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## **Elizabeth River Trail Offers Something For Everyone – Even Nature Lovers**

NORFOLK, Va. – (March 2021) The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation has organized a special series of tours and events for nature lovers along the trail. All events are FREE, and space is limited to ensure safety precautions for all participants. Some tours are walking tours along the trail, and some are biking tours. All tours are free but registration is required. Masks are required.

March 27, 2 pm	Walking Tour Plum Point Park to West Ghent
April 24, noon	Bike Tour Plum Point Park to Stockley Gardens (Celebrate Trails Day)
May 13, 6 pm	After Work Botanical Bike Tour Pagoda to Plum Point Park
June 12, 10 am	Weyanoke and Jeff Robertson Park - What's in Bloom

March 27 is also the Elizabeth River Trail's annual spring Meadow Volunteer Day from 10-12. The Elizabeth River Trail's award-winning managed meadow and edible orchard in Chelsea needs a little spring cleaning. First planted in December 2017, the meadow features native wildflowers, grasses and edible fruit trees. Volunteers should meet at 1129 Boissevain Avenue, near Benchtop Brewing Company's parking lot on the Elizabeth River Trail. Details at <https://www.facebook.com/events/277381280418024/>.

The Botanical Tour series are led by volunteer Jim Affedit who is a Norfolk Master Gardener. The series is a partnership between Virginia Cooperative Extension and Norfolk Master Gardeners. To view more information and register for these tours, visit the ERT Botanical Tour page here: <https://events.elizabethrivertrail.org/botanicaltours>

"I think COVID-19 has really forced us to be versatile in the way we are thinking about programming, and what Jim is doing with the Elizabeth River Trail is a homerun," said Chris Epes, extension agent with Virginia Cooperative Extension. "It's as good of a collaboration amongst community partners as we could want, and it provides a safe, fun, and active educational opportunity for the whole family to ride the trail, learn about our city and get a crash course in conservation landscaping. The Elizabeth River Trail is quickly becoming something which is iconic of Norfolk, and we couldn't be happier to be a part of it."

"I decided to prepare a botanical guide to the Elizabeth River Trail since it combined multiple interests, provided a fun and educational activity, and kept me both mentally and physically active," added Affedit. "I will lead various tours along the trail with a botanical emphasis as we are able to get back together following our pandemic social distancing."

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation's mission is to promote, enhance and transform the Elizabeth River Trail into the most iconic urban riverfront trail in the country. The ERT runs 10.5 miles and connects businesses, historic attractions and 28 neighborhoods within a five-minute walk. The multi-use trail is designed for walking, running and biking. It comprises 11 sections and 11 trailheads from Norfolk State University to NIT Terminals along the Elizabeth River. Highlights include Harbor Park, Downtown Norfolk, Freemason Historic District, Sentara campus, Fort Norfolk, Chelsea, West Ghent, Lambert's Point, Old Dominion University, Larchmont and Lochhaven. In 2018, the ERT Foundation launched a \$4 million comprehensive capital campaign to raise funds to activate and enhance the 10.5-mile trail. It successfully achieved the goal in 2020. Major sponsors include Sentara and the City of Norfolk. For more information, visit [www.elizabethrivertrail.org](http://www.elizabethrivertrail.org).

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