardwoods. Three ponds located on the property support a good recreational fishery.

James River State Park received federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) in 2000 for property acquisition, and then in 2001, 2004 and 2008 for park facility development. In

compliance with the LWCF Act of 1965 and amendments thereto, the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to maintain the park for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation Planners and State Park Staff conducted this master plan update in accordance with §10.1-200.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This plan outlines the desired future condition of the park over a 20-year planning horizon. As required by the *Code of Virginia*, it must be revisited every five years to ensure that the development objectives outlined in the plan continue to meet the recreational, environmental and historic protection needs of the citizens of the Commonwealth. As a part of the 2014 master plan process, the 1998 park master plan, the 2004 update and the 2008 amendment were reviewed. It was determined that significant changes occurred within the master plan and a full revision was warranted. The executive summary and accompanying map have been updated. The phased development plan and costs have been revised to reflect current proposed projects. The park staffing and operations costs data have been also updated to reflect current conditions.

The adopted park purpose statement is stated below:

***PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT: “The purpose of James River State Park is to provide premiere outdoor recreational opportunities while protecting and interpreting the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the James River and the surrounding region.”***

**ATTENDANCE:** Visitation at the park has been fairly stable over the last few years. The following table depicts park attendance during the period 2005 to 2013:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
30,025	31,330	50,568	53,214	53,935	55,751	55,730	57,421	57,985

In 2013 James River had 57,985 visitors; 38,442 were overnight guests, while 19,543 were day-use visitors. With this level of visitation, it is estimated that the park had an economic impact on the local economy of approximately \$3,195,838. Master plan recommendations designed to increase visitation and improve the visitor experience, once implemented, should have a further positive impact on the region’s economic vitality.

Additional land acquisition is recommended to enhance park offerings, establish connective trail easements/corridors, and buffer the park from inappropriate development and/or protect valued viewsheds. Future land acquisitions will only be negotiated with willing property owners. The placement of conservation easements on adjacent property to preserve the natural resources, cultural landscapes, and scenic resources in close proximity to the park will be encouraged. In working cooperatively with neighboring landowners, the park will be enhanced and protected over time.

This 2014 master plan update represents both new facilities and improvements to existing facilities. New facilities at this park should be designed and built in keeping with the prescriptive

management areas as defined by the Park Resource Management Plan and the guidelines of the Park Visitor Experience Plan, if and when available. To the greatest extent possible, Virginia State Parks strives to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards. All future phases of park construction will be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner. Building and site design will implement green energy standards using energy-efficient and sustainable materials and process to the greatest extent possible. These facilities will be carefully sited to minimize impacts to the views within the park and of the park from adjacent lands and water bodies. Development activities will comply with requirements set forth by the Department of Environmental Quality's best management practices for erosion, sediment control and stormwater management in order to protect water quality.

Completion of all of the projects in this list will represent total build-out (completion of the master plan), and will cover a 20-year timeframe. The phasing costs are based on 2014 estimates.

### **James River State Park Proposed Phasing**

#### **PHASE I**

Add staff residence

Renovate staff residence for office/meeting space and barn for environmental education staging area

Add large playground (across from visitor center)

Improve Cabell Trail (road) for accessibility from visitor center to Tye River Overlook

Add vault toilet and water hydrant at the group camp

Improve ponds/dams at Branch, Taylor and Greenhill Ponds

Add large playground in picnic area (near shelters 3 and 4)

Expand Red Oak Campground with a loop with seven primitive sites & three camping cabins

Enhance canoe launch and support facilities at Dixon Landing

Add concession building/comfort station at Dixon Landing

The total estimated cost for Phase I development is \$12,410,072

#### **PHASE II**

Add small picnic shelter (with water and electric) in cabin area

Enhance Shelter 6 with water and electric service

Expand parking at Amphitheater on the James, with trail connections to other parking

The total estimated cost for Phase II development is \$690,171

### **PHASE III**

Add campground (30 sites) with bathhouse

Enhance Shelter 4 with catering kitchen

Develop canoe-in camping on Cunningham Island

Add equestrian group camp (3 sites with stalls)

Add staff residence

Improve canoe livery with parking at Bent Creek

Add group camp at Bent Creek (vault toilet, water, small shelter and road improvements)

The total estimated cost for Phase III development is \$6,161,748

**The total cost to bring James River State Park to its desired future condition is \$19,261,990**

### **Staffing and Operations**

Staffing and operational costs at James River State Park are presently budgeted at \$852,000 annually, including salaries for seven staff positions. Two additional staff positions are identified in Phase I which are either vacant positions or needed to bring the current park staffing to the standard base level. At complete build-out of the proposed three phases of development, four additional staff will be needed and an additional \$321,000 in operating funds. In order for the park to operate effectively and efficiently at full build-out, the park must be provided the projected staffing and operating costs for the three development phases. The total budget for James River at full build-out is projected to be \$1,173,000 with 11 staff positions.

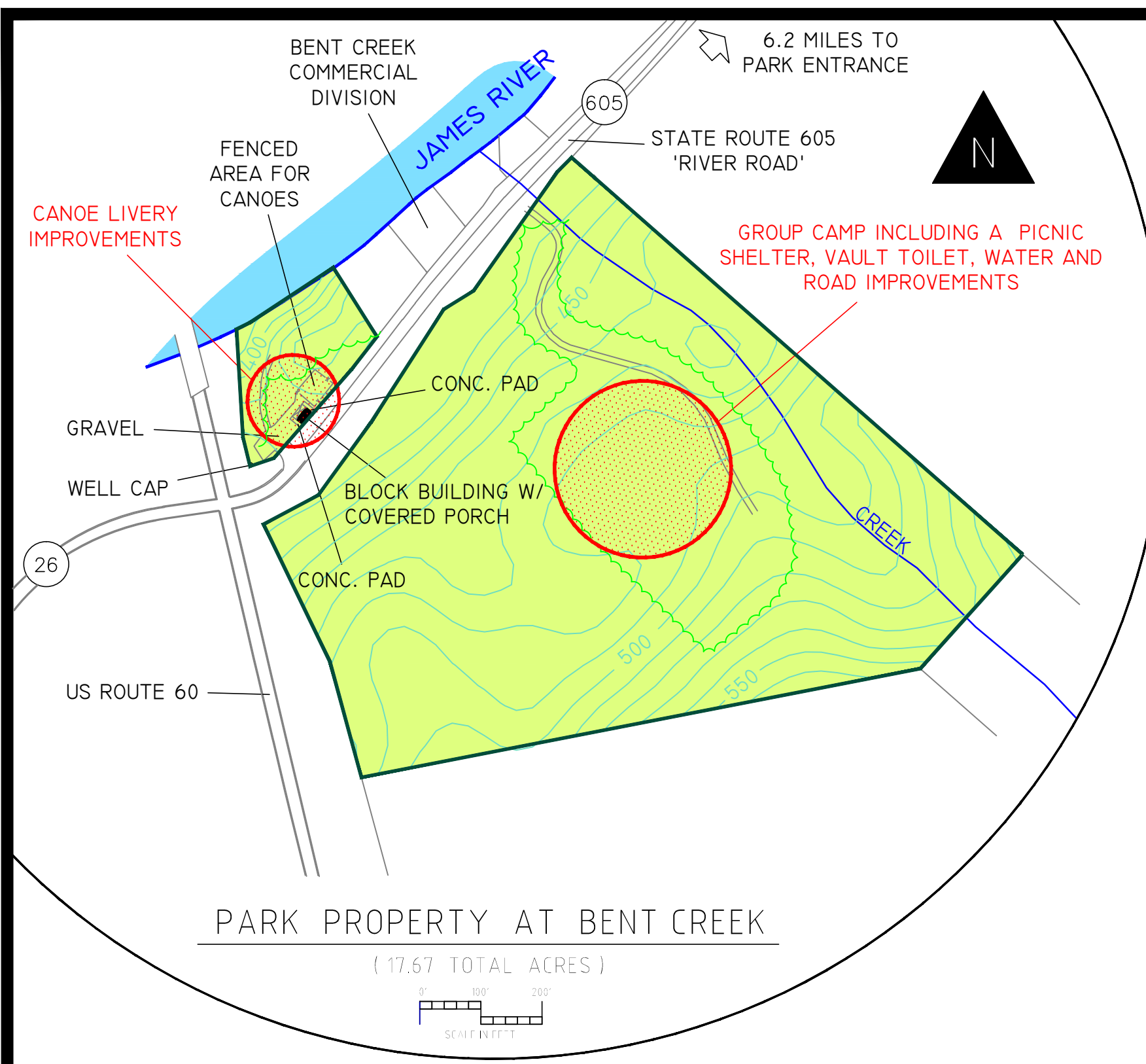
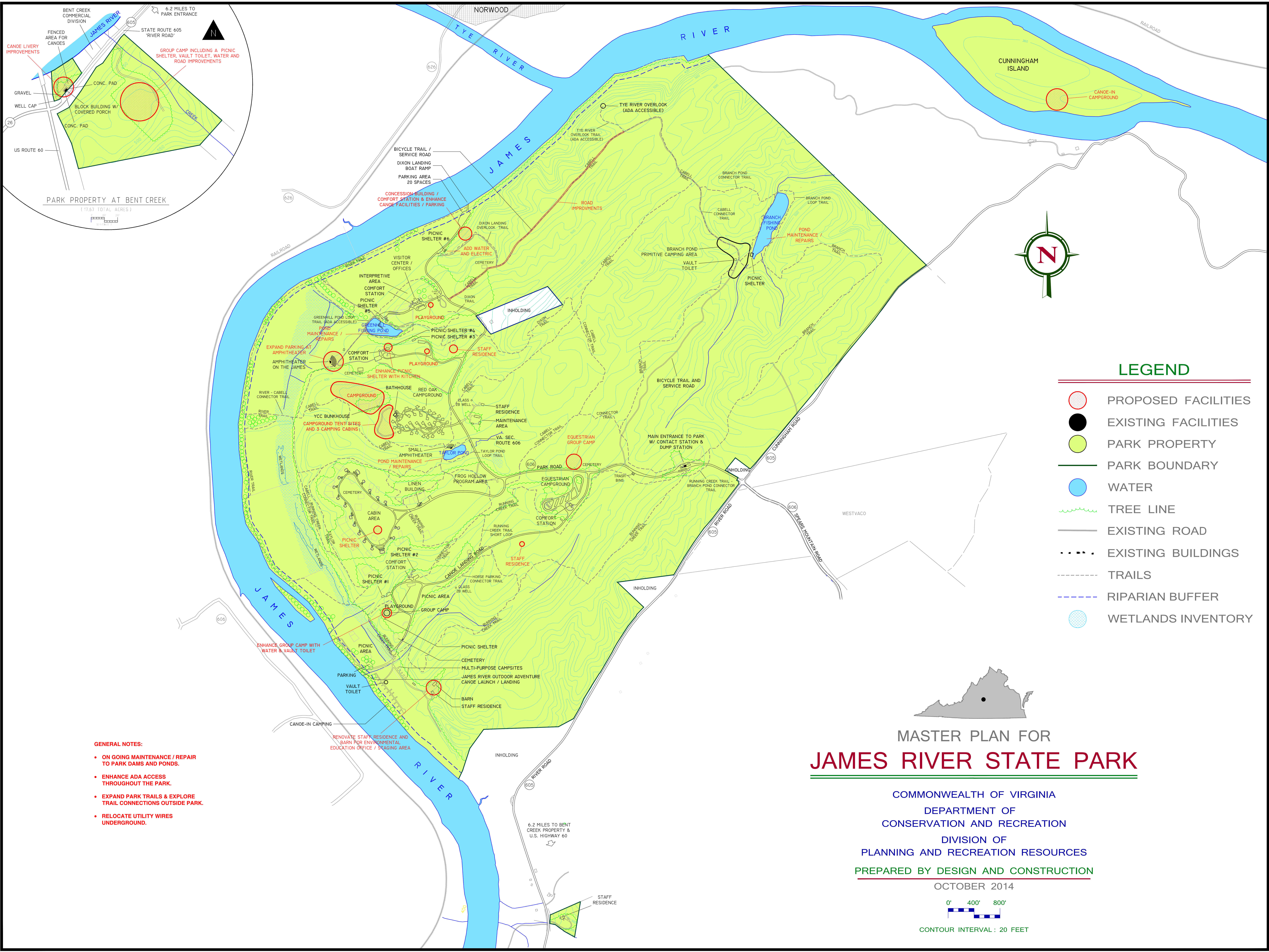
## JAMES RIVER STAFFING AND OPERATING COSTS

EXISTING (FY 15)	PPHASE I	PPHASE II	PPHASE III	FULL BUILD OUT
<b>STAFFING</b>				<b>STAFFING</b>
Park Manager				Park Manager
Asst. Park Mgr				Asst. Park Mgr
Chief Ranger				Chief Ranger
Educ. Specialist				Educ. Specialist
Park Ranger (2)	Park Ranger*		Park Ranger (2)	Park Ranger (5)
	Housekeeper*			Housekeeper
Office Manager				Office Manager
<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>				<b>SALARY TOTAL</b>
\$403,000	\$92,000		\$92,000	\$587,000
<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>				<b>WAGE TOTAL</b>
\$248,000	\$28,000	\$3,000	\$49,000	\$328,000
<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>				<b>OTPS TOTAL</b>
\$201,000	\$19,000	\$2,000	\$36,000	\$258,000
<b>TOTAL BUDGET (FY15 dollars)</b>				<b>TOTAL BUDGET (FY15 dollars)</b>
\$852,000	\$139,000	\$5,000	\$177,000	\$1,173,000

NOTE – All costs (salary, wage, OTPS (Other than Personnel Services)) are based on FY15 budget projections.

\* Additional positions which are vacant and/or will bring park to standard base level staffing.





### LEGEND

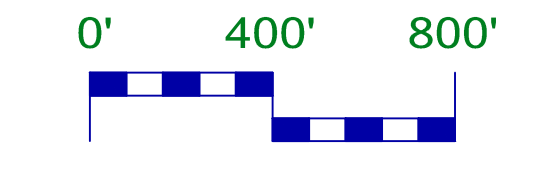
- PROPOSED FACILITIES
- EXISTING FACILITIES
- PARK PROPERTY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- WATER
- TREE LINE
- EXISTING ROAD
- EXISTING BUILDINGS
- TRAILS
- RIPARIAN BUFFER
- WETLANDS INVENTORY

- GENERAL NOTES:**
- ON GOING MAINTENANCE / REPAIR TO PARK DAMS AND PONDS.
  - ENHANCE ADA ACCESS THROUGHOUT THE PARK.
  - EXPAND PARK TRAILS & EXPLORE TRAIL CONNECTIONS OUTSIDE PARK.
  - RELOCATE UTILITY WIRES UNDERGROUND.

# MASTER PLAN FOR JAMES RIVER STATE PARK

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
 DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION  
 DIVISION OF PLANNING AND RECREATION RESOURCES  
 PREPARED BY DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

OCTOBER 2014



CONTOUR INTERVAL : 20 FEET