



The Learning Barge ~ A Unique Floating Classroom Teaching the restoration of an urban harbor

First in the World

The Learning Barge will be the world's only floating wetland classroom on a barge, a unique mobile field station, providing students, teachers and the public with compelling on-the-water education regarding stewardship and ecology of an urban harbor river. Powered by sun and wind, the barge will support environmental research, teacher training, education, public outreach and stewardship for an urban population with limited public access to the river. Over a 20-year life, the project will reach more than 200,000 visitors.

Demonstrates Sun and Wind Power

Designed by the University of Virginia's School of Architecture, the 120' by 32' barge will be powered solely by wind and sun. Certified by the Coast Guard, she'll accommodate 149 passengers. A living wetland nursery on a steel deck barge symbolizes the marriage of the environment and a working harbor where industries are cooperating to restore the health of the river. In addition to the wetland nursery and solar/wind power systems, education components will include an enclosed classroom, seining pool, oyster floats, hand washing station using rain water, composting toilets, artifacts wall and more. The design won the national Education Award 2007 from the American Institute of Architects and was the only project to win two P3 awards from the US EPA in a competition at the Washington Mall.

Mobile Field Station

The barge will serve as an icon for Elizabeth River restoration and will move by tug to restoration sites, festivals, schools and public docks in the river cities of Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake and Virginia Beach.

The Lesson: How to Achieve a Swimmable, Fishable Urban River

Students, teachers and the public will engage in inquiry-based learning on how to achieve a new community goal: A swimmable, fishable Elizabeth River by 2020. This urban river currently does not meet safety standards for swimming or harvest of shellfish. Starting with teacher training in summer 2009, followed by student field trips and public workshops, hands-on learning will explore river stewardship, alternative power, importance of wetlands, tidal ecosystems, "green" technologies and more. Instruction will especially target grades 6-8 and complement VA Standards of Learning. The curriculum will teach identified voids in existing instruction. The barge also will be available for art, music, civic meetings, garden clubs and public events, celebrating our home river.

Under Construction for Launch in Summer 2009

The Learning Barge is under construction on the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River at East Coast Steel Fabrication Inc. Students from University of Virginia built the classroom and power components and will install them in Summer 2009, with a public launch planned for late summer 2009 and programming to begin immediately after.

Your Funding Assistance Is Needed!

More than two-thirds of funds are in hand to complete the Learning Barge and operate it for three years, thanks to leading donors including Dominion Power, (\$125,000), Lowe's (\$125,000) and UVA President's Fund for Excellence in Teaching (\$150,000). We welcome inquires regarding remaining funding opportunities. The three-year budget is **\$1,252,081** and includes research, design and construction (\$875,355), as well as education programs and maintenance for 3 years (\$376,726). Additional donors include Norfolk Foundation, Virginia Environmental Endowment, EPA P3 Award, Oak Hill, National Endowment for the Arts and numerous others.

Learn More - www.arch.virginia.edu/learningbarge

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