



RIVANNA RIVER STEWARD REPORT

River Stewards: Justin Altice & Mariah Burgess

Date: 5/7/20

Starting Location and Time: Darden Towe Park (4:30 PM)

Ending Location and Time: Riverview Park (5:30 PM)

Weather: Sunny, clear skies Recent Precipitation: Rainfall for the week was <1"

USGS Gauges: SF Rivanna River 3.8 ft (400 ft²/sec), NF Rivanna River 6.15 ft (210 ft²/sec), Palmyra 3.9 ft (1000 ft²/sec)

Water Color: Clear Water Odor: None Air Temp: 73° F

DO: 5 ppm pH: 8 Turbidity: 10 JTU Water Temp: 66° F

Water Testing Location: Darden Towe Boat Ramp

Land Use:

This two mile stretch of the Rivanna River acts as the border between Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville. The Albemarle side contains the Old Mills Trail and the Charlottesville side contains the Rivanna Trail. Both trails run parallel to the river. After leaving Darden Towe Park the city side on river right begins a stretch of commercial uses that have no interaction with or reference to the Rivanna itself. The county side on river left contains a seldom utilized road leading to Free Bridge where the 250 bypass passes over the river. After some commercial businesses located at Free Bridge, the city side of the river is predominated by the sights and sounds of the heavily utilized Rivanna Trail with few other land uses present. The county side of the river passes by several residential developments nearby with fewer community members seen along the Old Mills Trail presumably due to limited access points.

Wildlife Sightings and Plant Life:

On this relatively short paddle, we observed a duck pair and a small group of geese.

People Interactions:

We biked from Riverview Park to Darden Towe Park on the Rivanna Trail, which was filled with runners, families walking, and other bikers. Many community members were using the



Darden Towe boat ramp to fish or access the river. We encountered several groups on the river finding a good place to hang out while floating, a person sunbathing on the Albemarle County side, and a group of kids enjoying a rope swing on the city side.

Litter and Pollution:

We picked up only a few bottles along this stretch.

Hazards:

We did not observe any immediate hazards, although the condition of the river access point at Riverview Park has deteriorated over time and could be improved for safety purposes. We also observed a few new areas of bank erosion that will need to be monitored.

Overall Summary:

The paddle-bike shuttle option afforded on this section of the river is very manageable and enjoyable as you get to observe the river from two different vantage points. There were many community members enjoying the natural beauty and recreational benefits the river has to offer on this beautiful afternoon. This section of the Rivanna can be finished in an hour or less with the ample water levels enjoyed this day.

The two trail systems on either side of the river offer a great way for the community to see and appreciate the Rivanna River. Improvements at both access points at the parks could help with accessibility to the water, especially at Riverview Park.

Actions Needed – level of priority (1 highest/5 lowest):

3 – Work to create community support for river access improvements

3 – Work with county and city officials to collaborate on access point improvements



Figure 1: Looking closely, you can see white flags which indicate where RCA staff planted livestakes in winter 2019. Many stakes are now “leafing out,” signifying that they have successfully rooted and are creating more stable banks.



Figure 2: Bank erosion observed directly across from Darden Towe boat ramp.



Figure 3: Free Bridge looking downstream where the 250 bypass crosses the Rivanna



Figure 4: More bank erosion on river right along the Rivanna Trail.



Figure 5: Duck enjoying the river.



Figure 6: Additional bank erosion along river right near Riverview Park.

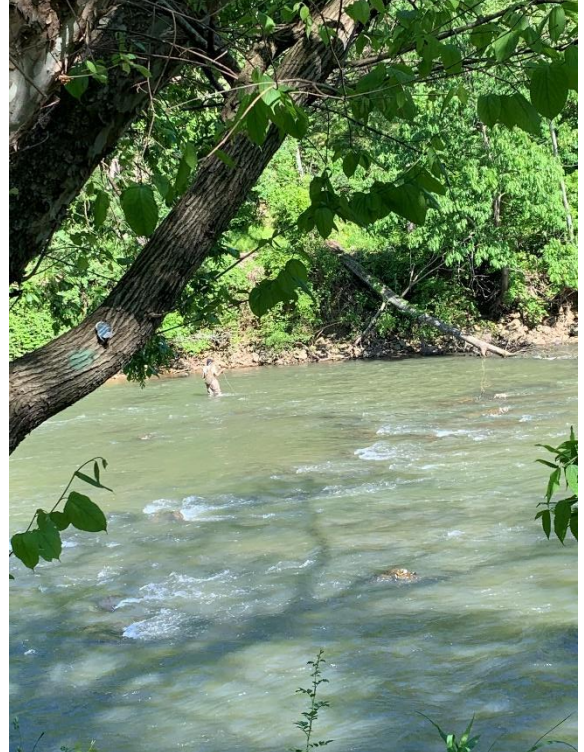


Figure 7: An angler casts on the left bank across from Riverview Park.



Figure 8: View of Montalto and the water tower signal the conclusion of the paddle trip.