



**“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul alike. ”**

**--John Muir**

John Muir’s words ring true today more than ever, as more and more land is being lost to development. **And now development is a threat to a very special place, Belmead on the James, because it is being sold.** The 2,265 acre Belmead property is a place of breathtaking natural beauty, home to hundreds of species of animals and plants, and the site of some of the most important historical and religious events in American history. One chapter of Belmead’s unique history is of a plantation eventually being converted to two high schools that educated 15,000 young African Americans over 80 years, from 1895 through 1972. Alumni of the schools and descendants of original enslaved peoples continue to work to keep this special history alive and engage a broader community.

The large size, 2,265 acres, and numerous eco-systems make Belmead a uniquely rich site, well-suited to environmental research, education, enjoyment, and inspiration. Preservation would allow for a future of biological diversity, the value of which will only increase as diversity continues to decrease in many unprotected areas.

### **Natural highlights at Belmead on the James:**

#### Waters and Wetlands:

Belmead has 150+ acres of wetlands; 600 acres of several types of wetlands and floodplains combined.

The 2 ½ miles of the James River, two perennial streams/creeks, and several intermittent streams add up to more than 51,000 linear feet of waterways.

A large pond and several vernal pools are on the property.

#### Birds:

150 bird species have been identified at Belmead.

26 are on the list of 40 birds Virginia has designated as species of concern in our area.

At least 43 species breed at Belmead; many others have been observed exhibiting behaviors indicating they most likely breed there, and many more are present during their breeding seasons.

Three species were the first reported presence in Powhatan County.\*

#### Plants and Trees:

Approximately 755 acres of mature secondary hardwood forests grow at Belmead.

More than 280 species, of plants, shrubs, and trees have been identified.

#### Other:

A total of 36 turtles, snakes, and salamanders are found at Belmead; 5 are species of concern in Virginia.

26 species of fish are found; one is a species of concern.

\* Other Powhatan County records at Belmead included three species of dragonflies and four of plants. Ten species of moths found there have rarely been recorded in the state.