

Historic Evergreen and East End Cemetery Frequently Asked Questions

1) How did the two cemeteries fall into such disrepair?

When Evergreen was founded in 1891 there was no provision made for perpetual care, and the Evergreen Cemetery Association lacked an endowment to help maintain the cemetery into the future. Though the cemetery's owners hired staff to care for the cemetery through the years, much of the care/repair of individual gravesites fell to families, who maintained the resting places of loved ones for decades, and in some cases continue to do so today. With so many Richmonders, particularly young men and women, moving to northern cities as part of the Great Migration during the WWI era and beyond, there were fewer family members present to care for plots at Evergreen. In time, many of the traditional gatherings at Evergreen (including Memorial Day clean-ups and picnics) no longer took place, and the site's deteriorating infrastructure made it increasingly difficult for families and visitors to navigate overgrown walkways and roads. The picnic tables and benches you see on-site today were suggested by family members who remember visiting the cemetery regularly as children for special gatherings, clean-up days, and family celebrations.

2) What is the goal of the restoration effort, and has a plan already been created for what a restored Evergreen and East End Cemetery will look like?

Led by Evergreen's advisory team (known as the Executive Planning and Review Team), we completed our two-year Master Plan for Historic Evergreen in November of 2019. Enrichmond became the stewards of East End Cemetery after the master planning work began. Not to impede the work already well underway with Evergreen, we elected to include East End into the planning work afterwards. That work started in November of 2020 following significant COVID-19 delays. The final plan, the existing Evergreen plan with the addition of East End, will guide the cemeteries restoration for years to come.

Beginning in June 2018, the advisory team defined the vision for a restored Evergreen: "to inspire present and future generations to honor the nation's African American cultural, historical, and spiritual inheritance." The team also charted the restoration's mission: "to reveal and celebrate African American cultural and spiritual experiences, legacies, and places through public programming."

Ideas, suggestions, and memories conveyed via our [website](#) or during one of the 12 public gatherings directly informed the planning process that followed, so that the above vision and mission are appropriately reflected in the physical restoration of Evergreen. In May 2019, a range of preliminary restoration design options informed by last October's community conversations and the advisory team's recommendations were presented in a variety of meetings to the public for feedback, suggestions, and improvements. Only then was the plan moved into its final form and presented to the public on February 29th, 2020. The planning and public input for the expansion of the plan to include East End Cemetery will begin in the Spring of 2021.

You can view the descendent family and community lead Historic Evergreen Master Plan [HERE](#):
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1o11hyDrMOyKe2-RgdN59M9FGTl_Eb3Py

3) Are descendant families involved in Evergreen's restoration?

Yes! Most of the initial members of the advisory team are descendant family, and they are helping to guide the restoration process (including community engagement), create opportunities for educational programming at the cemetery, and collaborate with volunteers.

In addition, we have Evergreen and East End families regularly volunteering in our ongoing Saturday morning clean-up events listed on [HandsOn Greater Richmond](#). A kiosk flyer at Evergreen's entrance invites families to become involved in the restoration process, and our on-site staff regularly meet with family during their visits to the cemetery. Another kiosk will be installed at East End shortly.

4) What is the Executive Planning and Review Team (ExPRT) for Historic Evergreen Cemetery?

The Executive Planning and Review Team (ExPRT) is the advisory team assisting the Enrichmond Foundation in planning, reviewing, and prioritizing initiatives relating to the restoration of Historic Evergreen Cemetery. The advisory

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team's discussions, decisions, and recommendations will inform the strategic priorities and implementation of Evergreen's multi-year restoration process. The team meets monthly on the campus of Virginia Union University.

Comprised of 15–25 Historic Evergreen and East End stakeholders, the advisory team records, considers, and addresses the ideas, suggestions, and concerns you share with us to help strengthen the impact, quality, and sustainability of the restoration project. Advisory team members are committed to the successful restoration of Historic Evergreen and East End Cemetery as a sacred, accessible, public place where African American perspectives and histories are dignified and celebrated.

5) How did Enrichmond become caretaker and stewards of Historic Evergreen and East End Cemetery?

The Enrichmond Foundation purchased Historic Evergreen Cemetery in 2016. It was the previous owners, the Entzminger family, who entrusted Enrichmond to carry forward their hopes of renewing Evergreen Cemetery. The Entzminger's had privately owned and managed Evergreen (as well as Woodland Cemetery in Henrico County) for more than 40 years. Woodland Cemetery is now in the capable hands of Mr. Marvin Harris and the Woodland Restoration Foundation (formerly the Evergreen Restoration Project).

Enrichmond, under the guidance and overview from multiple Friends groups - including Virginia Roots, Friends of East End, Evergreen Restoration Project, Friends of Shockoe Hill Cemetery, and the Friends of Forest View Cemetery, descendant family members, long-time volunteers, community leaders, National Park Service, City of Richmond, County of Henrico, Commonwealth of Virginia, and preservation groups, initiated the process of becoming the caretaker and steward of East End Cemetery immediately afterward.

East End Cemetery was different in that it had no owner. Enrichmond worked with the State Attorney General's Office to pursue a public and transparent process of asking for community input before being awarded stewardship of the property by the State of Virginia. After a four-week public input process to determine if anyone claimed ownership (none did) or if anyone opposed our request (none did), Enrichmond met with the presiding judge who reviewed the request, assessed Enrichmond's capability and track record in like efforts, and read our 20+ letters of support from descendant family members and community leaders, and were granted stewardship and custodian responsibilities. Our public hearing notices for this effort were published publicly using the same process of reinterment notice that Enrichmond ran in the late Summer of 2020.

6) What is Parity LLC?

In 2006, the Capital Region Land Trust, the City of Richmond, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Enrichmond Foundation initiated the establishment of the James River Park Conservation Easement. This unique and historic urban conservation easement preserved and protected almost half of the parks 600+ acres. The individuals that stewarded this to completion overcame immense difficulties in dealing with tax delinquent properties, absentee owners, no owners on record, small parcels and large privately held properties. From this experience we learned land ownership could be a powerful tool in our mission of protecting and preserving open spaces as well increasing equitable access to communities in need. Over the next several years Enrichmond was presented with more opportunities to preserve and improve equitable access for ALL Richmonders as well as expand and enhance public and open spaces - most notable were Vauxhall Island and Evergreen Cemetery. Using a common practice among developers and nonprofits alike, Enrichmond's board established Parity LLC as its land holding entity. Having land held by a separate entity protects the Foundation's charitable donations and other assets against liability. Finally, ownership of Parity's assets is defined in our publicly available audits and financial disclosures (Form 990) required of all nonprofits. In Section R- Related Organizations and Unrelated Partnerships, Enrichmond is listed as the 'Direct Controlling Entity' of Parity LLC. Enrichmond's Board has elected to assign its Executive Director as the manager of Parity LLC. All funds awarded and land donated to Parity LLC is under direct and absolute ownership and management by the Enrichmond Foundation and its Board of Directors.

7) What is the Enrichmond Foundation?

The Enrichmond Foundation was formed in 1990 by the City of Richmond's Parks Advisory Board. The impetus to establish a park foundation was to protect Belle Isle from large scale residential development and open the island to the

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public. Over our 30-year history we have acted as the fiscal agent for more than 130 “Friends” groups and special projects driven by community-based volunteer efforts. Enrichmond and our neighborhood volunteer groups do amazing work in the City’s parks, but we support multiple public and open space efforts throughout the City. These include cemeteries, community gardens, street trees, pop-up parks, playgrounds, trails, farmers markets, dog parks, amphitheaters, and historic structures.

We saw the preservation and restoration of Historic Evergreen Cemetery as an urgent, critical need for Richmond’s East End community, and Preservation Virginia and Virginia Community Capital committed the resources to help make it possible. Restoring this sacred place, originally conceived as a community gathering place and significant African American site of memory, aligns with Enrichmond’s mission to enhance public places in our communities through volunteerism, a respect for the City’s history, and community collaboration.

8) **How is Evergreen being cleaned-up and maintained?**

Maintenance of the property is one of our biggest tasks. We are leveraging our local and state-wide partnerships, fundraising, passionate volunteers, and professional network of experts to elevate and conduct maintenance work. We continue to work with the volunteers and volunteer organizations that have been working at Evergreen and offer tools, equipment, training, storage, supplies, and other services on-site. Enrichmond’s volunteer coordinator, caretaker, and groundskeeping team work together to coordinate regularly scheduled professional maintenance, as well as volunteer efforts at the cemetery.

Nearly all of the research, outreach, and maintenance for Evergreen to date has been accomplished by devoted and tireless volunteers for decades. The Maggie L. Walker Foundation mobilized volunteers to clear and maintain portions of Evergreen in the 1970s, followed by Dwight Storke, Jr. and Jim Bell of the National Park Service. Veronica A. Davis of Virginia Roots reinvigorated the volunteer effort in the 1990s, followed by John Shuck and Marvin Harris, who continue to lead volunteer groups in East End Cemetery and Evergreen, respectively. Enrichmond is now able to provide dedicated, paid staff support to ensure that volunteer efforts culminate in a fully preserved cemetery that is open and accessible to the public.

9) **Restoration is going to take a long time and cost a lot of money. How are you funding this?**

We envision restoration of Evergreen as a multiyear, multimillion-dollar project that will demand collective creativity, resourcefulness, and determination until this national treasure is honored and cared for as it should be. Restoration will likely take at least five years.

Restoring and maintaining Historic Evergreen Cemetery will indeed be expensive. The Enrichmond Foundation has received a generous commitment of funds from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to help defray the costs associated with the purchase and restoration of the cemetery. Enrichmond has received substantial support from three great organizations – Preservation Virginia, Virginia Community Capital, and Dominion Energy – as we work through the early phases of planning and restoration.

In June 2018, Gov. Ralph Northam signed into law a bill providing support to care for and maintain a number of historic African American cemeteries, including Evergreen. Though the funds from this bill cover a fraction of our annual maintenance costs at Evergreen, this critical state support contributes to and enhances the restoration effort at Evergreen in important ways.

10) **What are you doing to support preservation efforts of other cemeteries in need?**

We currently partner with Friends of Shockoe Hill Cemetery and Friends of Forest View Cemetery by serving as their fiscal agents. In the case of Forest View we worked with the City of Richmond to assume ownership of this tax delinquent property in order to keep the property out of private hands (developers) and protected for perpetuity. Enrichmond has also become the owner of East End Cemetery, adjacent to Evergreen, to preserve this significant site and to work with family members, community members, and volunteers to properly restore it for the benefit of the community. Like Evergreen, East End had been cared for by a long list of dedicated volunteers under the leadership of John Shuck, an Evergreen advisory team member, and most recently by Friends of East End.

Learn more and consider supporting the Woodland Restoration Foundation [HERE](https://www.woodlandrestorationfoundation.org):
<https://www.woodlandrestorationfoundation.org>

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11) What efforts were made to incorporate the existing volunteer groups and others in the preservation process underway at Historic Evergreen and East End Cemeteries?

Starting in April of 2016, Enrichmond staff, Friends of East End (Brian and Erin Palmer, John Shuck, and Justin Curtis), Evergreen Restoration Project (Marvin Harris), and Virginia Outdoors Foundation held weekly update meetings. These meetings were established to provide a regular flow of information between the organizations. In addition, Enrichmond sought input from descendant family members, National Park Service, the City of Richmond, the County of Henrico, and preservation organizations. The group maintained copious meeting minutes and action items for each member to report back on at a future date. One example of these action items assigned to Enrichmond was reported on via email on July 21st, 2016 to Friends of East End (Brian Palmer, John Shuck), Evergreen Restoration Project (Marvin Harris), and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (Brett Glymph, Jason McGarvey, and Leslie Grayson) stating Enrichmond's Board of Directors, per the request of the weekly group meeting members, had agreed to incorporate East End Cemetery within its acquisition efforts. These weekly meetings and the guidance we received were critical in our decision-making process. The weekly meetings continued until May of 2017. Currently, Enrichmond continues to support and work alongside Marvin Harris in his new role at Woodland.

Learn more and consider supporting the Woodland Restoration Foundation [HERE](https://www.woodlandrestorationfoundation.org):
<https://www.woodlandrestorationfoundation.org>

We worked to collaborate with Friends of East End up until November 2020. We attempted to settle our disputes with Friends of East End representatives via mediation, but our efforts were declined. Due to ongoing challenges and disagreements which unfortunately were not resolved, we parted ways with Friends of East End.

Mediation is a private process where a neutral third person called a mediator helps the parties discuss and try to resolve the dispute. This process is explained in more detail here:

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/dispute_resolution/resources/DisputeResolutionProcesses/mediation/

We currently partner with Friends of Shockoe Hill Cemetery and Friends of Forest View Cemetery by serving as their fiscal agents and land holder in the latter case. Enrichmond has also become the owner of East End Cemetery, adjacent to Evergreen, to preserve this significant site.