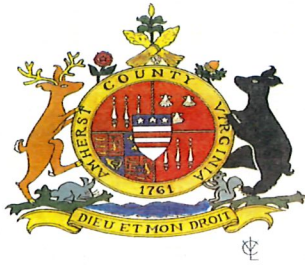


Board Agenda VII. C.



Meeting Date: November 15, 2016

Department: Recreation & Parks Department

Issue: "Rucker's Landing" @ Riveredge Park

Board Action: The Board is being asked to name the boat launch at Riveredge Park and appropriate the cost of signage.

Attachments: Batteau Proposal for Amherst County regarding Riveredge Park
Name Boat Ramp "Rucker's Landing"
Informational Batteau Signage at Riveredge Park

Background: Enhancements and expansions continue to be made at Riveredge Park. One of the visions of the Board of Supervisors is to "turn Riveredge Park ... into a magnet for community life, Lynchburg resident attention and a key asset for Madison Heights".

The Riveredge Park area has historical significance relating to the history of the batteau traffic on the James River. The batteau was a major factor in the economic growth of this region. *It was invented, patented and built by two Amherst County brothers, Anthony and Benjamin Rucker.* Today, the significance of these vessels to the history of this region is celebrated each June with a weeklong festival of batteaux traffic on the James River. The batteaux, along with countless canoes and kayaks, use the boat ramp at Riveredge Park to launch into the James River for this event.

Naming the boat launch at Riveredge Park, "Rucker's Landing" will give an identity to the launch area and will be used in Amherst County marketing/promotional material to celebrate the county's contribution to an important era of Virginia history.

The Rucker family has offered to source and pay for half the cost of historic and educational signage as depicted in the attachments.

Recommendation:

1. That the Board name the boat ramp at Riveredge Park, RUCKER'S LANDING.
2. That the Board appropriate \$1,200 from the Park Equipment budget to pay for one half the cost of the proposed signage.

Batteau Proposal for Amherst County Batteau Informational Signage and Annual Event

Historical Brief:

The design and first launch of the famous James River Batteaux occurred in Amherst County. From 1775 until the mid-1800's hundreds of these slim craft were used to transport tobacco and other goods down the river to Richmond. It is documented that Thomas Jefferson was present at the launch of the first vessel of this sort.

Since 1982 the "James River Batteau Festival" has been launched from Percival's Island in Lynchburg in which a number of these vessels begin their eight-day journey to Maiden's Landing just upstream of Richmond. Many visitors attend the launch and related events in Lynchburg.

The Opportunity:

Amherst County has an opportunity to obtain positive publicity and tourism concerning the James River Batteau. The county could benefit from attractive, well designed signage This proposal is to address that opportunity.

A Two Pronged Proposal:

- 1) To name the boat ramp at Riveredge Park as "Rucker's landing"**
- 2) Informational signage at Riveredge Park**

1) To name the boat ramp at Riveredge Park as “Rucker’s landing”

The James River batteau was designed by two Amherst County brothers, Anthony and Benjamin Rucker. The unique craft they designed and built provided the farmers of Amherst County the means to get their tobacco and other produce safely and swiftly to Richmond.

The Rucker brothers were associates of Thomas Jefferson who was present at the launch of the first of these vessels. Jefferson purchased one of these boats to transport his own farm produce grown at Poplar Forest.

Later when the Rucker brothers wished to obtain a patent on the vessel they had designed Jefferson supported their claim.

The Rucker family was among the earlier settlers of Amherst County and were prominent leaders during the colonial era and later.

This proposal is not to rename Riveredge Park, but to request that the boat launch there be identified as “Rucker’s Landing.”

2) Signage at Riveredge Park:

It is proposed that three informational signs be erected at Riveredge Park describing the invention of the James River Batteau in 1775. The signs will make note that the batteaux for the annual James River Batteau Festival are launched there at Riveredge Park. The proposed layouts for each of these signs is included herein.

The signs are to be of the heavy duty metal table-top type now used by many national and state parks throughout the country. Fossil Industries is proposed as the provider for the signs because of favorable feedback from a number of governmental bodies using their products.

The signs are to be 36" by 24." They are to be on heavy duty metal posts with a heavy sheet metal backing. There is a frame provided into which the actual graphics "slip-in" is to be inserted.

Fossil Industries guarantees the graphics against fading for ten years. These signs appear to be the most vandal-proof of those researched.

It is proposed that the signs be "unveiled" for the public and the media on Saturday, June 10, one week before the launch of the James River Batteau Festival. On this same day it is proposed that there at Riveredge Park the first of an annual Amherst County festival or event be launched.

Cost:

More than \$1,000 has already been expended for the line art and graphics layout for the signs. These expenses have been absorbed by the proponents of the signage and are **not** Amherst Count expense.

It is proposed that the cost for the actual metal signs and graphics inserts be shared 50-50 by the County of Amherst and the sign proponents. A copy of the quotation from the sign provider, Fossil Industries, is included herein.

Signage Cost Summary:

Three Graphic Panels	\$ 429.00
Three Fossil Industries Metal "Tabletop Signs"	\$1,713.00
Shipping Expense	<u>\$ 245.00</u>
Total	\$2,387.00
50% absorbed by proponents	\$1,193.50
50% of cost to Amherst County	\$1,193.50