



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 17, 2022

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Ijams Celebrates Re-Opening of River Trail Nov. 1

Ijams Nature Center will celebrate the re-opening of the north side of River Trail and a new section of the River Boardwalk on Tuesday, Nov. 1, at 11 a.m. The public is invited.

Attendees will gather at the intersection of North Cove Trail and River Trail on the bluffs behind the Ijams Visitor Center. Ijams Executive Director Amber Parker and City of Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon will make short remarks. Afterward, guests will explore the new trail, including the boardwalk, to its intersection with River Landing.

River Trail is only accessible by foot and the route includes significant inclines. The total length of the walk is about one mile.

A large section of River Trail washed away during flooding in February 2019, forcing its closure. The boardwalk remained open, but could be accessed only from the opposite side of the trail.

Ijams Nature Center staff called in partners to determine the best way to repair the trail and stop further erosion.

“We brought together government, commercial and nonprofit partners, as well as individual members of this community, to develop a plan to restore one of Ijams’ most visited and beloved places,” Parker said. “This was a major project with many nuances, and it would not have been possible without their contributions.”

While planning was under way, Ijams staff and volunteers began removing invasive species from the area to open up the view to the river and allow native species to repopulate. Appalachian Mountain Bike Club created a new section of trail farther from the river’s edge.

The next step was to install a support system on the side of the cliff, which had to be done from the water and required massive equipment. Ijams needed to find a barge company, and with all of the damage caused by the flood and other work that needed to be done, the waiting list was long.

In June 2022, Knoxville Barge, Inc., drove pilings into the side of the cliff to provide support for a new section of the River Boardwalk to connect the trail and existing boardwalk.

Earthadelic then tackled the rest of the project, which involved construction on a cliff face and seamlessly marrying new construction to the existing boardwalk. The original wooden structure was designed and built by Don Niday in the mid 1990s. Earthadelic completed its work in early October.

The City of Knoxville and an individual donor helped cover the cost of the project.

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit, 318-acre educational nature center for all ages, abilities and walks of life. Ijams' mission is to encourage stewardship of the natural world by providing an urban greenspace for people to learn about and enjoy the outdoors through engaging experiences. Located just three miles from downtown Knoxville, Ijams features 12+ miles of hiking and mixed-use trails, a public access river dock, swimming, boating, biking and more. The center offers hundreds of educational programs annually for all ages. The Ijams grounds and trails are open every day from 8 a.m. until dusk. Starting Nov. 1, 2022, the Visitor Center will switch to fall and winter hours and will be open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and Sunday, and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. For more information, visit Ijams.org.

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