

Ivy Creek Foundation
P.O. Box 956
Charlottesville, VA 22902

May 7, 2019

Jeff Richardson
County Executive
Albemarle County
401 McIntire Rd
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Dear Mr. Richardson:

The Ivy Creek Foundation, in long term agreement with Albemarle County and City of Charlottesville Parks and Recreation Departments, stewards the Ivy Creek Natural Area. The Ivy Creek Natural Area property encompasses much of the former River View Farm, a historically significant property formerly owned by Hugh Carr and his family. The Ivy Creek Foundation currently seeks to call further attention to the significant heritage of the property and its residents through listing in the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register. We are writing to request your support for this undertaking by authorizing the City and County Parks and Recreation Departments to sign the Preliminary Information Form, the first step in seeking National Register designation, as property owners.

River View Farm and the Carr-Greer Farmhouse present at Ivy Creek Natural Area appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register due to the property's significance in American history as the farm built by emancipated slave, Hugh Carr, and the contributions of subsequent residents, Mary and Conly Greer, to our community in the areas of Education and Agriculture.

Former slave Hugh Carr established River View Farm during the post-Emancipation era, a period of dramatic change resulting from the transition from a culture of slavery to a new, often-contested order that continues to shape our society today. Against powerful odds and challenges, including racial prejudices and discrimination, Hugh Carr worked as both a share cropper and wage laborer following his Emancipation and was able to save enough money to begin buying property in Albemarle County circa 1870. Assembled over the course of about twenty years, Carr's River View Farm was part of a larger community of African American farmers, millers, craftsmen, laborers, educators, and ministers known as Union Ridge or Hydraulic Mills. Other than River View Farm, little else of the community survives today.

River View Farm was divided among Hugh Carr's children upon his death in 1914. Carr's eldest daughter Mary, and her husband, Conly Greer, eventually acquired River View Farm in its entirety and continued to live on, expand, and enhance the farm for the remainder of their lives. Mary and Conly Greer each contributed greatly to the broader community through their work. From 1930 to 1950, Mary served as principal of Albemarle Training School, the only school providing post-elementary education to African American children in the County during the segregation period. Conly served local African American farmers as the Agricultural Extension Agent for Albemarle County between 1918 and 1953. Each provided important tools to help local community members to better their odds in a society heavily influenced by Jim Crow laws. Greer Elementary School is named in honor of Mary Carr Greer.

The River View Farm property thus holds a special and significant place in Albemarle County history. Ivy Creek Natural Area continues to contain extensive evidence of its agricultural heritage associated with the Carr-Greer family. This evidence is protected through the stewardship practices of the County, City, and Ivy Creek Foundation.

Friends of Ivy Creek Foundation are prepared to develop the materials needed to list the Carr-Greer Farmhouse and the River View Farm property in the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register. Successfully listing the property will raise awareness about its importance and provide publicly-accessible information to local residents as well as other interested individuals and researchers. The National and State Landmarks Registers are an honorary designation that is administered by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Benefits of listing include recognition, public pride, and helping the property to qualify for certain grant funding. Contrary to widely held opinion, listing a property in these registers imposes absolutely no restrictions on future use, development, or modification. Ivy Creek Foundation seeks listing as a first step in a broader effort aimed at providing enhanced interpretive opportunities about River View Farm and the important aspects/chapters of local history it embodies to the public. It would also enable Ivy Creek Foundation to seek grant funding from certain sources that require designation that would be used to address repair and interpretation of the building to enhance public enjoyment and education.

Your support of this effort would signal your commitment to the stewardship of locally important African American heritage resources. Few properties of this type survive within our community. Listing the Carr-Greer Farmhouse and River View Farm on the National and State registers would signal your support for protection of a rare surviving example of post-Emancipation African American heritage, and serve as a model for others to consider pursuing National Register listing.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources is available at any point in the process to address assistance in understanding the benefits of listing, and is available to answer questions.

As joint owners of the property, we need both Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville to have an authorized representative sign the Virginia Department of Historic Resources application that they use to evaluate the eligibility of a property. As noted, Ivy Creek Foundation is prepared to take responsibility for completing all other aspects of the form and the subsequent nomination materials at no cost to the City or County.

We appreciate your support in this matter and ask for your authorization for the County Parks and Recreation Department or some other staff member to sign the initial form required by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to evaluate the eligibility of the property for the National and State Registers.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lorna Werntz
President
Ivy Creek Foundation

Rochelle Garwood
Interim Executive Director
Ivy Creek Foundation