

# From Footprints on the James to the River of No Return

Karl Schmidt, Virginia Commonwealth University

Daniel Carr, Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. James Vonesh, Virginia Commonwealth University





## **Footprints on the James**

- Virginia
- Fall Line Tidal River
- Populated River
- Mothership Logistical Support
- Multi-Sport
- Multiple Permissions/Permits
- Many Land Owners & Managers
- 19-31 Field Days
- Rotating Guests & Staff

## **River of No Return**

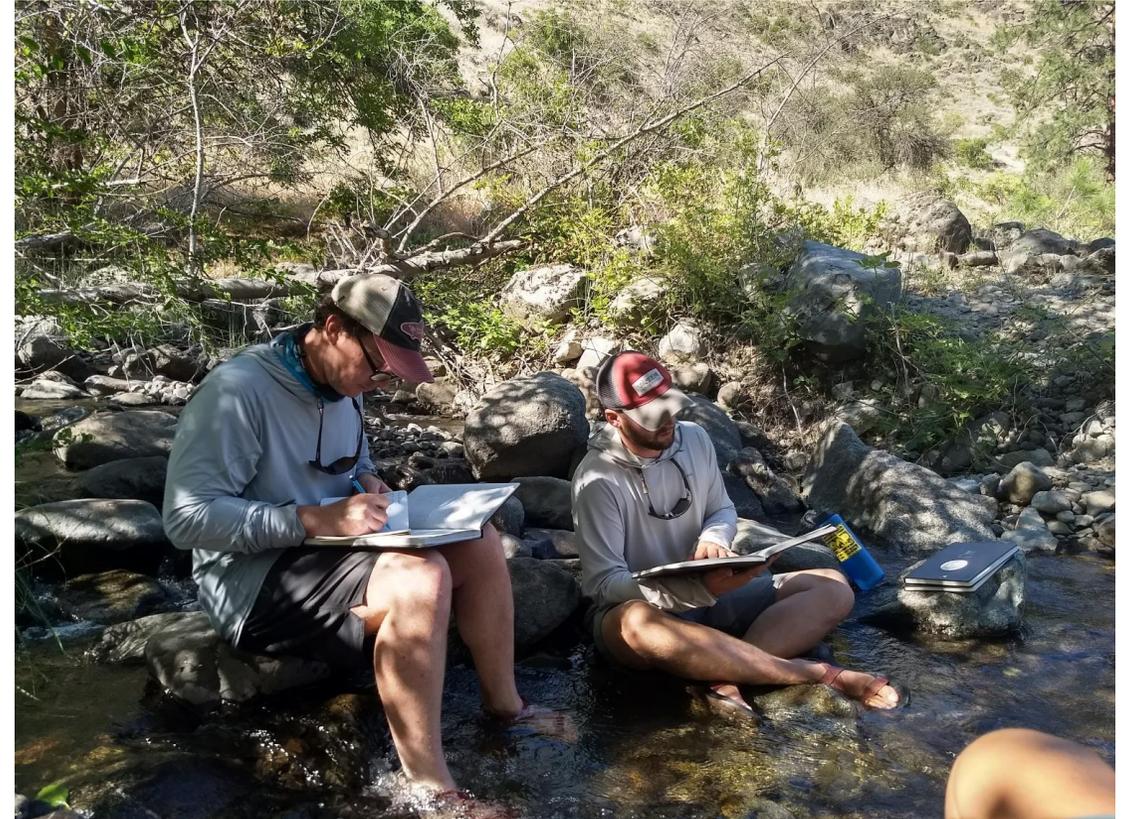
- Idaho, Oregon, Washington
- Western Mountain River
- Wild / Rural River
- Field Logistical Support
- Single Sport
- Single Permission/Permit
- Few Land Owners & Managers
- 9 Field Days
- Fixed Guests & Staff

*“And so we were looking to take the Footprints on the James approach to a course, but in a river that we could contrast with the James”*

# Academic Layout

Taking place over five weeks in the summer of 2018, June 25 – July 26, three 2 credit courses made up this experience. 13 Students.

- Expedition Planning & Management
  - 75% Classroom, 25% Field
- Wilderness Policy
  - 50% Classroom, 50% Field
- Natural History
  - 25% Classroom, 75% Field



# Expedition Planning & Management





# Wilderness Policy

# Natural History

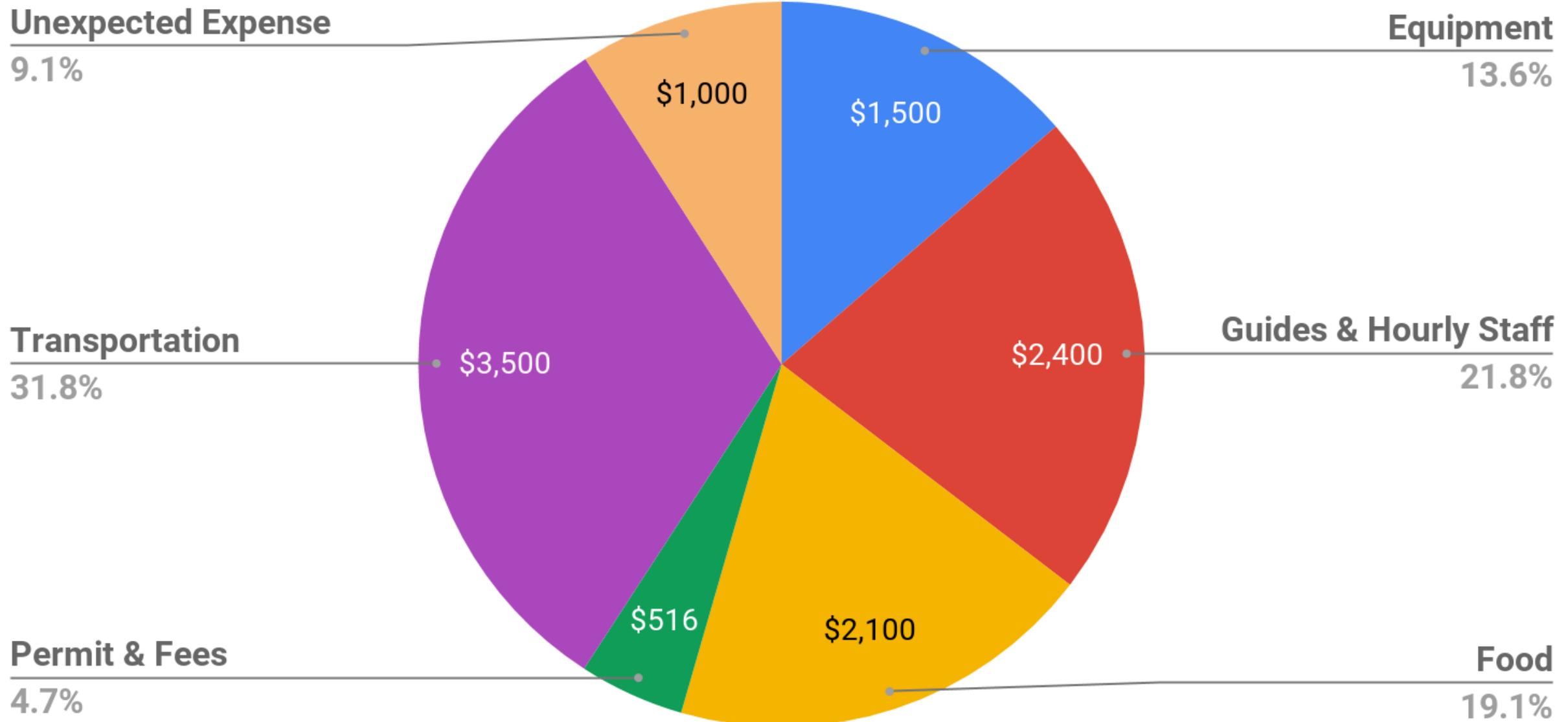


# Outdoor Adventure Program Logistical Support

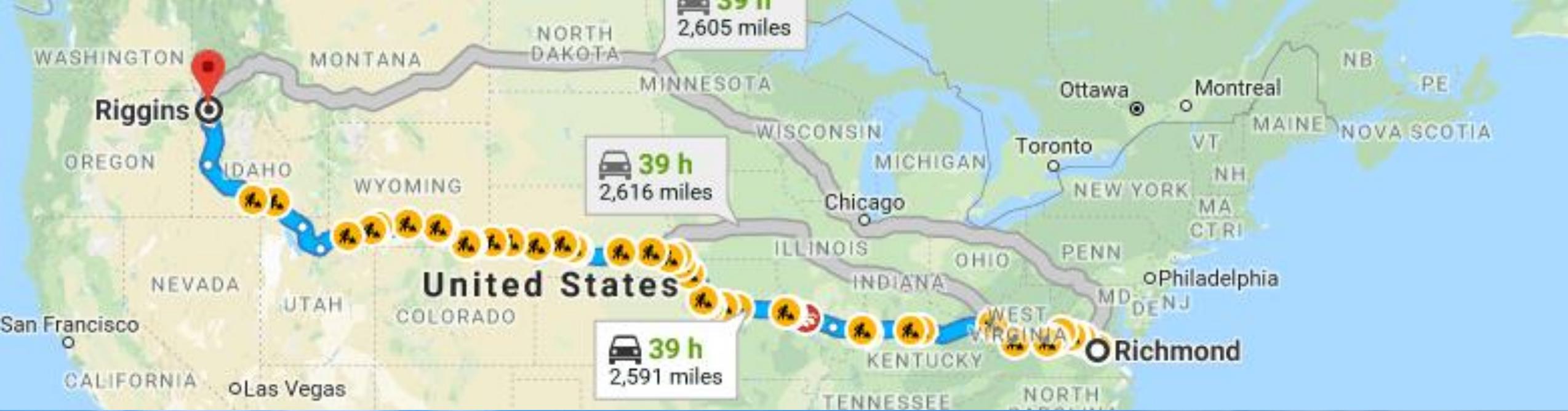


- 340 program offerings
  - 242 outdoor trips
  - 11,771 participations
  - 55,739 contact hours
  - 17,060 equipment rentals
  - 3 Professional Staff
  - 3 Graduate Assistants
  - ~40 Student Employees
- +Budgeting
  - +Vetted Risk Management
  - +Transportation
  - +Outdoor Technical Skills
  - +Course Area Beta & Permit
  - +Equipment & Food

# River of No Return Expedition Budget: \$11,016









*“The depth of the material we covered on the Salmon River would have taken multiple semesters to get across in the classroom,” he said. “Discovery- and inquiry-based learning were a huge part of the nature of the course. I'd say that many of the lessons professors taught were impromptu and based on a question a student asked. It was really cool to watch the students learn how to read their surroundings and develop questions, but also apply previous learning towards new processes, systems and findings.”*











*“Going into the trip, I was nervous because I was going into the wilderness with people I barely knew, and sometimes I can be pretty shy, but I was almost overwhelmed by how great and inclusive everyone was on this trip,” she said. “I think we were all really excited about kind of nerding out together over the topics we love in environmental studies and biology, and then getting our adrenaline rush rafting down the beautiful river together.”*

# THE RIVER OF NO RETURN

*VCU students get firsthand experience with ecology,  
wilderness policy and adventure.*



By VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY