

CURRENTS

Volume 9 , Issue 1

Winter 2010

Preserving and Promoting the Natural and Cultural Resources of the Dan River Basin through Stewardship, Recreation and Education

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION

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CASWELL HERITAGE TRAILS—
ONE YEAR'S WORK

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Meetings of the DRBA Board of Directors

are held on the third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. All DRBA members are welcome to attend. The next Board meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 20th at the Eden City Hall.

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Photographer Brian Williams

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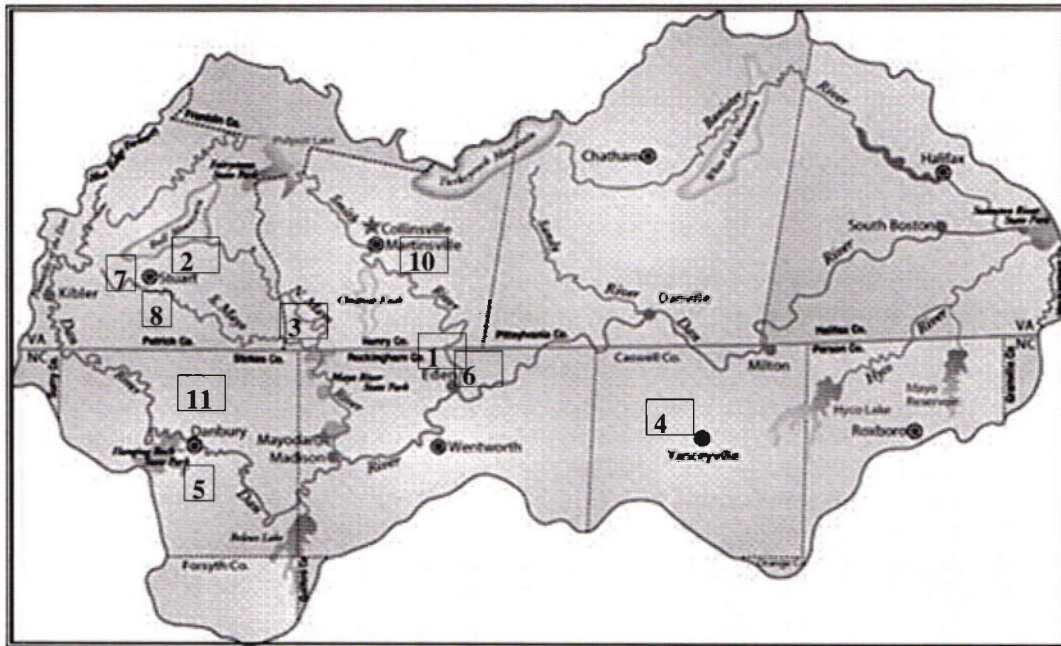
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Greetings from the Director

As we start a new year, I extend heartfelt thanks to our many members, donors, volunteers and staff for their outstanding contributions to DRBA's work on behalf of our Dan River communities.

We are also grateful for the vision and investment of our area's foundations who invest in on-the-ground results. With three offices staffed by nine full- and part-time employees and volunteers, DRBA works across 3,300 square miles of rural Virginia and North Carolina. Without the support of the Harvest Foundation, Danville Regional Foundation, Virginia Environmental Endowment, Golden LEAF Foundation, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, MillerCoors, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Dominion Foundation and others, this work would not be possible.

Foundations support the lion's share of DRBA operations and major programs, and we are reminded by those foundations that DRBA needs to look to the community and to local businesses for sustainable sources of support.

While individual donors donate smaller amounts, every single donation makes a difference. Each year, every new dollar from the community is multiplied.

From new senior center trails in Yanceyville and places for people to walk for health in Fieldale, to stream buffers restored in Danville and projects to ensure clean water in Stokes and Rockingham, to hundreds of school children raising trout in Henry and Patrick counties, to the first-ever Girl Scout "Rock the River" event in Halifax County, you are providing ways for people to play, to learn and to care.

With new accesses to the Dan and Smith riv-

ers in Stokes County, NC and Henry County and Martinsville, VA, you are building a network that makes it possible for

children, adults and senior citizens to be active, to connect with nature and, importantly, to connect with each other.

DRBA's new "insider's guides" to the Dan and Smith rivers share the natural, cultural and recreational highlights of our area to promote tourism. As an added benefit, the guides assist in identifying the themes and stories of our region, a region that deserves to be designated a National Heritage Area.

DRBA works in support of a strong regional identity, a sense of place, a place that supports and sustains the people who call the Dan River region home. We are reminded that the Dan River region needs to be the best—to compete as a place that draws people and long-term investment primarily for the intrinsic qualities it offers, not primarily for tax breaks.

We are sending a clear message that we care about our neighborhoods, our landscapes, our heritage, and the health of our communities and our natural resources. As we enter the second decade of a new millennium, our region, if it is to thrive, has no choice but to look upward and forward, expecting only the best for ourselves and our future generations. Happy 2010!

Katherine Mull



PRESIDENT'S SPACE

The season is upon us to celebrate thanks and sharing with family and friends. What better way to be thankful for the wonderful area we live in than to share the gift of a DRBA membership, send notes on the Caswell County winter scenes cards, or contribute to the ongoing efforts of DRBA.

Thanks to everyone for your volunteer efforts on behalf of DRBA. Your dedication, skills, abilities, joy, laughter and positive attitude make DRBA a continuing success. I wish a delightful Holiday season to all and a healthy, happy New Year.



Wayne Kirkpatrick

1

DRBA AND MILLERCOORS PARTNER FOR WATER QUALITY

MillerCoors and the Dan River Basin Association joined forces in September in celebration of MillerCoors's first annual Water Stewardship Month. Employees from the MillerCoors Eden brewery volunteered their time to restore the Smith River's forest buffer at the new Island Ford Landing at the Smith River Greenway.

As a leading brewer, MillerCoors understands the importance of protecting and conserving our nation's water supply, as well as investing in its local brewery communities. On Saturday, September 12, a team of nearly 60 employee volunteers planted trees along the walkway to the river to help control erosion and protect the river from runoff.

DRBA worked with the City of Eden to coordinate this restoration of trees near the trailhead of the Smith River Greenway. During the event, DRBA's Jenny Edwards, with the assistance of DRBA intern Kat Bongarzone, led a special program to guide children through the process of understanding how trash affects our natural resource. The result was "bottle blooms," or flowers made out of plastic recyclable bottles. MillerCoors representative,



Kristy Mallow of the Golden, Colorado brewery, was impressed by Jenny's programs, and the company anticipates making such programs a "best practice" for future such events.

Katherine Mull

2

Patrick County Farm Tour

On October 10, 2009, locals and visitors to Patrick County enjoyed a rare "up close and personal" encounter with the animals and landscapes of the county's farms. While the numbers of visitors varied widely from farm to farm, Jay Noonkester of Windy Hill Orchard commented, "We're getting a lot more people than usual today." Tammy Goodyear, Moss Creek Farm and Gardens, said more than 20 people visited her farm throughout the day—far more than a normal day.

In addition to activities like picking fresh apples and scratching the heads of friendly goats, visitors learned about the "best management practices" on the farms that help sustain the health of the land and animals. Windy Hill Orchard, for instance, is a "light spray" orchard and uses fish emulsion, kelp and natural liquid lime as opposed to chemical alternatives to protect apples and promote tree growth. "We're raising our grand-kids here," says Debbe Noonkester. "I want to be able to pick an apple off a tree and eat it without worrying about chemicals." Debbe says the orchard is not completely organic yet, but "we are working toward that." Other farms boasted healthy vegetative buffers along creeks to protect water quality and standing trees

that provide wild bird habitat and natural shade for the farm animals.

Patrick County has its history and other bragging rights too. It is home to twenty-one Virginia Century Farms (farms that have been in operation for 100 years or more). Six of the farms on the Patrick County Farm Tour are the recipients of "Conservationist of the Year" for outstanding environmental stewardship practices such as fencing livestock from local creeks to protect water quality. (It's healthier for the cows, too.)

The family-friendly tour was made possible with support from Farmers of Patrick County, Virginia Environmental Endowment, and DRBA. Information is available at www.patrickcountyfarmtour.com or by calling Wayne Kirkpatrick at 276-694-4449.



Farm Tour guest, Susan Anderson of Greensboro, NC, visits Moss Creek Farm in Stuart, VA

Jenny Edwards

It was Easter Sunday of 2006. I was about to head north to visit my daughter in Richmond when T and Lindley Butler described a beautiful piece of land located between the North and South Mayo rivers near Horsepasture, Virginia.

Shaped like the boot of Italy, with its toe extending into North Carolina, the land was located just north of the new NC Mayo River State Park. The Butlers had met with the property owner who indicated that he might be willing to sell the property for conservation purposes.

As we unfurled maps, aerial photographs and other documents, it was clear that the land featured a diversity of cover types and was an excellent wildlife habitat. It also had cleared areas, trails and road access. Protecting this land would offer a chance to preserve significant natural and cultural resources for the Dan River region, and it would also provide a bi-state park within a day's drive of more than a million potential visitors.

Historian Lindley Butler noted that it was here that Col. William Byrd surveyed the Virginia/North Carolina boundary in 1728. T Butler described how Byrd eloquently wrote in his diaries about camping here and hunting a bear. Byrd also wrote of his horse stumbling in the North Mayo River near a lovely river feature that paddlers now call "Byrd's Ledge."

Some time later DRBA appeared with then-Delegate Robert Hurt before the Virginia General Assembly's House Rules Committee. Some committee members had read Byrd's diaries

and were intrigued that the river was named for surveyor William Mayo, after whom Mayo Island in the James River in Richmond is named. A feasibility study for a park was approved.

While Virginia's feasibility study was underway, DRBA and partners successfully worked with Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and Henry County officials to obtain Virginia State Scenic River status for the North Mayo River and the South Mayo River. In addition, Lewis Ledford, Director of N.C. State Parks, and Joe Elton, Director of Va. State Parks, met in Martinsville with local officials to discuss and celebrate this potential bi-state partnership.

In September 2009 the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation purchased 342 acres of land between the forks of the Mayo River. This land will be combined with other parcels to be purchased from willing sellers. Virginia's new state park will seamlessly connect to North Carolina's Mayo River State Park, another project that was initiated by DRBA's founders. A master plan will likely include river access for paddling and fishing, camping areas, and facilities for nature study.

DRBA thanks our many partners, including Henry County, the Southern Environmental Law Center and the dedicated staff and leadership of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Katherine Mull



"Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting and autumn a mosaic of them all."

- Stanley Horowitz



Emerging Thoughts on Pedestrian Planning and Trails in Yanceyville

DRBA recently provided a Letter of Support to the Town of Yanceyville for an NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant to fund a comprehensive pedestrian planning study for the Town. This comes on the heels of our working with David Parrish, Yanceyville Town Manager, to develop a shovel-ready project to connect the Senior Center to Maud Gatewood Park and, eventually, to downtown. We have also spoken with NCDOT regarding the installation of a crosswalk and signage on Firetower Road at the entrance to the Senior Center and Oakwood Elementary School. In support of the Town, we have also submitted an official request to NCDOT for this crosswalk.

DRBA staff also recently gave a presentation to the Yanceyville Town Council on the many benefits of trails, especially of fibrous systems near towns, schools, and areas of employment/services. The Chair of DRBA's Caswell County affiliate, the Parks and Recreation Commission Trails Committee, and I have been talking with County Commissioners and Town Council members over the past few months about this possibility, and we are ready to ask both boards for their endorsement. Approving trails within easements will allow for a major jump start on planning trail routes in cooperation with property owners and will also provide a basis for planning other connecting trails.

PTCOG Trail Planning Effort Benefits Caswell Trails

The Piedmont Triad Council of Governments recently held workshops for planning major trail routes in several counties in NC, including Caswell. We were the last stop on the PTCOG trail planning tour, which allowed for Rockingham and Caswell County representatives to suggest trail links in concert, looking at ways to extend a leg of the Mountains-to-Sea trail into and through Rockingham and Caswell Counties while planning for other major routes, including a Race to the Dan route.

The PTCOG planning effort allows us to go into our upcoming workshops in Caswell with certain regional trail routes as "already on the

books." We will be able to have a more fine-grained discussion about specific routes in Caswell County as they tie into major trail routes.

Preparing for Upcoming Heritage Trails Master Plan Workshops

The workshops for planning Heritage Trails in Caswell County are around the bend of the New Year! All events will be held at the new Senior Center on Firetower Road and will include an opening presentation and audience activity, followed by three days of public participation in planning the trails and identifying contributing features in the County.

The schedule for the events is as follows:
Feb. 3: Kick-Off Presentation and Audience Activity (7 pm - 8 pm)
Feb. 16 - 18: Public Workshops (noon - 7 pm)
Mar. 3: Closing Presentation (7 pm - 8 pm)

Trail Routing, Funding and Construction

The mountain bike trails and additional senior center trail routes are being refined and are nearly ready to begin construction using volunteer labor, including a couple of Boy Scout projects. The Southern Virginia Mountain Bike Association (SVMBA) has offered to provide assistance in the New Year with volunteer training and construction.

DRBA is also pursuing a grant through the NC Trails Program for construction of the School/Stream connector, which will complete the Stream Walk loop on the Senior Center property and connect via crosswalk the Senior Center with Oakwood Elementary School.

Preparing for Annual Celebration

Caswell County will host DRBA's annual celebration on March 6, 2010. Plans for the event are developing, but we are looking forward to meeting in the upstairs of the historic courthouse in downtown Yanceyville.

The Year in Summary

With our workshops just around the corner of the New Year, it appears that we have made much progress this past year in raising awareness, gaining support, and actually getting trail built in Caswell County! Not a bad start.

Chad Hall

5 STOKES COUNTY UPDATE

This past Fall has been all about making connections here in Stokes County.

One of DRBA's most critical objectives here is protecting and restoring river accesses. Our partnership with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is leading the way on this front. Look for exciting announcements in the Spring regarding improvements to two existing Dan River accesses as well as the restoration of public access at another. Hemlock Golf Club president, Keith Robertson, states that he is "very happy to get the access reopened with the support of Wildlife and DRBA." Expect an official opening later this Winter!

The Stokes Office hosted a kick-off meeting of the new Stokes Rivers & Trails Committee in December. Over a dozen local people interested in outdoor recreation and environmental protection squeezed into our office space to brainstorm events and projects we can work on together. Attendance and interest exceeded

our expectations with representatives from local government, Hanging Rock State Park, camps and businesses, other non-profits, and Stokes residents interested in promoting our natural treasures and outdoor recreation.

The committee developed a preliminary list of activities for a local "Last Saturday Outings" series to begin in 2010. In addition, a brief inventory of events and projects was developed and discussed which the committee will consider supporting or leading.

Many other connections here in Stokes are developing with leaders in health and wellness, agriculture, water quality, heritage, arts, recreation, civic groups and others. It is an exciting time of preparation and expectation for DRBA and Stokes County. If you travel through Danbury, please consider paying a visit here at 108 Bank Street...but call first since we're often in the field making those connections.

Editor's Note: Dale Swanson's office number is 336-593-DRBA (3722)

Dale Swanson

6 One Cleanup, Two Rivers

With lots of good memories from last year's NC Big Sweep, I was looking forward to this year's event on October 3 and hoping for a beautiful day. It was a perfect day for an enthusiastic group with a mission. Fourteen paddlers, including a visitor from Florida who wanted to help the river cleanup because he had enjoyed two days on the Dan that week, took to the water. Meanwhile, Milton Hundley scoured the banks of the Smith upstream from Island Ford Bridge.

We launched at Island Ford Landing, Eden's new access at the trailhead of the Smith River Greenway, where volun-

teers from Miller-Coors Brewery had recently joined with DRBA to plant crape myrtles and juniper to beautify and protect the river.

Water levels were good and the current on the Smith River made getting to and collecting some of the litter a challenge for me, but help was always nearby. With teamwork, we hauled out a shopping cart, several tires, and the frame of a large textile mill cart, in addition to three or four bags of litter apiece.

When we reached our mid-point, the Eden Wildlife Access, we all deposited

our collections of litter and Jeff Johnston, accompanied by his faithful dog Guy, shuttled us on his Three Rivers Outfitters bus to the Leaksville Landing for a leisurely lunch, delicious brownies from T, and good conversations.

We got back on the river with empty bags and enjoyed our time on the Dan. There was less litter to collect on the second part of the float, so we just took our time. It was one of those days you didn't want to end. I just wanted to keep floating. Thanks to everyone for making it another successful and memorable day.

Sharon Olson

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OCTOBER 17TH THIRD SATURDAY OUTING

Betty and I hosted a DRBA member hike and covered dish meal on October 17. Fourteen of us enjoyed a vigorous hike to view the remains of a South Mayo River hydroelectric facility that supplied the initial electric service to the Town of Stuart. Constructed in 1916 by local businessman W. H. Clark, and in operation until 1939, there remains a partial dam, a hand dug tunnel, and a long flume that channeled water to the then existing turbines. Seeing this large manmade creation in a somewhat remote area along the steep sided South Mayo is quite striking. The part of the flume where the turbines were located stands about twenty feet high by forty feet long and seemingly grows from the side of the

mountain.

The hike also featured a wide variety of flowers and plants that intrigued everyone, with Hearts-a-Bursting as a favorite. After returning to the Kirkpatrick home, a hayride and plenty of food prepared by many hands capped a cool, cloudy day that gave way to warm sunshine.

New and long-time friends make this day special to Betty and me. We look forward to next October when good friends, good food and good times come together again to enjoy our part of the basin. Thanks to all who came out, enjoyed the hike, brought food and helped to make a great day.

Wayne Kirkpatrick

WATER QUALITY MONITORING



PHCC instructor and DRBA member Rebecca Adcock (4th from left) helps her students identify macroinvertebrates.



DRBA volunteer Betty Kirkpatrick assists Patrick Henry Elementary 1st Graders with a VMNH Exploring Nature program at Fairystone State Park.

DRBA's watershed education and stream monitoring efforts continue throughout the year. Because of our topography and climate, the Dan River basin boasts an abundance of streams that provide the focus for much of DRBA's programs. Recent water quality efforts include seven "Tub-of-Bugs"/classroom watershed education demonstrations and multiple stream monitoring.

The Stuart campus of Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC) was the site for an extensive sampling of nearby Campbell Creek. DRBA member and PHCC instructor Rebecca Adcock's Biology 101 lab class performed macroinvertebrate and fecal coliform monitoring with excellent water quality results for both methods.

Additional stream monitoring/educational presentations included two VMNH Master Naturalist classes, one at Fell's Branch and a second at the

Museum; a VMNH Exploring Nature children's program for 75 first graders at Fairystone State Park; Philpott Lake tributaries monitoring by the Friends of Philpott; and the Pittsylvania County science teachers monitoring of streams in the proposed uranium mining area. Two schools, George Washington High (10th grade) in Danville and the New Vision School (Earth Club, K - 5th grade) in Madison, each hosted DRBA for a watershed education class.

Many volunteer opportunities exist across the basin for anyone interested in exploring aquatic stream life or giving classroom demonstrations. Contact Wayne Kirkpatrick (276-694-4449; wynbtyk@embarqmail.com) or Jenny Edwards (jedwards@danriver.org) for information. Your involvement is most welcome and needed.

Wayne Kirkpatrick

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Cemetery Project

DRBA assisted the Fayette Area Historical Initiative (FAHI) in a successful grant application to The Helen S. and Charles G. Patterson, Jr. Charitable Foundation Trust. The foundation awarded \$10,000 to FAHI to support their partnership with DRBA in documenting and preserving the natural and cultural features of historic African-American cemeteries in Martinsville-Henry County, Patrick County and Pittsylvania County. Other support for the project comes from the Virginia Environmental Endowment and the The Harvest Foundation through their funding to DRBA.

The project includes cemetery clean-ups, an inventory of historic trees and other plantings, educational "community suppers" featuring experts in African American history and cultural preservation, and engaging area youth in recording oral histories of local seniors.

Church and family cemeteries are invited to submit photographs and information recorded from headstones for inclusion in an online registry. Other information on the register will include historical information about each site, a list of the people buried, maps of cemetery locations, images of remaining tombstones and an inventory of natural features.

Without documentation, the natural and historic landscapes of these cemeteries could be lost to housing, industrial, and agricultural development. By making this information available online, DRBA and FAHI hope to lay the groundwork for a future driving tour of African-American historical sites as well as assist genealogical researchers across the nation.

Jenny Edwards

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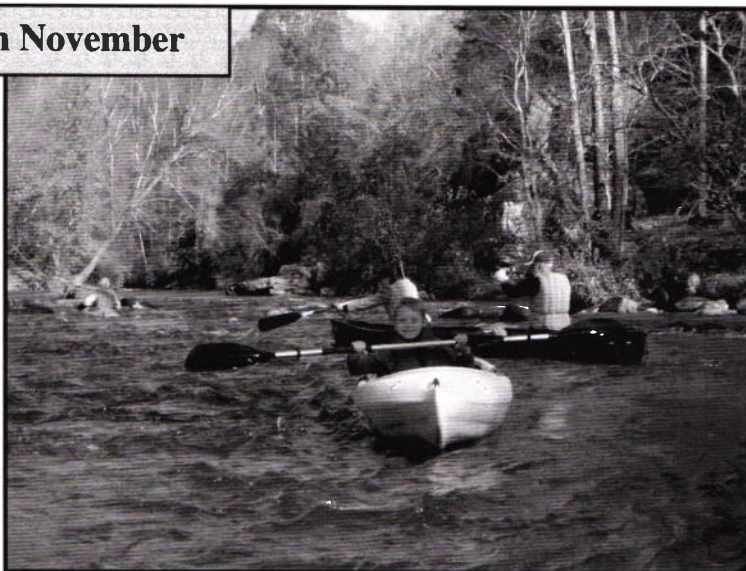
A Chilly Adventure in November

After spending the night camping in almost freezing temperatures, we must say that we were a bit nervous waking up on a cool Saturday morning on November 7, knowing that we would be spending the day on the Dan River. Yet as the morning chill lifted, we began to feel the distant heat from the sun warming our faces.

We gathered at the river put-in, just outside Hanging Rock State Park, around 10 a.m. Most of the folks were shaking hands and recalling stories of previous trips, while we sat shyly on the side lines. After everyone had arrived, some 40 paddlers, we took to the river.

Having only paddled on local lakes and the Neuse River in Raleigh, our home town, we truly had no idea what to expect from this more mountainous river. A quick glance at the river map revealed three major rapids: Shop Rock Rapid, Rebel Bend Rapid, and Moratock Rapid. Well, in our minds, as inexperienced boaters, every ripple in the water was more than we had ever attempted. But with primitive balance, an eagle eye guide, and lots of encouragement, we made it through them all unscathed.

The Dan River itself was quick flowing and cool. The crystal clear water let us see straight down to the rocky bottom. The best part of the river, however, was when the forest-covered banks would open up to gigantic rock faces. Many seemed over 100 feet high,



and several jutted out over the water allowing us boaters to advance right up to the surface of the rock.

Crashing over the last rapid, the sun beaming with the heat of the day, our confidence guiding us through the water, we could hear our new friends encouraging us onward. What a great day for a paddle, and we cannot wait for more adventures with the Dan River Basin Association!

Editor's note: *Monica and her friend Rachel are elementary school teachers in Raleigh.*

Monica R. Kennedy

MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS
Mid-September – Mid-December 2009

MEMBERSHIPS**Protector**

Carolina Canoe Club
Lewis and Doug Riddle
Spray Water Power and
Land Company

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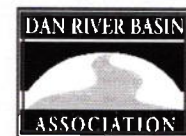
Larry and Brenda G.
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R. Allen and Jenny
Walton
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Williams

Friend

Mary Berry
Mike and Jane Haines
William Renyer
James Muehleck

Other

Lucas Conkle
Marshall Stowe
Margaret Gurley and
Tom Edmonds
Milton Hundley
Catherine Clark
Clay Gravely
Shari Hopkins
Sharon Olson
Lewis and Doug Riddle
Leigh Rodenbough
Kay Slaughter
Angie Stallings
Fletcher and Ginger
Waynick
Charlie Williams III



DRBA Outings

January 2

Hike, Richmond &
Danville Rail-Trail

February 6

Hike, Fieldale Trail

March 6

Annual Celebration and
Hike, Yanceyville

Dan River Basin Association

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TO:

Visit us on the web at www.danriver.org

TROUT UNLIMITED NAMES BRIAN WILLIAMS EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR FOR VIRGINIA

DRBA's Brian Williams was recently recognized by Trout Unlimited, a national conservation organization, as their Conservation Educator of the Year Award recipient for Virginia.

Williams worked as a volunteer with the Trout in the Classroom Program for four years, helping with the creation of Virginia's first Trout in the Classroom program in Martinsville &

Henry County. In early 2008, he was hired as the Education, Outreach, and Conservation Coordinator for DRBA where he has continued to support Trout in the Classroom in more than 25 schools and in the Virginia Museum of Natural History. Williams currently works out of the organization's Collinsville office. Since the inception of the program in Henry County by Dr. David Jones he has led the Smith River Chapter of Trout Unlimited in becoming the largest Trout in the Classroom Program in the nation.

Trout Unlimited recognized Williams at their annual meeting in Ruckersville, Virginia with the Mike Barbour Memorial Award for his extensive work in educating the



public about the importance of water quality and conservation. His work has directly impacted many thousands of children and adults across Southern Virginia. Over the course of his career he has given more than 100 presentations to youth groups on the imperative need for conservation in the Smith River corridor and related areas, has staffed more than 25 workshops for teachers

and other educators, has served as a river guide for youth and adult groups floating the river and has authored a new guide to the Smith River that is being used as a tool to promote tourism in our area.

According to our local Trout in the Classroom sponsor, Dr. David Jones, Williams "is a tireless advocate for improving water quality in the Smith River, protecting riparian borders and view shed forested areas. His work and passions provide us with one of our greatest opportunities for creating jobs and tourism leading to economic recovery in the Martinsville-Henry County area."

Jennifer Doss