



CITY OF HARRISONBURG  
**OFFICE OF  
THE MAYOR**

MAYOR DEANNA REED

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**Proclamation Recognizing the Purcell Park Bioreactor  
Project as a 2021 Governor's Environmental Excellence  
Award Gold Medal Winner**

*WHEREAS*, the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards recognize successful and innovative efforts that improve Virginia's environment; and

*WHEREAS*, the Purcell Park Bioreactor Project completed by the Harrisonburg Public Works Department is a 2021 Gold Medal Governor's Environmental Excellence Award winner; and

*WHEREAS*, Harrisonburg Public Works partnered with Ridge to Reefs, Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, James Madison University, Virginia Tech, and the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Regional Sewer Authority to install and monitor the woodchip bioreactor; and

*WHEREAS*, the bioreactor, the first of its kind on the East Coast, mimics wetlands and converts nitrate-nitrogen in the water to harmless nitrogen gas; and

*WHEREAS*, excessive nitrogen causes large algae blooms in rivers and streams, leading to decreased oxygen levels and fish kills when these blooms die; and

*WHEREAS*, woodchips for the bioreactor came from over 200 Ash trees removed from Westover Park due to the emerald ash borer; and

*WHEREAS*, the bioreactor removes about 98 percent of nitrate, more than 1,000 pounds annually, preventing it from entering Blacks Run, which eventually feeds into the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and

*WHEREAS*, the bioreactor is one of the most cost-effective Best Management Practices discovered for nitrogen; and

*WHEREAS*, Wes Runion, environmental specialist with the Harrisonburg Public Works department was integral to the City securing the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant that was used to fund the bioreactor construction and has taken the lead on the post-construction monitoring, working with James Madison University and Virginia Tech faculty and staff for water sampling and testing to confirm the overall effectiveness of the bioreactor.

*NOW, THEREFORE*, that I, Deanna Reed, as Mayor of the City of Harrisonburg, hereby recognize the accomplishments of the Harrisonburg Public Works Department, the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department, and, in particular, Wes Runion, in receiving a Gold Medal Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for the Purcell Park Bioreactor Project. On behalf of the City Council, we commend you for your hard work and dedication.

GIVEN under my hand this \_\_\_\_ day of April, 2021.

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deanna R. Reed, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pamela Ulmer, City Clerk