



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

**Parks &  
Recreation**

**FY 24/25**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**JULY '24 - JUNE '25**



Concept design for Rudee Park

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# MISSION

**EXCEED COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS IN AN INCLUSIVE, INNOVATIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER**

## COMMISSION

Phillip J. Hines | Chair  
 Daniel Edwards | Vice Chair  
 Larry Altman  
 Alexander Amerine  
 Barrett Lankford  
 Benjamin Messer

Clinton Mills Jr.  
 Kathryn Moran  
 Myra Payne  
 Eugene Towler  
 David Weiner  
 Debbie Wiggins

Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation is accredited by CAPRA, the certifying agency of the National Recreation and Park Association.





# 25 YEARS OF ACCREDITATION

Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation first became a CAPRA-accredited agency in 1999, the first agency in Virginia to do so. Re-accreditation is required every five years, and in 2024 we achieved a 100% score in all of the 154 required standards to earn CAPRA accreditation once again.

This achievement reflects the high standards and quality of the entire department, and is only possible through the passion, teamwork, and perseverance of all staff members in the department.

Another indicator of the hard work of the department this year was reflected in the earned revenue of the department - reaching \$1.7m above budget targets for the financial year and exceeding levels not seen since before COVID shutdowns.

Projects were also set in motion that will ensure the department continues to deliver on the high expectations from our residents, for years to come. Major investments into Rudee Loop Park, the VBTrail and continued work at Bow Creek Stormwater Park will bring new amenities to the city, and this year, upgrades were completed at several signature parks, including Little Island Park, Red Wing Park, Munden Point Park, and of course, Mount Trashmore Park.



Michael Kirschman  
Director

## A QUICK NOTE ABOUT CONTENT:

The City of Virginia Beach financial year runs from July 1 to June 30. Data and content in this annual report covers the period from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

**On the cover:** Sunrise at Little Island Park

**On the back cover:** Illustrated park map of Little Island Park

# #PARKLIFE - YEAR AT A GLANCE

JULY



TR Surf & Fun @ Oceanfront

AUG



Out of School Time 'Comic Con' Prom

SEPT



Disc golf @ Munden Point Park

OCT



Staff vs youth basketball game @ Bow Creek

NOV



The new Foxfire Trail

DEC



Wreath making workshop

**JAN**



Winter Wildlife Festival birding boat trip

Photo by Sylvia Williams

**FEB**



Snow plow during Winter Storm Kingston

**MAR**



Cherry Blossom Festival @ Red Wing Park

Photo by Virginia Beach Local

**APR**



Kayak rentals @ Munden Point Park

**MAY**



Rising Sun Pow Wow at Mount Trashmore Park

Photo by Virginia Beach Local

**JUN**



Summer Camps

# REC BY NUMBERS

IN FY24/25 PARTICIPATION & REVENUE HIT NEW HEIGHTS

**56,756**

MEMBERSHIPS SOLD

UP 2%

**218,897**

FITNESS CLASS PARTICIPANTS

UP 6%

**5,445**

PERSONAL TRAINING SESSIONS

**9,357**

SWIM LESSON PARTICIPANTS

UP 11%

**4,010**

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME KIDS

UP 6%

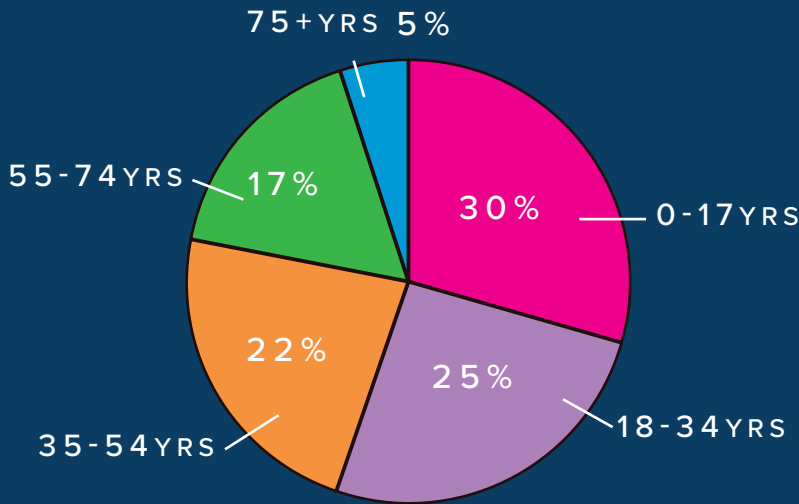
**1,945**

THERAPEUTIC REC PARTICIPANTS

UP 74%

# OUR REC CENTER MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIPS BY AGE GROUP

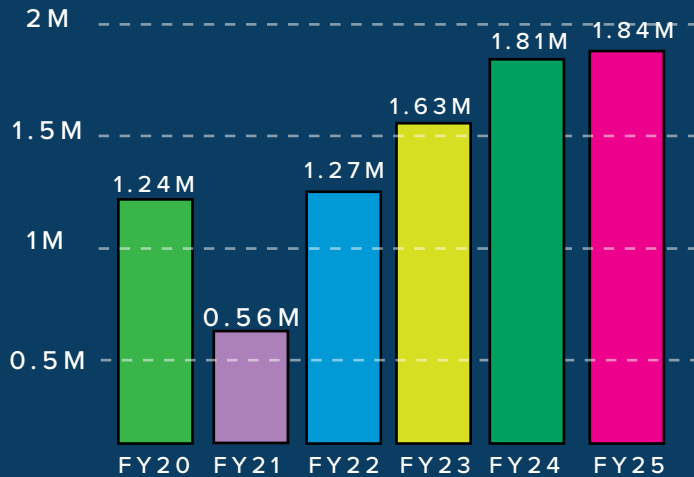


**1.83M**

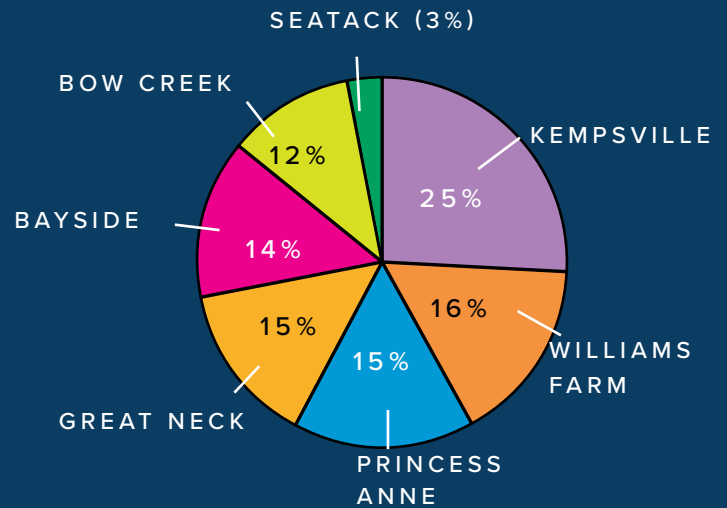
UP 2%

RECREATION MEMBER SCANS

SCANS BY YEAR



SCANS BY REC CENTER





# COMMUNITY

# BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Mount Trashmore Park hosts over 1.7million each year and now there are even more reasons to visit. In early 2025, upgrades to the park were completed, including new stairways, paved trails on the mountain top and the innovative Kids Cove expansion, with slides down the side of the mountain.

The Nansemond Indian Tribe Pow Wow returned to Virginia Beach in May after a decade away. **OVER 4,000 ATTENDEES** came to Mount Trashmore Park for the The Rising Sun Pow Wow, which featured roughly 30 tribes in a celebration of Native American culture through music, inter-tribal drumming, dancing, and storytelling.

With two successful summers completed at Williams Farm Park, Parks After Dark programming **EXPANDED TO TWO ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS** in College Park and Green Run neighborhoods in summer 2025.

Fifteen students from seven area middle schools took part in the second year of Fostering Love for the Outdoors & Wildlife (FLOW) Camp. The spring camp provides a way to introduce students from low income households to outdoor activities, including kayaking, fishing and wildlife watching, at no cost to the family.

The department earned **TWO AWARDS** at the annual Virginia Recreation & Parks Society (VRPS) for community programs, including Best New Special Event for the Autumn in the Air Festival and Best New Program for Parks After Dark.



2

1. Rising Sun Pow Wow at Mount Trashmore Park. Photography by Colton Morse (@lenscraftedlife)
2. Pizza time at Parks After Dark.
3. Enjoying the new slides at Mount Trashmore Park
4. Participants in FLOW Camp on a field trip to False Cape State Park.



3



4



# ENVIRONMENT

1

# GREEN & OPEN SPACES

The Winter Wildlife Festival **CELEBRATED ITS 15TH YEAR** with a keynote presentation from Dr. Mamie Parker. Over 2,300 people took part in festival trips and events. As part of the festival, Jody Ullmann was named the 2025 recipient of the Mary Reid Barrow Wildlife Advocate Award for her environmental work with organizations including the Virginia Living Museum and Lynnhaven River NOW.

During the year thousands of volunteer hours helped keep the parks clean too. Volunteers took part in over 600 clean up events, collecting over **24,000 POUNDS OF TRASH**.

The Urban Forestry Team received the Best New Environmental Sustainability award from the Virginia Recreation and Park Society for the interactive VBTrees tree canopy map.

With help from students at Bayside High School, a **'TINY FOREST'** was created in Wesleyen Park. These forests are method of planting diverse tree species in urban areas that encourages faster tree growth and brings a wide range of environmental benefits.



1. Brown pelican by William Murray - winner of 'wildlife portrait' category in the 2025 Winter Wildlife festival photo contest.

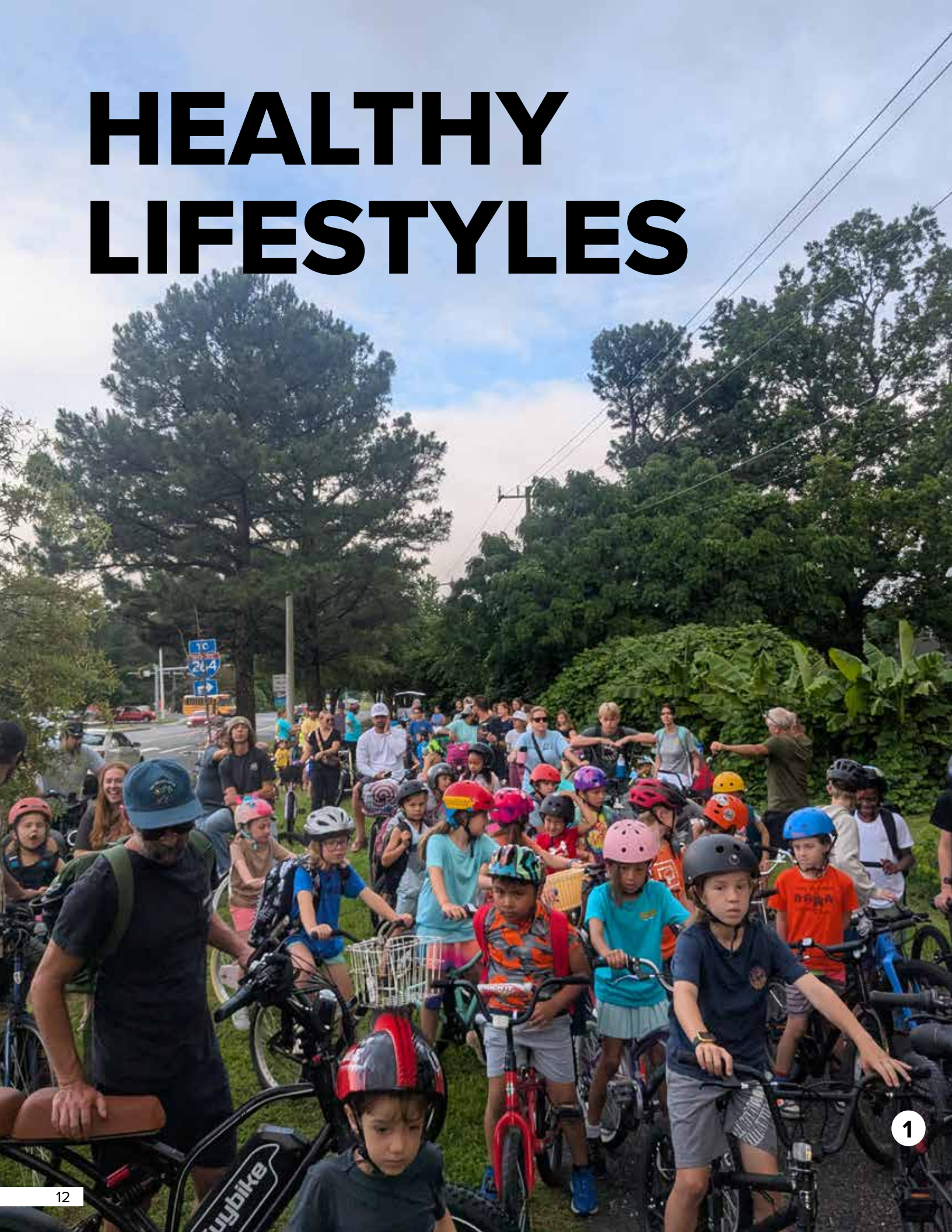
2. Students assisting with the creation of a Tiny Forest.

3. Volunteers show off their trash haul during a park clean up event.

4. Visitors at the Winter Wildlife Festival expo had a chance to get up close to animals, including this raptor.



# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES



# GETTING ACTIVE

A new **ONE-MILE MULTI-USE TRAIL** connecting the Foxfire neighborhood with the Virginia Beach municipal center has opened new spaces for walking, cycling and more. The trail traverses the West Neck Creek and links to trails in the natural area.

In early Summer a third kayak rental station was added to the park system enabling paddlers to access Stumpy Lake without the need for their own kayak equipment. Combined, over **2,400 PEOPLE** rented kayaks.

To help keep four legged family members healthy, **NEW DOG AGILITY EQUIPMENT**, funded by the Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation Foundation, was installed at three dog parks - Woodstock Park, Red Wing Park and Bayville Farms Park.

As part of National Bicycle Month, Virginia Beach Parks, Virginia Beach Public Schools and Virginia Beach Police partnered to create 'bike trains' at several local schools. **OVER 600 CHILDREN** took part in the event.



1. Ride to School day as part of National Bike Month.

2. Spin bike classes were added to Bayside Recreation Center.

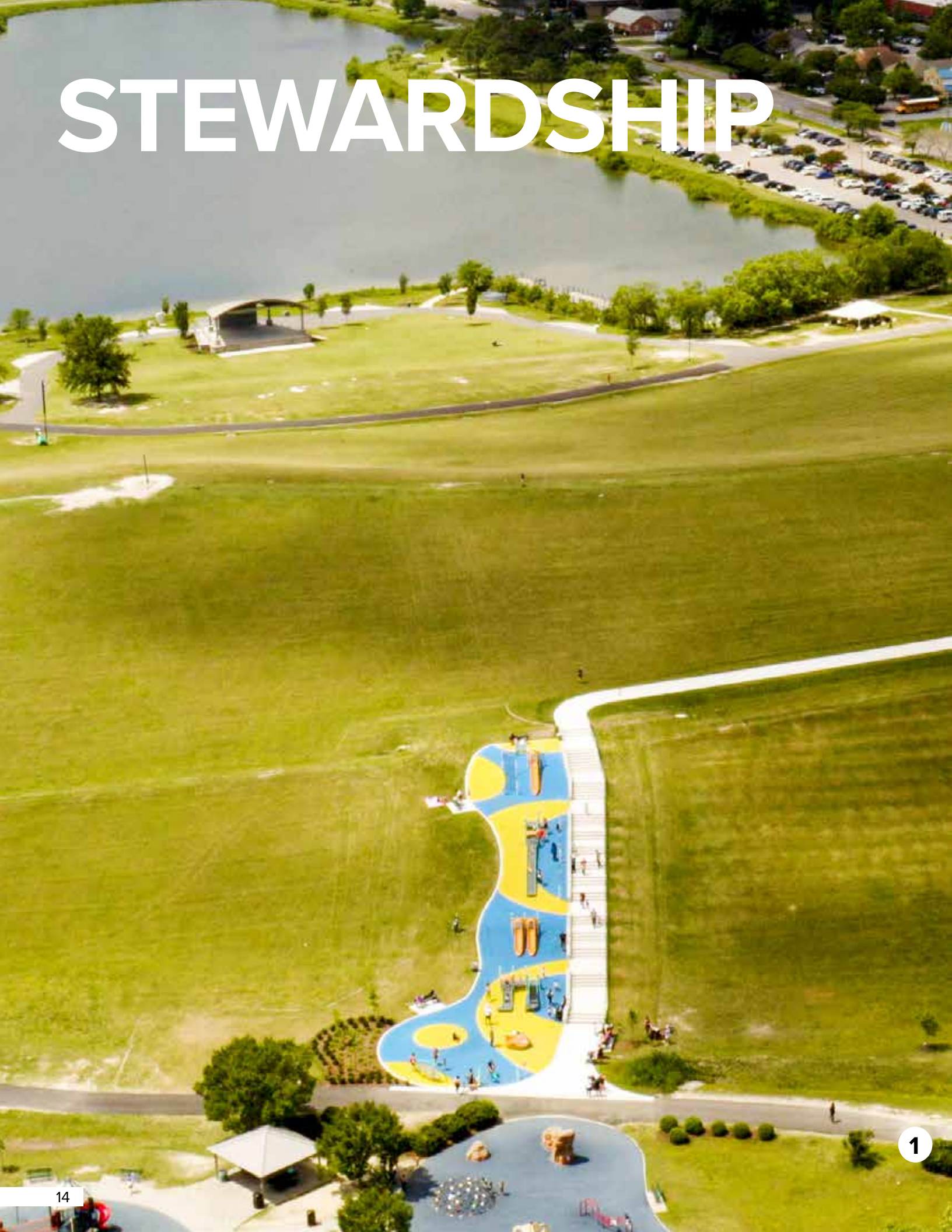
3. The new Foxfire Trail

4. New dog agility equipment at Bayville Farms Park.

5. PaddleBattle pickleball tournament at VB Pickleball.



# STEWARDSHIP



# BUILDING THE FUTURE

Several capital projects were completed at Mount Trashmore Park, including new stairways, paved trails and the showcase project - the **EXPANDED KIDS COVE PLAYGROUND** with slides down the side of the mountain, has already been a hit with younger residents.

The future **RUDEE PARK** took a major step forward with funding approvals, public engagement and the first concept designs delivered by Dills Architects. Construction designs are now underway.

While design for Phase One of the VBTrail is underway, funding was secured for Phase Four of the project, with **\$23.8 MILLION IN STATE FUNDING** awarded by the Virginia Department of Transportation's SMART SCALE program. The grant will help

fund a 2.8-mile segment that will extend the eastern portion of the trail from Birdneck Road to London Bridge Road.

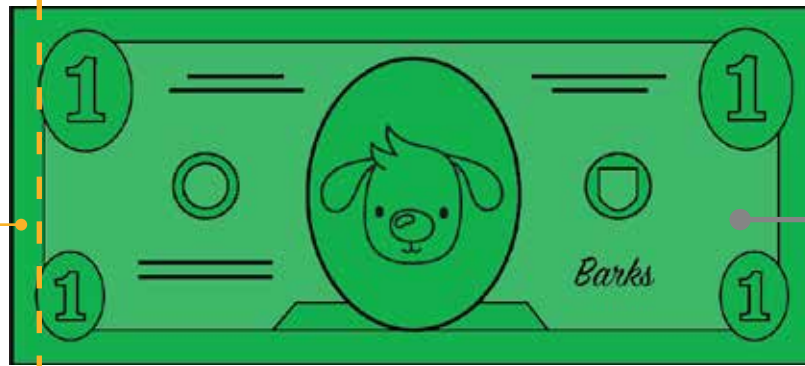
Additional capital project work completed this year included the completion of the one mile Foxfire Trail, connecting the Foxfire neighborhood with West Neck Creek Natural Area and the municipal center. New picnic shelters were installed at Munden Point Park, updated pickleball courts opened at Lake Placid Park and refurbished playgrounds were added across the park system, including a new playground at Princess Anne Athletic Complex.



# FY 24/25 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

\$2.64B City Operating Budget

**3.5%**  
Parks & Recreation  
\$92M



**97%**  
All Other  
Departments  
\$2.55B

For every dollar spent by the city, 3.5 cents is spent on parks & recreation and landscaping services

## Funding Comes From Taxes & Revenue

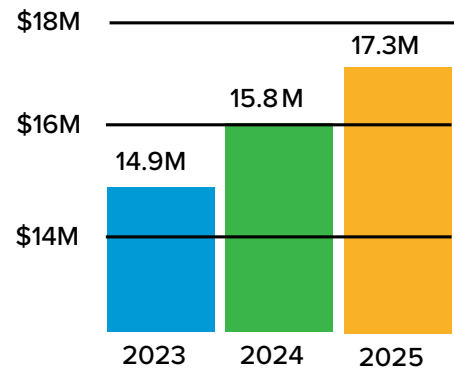
The annual operating budget for Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation is funded from a variety of tax sources, including property taxes and a dedicated recreation center tax. Revenue from fees and services also helps reduce the tax burden. The charts below show the revenue earned from these fees.

Revenue by Source



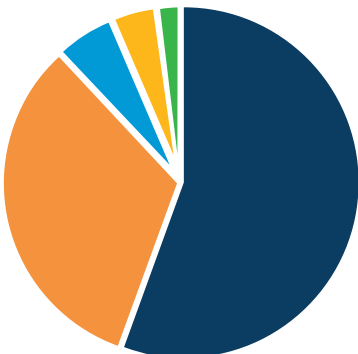
Revenue Source	Amount
Out of School Time	\$6.30m
Rec Center Memberships	\$6.00m
Rec Center Programming	\$2.60m
Sports Management	\$1.45m
Outdoor Events, Programming, and Fees	\$0.87m

Revenue by Financial Year



## How Our Funds Are Spent:

As well as maintaining over 300 parks and seven recreation centers, the department is also responsible for landscaping services on city properties, including Virginia Beach schools, the Oceanfront and the municipal center. Here's how the annual operating budget was spent in this financial year.



Expenditure Area	Amount
Staffing	\$51.0m
Operations	\$29.7m
Rec Center Maintenance	\$3.88m
Debt Service	\$5.00m
Capital Outlay	\$1.80m

# PARKS BY NUMBERS

**1.7M**

VISITS TO MOUNT TRASHMORE PARK

**2,285**

SHELTER RENTALS

UP 8%

**17,731**

BOAT LAUNCHES AT LYNNHAVEN

UP 2%

**24,504**

POUNDS OF TRASH COLLECTED BY VOLUNTEERS

**2,455**

KAYAK RENTALS

**1,257**

ADOPT-A-PARK VOLUNTEERS

# OUR TEAM



1

1. Oceanfront Parks & Landscaping Unit preparing to clear the snow during Winter Storm Kingston.



2

2. Team photo during Bow Creek Rec Center maintenance week.



3

3. Serving up food at the Staff Spring Picnic.



4

4. Parks & Rec table at a hiring fair.



5

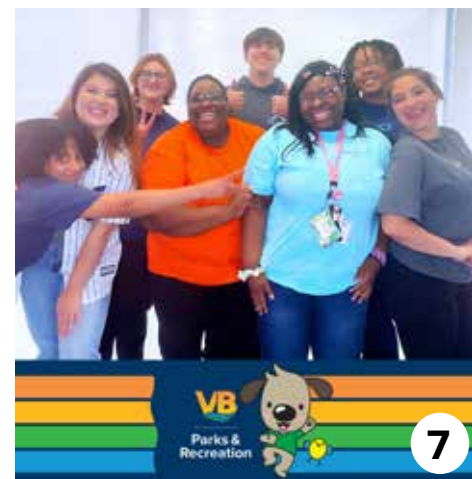
5. 'Popsicle Pop-up' at Seatack Rec Center.

6. SYEP workers at Parks After Dark.

7. Selfie station in use at a morale committee event.



6



7

# STAFF IN NUMBERS

**519**

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

---

**1,066**

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

---

**11**

INTERNS

---

**422**

NEW STAFF HIRED (FULL & PART-TIME)

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**88,259**

VOLUNTEER HOURS

# LEGENDARY FEEDBACK

A selection of our five-star user reviews and testimonials from the year.



**1,502**

total online reviews in FY 24/25

**4.59**

average rating

## WILLIAMS FARMS REC CENTER

"The kids love it there, and so do we as the parents. Highly recommend for kids birthday parties and swimming pool access for the kiddos!"

## PRINCESS ANNE REC CENTER

"This rec center is amazing. Nothing bad to say about this place. The staff here are exceptional."

## LAKE LAWSON/SMITH NATURAL AREA

"Awesome little park with lots of water access. Shelter and restrooms were clean and well maintained"

## PARKS AFTER DARK

"Parks after dark is so wonderful. Thank you so much for putting it on."

## LYNNHAVEN BOAT RAMP

"I have never seen a more organized boat ramp in my life! Staff is professional and truly special. Came here with my family to enjoy a nice outing on the water and the ramp was organized and run like a well oiled machine. 10 out of 5 stars."

## GREAT NECK REC CENTER

"The Virginia Beach Recreation Centers are an amazing deal. I've tried all the Rec Centers and they are all great, but Great Neck is my personal favorite because the place has a great vibe and all the folks that work there are super chill. It's also really great to work out with regular nice people who are enjoying their day and being friendly. The drop in Fitness Classes are a great way to stay in shape."

## MUNDEN POINT PARK

"We had a wonderful going away party picnic for dear friends and really enjoyed it. I noticed that staff were seen working all over the place and keeping things maintained."

## CITY VIEW PARK

"Forgot how great this little city park is because it's not near my neighborhood. Son had practice nearby and was looking for a park to walk at while I wait. The grounds are very clean and the walking paths are nice!"

## BOW CREEK REC CENTER

"Got a Bow Creek Rec Center Yearly Pass for my 14 year old Grandson last year. He loves going to the Rec Center and usually tries to go every day! There is so much for him to do there! It's also great that he can go to any Virginia Beach Rec Center! He has a safe place to go so I don't have to worry about him!"



virginia beach  
parks & recreation  
foundation

# VBPRF UPDATES

The Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that exists to support the citizens of Virginia Beach and the Parks and Recreation Department.

In FY 25, the VBPRF Board worked with Department staff to strengthen two existing programs for the benefit of the citizens of Virginia Beach. The FLOW Spring Break camp was offered to more middle schoolers from struggling families. These students get a chance to experience the dynamic and diverse natural environment throughout our park system at no cost.

The Foundation also expanded and reorganized the Community Care Fund, formerly known as the Youth Scholarship program. By creating a more robust partnership with the Youth Opportunities Office they have been able to help more struggling families through reduced fees for recreation center memberships, classes and specialty camps.

A new silent auction was held for the 15th annual Winter Wildlife Festival, with proceeds benefiting the foundation. Items available for bid included art prints, bird feeders and a foldable kayak.

Over \$50,000 in funding was provided to the Department for equipment and programs, including two portable bleachers, five mobile bike racks, and two beach wheelchairs for Little Island Park.

## FOUNDATION BOARD

Barbara Duke | **President**

Ron Kaufman | **Treasurer**

Claire Yoder, RN, JD | **Secretary**

Pete Striffler, P.E | **Member**

# CREATIVE HQ

MARKETING METRICS FOR 24/25FY COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEAR

**1.16m**

WEBSITE VISITS

UP 75%

**3.3M**

EMAIL CAMPAIGN OPENS

UP 40%

**12,500**

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

UP 28%

**12,648**

DIGITAL ACTIVITY GUIDE READS

UP 66%

**\$71k**

ADVERTISING SPEND

UP 50%

**316k+**

SMS TEXT OPENS

UP 334%

# PROMOTING PARKS & REC

Encouraging more people to visit parks & enjoy everything VB Parks & Rec has to offer is the core mission of the Creative HQ team, and initiatives this year included the expansion of the seasonal digital activity guide, new, eye-catching rules signage in the recreation centers, featuring our mascots, Barks & Rex; new designs for swim league teams, updated park maps in natural areas and new designs for regulatory signage in the parks.

Barks & Rex also appeared on a larger range of swag and prizes too, including a foldable kayak, pickleball bats and a new series of stickers and an origami Rex kit was given out at the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

Creative HQ claimed two awards at the annual Virginia Recreation & Parks Society (VRPS) awards held in the fall, earning accolades for 'best marketing campaign' for our legendary value marketing campaign and 'most creative marketing piece' for our pocket map.



1. Updated map signage at Lake Lawson/Smith Natural Area.
2. A completed origami Rex in a cherry tree.
3. Limited edition Barks & Rex pickleball paddle.
4. Awards earned at the 2024 VRPS annual conference.



# Little Island Park

