

Parks to the People

*A Strategic Approach to Outreach and Publicity for
the Albemarle County Department of Parks and
Recreation*

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Executive Summary

The Albemarle County Department of Parks and Recreation seeks to expand outreach and publicity efforts, with an eye to increasing community utilization of the parks. To understand the current state of affairs, I interviewed a series of stakeholders from around the County, including County employees, leaders of independent organizations that work closely with the County, Albemarle County Public School teachers, employees of the City of Charlottesville, and other local experts. These folks represent a cross-section of the interests surrounding the parks, and allowed me to craft several programs that fall into three broad categories: web-based outreach, volunteer engagement, and City-County partnerships. These programs were then presented to a panel of experts, convened from among all those interviewed over the course of my research. Based on their evaluation of the programs, I propose implementation in short-, medium-, and long-term packages, constructed based on the programs' feasibility, visibility, and sustainability. Ultimately, I recommend a facebook photo contest and a restructuring of volunteer management in the near term, the hiring of a Volunteer Coordinator in the medium term, and the co-establishment with the City of a joint environmental education program and a UVA liaison in the long-term.

Background

Albemarle County serves almost 100,000 citizens. County residents elect a Board of Supervisors, who set the management agenda for the County Executive to oversee. The department of interest in this analysis is the Department of Parks and Recreation. The Parks and Rec Department (P&R from here forward) employs about twenty people, and oversees over 3300 acres of park land within Albemarle County. P&R's budget has remained largely unchanged every year since the Great Recession, and stands at \$2.28M for FY2014. With this money, P&R maintains the parks and trails and organizes participatory recreation programs, often in partnership with the City of Charlottesville, independent organizations, or both.

Albemarle County P&R focuses on natural resource protection, preserving and maintaining wilderness areas for public enjoyment. By contrast, the City of Charlottesville P&R focuses primarily on participation-intensive recreation, like classes and sports leagues. This policy difference highlights the comparative advantages of the two entities. Charlottesville has a stronger tax base and a larger staff, so they can provide staff- and resource-intensive services. Often as many as 2/3 of the people who utilize these programs are residents of Albemarle County who live outside Charlottesville city limits. The relationship between the two institutions is amicable.

Albemarle County owns and maintains vast swaths of land that are conducive to more personally-driven, less administration-intensive activities. Popular pursuits include fishing, mountain biking, running, canoeing, and other independent or small-group activities. The City and County jointly administer Darden-Towe Park, with the County providing facilities and maintenance, and the City providing organizational manpower to facilitate group sports on Darden-Towe fields.

The public demand for outdoor recreational opportunities is strong in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, and P&R wants to increase utilization of their facilities. This requires informing prospective

visitors about the parks' amenities and capturing the interest of infrequent visitors, increasing rates of attendance. Public parks are a public good, one that Albemarle County pays to maintain, so we can increase value to the taxpayer by increasing the number of patrons and the frequency with which they visit.

Recent elections brought a wave of new members to the Board of Supervisors, many of whom have democratic allegiances and a desire to expand the scope of the County's services. They plan to pay for this expansion with a moderate tax hike, and most of the increase in funds will go to the schools. This may herald a new way of doing business after several years of frozen budgets, and P&R, as a popular program, could be in a position to grow their operating budget in coming years. Though the budget has been set and allocated through June 2015, this new real estate tax will yield an 8.3 percent increase in the budget, \$26.8 million each year¹. This annual increase will open opportunities for new programs, and P&R can make the most of this by using new funds to increase utilization of the parks. Increased attendance is one of P&R's key progress indicators, so investing in outreach will yield the largest return for the people of Albemarle County.

Key Stakeholders

Among the approximately 120,000 people in Charlottesville and Albemarle, there are several groups whose distinct interests or roles make them key stakeholders in park policy. The purpose of this project is to increase utilization of the parks in a broad-based manner, so these stakeholders are mainly of interest as audiences and partners in the outreach effort. The County has already engaged many of these groups at one level or another, and should continue to maintain these relationships while building new ones along similar lines.

City of Charlottesville

The City of Charlottesville is completely surrounded by Albemarle County, though their Departments of Parks and Recreation take different approaches to managing the parks and providing recreational services. Doug Ehman, City of Charlottesville Parks Division Manager, describes the city's specialty as "Active Recreation." This includes classes, sports leagues, and other activities that require intensive administrative input, and involve many users for a given time and space. The City P&R uses its \$9M budget to provide these services to city and county residents alike, and as many as two-thirds of participants live beyond Charlottesville city limits.

One limit to the City's ability to expand its services is a legal limit on the number of full-time employees they can hire. This has hindered the development of some projects that the City has considered for some time, including a youth environmental education program. The County and City partner on the maintenance of Darden-Towe Park, share the costs of capital improvements, and have cooperated on trail construction connecting green spaces. Ehman cited the development of trails and greenways as a

¹ http://www.dailyprogress.com/news/albemarle-supervisors-up-tax-rate-proposal/article_3ec5d36e-a4df-11e3-9b43-0017a43b2370.html

major priority in terms of increasing the accessibility of green spaces in and around Charlottesville. Albemarle County is also contributing \$100,000 to the construction of a new skate park at McIntire Park.

The City also uses its larger budget to construct and maintain new facilities, including the Smith Aquatic and Fitness Center. The County, by contrast, focuses on natural resource preservation, and boasts vast land holdings, some of which are still not fully developed. The working relationship between Albemarle County and City of Charlottesville Departments of Parks and Rec seems amicable. They have complementary assets, and, in the words of Mr. Ehman, they would make “a dynamite combination” if brought together.

Albemarle County Public Schools

The County takes responsibility for grounds maintenance at Albemarle County Public Schools, and their grounds become public parks after 6pm, on weekends, and during the summertime. In exchange for maintenance services, the schools permit the County to send informational materials home with students. For details on this practice, see “Previous Approaches” section below. This partnership currently manifests itself mainly on school grounds and in these materials, but could be expanded. Doug Ehman admitted that the City P&R lack a solid environmental education program. The County, which administers both an extensive K-12 school system and 4000 acres of parks, seems ideally suited to fill this need. This could take the preliminary form of park-hosted field trips, but could emerge into a fully-constituted environmental education program.

Joani Laird, a teacher at Jouett Middle School as well as the Jouett Sports Supervisor, liaises with the County to coordinate afterschool team sports. Some of these sports are run by the schools, others, like those discussed in the next section, are organized by independent entities that use the school facilities when they become County parks. This program has existed for about ten years, and involves a network of PE teachers who double as coaches and coordinators, employed by the County as Sports Supervisors. These positions were created to consolidate the program, favoring county employees over parents in a coaching role, largely for reasons of administrative simplicity.

This program targets elementary school kids to gain their interest, and mostly serves kids enrolled in afterschool care programs from 4pm-6pm. Connecting with children at a young age creates opportunities for them to remain involved and engaged as they grow up, an approach the County can expand beyond just sports programming.

Organized Recreational Interests

One of the most effective ways to reach a large number of people is to message to a group on the basis of their shared identity. In the case of Albemarle County Parks and Recreation, there are numerous independent groups whose members make use of park facilities, as well as area groups whose members would benefit from the services that P&R provides. For example, dozens of independent sports leagues host practices and competitions at County parks. These range from youth and adult baseball to baton-twirling, and complement sports leagues that the County itself administers. These independent leagues have a network of members and established communications across that network that the County could

use to distribute promotional materials. They can also solicit feedback from them to see what they can do to make the parks more hospitable for more such organizations.

SOCA

The largest organization that uses County facilities is SOCA, the Soccer Organization of Charlottesville-Albemarle. Over 5000 participants, children and adults, play with SOCA, using twenty fields throughout the County, including fields at ACPS facilities. Their program is about 30 years old, well-established in the community. They have grown steadily at about 2-3% per year, and are very interested in improving the quality and quantity of fields available to them.

Many of the fields they play on are public fields, which the County allows them to use free of charge. In talks with Matt Wilson, SOCA Commissioner, he cited field quality as one of SOCA's primary concerns. The County lacks the funds and manpower to keep fields manicured for sport, so some of the fields need maintenance above and beyond what the County is able to provide. Wilson noted that, as one of the primary users of the fields, SOCA would be prepared to contribute funding to get the fields to a condition ideal for soccer. He said SOCA is reluctant to do this without a guarantee that their members can use the fields they pay to fix up, since there are many athletic organizations that need the space and the County rotates usage in the interest of fairness.

As far as communications go, SOCA disseminates information to its members almost exclusively by email. Wilson assured me that they would gladly forward calls for volunteer service along to their membership, though he cautioned me that they have had problems being blocked as spam from their members' inboxes before. In an age of increasingly self-regulating inboxes, it seems prudent to be aware of this potential and craft volunteer solicitation emails in a way that avoids their misidentification as spam.

Beyond independent leagues with regular participation, Charlottesville and Albemarle boast a generally fit and outdoors-inclined population who would probably be receptive to the idea of using the parks more thoroughly. This includes groups like the Charlottesville Area Mountain Biking Club and the Thomas Jefferson chapter of Trout, Unlimited, who organize outings for their members and would benefit from a more robust relationship with the County P&R. The county could reach out to these groups as co-sponsors for promotional events, as they have already done with Trout, Unlimited for Kids Fish Free day.

CAMBC

Charlottesville Area Mountain Biking Club, CAMBC, makes extensive use of Albemarle County Parks, and contributes a substantial amount of volunteer labor to trail maintenance. The organization was founded in 2002 as an ad hoc community group to facilitate trail maintenance volunteering, and has since grown into a cohesive social, recreational, and volunteering community. Over the last twelve years, the group has performed about 500-1000 hours of community service per year, depending on the projects available. CAMBC has been instrumental in building and maintaining trails throughout County parks,

although Will Sanford, CAMBC's president, pointed out that volunteers get much more excited about construction of new trails than maintenance of existing ones.

Like SOCA, CAMBC expressed enthusiasm about their partnership with Albemarle, this relationship has been robust for years, and they are happy to use their listserv to disseminate information about volunteer or promotional events from County P&R. They have an arrangement whereby volunteers can earn summer passes to the swimming holes in exchange for 24 hours of service. This arrangement could be used to induce other groups to continue their volunteer relationship beyond the first session. CAMBC also expressed an interest in capital improvements at the parks, like new play structures, picnic awnings, etc. As opportunities for new capital investments arise, P&R would do well to communicate with partners like CAMBC to find out what park patrons want most from their visits.

Miscellaneous

Finally, organized communities like churches and senior centers have dedicated members who tend to plan group activities for their community. These organizations look for programming opportunities that will keep their members engaged and participation strong. The Parks offer venues for low-key activities that emphasize natural beauty and fitness, and are therefore well-suited to the sort of programs these organizations seek to provide. The County should target these groups with promotions aimed at bringing in first-time users to the parks, since people are more likely to try something new as members of a group than on their own.

Albemarle County P&R provides a broadly appealing service, so it is difficult to identify any stakeholders that will oppose an effort to bring park services to more people. The only plausible source of opposition comes from the County administration itself, as increased utilization will increase traffic, trash, and general wear and tear. Increased traffic, while disruptive, is a sign of progress, and could be leveraged by P&R to grow their budget. More popular and better-acclaimed parks tend to increase property values, which in turn increases County tax revenues. This seems like a short-term cost that the County could be persuaded to accept in light of long-run gains.

Previous Approaches

Needs Assessment Report

In 2004, the County commissioned a Needs Assessment Report by Ballard, King, and Associates, a recreation consulting firm from Highlands Ranch, CO. The report evaluated County demographics to identify groups that would be likely to use the parks, and surveyed residents' preferences for recreational activities. They also projected increase or decrease in interest in various activities based on national trends. The Ballard, King, and Associates report recommended new infrastructure to accommodate organized sports and recreation, including new outdoor field complexes and additional aquatic facilities.

The report went on to identify trails and green spaces as the greatest area of necessary growth. While the County did not take this in hand right away, they have since made significant progress, and

Albemarle today boasts 60 miles of trails. Many of the trails are part of a network of “greenways,” essentially linear parks that are intended to connect green spaces and provide alternatives to automobile transportation. Dan Mahon oversees the greenway expansion program, and his first priority is to connect all of the disjointed stretches of trail into a contiguous network. One of the main obstacles is land procurement, making sure the County owns land on which to build these contiguous networks. County residents donate land in an effort to reduce their property taxes and to take a tax write-off, and just this year the county is preparing to incorporate a 600 acre proffer, a substantial boost to their 4000 acre holdings.

The Great Recession of 2008 hampered most large projects, as the County moved onto a cost-saving footing. Through hiring freezes and program cuts, they were able to avoid widespread layoffs, but also faced steep limits to expansion. The county eliminated 70-80 positions, and placed a new, intense priority on efficiency and cost-savings. One way they managed to maneuver within these constraints was through partnerships with independent recreation leagues. These leagues handle the administrative and logistical elements of these activities, with the County providing facilities and maintenance services.

These athletic programs continue to grow year to year, and this has been an effective way for the County to bring new people to the parks without significantly increasing costs. This creates new engagement, bringing people to the parks for the first time and introducing them to facilities they can use above and beyond organized sports. Community partnerships like this target families, encouraging parents and their children to enjoy the parks together. This puts the parks on parents’ radar when it comes to family recreation, especially important in the summertime when kids are out of school.

Trailhead Surveys

At the entrance to each park, and at trailheads within larger parks, the County has paper surveys that patrons can use to provide feedback to the department. These surveys generally yield comments about maintenance needs or aesthetic suggestions, which P&R take very seriously. Bob Crickenberger, Director of Parks and Recreation, emphasized that, in this business, the details matter, and being able to solicit information from patrons allows P&R to address those details.

These surveys are now available online as well, which allows for more easily organized and consolidated information. Most patrons do not fill out surveys, so to solicit more feedback the County would do well to make them more visible, and more visually appealing. The link to the surveys is all the way at the bottom of the P&R page, you have to scroll down to it, and the survey itself is fairly Spartan in appearance. Something as simple as an inviting link and a more visually-appealing survey page could help increase rates of feedback and thoroughness of responses.

Kid’s Fish Free Day

The County has focused on family engagement with Kid’s Fish Free Day, due for its Twentieth Anniversary this April. Community co-sponsors include the Thomas Jefferson chapter of Trout, Unlimited, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Kingfishers. Kids fish for free all

day at Mint Springs Park in Crozet, and local bait and tackle vendors set up shop. Events that target not only families but lifestyle or hobby demographics create first contact for people who are likely to return and continue using the parks. Since the County relies in part on volunteer labor to meet maintenance needs, events that increase community investment in the parks have the additional effect of improving park quality by increasing the volunteer pool.

This event has the potential to expand into a general Memorial Day celebration, or any grand event to open the summer. Doing so would create an opportunity to reward and recognize volunteers, to increase interest in season passes to swimming and fishing parks, and to get people excited about the parks before peak season. All of the County parks are outside the city of Charlottesville, removed from the densest area of settlement. For an event like this to succeed, it must draw members of the Charlottesville community, both for the sake of the event and because they represent a substantial proportion of the Albemarle population, whose park usage we would like to increase.

Albemarle County Public Schools

The partnership between P&R and the schools allows the County to keep grounds maintenance under the purview of one department, but it also creates an opportunity for P&R publicity. The schools allow P&R to send promotional materials and activities-registration brochures home with students in “Tuesday folders.” This allowed the county to reach 7700 students’ backpacks this past year, but Doug Ehman of Charlottesville P&R expressed his doubts regarding this practice. He said that between the redundancy of sending multiple folders to a single household and the tendency of parents to dispose of non-essential paper communications without examining them, this was not cost-effective outreach. He recommended direct mail, which the City uses to reach its residents. However, with twice the population and one-fourth the budget, direct mail is not really viable for the County. One way to assess the effectiveness of this practice would be to include a promotion code in the Tuesday folder papers to track who was registering for classes because of having seen the materials.

As an alternative, Joani Laird of Jouett Middle School identified “Jouett Matters,” the PTO newsletter that most parents use as their primary source of information about the schools. Similar email newsletters exist at most schools in ACPS, and represent a less paper-intensive opportunity to reach a large swath of the population effectively. These newsletters are a valuable platform for announcing recreational programming, volunteer opportunities, and upcoming events. Most parents probably do not know that the school facilities are also County parks, and making people aware of that relationship is valuable in terms of P&R’s visibility in the community.

Web Presence

In light of budget constraints, as well as changing communication trends, the County has worked to update its online presence. The website recently underwent an overhaul to improve accessibility, and users have responded positively. The County’s goal was to make the website a “one-stop shop” where residents can easily find whatever services they need. Bob Crickenberger, Director of Albemarle P&R, said that activities registration has increasingly take place online, replacing paper forms and generally following industry-wide trends. The County has also begun making public announcements on its

facebook page, which has gained over 100 “likes” since I began this research. “Likes” are an important metric of success in facebook-based outreach, since posts from the pages a user “likes” show up in one’s newsfeed. The County’s internet presence costs them little, but increases their visibility, especially among young parents.

Jody Lewis was recently hired by the County as a Communications Specialist, responsible for managing the County’s web presence, including the website and social media, as well as conventional media coverage. Her job largely involves working with the most public-facing departments (Schools, Police, Parks and Rec) to convert their activities into positive press. She recently incorporated Hoot-suite, a social media management program, into their arsenal. Hoot-suite allows the user to track the attention their social media accounts receive, as well as glean demographic data from platforms like facebook. This has been ongoing for only a few weeks, so the data are very limited, but have great potential. In discussing the County’s social media strategy, Lewis was hesitant about individual departments spinning off their own facebook pages. She pointed out that P&R generally represent “feel good” information, and that to take away the charming photos and event announcements from the primary County page might detract from the County’s presence as a whole.

In addition to social media growth, the County has put out a call for proposals to develop a mobile site, one that users can easily access from a smartphone platform. This program has been allocated about \$25,000-\$30,000, and will get underway in the next year. We discussed the possibility of different mobile sites for different departments, but if the sub-pages within the mobile site are clearly identifiable and accessible, that will probably suffice. Lewis is a very recent hire and has many solid initiatives planned, so the media presence of P&R will benefit as the County’s presence generally improves.

Programs

Now that the recession has ended and the County is once again in a position to expand programs, the Parks and Recreation department want to increase the visibility of the parks, and by extension their utilization. Given the context in which P&R currently finds itself, I recommend pursuing three distinct avenues of outreach and publicity. The first is web-based outreach, whereby the county can adapt to communications technology trends, as well as creatively using the online communications infrastructure they already have. The second is volunteer-based outreach, expanding volunteer opportunities to deepen community engagement with the parks. In addition to the examples I explored above, there are a host of community groups in Albemarle County who could be brought to engagement with the parks with just one Saturday morning volunteer session. Finally, I propose programs that the County could jointly undertake with the City of Charlottesville Parks and Recreation department to make the most of their complementary resources. In the words of Doug Ehman, the two have the potential for a dynamite partnership; all they need is the opportunity to collaborate.

Web-Based Outreach

Facebook Photo Contest

The County is adapting to the digital communication century, and currently operates a facebook page with over 1,600 likes. The County can increase traffic to its page, while simultaneously crowd-sourcing new promotional images, by hosting a photo contest on their facebook page. Patrons would post photos to the County of Albemarle page and “like” the page, ensuring that future announcements from the County appear in their newsfeed. This would create a vibrant chronicle of what park usage looks like today, and would also serve as an opportunity to build the facebook page as a piece of communications infrastructure.

A great place to introduce this competition would be at weekly sports league games that take place on county park land. These participants and their families fill the fields from dawn until dark for most Saturdays all year, and while they do, they are prime participants for a contest that encourages them to take action shots of their children and their beautiful surroundings. This elevates the place of the parks in the consciousness of the people of the county, and cultivates a rich, democratic portrayal of what the parks mean to the people they serve. Instruction sheets could be placed next to park evaluation surveys at all the parks, as well as online.

By increasing the number of views to the page, and by encouraging more people to like and post to the page as a part of the contest, we increase the likelihood that other posts by County of Albemarle appear in user newsfeeds in the future. Implicit in this is that the County’s facebook page is not currently very high-profile, so to get this contest going will require established outreach channels. These outreach channels must be simultaneously approached within a one-week window, in order to maximize attention right before the event begins. The event should run for a few weeks to allow for weekend traffic, and culminate with a public award, showcasing one of the parks. The best time to run a program like this would be through April and May, building enthusiasm about the parks before the peak summer season begins.

The initial exposure period is the most critical. To achieve the objective of establishing the county Facebook page as a major component of outreach infrastructure, we must maximize new traffic to the site, measured in site visits and “likes.” The county should first target people who will already be at park facilities, like sports teams, volunteer groups, and recreation groups. Often the latter two overlap, and it would be a simple thing to hand out quarter-sheet printed instructions for the photo contest, including how to post, reminders to like the page and to check back in for announcements throughout the summer. Folks with smart phones can do it right there, and the instruction sheet will include both app and browser-based instructions. The instruction sheet should include information about the prizes and the details of the event where they will be awarded. The costs involved come mainly in this final stage, with the event taking up the lion’s share of manpower and money. The County could incorporate the award celebration into Kids Fish Free Day or other Memorial Day festivities, thereby advertising those festivities through the contest itself.

The main problem I foresee is anemic participation. People may not respond with interest or they may not have a high comfort level with facebook. One way to increase interest is to make the prize explicitly valuable, I propose "Season pass to swimming parks, (\$100 value)." Local businesses are usually willing to donate to events like this, so the park could approach vendors in the area to supply attention-getting prizes, or at minimum food for the event. To address low comfort, we should shorten the time between first hearing about the contest and posting a photo. County personnel can hand these cards out to any group with whom they work in the parks, and can send them out through the schools as well. Culminating the digital contest with a real-world event makes it seem more tangible, and also can increase traffic at the parks at the outset of the summer.

Parks Smartphone App

One of P&R's primary objectives is to preserve and safeguard the natural resources and beauty of Albemarle County. As such, the parks are home to many wild flora and fauna that showcase the biological heritage of the region and delight park visitors young and old. In order to engage the public more deeply in this goal of resource conservation, the county could develop a smartphone app for use in the parks. The county could offer a cash prize to Hack C'ville members or a UVA App development class, or commission a professional app developer, to produce an app that county residents and visitors could download and use when they visit the parks.

The purpose of the application would be to make for a more information-intensive, interactive experience. The app could serve as a wildlife-identification tool, with users answering a series of questions to move through a flowchart and identify what they're looking at. It could function like Foursquare, identifying landmarks where users can check in, sharing photos of novelties like beaver dams, eagle nests, etc. This feature could also be used to identify maintenance concerns, such as a tree that has fallen across a trail, and pinpoint their locations. This would increase responsiveness by County staff and support a more efficient relationship between County and patrons. An app could also be used with signage, with signs identifying points of interest, which a visitor can scan to pull up more information through the app. This would help signs stay small and discrete without compromising their informative nature.

A parks app represents a longer-term investment, since initial development could take months. The time frame and the cost will depend on who the County approaches to develop the app. Sponsoring a contest or sourcing the project to a UVA class would probably be lowest cost, but could take a whole semester. The quality of the final product may be lower than if it were professionally developed, although this gives the advantage of having several candidates to choose from. Professional app developers in Charlottesville will probably turn around a cleaner product, and faster, but they will cost more. They may also be able to provide valuable technical support as app usage continues, and for that reason may be worth the additional cost.

Potential hurdles for this initiative linger mainly in the initial uptake phase. Since people have been using the parks without an app for years, its necessity may initially seem unclear. One way to introduce the application could be to tie it in with a lesson plan that schools can implement on field trips, thereby

introducing children who will share the app with their parents. The schools represent a large target audience, and if the application can be used at several different grade levels, so much the better. Teachers may not show great interest at first, which would slow the adoption process down. One way to mitigate this would be to approach both school-sponsored and independent after school programs (boy and girl scouts, boys and girls club, etc) that may have more curriculum flexibility. One problem with this could be a low density of smart phones among the children, so the program should initially approach high school kids to minimize that problem.

The City of Charlottesville recently launched an app to improve user interaction with the City. It remains in the very initial uptake stages. The County should communicate with the City about this process, and try to learn from what works for the city and what does not. The most valuable information to glean from observing the City's progress is what sort of functionality people want and need from such an app. The County can ride the City's coattails by observing what they need to change about their app to meet constituent needs, and then use this to inform the design of their own.

Volunteer Outreach

Many of the parks' most avid users also volunteer their time to help with park maintenance, often in conjunction with an organization to which they belong. Charlottesville Area Mountain Biking Club is a great example, their members volunteer 500-1000 hours a year with the County. The objective of this program is to establish similar relationships with other organizations in the area, bringing more people into the parks for their first time, and deepening community engagement by giving them a clear opportunity to invest in the parks. These options could fall short of this goal if we fail to make contact with enough groups, if we fail to translate that contact into a volunteer session, or if we fail to cultivate an ongoing relationship once the group initially engages.

Making initial contact is time and manpower-intensive, as it requires identifying candidate organizations, finding a contact person, and scheduling a project that meets mutual needs. One way to start would be to reach out to general service groups, like APO and Madison House at UVA. High School National Honor Society chapters also facilitate volunteer opportunities for their members, and all of these groups can probably offer information on other groups they have worked with in the past. Once these groups have agreed to offer volunteer hours, the quality of their experience will have great bearing on whether they continue to volunteer. Communicating clearly with the contact person beforehand about mutual expectations for the work to be done helps people know what to expect and become enthused. Projects should be designed to show tangible progress, and the best projects will be ones that can be completed in distinct phases. This creates an ongoing project that the group may develop an attachment to, and to which individual members may want to commit additional time. Incorporating the facebook photo contest into these first time sessions gives volunteers instant memorabilia and another dimension of engagement.

The County has an arrangement with CAMBC whereby volunteers who give 24 hours of service get a free pass to the swimming holes. Using this as incentive for volunteers may weaken its power as a prize for the facebook photo contest, but it gives the volunteers a goal to work towards that keeps them

coming back. Since most volunteering will happen in summertime, when people will also want to use the swimming holes, it might make sense to have the volunteer hours from one summer roll over to the next year. The County also sells half-price season passes in late July, so for this year these half-price passes could go out to volunteers who have completed 12 hours by that time. These inducements cost the county foregone revenue, but if individuals or families with volunteer passes bring paying friends and guests, they can offset this loss. They also may not have been initially planning on buying a pass, lowering the opportunity cost to the County of handing them out for free.

The volunteer program is currently jointly run by Dan Mahon and Tucker Rollins. It would be much improved by the creation of a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator position. This position would administer all of the above programs, freeing Tucker and Dan to oversee trail development and outdoor recreation. One of the caveats Tucker made regarding a Volunteer Coordinator is that they must be competent in managing trail construction, preferably with direct experience in that realm. This allows them to oversee weekend volunteer projects, keeping volunteers accountable and on track, and also consolidating the relationship between volunteers and the county into one individual. This consistency allows for a more personal approach, and also deepens accountability, which will keep people coming back to volunteer again.

Each Department is evaluated in terms of Key Progress Indicators, so the Board of Supervisors knows where they are successful and where they need to improve. "Volunteer hours per year" represents one of those KPIs, and therefore to expand volunteer hours will draw positive attention from the Board. Mahon and Rollins have begun logging volunteer hours in the P&R SharePoint folder, the system the department uses to manage its electronic records and communications. I recommend maximally data-intensive record keeping, with particular care taken to log the group name, contact information, how many people volunteered, for how long, and what they did. The purpose of this record keeping is to demonstrate volunteer engagement, but also to ensure that P&R can follow up and invite people to return to volunteer again. Something as simple as a group-specific thank you note, detailing for the group how their work helped the County staff, can go a long way in preserving volunteer engagement. The more time that can be devoted to this process, the greater the volunteer retention. Doug Ehman from City P&R told us that the City had a volunteer coordinator who secured them up to 90,000 man hours of volunteer service each year, and with the elimination of that position, volunteer hours have fallen to about 20,000 man hours per year. Volunteer management involves both project management and relationship management, and placing someone directly in charge of both things to the exclusion of all else leads to substantially higher engagement.

City-County Partnerships

Environmental Education Program

The City and County have complementary resources and a solid history of collaboration on projects like trails, Darden Towe Park, and sports leagues. An environmental education program could leverage the City's funds and manpower to make the most of the County's extensive land holdings and their mission of natural resource conservation. Initial participants could be drawn from existing afterschool programs,

though the City and County could advertise through the schools to the student population as a whole. The necessary components of this program include teaching staff, a curriculum, and transportation to and from the parks.

This program could reach out to ACPS for staff to run these programs, and the city and the county could negotiate cost sharing to compensate staff. If existing afterschool programs are already short-staffed, it may be ineffective to recruit staff from there. Another option would be to recruit university students as instructors; they would probably cost less, though they may also be less effective facilitators.

The county could present the need for a curriculum to a class at UVA, and could offer the team that creates the best program the opportunity to implement it. One course, ARCH 2250, Global Sustainability, taught by Professor Phoebe Crisman, presented its students a similar task on behalf of the Elizabeth River Project in Portsmouth, VA last spring. As with other options for using UVA classes, the costs are low, but the work product may not be as clean. With several teams working toward the same goal, though, the County is likely to see at least one proposal that it can refine into an implementable form. As with the app, putting the project to students makes for a longer timeframe as well.

I contacted the Environmental Learning Center in Fort Collins, CO, to learn more about their programs and what the County of Albemarle could learn from their efforts. They are a nonprofit affiliated with Colorado State University, and have been hiring college students to write lesson plans and teach and run programs for over ten years. The Environmental Learning Center designs customized lesson plans based on age and grade level, and plans written for a program in Albemarle could use Virginia Environmental Science SOLs as guidelines to keep the programs relevant. One program that ELC provides is called Great School Escapes, which are classes that take place on teacher in-service days, when kids are not in school but parents still work. This program targets K-5 students who would be too young to stay home alone. At the other end of the age spectrum, ELC also runs a program called Envriomentors, which brings in college students to mentor high school students in designing projects for an environmental science fair.

The ELC has been operating in its current state for about 12 years, but has been a recipient of patronage from CSU for much longer. In 1989 CSU students voted for some of their tuition fees to support the ELC, and the land they teach their programs on was donated to the school for educational purposes. Kristin Dean, the Program Director for the ELC, told me about the aspects of the program that allow it to succeed. They began with a strong relationship with the Poudre County School District, providing environmental education field trips for all ages. As kids became exposed to the program through their schools, parents began signing their kids up for other extracurricular programs run by ELC. The ELC offers its classes for \$10 for members, \$40 for non-members, per day-long session. Annual memberships only cost \$25 per child; so many parents invest in the ELC to have a well-reputed option for environmental education programming, particularly on school in-service days.

Transportation logistics become increasingly complex with greater participation. Most of the county parks are outside the Charlottesville urban ring, so no existing public transit runs to them. Many of the kids participating in this program may not have access to vehicles, and liability and logistics are simpler if

all participants are accounted for. Albemarle County school buses could transport students from a central meeting point, like their school, to the parks and back.

This program should start slow, with weekly sessions with small classes, to keep staff and transportation costs down. The city and county can expand the program incrementally, incorporating in-service days or other types of programs, as resources and interest allow. Gradual implementation through a partnership with ACPS will aid in institutionalization of such a program, and keeping the schools engaged will ensure its survival over time.

University Engagement Liaison

In designing the approach to several of these proposals, the potential for crowd-sourcing creative ideas and work from university students has arisen. Within the Batten school alone, students work on projects for independent clients that range from grant writing to research to data analysis. The Engineering, Education, and Architecture schools also train their students with skills that are applicable to projects that the City and County need completed. By creating a position that involves aggregating projects that the city and county need doing and presenting them in a framework that professors can incorporate into their curricula, the City and County can tap a bright and inexpensive source of creative labor. In addition to university classes, this liaison could make the project list available to the Jefferson Public Citizens, an organization that sponsors student-led service projects.

The key factors in implementing this program involve settling the nature of the position and clearly delineating channels of communication. The city and county must decide whether to create a new position entirely, and hire a new employee, or to incorporate the responsibilities of this position into an existing one. In either case, compensation for these duties will need to come from somewhere, so the City and County will need to negotiate cost-sharing. I propose an initial 66-33 split between the City and County respectively, with a provision for revisiting this after one year when both groups have had time to assess the value of the projects the liaison can get underway. In terms of communication, they must establish a strong relationship with the University, publicizing to the academic departments that this resource exists. Both City and County staff should receive briefings about the goals of this new position, and should be encouraged to submit projects to them for refining and pitching to the University.

I spoke to Julie Caruccio, the Director of Student Affairs and Community Engagement, about the potential for such a position. She said that a representative from the City and County who presents opportunities for in-class public service is something that many have discussed, but has never gained any real traction. She mentioned former Mayor Dave Norris and his Charlottesville Institute as an example of a similar initiative that never got off the ground. She said that, to date, professors like Phoebe Crisman in the Architecture School and Paul Martin in the Batten School have used their own personal and professional connections to find projects for their students. The Office of Community Engagement compiles a list of classes (Appendix C) with a public service or public-facing emphasis, which would be a good place for a liaison to identify faculty who would be amenable to public partnership projects.

In order to be effective, the liaison must emphasize applicability of the projects to specific classes, and reach out to these professors directly in pursuing implementation. Many professors are open to this, and given one or two semester's notice, Caruccio was confident that others would be interested in incorporating partnership projects into their curricula. She told me that UVA has the highest rate of service of any comparable student body, 81% of UVA students engage in public service each year. Creating this position allows the City and County to solicit the help of UVA students based on their current needs, which creates value for the community and strengthens the University's relationship with these partners. It also deepens the engagement of students with their community, a goal that City, County, and University officials have all indicated interest in pursuing.

Program Evaluation

These programs are not mutually exclusive, but, in the face of cost and manpower constraints, the County must make decisions about which programs to implement and when. In order to inform that decision, I convened a panel of the stakeholders and local experts I had interviewed over the course of my research. I asked them to evaluate the programs on the basis of their anticipated feasibility, visibility, and sustainability.

Feasibility

This metric captures a number of the logistical details of bringing a program to life. Most relevant to this analysis are time frame, cost, and institutional relationships. Since the budget for the 2014-2015 year has already been determined, the County cannot afford to undertake most of these programs for at least the next year. Some of the programs involve multi-lateral partnerships between the County and other institutions, and so implementation of those may require a longer time frame in order to bring the various constituent parts into alignment. The programs that I recommend in the short-term packages are ones that the focus group indicated the county could take on right now, whereas moderate-term and long-term programs require additional funds, buy-in, or both, in order to succeed.

Visibility

An important metric for any outreach strategy is visibility- how many people see or receive your message? There are a number of ways of determining this, and they vary by medium. A social media-based approach can measure its visibility in terms of increased web traffic. A paper campaign like the ones they send in Tuesday folders reaches a large number of households, but isn't necessarily visible amongst all the other materials. Ultimately, each program's visibility can be measured in terms of traffic to the parks each week. The County has traffic cameras at the parking lots of several parks, which count cars and report weekly visitation numbers. They can use these cameras to track attendance in the wake of a new program, and determine its effectiveness. One of the most important factors in the panelists' assessment was demand from county park-goers, requests or suggestions about P&R services that they have heard or made themselves. The options in the short-term package were those particularly well-rated for visibility, the better to pique initial interest in the outreach program.

Sustainability

Finally, the most subjective metric, but no less important for it, is sustainability. To what extent can this alternative be relied upon to continue generating increased interest, especially relative to cost? For example, a photography contest may garner a lot of interest, but running them too frequently may cause a loss of novelty and interest. An institutional partnership, on the other hand, like a monthly volunteer day coordinated through local sports organizations, continues to pay dividends in terms of park exposure.

Ultimately, if the outreach and publicity recommendations accomplish their desired traffic increase, the county will have to revisit its park infrastructure to accommodate higher demand. The County will have to evaluate these variables as they arise. Ideally, these increased costs will serve as evidence of higher demand for Parks and Rec, and they can leverage this demand to grow their budget, not just to account for greater need but also to continue expanding services. This outreach push is the beginning, but if it gathers momentum, could elevate the parks as a government priority and, to an even greater extent than they already are, as a community fixture.

Parks to the People Decision Matrix

Package	Program	Feasibility	Visibility	Sustainability
Short Term	Facebook Photo Contest	7	6	6
Short Term	Volunteer Management Revision	6	5	7
Medium Term	Volunteer Coordinator	5	6	7
Medium Term	Smartphone App	4	5	4
Long Term	Environmental Education Program	4	6	6
Long Term	University Liaison	4	5	6

Since any outreach program must target the community it seeks to reach on the basis of that community's wants, needs, and circumstances, I form my recommendations mainly on the basis of interviews from P&R employees, heads of major patron organizations, and representatives from the City and other departments at the County. These qualitative interviews allowed me to learn a great deal about the current state of P&R, their programs, and the trends surrounding their work. The Panel of Experts evaluated the programs from the perspective of their role and their experience, using a combination of spectrum ranking and free response feedback. The scores in the table below are the aggregation of their assessments. Participants were asked a series of questions (Appendix A) some free response, some ranking various elements on a scale of 1-7. I have rated each of the programs in terms

of feasibility, visibility, and sustainability based on the responses to this survey, as well as interviews with local experts who could not attend the meeting, such as Kathryn Ware of Willowtree Apps.

Program Implementation Packages

The programs are divided into short-term, medium-term, and long-term implementation packages. I have included detailed assessments of these programs, drawing from the Panel of Experts as well as my other interviews. The following assessment explains the placement of each program in its respective package, along with more detailed notes on implementation. The short-run programs require little funding, and include low-cost programs and institutional changes that can make P&R outreach more effective. The medium-term programs require greater investment of funds, but could significantly improve patron and volunteer experiences with the park. The long-term programs represent changes in institutional relationships that could dramatically impact the way the City, County, and community interact with each other and the Parks themselves.

Short-Term

Facebook

The first program to launch in the short-term package is the facebook photo contest. According to Jody Lewis, Communications Specialist for Albemarle County, this program would be most effective if carried out on the County's facebook page, as opposed to one dedicated only to the parks. She described Parks and Rec as the "feel good" department, with usually pleasant news, so she wouldn't want to see that part leave the county page. The photo contest will rely on initial publicity to volunteer groups, school groups, and sports leagues that use the parks, which require printing instruction cards for county staff to distribute.

This program can be implemented immediately, for about \$1000, and will draw attention to the parks right as summer commences and attendance naturally increases. I included it in the short-term package because of its low cost and logistical simplicity, but also because the focus group rated it very highly in terms of visibility. Jody has been diligently expanding the footprint of the facebook page, and a move like this makes use of parents' and volunteers' existing tendency to photo-document their time in the parks. By tying it in to a celebratory event, it becomes time-bound, which will manifest itself in a concentrated period of high-intensity participation. This is the kind of engagement that succeeds on social media, drawing attention to the program and the parks themselves.

This event, if successful, can become an annual fixture, sourcing new images for promotional materials and giving the county a new platform for parks promotion. It can join Kids Fish Free Day as part of the county's celebration of the beginning of summer, elevating interest right before the main park season. This program also scored well on sustainability for its spillover effect of raising the profile of the County facebook page as a messaging platform. It pays dividends by increasing the number of people who are connected with Albemarle online, and therefore see announcements from the County in their newsfeed.

Volunteer Management

Volunteers represent a captive audience for outreach and promotional materials, and the better P&R tracks their participation, the more those relationships can flourish. This program rated high on visibility because the focus group resoundingly agreed that participation in volunteer activities increased the likelihood that a person would return to the park as a patron. The better-maintained these volunteer relationships are, the more close an affinity volunteers will feel with the parks themselves. This program also earned high marks on sustainability, as the main thrust is to improve communication with an organization of volunteers, garnering more volunteer hours in a self-reinforcing way.

This is a short-term program because the changes are simple, low-cost, and largely internal. They are designed to make volunteer management more efficient, but will not see dramatic gains in volunteerism without a dedicated volunteer coordinator. The structural adjustments to the volunteer program are only the first step, meant to be undertaken in the next year within the currently allocated budget. On average, the focus group estimated that the logistical strain involved with an increase of 240 hours per month would warrant the hiring of a volunteer coordinator, so if this program yields an increase of that magnitude, P&R should pressure the County to create this position.

Medium-Term

Volunteer Coordinator

The county has been exploring the idea of creating a volunteer coordinator position now that the recession-imposed hiring freeze is beginning to thaw. Suggestions of creating one position responsible for the entire county's volunteering programs have met with skepticism, given the wide variety of tasks the County enlists volunteers for. The Police Department, for example, has requested a coordinator of their own, given the specialized nature of their work. Parks and Recreation made a similar request, which was denied in this year's budget hearings.

Apart from volunteer supervision, this role would manage the logistics of growing and maintaining the volunteer pool. This puts the position in the medium-term, one that I would like to see created in the next year or two. Doug Ehman of Charlottesville P&R informed us that, when the City had a Volunteer Coordinator, they enjoyed 85,000-90,000 hours of volunteer service each year. With the elimination of this position, their volunteer hours have dropped to around 20,000 hours per year, a dramatic loss. I will not claim that a Volunteer Coordinator would increase hours four-fold, but one person taking total responsibility for volunteers would certainly smooth logistical challenges. Testimony from Ehman could help sway the Board of Supervisors on the subject of Volunteer Coordinator during next year's budget hearings.

Creating this position will not be possible for at least one year, since the budgets have been set through June 2015. For this, and because the request was denied this year, it received middling marks on feasibility. The program did receive strong marks on visibility, because one person is now the designated face of the volunteer program. This affords a more robust program that groups in the community can engage more easily.

In order to maximize the value of this investment, the volunteer coordinator must play a binary role. On the one hand, they are an important part of the maintenance and support infrastructure for Parks and Recreation. On the other hand, they are an ambassador for the department, encouraging community groups to become actively invested in the Parks' wellbeing. If successful in this regard, the Volunteer Coordinator will make sustainable contributions by permanently augmenting the County's available volunteer labor force, as well as making volunteering for the parks a more mainstream activity.

Smartphone Platform Development

Smartphones have become a platform for everything from checking the news to paying the bills. As saturation of these devices continues to change the way people interact, having a niche on the smartphone platform will make the parks more accessible. This program falls in the medium-term category because of prohibitive costs and dubious effectiveness in terms of visibility and sustainability.

In talks with Kathryn Ware of Willowtree Apps, a developer in Charlottesville, I learned that a professionally-developed app usually costs about \$50,000 after consultations and troubleshooting. This is so far outside the County's price range as to be effectively impossible, the panel agreed the county seemed unlikely to spend more than \$2000 dollars on such a project. Given that it has extremely low feasibility, this program will need to wait for a more favorable budget atmosphere.

The county is already considering the development of a mobile website, which might draw resources away from an app. Given the advice of Ware, this development may be positive. A mobile website accomplishes the goal of a more information-rich park experience, but is more feasible because the parks would only be one piece of the overhaul. A mobile site, while not dedicated specifically to the parks, could increase their visibility simply by increasing the frequency with which people seek out information about the county on their phones. This development could lay important groundwork by associating smartphones with county-related reference material, so later on a Parks app might see greater uptake.

The City of Charlottesville Parks and Recreation just launched an app of their own, so the County would do well to observe its early progress and learn from this. Kathryn Ware cautioned me that apps are usually intended to target very large consumer bases, and a constituency of 100,000 people may just not be a sufficiently large audience. For this reason, the app program also ranks low on sustainability, as the experts seem skeptical of its power to deliver return on investment.

Long-Term

City-County partnerships represent longer-term options because of the many moving parts that must be brought to work together. Doug Ehman said of these partnerships "we have more money than we know what to do with" which floored the folks from the County, and highlights the potential for the two institutions to collaborate. However, statutory limitations on hiring make it so the City can only hire a limited number of full-time employees at a time. This limits their growth, especially in terms of programming. The County can offer an outlet for City funds and, since their athletic program

participants are up to 2/3 County residents, there is ample precedent for cost and program sharing across these institutions.

Environmental Education Program

This program incorporates the skills of many different groups who work closely with Parks and Recreation. The program falls in the long-term package because these several groups must each commit the time and resources necessary to make the program function. These include the Albemarle County Public Schools, the City, and the County, to name a few. It ranks low on feasibility because of the extended time frame, but the City has the money, and the County has the facilities, so it could become more feasible with a clear cost-sharing plan.

The costs of this program come in the form of staff, transportation, curriculum materials, and initial outreach. Program design assistance from the Environmental Learning Center in Colorado can help keep costs down by learning from their experience in this field. The program meets demand that panelists reported having heard from their patrons and folks in the community, they were very confident that such a program would increase use of the parks among participants, even after the classes had concluded. This makes the program highly visible, drawing new park patrons and solidifying their interest in the parks.

Doug Ehman said that this type of program represents a hole in their offerings that they have been trying to close for some time. When the County and the schools approach the City about funding such a program, they should make it clear that this is the time for all three of their aspirations to converge on this program. Coordination with the County and the schools could channel this money into a program that changes the face of environmental education in Albemarle. Its potential to become a fixture within the broader Charlottesville Green City initiative makes this program a strong one in the sustainability category as well.

University Liaison

This position represents a long-term relationship that will have to adapt over time to the landscape at UVA. Even more than the environmental education program, this role requires coordination across several groups. It must bring together the interests of various UVA academic departments, as well as the City and County, and present them in a way that is accessible and actionable to students. Ad hoc relationships like this have existed between certain professors or departments and various external clients in Charlottesville and beyond, so there is some precedent to work off. These projects are usually arranged bilaterally between professor and community partner, so aggregating them into one pool will change the way classes approach community partners. This should, in theory, make things easier on the faculty, but the program will only succeed with buy-in from professors. This will require the liaison to frame the projects around curricula, partnering with UVA faculty to maximize relevance. This may at times limit the types of projects the liaison can connect with a class, limiting gains from the program. It may take several years to solidify, placing this program in the long-run category on the grounds of low feasibility.

Once the program is underway, the liaison must strive to deepen the connection between the students working on the projects and the public department they serve. This means face-to-face introductions of community partners, as well as facilitating communication between students and the department with which they work. There are projects across the City and County that would be germane to many classes at UVA, so the University Liaison would have to represent interests broader than simply those of Parks and Recreation. This would dilute the direct benefit of the position to P&R visibility, but panelists agreed that those who worked on projects specifically on behalf of the parks would develop a deeper interest in their wellbeing, and therefore within that scope this role could raise visibility.

In terms of sustainability, the panelists agreed that investing in this partnership could reap long-ranging rewards for all parties involved. Public institutions like the City and County always have work that needs doing, and professors always need projects to challenge and engage their students. This also deepens the relationship between the University and the local community, creating new opportunities for students to invest themselves in every part of their surroundings, including the parks.

Conclusion

The Albemarle Parks and Recreation Department has weathered bleak budgets and continued to provide citizens of the County with well-maintained parks and community recreation programs. Now that the recession has ended and the Board of Supervisors is pushing for a tax increase, department budgets have more flexibility to grow their operations. While the majority of new revenues will go first toward Albemarle Schools, Parks and Rec has a chance to make a case for new programs that will improve their ability to perform their role in the community.

I recommend that P&R move forward with the facebook photo contest in the final weeks before summer begins, leading up to a celebration that either builds upon Kids Fish Free Day or establishes a new Memorial Day event. The contest utilizes existing relationships to build the County's social media reach, expanding their outreach infrastructure.

I also recommend that P&R adjust their volunteer management to emphasize relationship-building and maintenance. By incorporating volunteers into an outreach agenda, P&R can deepen their investment in the parks by offering incentives for longer commitments and by following up and cultivating relationships with local organizations. Targeting organizations and reaching out to people in their self-constructed communities helps incorporate volunteering and the parks into the identity of the group in question. These changes rely on improved record-keeping and follow up, and represent simple improvements that will help deepen and elaborate community engagement with the parks.

I recommend that these adjustments to volunteer management be made with an eye to demonstrating the value and necessity of a Volunteer Coordinator. While the Board of Supervisors did not support the creation of such a position this year, P&R should make the case to next year's budget committee for a Volunteer Coordinator for their department. After several months of managing volunteers as part of an outreach strategy, Mahon, Rollins, and the whole department will have a much clearer sense of the specific needs that a Volunteer Coordinator would meet. In principle, this role embodies the importance of volunteers to the department and their operations, creating a point-person that the

community can identify with volunteering at the parks. This individual will have much more time to reach out to new groups and maintain existing relationships, which would compound the gains of the volunteer management adjustments.

In hiring the Volunteer Coordinator, the logistical challenges that implementing volunteer management presents should factor into selection criteria, as should their competence with the actual work that volunteers will be expected to do. Mahon and Rollins have trail construction expertise that keeps volunteers productive and on-track, and this skill set would be essential in anyone overseeing volunteer work. If this role does not receive funding this year, P&R should continue to refine the position description, potentially at first presenting the role as a part-time position, pending review.

With respect to the County's mobile platform presence, I recommend they wait and watch the City's new app, to gauge demand and to see what troubleshooting events may arise. There are already calls for proposals out for a mobile site, so Parks and Recreation should consider what functionality they would want available for their department on that platform. Volunteer registration, activity registration, park navigation, and park information are the four functions I would prioritize, as these are likely the most common ways people will be seeking time-bound information on the parks.

The University Liaison role will have to be discussed further with the City to determine cost-sharing, as well as what projects to present first. I have included in the appendices a list of professors whose classes are geared toward public service projects with community partners, as a starting point for anyone seeking to engage UVA students in such projects. This program has had several iterations and false starts from various involved parties over the years, so a more deliberate approach that cleanly integrates City, County, and Faculty needs will require more conversations among those parties before implementation is possible.

Finally, I recommend that the County P&R approach the City P&R and ACPS about developing an environmental education program to roll out summer 2016. The Environmental Learning Center in Fort Collins, CO has extensive experience and can provide advice on administrative issues that they have encountered. Since a coalition of several interests will be necessary to make this a reality, I recommend the program begin small in scope, perhaps at one pilot elementary school, and expand as learning by doing allows.

The Albemarle County Parks and Recreation Department works to preserve the natural beauty of our land, and to facilitate community enjoyment of that beauty. This manifests itself in many ways, and it contributes to a community culture that cherishes the outdoors and time spent there. In order to better serve the community the Parks and Recreation department should make every effort to inform people of the resources available, and create channels for utilization and investment. People live busy lives, and do not frequently deviate from established routines. Sometimes it takes a disruption, an invitation to volunteer, to post a photo, to attend an event, to make people aware of something new and wonderful that was right at their fingertips. Parks and Recreation must endeavor always to create those small aberrations, those opportunities to engage, bringing more people to the parks, and bringing the Parks to the people.

Appendix A- Interviews

1/22 Amy Smith, Albemarle Recreation Division Manager

1/27 Doug Ehman, Charlottesville Parks Division Manager

2/4 Bob Crickenberger, Albemarle County Parks and Recreation Director

2/18 Joani Laird, Jouett Middle School Sports Supervisor

2/21 William Sanford, CAMBC President

3/4 Dan Mahon, Albemarle Outdoor Recreation Supervisor

3/14 Matt Smith, SOCA Commissioner

3/17 Kathryn Ware, Willowtree Apps

3/18 Jody Lewis, Albemarle County Communications Specialist

3/19 Tucker Rollins, Albemarle Trail Maintenance Supervisor

3/28 Amy Smith, Albemarle Recreation Division Manager

4/2 Sarah Sumoski, Elizabeth River Project, Portsmouth VA

4/8 Kristen Dean, Program Coordinator, Environmental Learning Center, Fort Collins, CO

4/15 Julie Caruccio, Assistant Dean of Students, Director of Community Engagement

Parks and Recreation Panel of Experts

Evaluating Proposed Programs for Feasibility, Visibility, and Sustainability

Facebook Contest: Can the County Spare ~\$1000 to run this program?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

FB Contest: Does this program seem likely to increase traffic to the County Facebook page?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

FB Contest: Does it seem likely that increased traffic will translate to increased park visitation?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

Why or Why Not? (1-2 Sentences)

FB Contest: Is this a program we could see long-term gains from?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

FB Contest: Is this a program we could repeat without loss in effectiveness?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

Smartphone App: How much money would the county be willing to spend on this?

App: Would the presence of this resource change the way you work? If yes, how?

App: What is the likelihood of widespread usage of this tool?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Basically None ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Everyone will be doing it

App: What information might be most useful for the app to convey? (1-2 sentences)

App: Likelihood of continued usage?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Flash in the Pan ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ New piece of infrastructure

App: How much would the county be willing to spend per year to maintain this?

App: The app will require care and information updates from park staff, is there a role that could take this on as an additional responsibility? Who might that be?

Volunteers: How many additional hours a week would the proposed volunteer programs demand of the office?

- ☐ 5
- ☐ 10
- ☐ 15
- ☐ 20+

Volunteers: Can we afford to use swimming passes for a rewards program? If so, how many volunteer hours should it take to earn an individual pass? A family pass?

Volunteers: In your opinion, how many more man-hours per month of volunteering would justify the cost of a volunteer coordinator?

Volunteer Coordinator: How much would a person in this position be paid?

Volunteer Coordinator: What are some qualities you would demand in an effective VC?

Volunteers: To what extent does volunteering at the parks increase likelihood of using them recreationally?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Total conversion

Volunteers: what proportion of volunteer work has to be "corrected" in some way by maintenance staff?

- ☐ Less than 10%, they're mostly pros
- ☐ About 25%, they're not so bad
- ☐ About 50%, you win some you lose some
- ☐ Over 75%, these people are killing me

Volunteers: Rate the likelihood that a SATURDAY WORK CREW volunteer will return to volunteer again.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Never ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Guaranteed

Volunteers: Rate the likelihood that an INDEPENDENTLY SCHEDULED WORK CREW volunteer will return to volunteer again.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Never ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Guaranteed

Environmental Education: Based on other partner ventures, what do you think is the ideal distribution of costs between city and county? Be as specific as possible

EE: Given other after school programs, how much can the program reasonably charge to participate?

EE: To what extent do you think children participating in such a program will make it more likely that their family become park patrons?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Guaranteed

EE: Based on interaction with constituents, is there demand for this?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

EE: How have the city or county addressed demand for such programming in the past?

University Engagement Liaison: How much would a person in this position be paid?

Engagement: To what extent would working for the city/county in this capacity increase student engagement with the parks?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Total Conversion

Engagement: Are there sufficient projects that could be done by students that this would be a good investment?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

No Way ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, Definitely

Engagement: Has anything like this been attempted? How did it go?

Never submit passwords through Google Forms

Appendix C- Contact info for follow up resources

Public Partnership-Oriented Classes at UVA

ANTHROPOLOGY

- ANTH 2280
Medical Anthropology | TR 15:30 - 16:45 | McLeod 2014 | Douglass
- ANTH 4591
Social Inequalities Amid Globalization | R 14:00 - 16:30 | Cabell 287 | Khare
- ANTH 5360
World Mental Health | W 18:30 - 21:00 | Wilson Hall 141A | Merkel

[TOP](#)

ARCHITECTURE

- ARCH 2150/5150/COMM 3880/ENGR 2595
Global Sustainability | TR 11:00 - 12:15 | Campbell Hall 153 | Jones
- ARCH 5500-003/PLAN 5500-002
Health Impact + Design | W 9:00 - 11:45 | Campbell Hall 325 | Somers
- ARCH 5500-005/PLAN 5580-003
Advanced Housing Seminar | W 10:00 - 11:30 | Campbell Hall Exbc | Roettger, Moomaw
- ARH 5603
Community Public History Seminar | R 15:30 - 18:00 | Campbell Hall 425
- LAR 4200/5200
Healing Spaces | R 14:00 - 17:00 | Campbell Hall 108 | Rainey
- LAR 5280/PLAC 5860
Green Cities, Green Sites | W 9:00 - 11:45 | Campbell Hall 302 | Firehock
- PLAC 5500-001
Planning and the Nonprofit Sector | T 15:30 - 18:00 | Campbell Hall 305 | Spain
- PLAC 5500-002
Community Food Systems | T 11:00 - 13:45 | Campbell Hall Exbc | Denckla Cobb
- PLAN 3860/6860
Cities + Nature | TR 14:00 - 15:15 | Clark Hall 108 | Beatley
- PLAN 5400
Housing and Community Development | M 9:00 - 11:45 | Lower W. Oval Room, Rotunda | Moomaw
- PLAN 5500-001
Leadership for Community Change | W 13:00 - 15:30 | Lower W. Oval Room, Rotunda | Moomaw
- PLAN 5580-002
Fundraising | W 17:00 - 19:00 | Campbell Hall 108 | Firehock
- PLAN 5580-006
Sustainable Land Development | R 15:30 - 18:00 | Campbell Hall 107 | Missel

COMMERCE

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- COMM 2559
iStartup | TR 14:00 - 15:15 | Rouss Hall 403 | Touve
- COMM 3790
Venture Capital and the Emerging Firm | W 11:00 - 13:45 | Robertson Hall 221 | Richardson
- COMM 3880/ENGR 2595/ARCH 2150/5150
Global Sustainability | TR 11:00 - 12:15 | Campbell Hall 153 | Jones
- COMM 4681
Entrepreneurship Track Capstone | M 15:30 - 18:30 | Robertson Hall 116 | Richardson, Martin
- COMM 4690
Global Management | TR 11:00 - 12:15 | Robertson Hall 260 | Wilkerson
- COMM 4821
[Managing Sustainable Development](#) | MW 12:30 - 13:45 | Robertson Hall 260 | Brown
- COMM 4822
Invest in Sustainable Future | MW 14:00 - 15:15 | Robertson Hall 260 | White
- ECON 3050
Economics of Welfare Reform | TR 9:30 - 10:45 | Maury Hall 110 | Olsen
 - ECON 3050
Economics of Welfare Reform | TR 12:30 - 13:45 | Cabell Hall 268 | Olsen

EDUCATION

- EDHS 2892/WGS 2892
Issues Facing Adolescent Girls II | M 16:00 - 18:00 | Monroe Hall 130 | Lawrence, Levy
- EDHS 2895
Minding the Mind: Engaging Youth in Learning | TR 11:00 - 12:15 | Dell 2 101 | Loper
- EDHS 3020/5021
Contemporary Health Issues | TR 9:30 - 10:45 | McLeod Hall 2014 | Edwards
- EDHS 3500-001/WGS 3501
YWLP: Women's Leadership with Technology II | M 17:00 - 18:00 | Cabell Hall 032 | Lawrence, Levy
- EDHS 3500-003
Fostering Leadership in Girls and Women II | M 16:00 - 18:00 | Physics Bldg 210 | Lawrence, Levy, Merritt
- EDHS 3500-004/005
Practicum in Peer Alcohol Education | TR | loc: TBA | Bruce, Deering
- EDHS 5240
Substance Abuse in Society | M 18:30 - 21:00 | Clark Hall 108 | Pleszkoch

- EDHS 5500
Topics in Health Promotion | time: TBA | loc: TBA | Barry, Leonard
- EDLF 1200
Examining the Effectiveness of Social Innovation | TR 9:30 - 10:45 | Dell 2 100
| Bassok, Wyckoff

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ENGINEERING

- CE 2100
Introduction to Environmental Engineering | TR 11:00 - 12:15 | Thornton Hall E316 | Culver
- CS 4971
Capstone Practicum II | MWF 10 - 10:50 | Rice Hall 120 | Bloomfield
- ECE 3502
Student-Initiated Projects | time: TBA | loc: TBA | Holmes
- ENGR 1559
Strategies for Entrepreneurs | MW 15:30 - 16:45 | Thornton Hall E304 | Muir
- ENGR 2595/COMM 3880/ARCH 2150/5150
Global Sustainability | TR 11:00 - 12:15 | Campbell Hall 153 | Jones
- STS 2500-001
The Entrepreneur in History | TR 14:00 - 15:15 | Mechanical Engr Bldg 341 | Carlson
- STS 2500-003
Sustainability in Engineering & Society | MW 17:00 - 18:15 | loc: TBA | Lee
- STS 2500-004
Startup Oper for Entrepreneurs | MW 14:00 - 15:15 | Thornton Hall E304 | Muir

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GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

- GDS 3020
Global Development, Theories and Case Studies, Part Two | MW 14:00 - 15:15 | Chemistry Bldg 305 | Edmunds
- GDS 3113
A Buddhist Approach to Development | MW 17:00 - 18:15 | Fayerweather Hall 206 | Maxwell
- GDS 4952
University Museums Internship | F 10:00 - 12:30 | New Cabell Hall 036 | Love, Handler
- GDS 4962
Critical Issues in International Education | F 13:00 - 14:50 | New Cabell Hall 042
| Parcels

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HISTORY

- HIEU 1501
Food in the Early Modern World | R 13:00 - 15:30 | New Cabell Hall 283 | Lambert
- HIST 3559-003
The Entrepreneur in History | TR 14:00 - 15:15 | Mechanical Engr Bldg 341 | Carlson

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MUSIC

- MUEN 2690/3690/4690
African Music and Dance Ensemble and Performance in Africa (Levels 1, 2, and 3) |
TR 17:30 - 19:15 | Old Cabell Hall 107 | Kisliuk

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NURSING

- GNUR 6052
Epidemiology and World Health | R 13:30 - 16:20 | Mcleod Hall 1003 | Wells
 - GNUR 6052
Epidemiology and World Health | F 13:00 - 15:50 | Claude Moore Nursing Educ 1120 | Malpass
- NUCO 4450
Population and Public Health Nursing Perspectives | T 9:00 - 12:00 | Claude Moore Nursing Educ 1110 | Friberg
- NUCO 4600
Community Health Nursing | MW 10:00 - 12:10 | Claude Moore Nursing Educ 1120 | Conway
- NUIP 4003
Exploring Culture and Healthcare Access Issues through Remote Area Medicine | W 17:10 - 19:10 | Claude Moore Nursing Educ 1110 | Snyder
- NURS 3003
Nursing Leadership in Action | time: TBA | loc: TBA | Maxwell-Thompson

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PAVILION SEMINARS

- PAVS 4500-006
Global Food Security & Environment | W 16:30 - 19:00 | Pavilion VIII 108 | D'Odorico
- PAVS 4500-007
Water, Health, and Society | R 14:30 - 17:00 | Pavilion VIII 108 | Dillingham

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PSYCHOLOGY

- PSYC 7503
Contemporary Issues: Community Psychology | T 12:30 - 13:45 | Gilmer Hall 225 | Wilson

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PUBLIC HEALTH

- PHS 5015/7015
Qualitative Methods for Community and Global Health | F 12:00 - 14:30 | loc: TBA | Richardson
- PHS 5630
Healthy Appalachia: A Community-based Participatory Research Partnership | T 17:00 - 19:30 | loc: TBA | Cattell-Gordon, McGarvey

- PHS 7181
Research in Public Health | M 13:30 - 14:20 | loc: TBA | Hornsby
- PHS 7380
Environmental Health: Principles and Practices | M 9:00 - 11:30 | loc: TBA | Allen

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PUBLIC POLICY

- PPOL 3210
Introduction to Civic Leadership | M 15:30 - 18:00 | Minor Hall 125 | Chou
- PPOL 4210
Ethical Dimensions of Civic Life | TR 9:30 - 10:45 | Rouss Hall 410 | Todd
- PPOL 4220
Poverty: In the US and Rest of the World | F 9:00 - 11:00 | loc: TBD | Braithwaite
- PPOL 4730
Field Course in Global Social Entrepreneurship | M 18:15 - 20:45 | loc: TBD | Baird
- PPOL 4735
Field Course in Local Social Entrepreneurship | W 8:30 - 11:00 | Monroe Hall 122 | Purnell
- PPOL 4740
Philanthropy | TR 14:00 - 15:15 | New Cabell Hall 291 | Martin

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SOCIOLOGY

- SOC 3290
Sociology of Childhood | TR 9:30 - 10:20 | Dell 1 103 | Pugh

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RUSSIAN IN TRANSLATION

- RUTR 3340
Books Behind Bars: Life, Literature, & Community Leadership
T 12:30 - 16:45, R 12:30 - 13:45 | loc: TBD | Kaufman

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WOMEN, GENDER & SEXUALITY

- WGS 2892/EDHS 2892
Issues Facing Adolescent Girls II | M 16:00 - 18:00 | Monroe Hall 130 | Lawrence, Levy
- WGS 3501/EDHS 3500-001
YWLP: Women's Leadership with Technology II | M 17:00 - 18:00 | Cabell Hall 032 | Lawrence, Levy
- WGS 3559-002
Women & Poverty | R 15:30 - 18:00 | Minor Hall 130 | Davis
- WGS 4559-001
Gender-Based Violence | T 15:30 - 18:00 | Minor Hall 130 | Walsh

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