



JAMES RIVER WATER AUTHORITY

132 Main Street, P.O. Box 540, Palmyra, VA 22963



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July 17, 2020

JAMES RIVER WATER AUTHORITY STATEMENT TO WITH GOOD REASON

Louisa County and Fluvanna County are rural but growing communities in central Virginia. County leaders recognized over a decade ago that their existing drinking water supplies are not sustainable. They formed the James River Water Authority (JRWA) in 2009 with a single purpose: to develop a new public water supply. JRWA's proposed water supply project will fulfill that purpose by providing a safe and reliable source of public drinking water that will meet the projected needs of both communities for decades.

Since this project was conceived, JRWA has tried to work with the Monacan Indian Nation in good faith to address their concerns. JRWA wishes to set the record straight on several issues.

There are no easy alternatives. Selecting a location to construct a new public water supply is not a simple task. There are many reasons – including engineering, construction, water quality, cost, and other limitations – why a location may not be suitable. The general proposed location was selected in 2014 because no viable alternatives were identified at that time. A detailed engineering study completed in March 2020 and made publicly available reached the same conclusion. Nevertheless, JRWA is continuing to work with the Monacan Indian Nation and other stakeholders to evaluate potential alternative sites and opportunities to minimize the project's footprint.

The proposed project will not “destroy Rassawek.” The location of the proposed project, Point of Fork, has been subject to many different uses over the past 400 years. Today, the site is crisscrossed by transportation and utility infrastructure, including a legacy canal, roads, large electrical transmission line, two large petroleum pipelines, and an active rail line. Construction of this project involves digging a six-foot wide trench to bury a 24-inch water line and constructing one small structure to house a well and water pump on a parcel owned by JRWA. The contention that the addition of a small buried water main and water pump structure to a discrete portion of this heavily used landform will be the act that “destroys Rassawek” grossly exaggerates the actual impact of the project and ignores the many other greater impacts that already exist.

No known Monacan burial sites will be disturbed. No burial sites have previously been documented within the footprint of the proposed project. Assertions that burials will be disturbed are speculation. Nevertheless, JRWA has committed to working with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

to develop reasonable and appropriate measures, in consultation with the Monacans, to be taken in the event a burial site is unexpectedly discovered.

JRWA appreciates the historical significance of Point of Fork. The history of Point of Fork is our communities' history. JRWA has proposed to undertake the most detailed archeological study ever conducted for the site prior to any construction so that we may learn more about its history – and potentially answer the unresolved question of whether Point of Fork was in fact the location of Rassawek. JRWA invited the Monacans to participate directly in that study and the preparation of the written reports discussing what is found. JRWA also offered to make a sizeable contribution to the Monacan Ancestral Museum so that they will be better able to share what is learned about the site. When parties questioned the qualifications of the archeologist working on the project, JRWA engaged a new archaeologist. In short, if the water supply project must be built on Point of Fork because no alternative locations prove feasible, it will be constructed in a respectful and responsible manner.

The communities represented by JRWA are at a critical juncture where a new source of clean, reliable, and affordable drinking water is vitally needed. JRWA is willing to continue discussions with the Monacans and other interested parties who wish to work in good faith to find constructive ways to be sensitive to the area's rich history but will not entertain efforts intended solely to delay or frustrate completion of this important public water project.

FAQ and additional background information: <https://www.fluvannacounty.org/bc-jrwa>

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