



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elizabeth River Trail Foundation's 2024 Programs Expand Through Partnerships

NORFOLK, Va. – The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation offers an even broader variety of programs through new and existing partnerships in 2024. They include beautification opportunities with the Norfolk Master Gardeners, increased group paddle sessions with Norfolk Kayak Rentals, ERT's first wildlife-focused tour in collaboration with Elizabeth River Project's Otter Spotter program, and a new Spinclusion program that will offer bike rides to those with limited or different abilities.

Collaboration with Norfolk Botanical Garden will highlight its Garden of Tomorrow initiative while also bringing some unique plantings to the trail.

In its third year, the African American History Tour continues to draw large crowds. In February Norfolk Tour Company's owner and Chief Tour Guide, Josh Weinstein, will share stories of the Elizabeth River as a means of self-emancipation. A version of the tour will be revisited in June in honor of Juneteenth. Four additional historical and educational tours are scheduled including a new free tour of Fort Norfolk.

Also new for 2024 are the Beautification Workdays led by Norfolk Master Gardeners. Meeting on the fourth Friday of each month March - November, Master Gardeners will lead beautification efforts at rotating locations along the trail. This is in addition to the walking and biking Botanical Tours on the fourth Saturday of each month, March - October. The workdays will focus on removing invasive plants and non-native plants, as well as new plant installations. These workdays are open to anyone who wishes to support the trail through beautification and are an opportunity to learn about native plants and plant care from local experts.

The trail season will kick off on March 1 with a fundraising event at Benchtop Brewing. The release of the Wishing Tree Lager will help raise money for the trail. The event will include a group walk and group bike ride option followed by drinks, food, and socializing.

Celebrate Trails Day, April 27, will not only celebrate the Elizabeth River Trail, but also the Virginia Beach Trail set to break ground this year. Through a nearly \$15 million grant, Virginia Beach will create its first multi-modal trail section from the Newtown Road Light Rail station to

Town Center. As the Elizabeth River Trail looks to connect the existing 10.5 miles to the Virginia Beach trail, the Foundation is excited to highlight this positive step toward increased regional trail connectivity.

“What better way to actually Celebrate Trails Day, than by celebrating this regional connection on the horizon,” said Kindra Greene executive director of The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation. “This is a real opportunity to bring together multiple communities and celebrate a connection through trails and show a united force for active transportation, all while beautifying a corridor.”

Tours, events, community programs, and beautification days continue through the summer into the fall. Cooler days bring with them other popular trail programs such as the International Coastal Cleanup, Halloween Puppy Parade, and Glow Party all culminating with the festive Santa Bike Party in December.

ERT 2024 Tour Schedule

February 17 African American History Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

March 16 Lochhaven Resilience Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

March 23 Otter Spotter Nature Walk

March 23 Weyanoke Botanical Walking Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

April 6 Fort Norfolk Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

April 27 Celebrate Spring on the ERT Botanical Bike Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

May 11 Freemason Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

May 25 Colonial Place Gardens Botanical Bike Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

June 22 Chesterfield Heights Botanical Walking Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

June 22 African American History Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

July 27 Larchmont Botanical Bike Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

August 10 Chelsea Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

August 24 Freemason Gardens Botanical Walking Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

September 28 Plant Identification Botanical Walking Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

October 5 Lochhaven Resilience Tour with Norfolk Tour Company

October 26 Identi-Tree & Fall Foliage Botanical Bike Tour led by Norfolk Master Gardeners

If you would like to host an event on the trail, partner with the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation, or sponsor an ERT program, please email hello@elizabethrivertrail.org.

The Elizabeth River Trail Foundation’s mission is to create an inclusive and resilient urban riverfront trail that connects and inspires people and businesses in the Hampton Roads region. The Elizabeth River Trail runs 10.5 miles through 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 from Norfolk State University, through Downtown Norfolk and Old Dominion University to NIT Terminals along the Elizabeth River. The Foundation has completed multiple new unique and award-winning amenities, including kayak launches, play

sculpture, a double turbo challenge course in Plum Point Park, The Glowline and most recently, the installation of the first hydration station. Major sponsors include the City of Norfolk and Sentara. For more information, visit elizabethrivertrail.org.

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