**RRRC WMTT – March 9, 2024 – Parks & City Beautiful – 8 miles**

**MapMyRun:** <https://www.mapmyrun.com/routes/view/5940699433/>

**RunGo:** <https://routes.rungoapp.com/route/gCRKpn29pd>

**RunGo with notes:** <https://routes.rungoapp.com/route/HIrF477yBl>

Start at Monument Avenue going east

Turn right onto North Davis Avenue – 0.17 mi

Turn left onto Park Avenue – 0.23 mi

Turn right onto North Meadow Street – 0.60 mi

- Meadow Park to the left – 0.62 mi

Turn right onto Grayland Avenue – 1.19 mi

Turn left onto South Robinson Street – 1.61 mi

- Passing through Byrd Park, with Boat Lake to the right – 1.65 mi

Head straight onto Lakeview Avenue – 1.74 mi

Turn left onto Westover Road – 1.78 mi

- The Round House and Sheilds-Robinson family cemetery to the left – 1.81 mi

Turn left onto Swan Lake Drive – 1.90 mi

Continue on Swan Lake Drive keeping the lakes to the right – 1.93 mi

Continue right onto Lake Road – 2.17 mi

Turn left onto Amelia Street – 2.43 mi

Turn right onto Hampton Street – 2.47 mi

- Maymont to the right – 2.89 mi

- One entry point into the James River Park System ahead on the right – 3.01 mi

Turn left onto Kansas Avenue – 3.03 mi

Turn left onto Carter Street – 3.26 mi

Turn right onto Colorado Avenue – 3.65 mi

*SAG at entrance to three Riverview and Mount Calvary cemeteries*

- Mt. Calvary Cemetery to the right – 3.82 mi

- Riverview Cemetery to the right – 4.05 mi

Turn right onto Idlewood Avenue – 4.47 mi

- Hollywood Cemetery to the right – 4.53 mi

Turn left onto South Laurel Street – 4.78 mi

Turn right onto West Main Street – 5.05 mi

- Monroe Park to the left – 5.10 mi

Turn left onto North 1st Street – 5.58 mi

Turn left onto East Franklin Street – 5.65 mi

Continue straight around the traffic circle as Franklin becomes Monument Ave. – 6.67 mi

Turn left onto North Meadow Street – 7.02 mi

Turn right onto Stuart Avenue – 7.13 mi

Turn right onto North Arthur Ashe Boulevard – 7.71 mi

Turn right onto Monument Avenue – 7.95 mi

End at Monument Avenue – 7.99 mi

## Richmond Parks and the City Beautiful Movement

Appreciation for the positive impact of natural beauty extends back to ancient times, as ornamental gardens joined agricultural gardens, especially for the elite. Parks and even cemeteries were established acknowledging natural beauty. Hollywood Cemetery was established in 1847, designed as a garden cemetery, a landscape style that became popular in the 19th century. Located on the banks of the James River, the cemetery spans 135 acres of valleys, hills, and stately trees.

Richmond’s first municipal park, now known as Monroe Park, was established in 1853. As the city expanded, other small parks were added over the years, such as:

* Triangle Park, at Lombardy Steet and Park Avenue
* Meadow Park, at Meadow St., Stuart Avenue, and Park Avenue
* Scuffletown Park, hidden off alleys between Strawberry Street and Stafford Avenue, and Stuart Avenue and Park Avenue
* Paradise Park, hidden in an alley between Grove Avenue and Floyd Avenue

In the 1890s, America saw the rise of the City Beautiful movement, an American urban-planning movement led by architects, landscape architects, and reformers. This philosophy incorporated comprehensive urban planning, believing that design could not be separated from social issues and would encourage civic pride and engagement.

The movement gained attention in 1893 at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The fair’s temporary city, the “White City,” was a semi-utopia in which visitors were shielded from poverty and crime. It incorporated designs from architects trained at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris and landscapes including lagoons and green expanses, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., who designed New York City’s Central Park as well as the original layout for the Sherwood Park neighborhood in Richmond’s Northside (Brookland Parkway is the sole surviving element of his plan).

To most city dwellers, cities were ugly, congested, dirty, and unsafe. Since the congestion and poor sanitation affected rich as well as poor, city leaders and influential citizens were willing to give resources to beautification. The movement was said to increase civic virtue and the waning of social ills. Over time, it became apparent that city improvement was insufficient without addressing social and economic issues.

In Richmond, the City Beautiful movement was championed by Wilfred Emory Cutshaw. Cutshaw had served in the Confederate Army and became Richmond’s city engineer in the 1870s. The city was still devastated from the Civil War, so Cutshaw worked, throughout the next three decades, to renew the public infrastructure through waterworks projects and spaces for public recreation, including parks and playgrounds. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/City-Beautiful-movement>

## Byrd Park

When Wilfred Emory Cutshaw became city engineer in 1873, Richmond was still devastated from the Civil War and the growing population needed a safe water supply. He was a proponent of public recreation and beautification, as marked by two contemporaneous movements: the American Parks Movement and City Beautiful Movement. So in 1874, Cutshaw developed the naturalistic 60-acre New Reservoir Park, to surround the elevated reservoir. Excavation of Fountain Lake (aka Reservoir Lake and Boat Lake) provided fill for the earthen construction of the reservoir. To lift water from the James River to the reservoir, Cutshaw built the granite Gothic Revival Pump-House. The park was renamed in 1907 for Richmond founder William Byrd II. <http://www.richmondgov.com/parks/parkbyrd.aspx>

By 1917, the original Byrd Park had expanded, including property to the east that was once the Poplar Vale estate, owned by the Sheilds (changed later to be spelled “Shields”) and Robinson families. The City of Richmond added two lakes: Swan Lake and Sheilds Lake. Sheilds Lake was used as a whites-only swimming lake from 1919 to 1955. The Round House was built in 1914, replacing Rathskeller restaurant and saloon. The Round House (actually octagonal) was also known as Byrd Park Club House, William Byrd Park House, and Comfort Station.

The stone wall behind the Round House encloses the privately owned Sheilds-Robinson Family Cemetery. The Sheilds and Robinson families owned the Poplar Vale estate beside the original Byrd Park. (The Sheilds name was later changed the spelling to “Shields.”) By 1917, the original Byrd Park had expanded to include the Poplar Vale estate.

The park is now 275 acres. <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/15001044.pdf>

## Maymont

The Maymont estate was completed in 1893 by a wealthy Richmond couple, James and Sallie Dooley. The estate is an example of the Gilded Age in America, 1870 to 1900. It was a time of rapid economic growth, attracting millions of European immigrants. Yet it was also a time of poverty and inequality, since not all immigrants found their pot of gold and the wealth of a few became more visible and problematic.

Upon their deaths and according to their wishes, Maymont, including the buildings and its furnishings and the 100-acre landscape was left to the people of Richmond.

From Mrs. Dooley’s death in 1925 until 1975, the property was owned and operated by the City of Richmond. When the city realized it couldn’t maintain or restore the estate to its fullest potential, control was passed to the Maymont Foundation. Today, the foundation maintains natural-setting wildlife habitats, the Maymont Children’s Farm and The Robins Nature Center as well as the Maymont Mansion. <https://maymont.org/about/>

## James River Park System

In 1966, several citizens organized to oppose a proposed highway along the south side of the James. Their efforts helped to galvanize Richmonders to protect the sections now known as Pony Pasture and Huguenot Flatwater. Also in the ’60s, two Richmonders purchased several islands and parcels along the river, then donated that land to the City of Richmond with the agreement that it would become public parkland.

Since its creation, the park has grown from about 100 acres to over 600 acres and growing. It offers more than 22 miles of trails (with connections to other trails) for mountain biking, running, and hiking. Trail sections that are of special interest to runners include Buttermilk, North Bank, Forest Hill, Ancarrow’s Landing (aka, the Poop Loop), and Belle Isle.

In 2009 the City of Richmond recognized the value of the park by putting in place a Conservation Easement that preserves and protects hundreds of acres of the park from future development. Pony Pasture Park System was the site of a ceremony in 2019 in which the park was inducted into the Old Growth Forest Network. [www.jamesriverpark.org](http://www.jamesriverpark.org)

Today, visitors will find more than 22 miles of trails covering 562 acres, kayak/canoe access, special programs and conveniences such as 12-month fountains and bathroom facilities. It offers volunteer opportunities, too <https://www.facebook.com/jroc.rva> , including the Invasive Plant Task Force <https://jamesriverpark.org/invasives/> and donations through the Friends of the James River Park. <https://jamesriverpark.org>

## Mt. Calvary Cemetery

Mt. Calvary Cemetery was founded as a non-profit cemetery circa 1880 by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond to supplement grave spaces in the other Catholic cemetery of the time (Holy Cross). <https://www.richmondcemeteries.org/mount-calvary/>

## Riverview Cemetery

Riverview Cemetery was established by the city of Richmond in 1887. It was laid out in a curvilinear design, with six roundabouts amid winding avenues. Various civic and religious groups created clusters of sites within the cemetery, including American legionnaires, the Greek Orthodox community, and Armenian immigrants. The cemetery remained closed to African American burials until 1968. <https://www.richmondcemeteries.org/riverview/>

## Hollywood Cemetery

This “garden cemetery” was established in 1847 in a park-like landscape style that was popular in the 19th century. It spans 135 acres of valleys, hills, and trees (it’s even a registered arboretum!). Well-known gravesites include those of presidents James Monroe and John Tyler, six Virginia governors, two Supreme Court justices, prominent authors, suffragists, and Confederate leaders and soldiers. The 90-foot granite pyramid, completed in 1869, is a monument to 18,000 Confederate enlisted men buried nearby. <https://www.hollywoodcemetery.org>

## Monroe Park

The city’s first municipal park, then called Western Square, was created in the mid 1800s on a 10-acre plot to provide green, open spaces for city residents. The name was changed in 1853 to honor President James Monroe. It used early on as fairgrounds (till 1859) and a Civil War encampment. The fairgrounds hosted Richmond’s first organized baseball games. This was the location of the first Virginia state championship game between the Pastimes all-star squad of Richmond and the Monticello Club of the University of Virginia.

## Bryan Park

Joseph Bryan Park is a 262-acre park given in 1909 to the city of Richmond ‘to be a free park for the use and benefit of all its citizens’ by Belle Stewart Bryan in memory of her husband, the publisher of the *Richmond Times*,” says the approved [historic marker application](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/VLR_to_transfer/PDFNoms/127-5677_Joseph_Bryan_Park_2002_Final_Nomination.pdf). The city crafted the park according to the prevailing “City Beautiful” movement, using an English Naturalistic aesthetic of rolling hills, streams, dams at old mill sites, ponds, woodlands, carriage roads along the old farm roads, and open spaces. 1952, the city began development of the azalea garden.

The property was an 18th-century estate named Westbrook, with water-powered mill sites.

It was here on Aug. 10, 1800, that conspirators elected Gabriel, who was enslaved on nearby Brookfield Plantation, as general of their Rebel Army. He and other enslaved men made plans to overtake the capitol, kidnap Gov. James Monroe, and convince him to support political, social, and economic equality between Blacks and Whites.

Gabriel’s Rebellion was planned for the night of Aug. 30, 1800, starting just north of Brook Bridge on Brook Road. They also planned to kill plantation owners to ensure secrecy, then proceed to Richmond. The scheme failed due to a massive thunderstorm that made roads and bridges impassable. The leaders rescheduled for the next evening, but two slaves informed their owner, who notified the governor, who called out the militia. Gabriel escaped but was arrested within the month and imprisoned.

Development and falling city revenue have threatened the park, but the [Friends of Bryan Park](https://friendsofbryanpark.org/pages/bryan-park-history.php) was formed to rally for and help maintain it.

## Playgrounds and recreation for children

Playgrounds, children’s sports, children’s museums … without a doubt, we take these childhood benefits for granted. But we’ve come a long way from the “children are to be seen and not heard” days of old.

From our early memories of long-gone, death-defying equipment such as the kid-propelled merry-go-round, monkey bars, jungle gyms, and medal slides (a scalding experience on summer afternoons!) to our own kids playing on pint-sized forts and swings, playground memories are (mostly) sweet and sacred. They’ve always been around, right?

Actually, the history of the playground begins in the 1800s, as part of the child-saving movement of the time. In America, Boston played at the forefront of the movement. An outdoor gymnasium was erected there in 1821. In 1886, Boston expanded on the idea, following the idea of “sand gardens,” established in Germany the year before. Another Boston gymnasium, the Charlesbank Gymnasium, opened in 1889 as a free, public, equipped outdoor playground.

As with the City Beautiful movement, industrialization, urbanization, and concern for public welfare influenced the desire to provide recreation for youth. Humanitarians saw playgrounds a solution to cramped quarters and poor air quality. This new concept could keep children off the streets and help them develop physical health, positive habits, and socialization skills while enjoying the pleasures of childhood.

In 1906, the Playground Association of America was formed in Washington, D.C., to promote the concept, layout and design, and other how-to’s to communities around the U.S. The Playground Association of America believed that “play under proper conditions is essential to the health and the physical, social, and moral wellbeing of the child, [so] playgrounds are a necessity for all children as much as schools.”

Some of the more modern trends in playgrounds include:

* 1950s-1970s: novelty playgrounds, with rocket ships, slides, animal shapes, imaginative tunnels and shapes, typically made of metal.
* 1970s-1980s: rounded edges and hard plastic equipment, a response to rising concerns about playground safety.
* 1980s-present: modern playgrounds are made with safe surfaces and varying themes and materials.

As an interesting side note: Luther H. Gulick, the first president of the Playground Association of America, was responsible for the creation of basketball. The game was devised in the winter of 1891-1892 to provide an indoor winter activity for young men in Springfield, Massachusetts. Gulick had challenged his students in a course on the psychology of play to invent a new game “that would be interesting, easy to learn, and easy to play in the winter and by artificial light.” <https://www.pgpedia.com/b/basketball>

Gulick also helped develop the Public School Athletic League, convinced that “democratic team games” should be the direction of the play movement in America.

## Accessible playgrounds

More recently, playgrounds have been created considering the needs of all children, including those with disabilities. Accessible Richmond-area playgrounds include Merry Funford at Mary Munford Elementary School; Katie: A Playground for Katie and Friends at Huguenot Park in Chesterfield County; one at Pole Green Park in Hanover County; and Park365, at 3600 Saunders Ave., not far from the RRRC clubhouse.

## Dog parks

The world’s first municipal dog park is believed to be the Ohlone Dog Park in Berkeley, California. In 1979, activists from Berkeley’s People’s Park began bringing their dogs to play at an empty lot that had been cleared for San Francisco’s new subway system. The idea soon spread.

The Richmond region has more than a dozen dog parks, including Ruff Canine Club, the first dog park with a bar attached, in Scott’s Addition.