ALBEMARLE COUNTY PLANNING
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Project Name: SP-2025-00009 James River Runners Amendment	**Staff:** Ben Loppacker, Planner
Planning Commission Hearing: June 23, 2026	**Board of Supervisors Public Hearing:** To be scheduled
Owner: Shotgun Beach LLC; Hatton Hideout LLC	**Applicant**: Tom Paquette, James River Runners
Acreage: 58.6 acres	**Special Use Permit:** 18-10.2.2(29) Canoe Livery and accessory Primitive Camping
TMP: 13600-00-00-013C0 **Location**: Hatton Ferry Road	**By-right use**: RA Rural Areas
Magisterial District: Scottsville	**Conditions:** Yes **EC:** No
Proposal: Amend existing special use permit (SP20170004) to expand primitive camping onto parcel 13600-00-00-013C0 to allow six additional camp sites.	**Comp. Plan Designation:** Rural Areas – preserve and protect agricultural, forestal, open space, and natural, historic and scenic resources/ density (0.5 unit/ acre in development lots) in Rural Area 1 in the Comprehensive Plan.
Character of Property: The proposed expansion area is an open field, with larger scattered trees. There are no permanent improvements on TMP 136-13C and currently 14 campsites are allowed on the three parcels to the west.	**Use of Surrounding Properties:** Surrounding properties are rural, agricultural lands. Hatton Ferry is a historic former ferry location and has been the site of an ongoing livery operation.
Positive Aspects: 1. The proposal is consistent with the review criteria for special use permits contained in the Zoning Ordinance. 2. The proposal provides expanded recreation and camping options for community members who live in the area, as well as potential tourists. 3. No detrimental impacts to adjoining properties are anticipated.	**Concerns:** 1. None
Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of SP-2025-00009 with conditions.	

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The properties are located at the terminus of Hatton Ferry Road, along the James River, where it borders Buckingham County. It is to the southwest of the Town of Scottsville. There is an existing canoe livery that offers canoeing, kayaking, tubing, and rafting. Camping is accessory to the livery. Several tax map parcels are associated with the uses, totaling approximately 3.02 acres. TMP 136-13C is currently undeveloped, with the field on the northern portion of the parcel being used for overflow parking, and the partially wooded portion, where the proposed campsites would be located, is unused. The adjacent parcels include the existing 14 primitive campsites, as well as the boat ramp at Hatton Ferry.

To the immediate north of the site, is the CSX Railroad right of way, that separates the campsites from nearby residential uses. To the south lies the James River, which separates the proposed campsites from single family residences in Buckingham County. Beyond the adjacent properties are existing single-family residences.

All parcels associated with the use are zoned Rural Areas and designated Rural Area in the Comprehensive Plan. All surrounding properties are also zoned RA and designated RA in the Comprehensive Plan as well. Hatton Ferry is historically significant and is contributing to the Southern Albemarle Rural Historic District.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY

SP197800074	On January 3, 1978, the Board of Supervisors approved a special use permit for boating, canoe, livery, recreational activity on 14.5 acres, subject to conditions.
SDP197900022	On February 20, 1979, the Planning Commission approved the site plan required by SP197900074.
SP201700004	On March 14, 2018, a special use permit was approved to expand the camping area to allow five additional camp sites, including camping on Parcel 136-14A, which was not a parcel included with approval of SP197800074. Conditions of approval included:

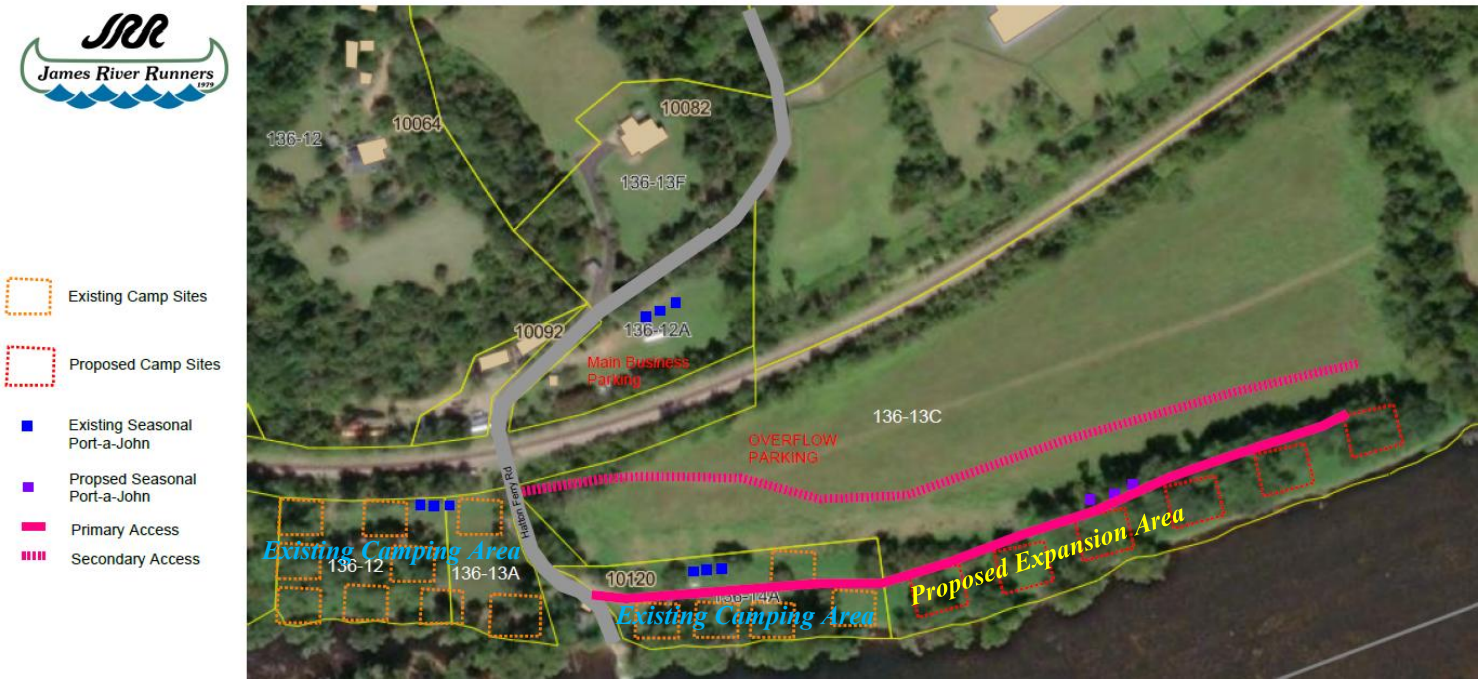
SP-2017-00004 James River Runners Amendment Special Use Permit Conditions

1. Accessory structures within the floodplain shall be constructed and secured in accordance with County Code § 18-30.3.15.
2. The use of fireworks on the property shall be prohibited.
3. The owner shall establish and enforce Campground Quiet Hours, as approved by the Zoning Administrator, for the hours between 10 pm and 6 am.
4. No amplified sound or permanent lighting shall be installed or used on the property.
5. A staff member shall be on the premises at all times when individuals are utilizing camp sites on the property.

DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

The applicant's description and justification for the request are provided with Attachment 2. The existing special use permit allows camping as an accessory use to the canoe livery on Parcels 136-12, 136-12A and 136-14A only. Nine primitive campsites are in use on Parcels 136-12 and 136-12A

and five primitive campsites are in use on Parcel 136-14A. This application seeks to expand the SP area to include six additional primitive campsites on a portion of parcel 136-13C, offering a total of 20 primitive campsites divided between the three parcels. Campsites would accommodate a maximum of ten people each who are canoe livery customers. The campsites would be restricted to the months of March through September. No additional uses or structures are requested with this application. The location of existing and proposed campsites is shown below on the applicant's concept plan:



COMMUNITY MEETING and COMMUNITY INPUT

Due to the limited expansion of an existing use, the Director of Planning waived the community meeting. At this time, staff have not received any public comment regarding this application.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST:

Special Use Permits are evaluated under reasonable standards, based on zoning principles which include the proposal's compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. Any impacts caused by the proposal may be addressed through conditions which must be reasonably related and roughly proportional to the impacts.

Section 33.8(A) states that the Commission, in making its recommendation, shall consider the following factors:

1. ***No substantial detriment. Whether the proposed special use will be a substantial detriment to adjacent parcels.***

The proposed increase in primitive camp sites would be an expansion of the existing, allowed use on neighboring parcels and no permanent structures are proposed on the parcel. No amplified sound will not be allowed, fireworks are prohibited, and quiet hours are established and enforced. Staff recommends draft conditions that continue these restrictions. Quiet hours are managed by the camp staff, required to be on-site during camping hours. Campground quiet hours will continue to be from enforced by on sight staff and signed campground agreements by customers agreeing to this ordinance. Quiet hours in the current conditions are from 10:00p.m. to 6:00a.m. However, for consistency with noise regulations on other RA uses, staff recommends a change that limits noise to 7:00a.m. No substantial detriment to adjacent lots is anticipated.

2. ***Character of the nearby area is unchanged. Whether the character of the adjacent parcels and the nearby area will be changed by the proposed special use.***

The character of the surrounding area is agricultural and residential. Seasonal use of campsites will not change the character of the area. Operation of the canoe livery supports recreational access and employment in the rural area. This use has been ongoing on TMP 136-12A since 1978. Staff believes that the limited expansion of the proposed use will not change the character of adjacent parcels or the nearby area.

3. ***Harmony. Whether the proposed special use will be harmony with the purpose and intent of this chapter,***

Section 10 of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the purpose of Rural Areas zoning: This district hereafter referred to as RA is hereby created and may hereafter be established by amendment of the zoning map for the following purposes:
• Preservation of agricultural and forestal lands and activities;
• Water supply protection;
• Limited service delivery to the rural areas; and
• Conservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources.

Additional primitive camp sites would not add significant new impacts to nearby agricultural or silvicultural uses. Because the use is primitive camping, it would not adversely affect natural, scenic, or historic resources.

with the uses permitted by right in the district,

The proposed increase in primitive campsites would not affect by-right uses in the district on this property or adjacent properties.

with the regulations provided in Section 5 as applicable,

Section 5.1.05 of the Zoning Ordinance contains the following supplemental regulations for camp uses:

a. Provisions for outdoor cooking, campfires, cooking pits, etc., shall be subject to Albemarle County fire official approval whether or not a site development plan is required;
b. All such uses shall conform to the requirements of the Virginia Department of Health Bureau of Tourist Establishment Sanitation and other applicable requirements. The regulations establish standards to be met throughout the operation of the camp use if approved, rather than approvals to be obtained in advance.

The Fire Rescue department has reviewed the plan and have no objection.

and with the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The public health, safety, and general welfare of the community are protected through the special use permit process, which assures that the proposed use is appropriate in the location requested. Zoning, Engineering, Building Inspections, Transportation Planning, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Albemarle County Parks and Recreation and Albemarle County Fire Rescue all reviewed this application and have provided no objections.

If the special use permit is approved, the use cannot commence without the appropriate approvals from the Fire Marshal, Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Zoning. These processes will ensure that all State and County regulations, special use permit conditions, and all necessary inspections have been approved.

4. ***Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Whether the proposed special use will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.***

The Comprehensive Plan (AC44) land use designation for the property is Rural Area. The property and all of the abutting properties along Hatton Ferry Road are designated as Rural Area and within Comprehensive Plan. Staff has considered not only RA objectives but applicable objectives of the Environmental Stewardship, Parks and Open Space, and Cultural Resources of AC44.

Objective 1: Develop and implement policies for protecting rural land-use patterns in the Rural Area, especially for land conservation, agriculture, and forestry, while prioritizing large parcels and unfragmented habitats.

The proposal to increase the amount of primitive camping on site is a generally low impact use, which appears to align with the recommended uses for rural areas within the AC44 Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 2: Protect natural systems, water supplies, and historic and cultural resources through the implementation of natural area preservation, adaptive reuse, historic preservation, and education policies and practices.

The proposal would not impact any historic and cultural resources per the Historic Preservation Planner comments, and no clearing, grading or permanent structures would be constructed on the property as part of this proposal.

Objective 3: Increase the use of land conservation programs to implement the Objectives of AC44's Rural Area Chapter and Environmental Stewardship Chapter.

The proposal would not add any land to any county conservation programs, however, there is no physical construction proposed as part of this proposal and it does not prevent land from being added to any land conservation programs in the future. Therefore, this objective does not appear to apply to this application.

Objective 7: Plan for and manage non-residential land uses and existing development in the Rural Area.

The proposal for primitive camping is consistent with existing nonresidential land uses on the adjacent parcels. Therefore, the application appears to be met by this objective.

The James River is a natural and scenic resource. Limited primitive camping is not detrimental to RA objectives or objectives related to natural and scenic resources. Camping opportunities allow for both residents and visitors to access the resource, aiding in tourism and parks objectives of AC44.

SUMMARY

Staff has identified the following positive aspects to this request:

1. The proposal is consistent with the review criteria for special use permits contained in the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The proposal provides expanded recreation and camping options for community members who live in the area, as well as potential tourists.
3. No detrimental impacts to adjoining properties are anticipated.

No concerns were identified.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the findings contained in this staff report, staff recommends approval of the special use permit application SP-2025-00009 with the following draft conditions:

1. Development of the use must be in general accord with the Concept Plan (Attachment 3). To be in general accord with the Conceptual Plan, development must reflect the following major elements essential to the design of the development:
    a. Location of proposed campsites
    b. Number of campsites
    c. Disturbance of wooded and vegetative areas is prohibited
2. Accessory structures within the floodplain shall be constructed and secured in accordance with County Code § 18-30.3.15.
3. The use of fireworks on the property is prohibited.
4. The owner must establish and enforce Campground Quiet Hours, as approved by the Zoning Administrator, for the hours between 10pm and 7 am.
5. Outdoor music is prohibited.
6. Permanent outdoor lighting is prohibited.
7. A staff member must be on the premises at all times when individuals are utilizing camp sites on the property.

POSSIBLE PLANNING COMMISSION MOTIONS:

A. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit:

I move to recommend approval of SP-2025-00009 James River Runners SP Amendment with the conditions stated in the staff report.

B. Should the Planning Commission **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

I move to recommend denial of SP-2025-00009 James River Runners SP Amendment. *Should a commissioner motion to recommend denial, he or she should state the reason(s) for recommending denial*.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – SP-2025-00009 James River Runners SP Amendment – Location Map

Attachment 2 – SP-2025-00009 James River Runners SP Amendment – Applicant Narrative

Attachment 3 – SP-2025-00009 James River Runners SP Amendment – Applicant Conceptual Plan