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DRBA Officers:

President: Jeffrey Johnston

Vice President: Mike Covey

Secretary: T Butler

Treasurer: Lindley Butler

First Saturdays Outings

- July 5: Lake Talbott, Patrick County, Virginia
- August 2: Dan River Boat Race, Madison
- October 4: Eden Riverfest

(details sent by email and postcard)

NEW MAYO RIVER STATE PARK

After decades of dreaming and numerous false starts, the Mayo River State Park is becoming a reality! Over the years, DRBA members Floyd Rich, Bob Carter, Bob Futrell, Ginger Bush, and many others have worked to preserve this major tributary of the Dan. The Rockingham County Commissioners passed a resolution of support for the park in December, 2002 and asked DRBA Executive Committee members to take on the project. Under the leadership of Lindley Butler, all of the county's municipalities and chambers of commerce, as well as the Rockingham County Naturalist Club, passed resolutions of support.

The crucial step was taken in May when the NC Legislature passed a law establishing the park. Shepherding the bill through the House was Rep. Wayne Sexton, aided by Rep. Nelson Cole, and Sen. Phil Berger guided the legislation through the NC Senate. Officials in Rockingham County have exhibited their support for the park by appointing members to a Mayo River State Park Committee, as well as contributing to funding for the park master plan. DRBA member William Butler completed a graduate school internship for DRBA in 2002 on water quality and recreation on the Mayo River. Now a Virginia Tech doctoral student, he is working on a master plan for the park, in coordination with the NC Division of State Parks.

"The Mayo River is truly worthy of a state park," says Lindley Butler. "The park is becoming a reality in part because regional leaders see it as a badly needed economic stimulus, but the enthusiastic local response and cooperation reflect the deep love that so many people have for this beautiful river."

EDEN GREENWAY PROGRESS

Phil Hunnicut and Mike Covey will represent DRBA on Eden's new Planning Board subcommittee that is being formed to design a citywide trail system. Also, DRBA submitted to Eden's city planner a comprehensive plan for a greenway along the Smith River Corridor. This is a highly visible and accessible loop of about 5.66 miles in the central part of town. It is stunning! All landowners were contacted in person and through written correspondence. Their responses were all favorable. Any concerns were documented and forwarded to the city. Endorsements from civic groups, businesses, and organizations (DRBA included) are in the possession of the city planner. Eden's planner noted that if all goes well, we may see something by early fall. Mike Covey will gladly remind her of this over the next few months.

JULY BOARD MEETING IN MILTON

DRBA's July Board of Directors meeting will be held in Milton, NC on Saturday, July 19, from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the Milton Woman's Club, a former church located on the corner of Broad Street (NC 57) and Academy Street. All board meetings are open.

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

The annual meeting of DRBA was held 10 April 2003, from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Pepsi Building, in Danville, VA. Karen Cross of the Danville Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department welcomed the group to Danville for the twice-postponed annual meeting. Twenty-seven people attended, including two members of the press.

Reports: Jeffrey Johnston presented the annual report of DRBA activities for 2002 (attached). T Butler reported that we have 106 memberships, with a 71% renewal rate for charter members. Lindley Butler's treasurer's report for 2002 gave receipts of \$7,075.70, disbursements of \$2,787.78, leaving a balance of \$4,287.92 on December 31. Recent expenses, including the new brochure, have reduced that balance to about \$2000.

By-laws: The proposed change in by-laws was accepted by unanimous vote of the members present. The section entitled Committees was deleted, since the president is authorized to appoint any committees needed.

Election: In the absence of Nominating Committee chair Steve Carpenter, Jeff Johnston presented his report, recommending that the current officers be reelected to one-year terms. By unanimous vote, the members present reelected the following four officers: President, Jeffrey Johnston; Vice President, Mike Covey; Secretary, T Butler; Treasurer, Lindley Butler.

With the resignation of two Board members and the expiration of five Board members' terms, the following Board of Directors was elected.

Terms Expire 2004: Frank Burgess, Karen Cross, Paul Ferguson, Betsy Hrabal, Tom Taylor

Terms Expire 2005: Forrest Altman, Steve Carpenter, Paul Johnson, Alidean Roberson, Neill Watson

Terms Expire 2006: Joey Bane, Ken Bridle, Barry Dunkley, Tom Edmonds, Terry Painter

New members are Barry Dunkley and Tom Edmonds. Reelected members are Joey Bane, Ken Bridle, Steve Carpenter, Terry Painter, and Alidean Roberson.

Program: Forrest Altman introduced our three panelists on Wild and Scenic River Status—Karen Cross of Danville Parks and Recreation, Ken Bridle, conservation biologist for the Piedmont Land Conservancy, and Tom Stutts, Friends of the Staunton River founder and member of the Virginia commission on wild and scenic rivers. Norman Smith, who was unable to attend, has offered to give DRBA free legal advice if we pursue Wild and Scenic status in the basin. Tom Stutts described the successful efforts of Staunton River advocates when the river was threatened with impoundment in 1976. After having 10.5 miles of the river designated as a Virginia State Scenic River in 1978, later efforts to amend the designation and include over 40 more miles were favorably received. Stutts stressed the importance of convincing landowners that they want to support the idea from the start. Karen Cross stated that the city of Danville is in favor of the concept of having the Dan River in the city designated a scenic or recreational river; however, the request needs to come from the citizens of the city, not its government. Each of the 16 Virginia rivers in the program is a little different, and because of the working dams in Danville, the designation must be worded so as to allow maintenance of the existing facilities. Ken Bridle reiterated the key role that landowners along the river play in achieving wild, scenic, or recreational designation. In North Carolina, the Dan River in Stokes and Rockingham Counties has been declared a North Carolina River Trail; however, this offers no protection for the river. The only other choice in North Carolina is the federal program. The Dan River does not meet wild status because of impoundments, but for unimpounded sections of 25 miles or more the recreational designation is possible. Bridle stated that the steps to the federal designation are (1) identification of some special feature through community input, (2) scientific study to endorse that identification, and (3) a management plan for preserving that special feature. In a national study, the Nature Conservancy has recognized the upper Dan and the Mayo as among the highest ranking natural areas in North Carolina, and the location of the federally endangered James River spiny

mussel in these rivers can offer some protection. Challenges include helping people in rural areas recognize threats to the quality of the river, the lapse of river access leases in Stokes County, and NCDOT's search for property for wetlands mitigation that has driven up land prices.

On the Dan River and its tributaries, there is already interest in the concept in Stokes, Rockingham, and Halifax Counties and the city of Danville. All the panelists agreed that grassroots support from landowners is key, recommending face-to-face contact and continually keeping landowners informed. Noncontiguous sections of only a few miles can be recommended for federal designation, and there is wisdom in starting with a short piece and building on that experience over time. At its meeting on April 12 the Board of Directors will consider forming a committee to explore the possibilities further.

FLOAT ON TALBOTT RESERVOIR JULY 5 IF WATER RECEDES

The Dan River Basin Association has announced its "First Saturday Outing" for the month of July in hopes that Talbott Reservoir, in the Dan River Gorge in Patrick County, Virginia won't be so full July 5.

Conditions permitting, the group will float in canoes and kayaks on the farther upstream of the two reservoirs that are part of the City of Danville's hydroelectric operation. Since both of the reservoirs in Pinnacles Park are currently closed because of high water, prospective participants are asked to check with the trip leader, Neill Watson, by July 3 for an update. Meeting at the Poor Farmers Market in Meadows of Dan, on U. S. Highway 58, near the Blue Ridge Parkway, boaters will car-pool to the Talbott Dam, where the water trip will begin and end. For more information or to request a place in someone's boat, call Neill Watson at 336-623-1898 or Outings Chair Terry Painter at 336-599-5043. Painter's



planned June float on the Staunton River was twice postponed because of high water. As always, the Basin Association's outing will be canceled if conditions are unsafe. Forrest Altman on the Banister in April

DRBA WINS FIRST PRIZE FOR SPRING CLEAN

Rockingham County's third annual Spring Clean was held in April, sponsored by the county's government and Beautification Council. Nonprofit organizations cleaned up roadside litter and illegal dumps. Fourteen organizations competed for cash awards, with DRBA winning the top prize of \$500 for the most pounds of trash collected—31,040 pounds. Twenty-five DRBA members delivered debris to the county landfill during the two-week event, cleaning roadsides and tackling dumps on four tributaries of the Dan River—the Smith River and Town, Wolf Island, and Matrimony Creeks. "Despite our efforts, tons of trash are still fouling these creeks," said T Butler, chair of the Beautification Council. "And several DRBA members commented that without the trash, these places would make beautiful parks."

The county waived tipping fees for registered groups, whose members delivered over 37 tons of trash to the landfill. A total of \$2000 was distributed among the groups. "Despite the work that remains, we're delighted with the turnout and the results of the cleanup," Butler declared. "And we're really grateful to our sponsors who made the prizes possible. Miller Brewing Company was the major sponsor of the event, and Miller employees, led by DRBA members Cathy Wright and Brenda Williams, conducted a roadside cleanup near their plant on DRBA's behalf." For further information about Rockingham County Spring Clean, contact T Butler, 336-349-5727 or members@danriver.org.

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WE'RE ON THE WEB AT:
[HTTP://WWW.DANRIVER.ORG](http://www.danriver.org)

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Promoting stewardship, recreation, and education in
the Dan River Basin region



HIGHLIGHTS OF APRIL BOARD MEETING

The Board of Directors met on April 12 at Ballou Park in Danville, VA. Treasurer Lindley Butler reported that the cost of designing and printing the new brochure would come to about \$2000. Also, the no-interest loan is to be paid back from sales of the Dan River Atlas, after which our sales will yield profit. Forrest Altman has the CD of the brochure, so that our future cost will be only for printing. Miller Brewing Company has given DRBA a \$10,000 grant for a RiverFest in Eden October 4. The Board recommended seeking additional sponsors for the event. Suggestions for grants included Hospice, Duke Foundation, and the River Network listing. Education Committee Chair Forrest Altman reported that Steve Carpenter, our photo archivist, has digitized photos that we can use for publicity and that the new DRBA website was up. A video on the Dan was discussed as a possible DRBA project. Recreation Committee Chair Neill Watson reported on future outings, and the Board agreed that the First Saturday river outings should start at 10:00, be of short duration, and be appropriate for beginning paddlers. Other DRBA outings can be more lengthy and challenging. Stewardship Committee members Mike Vaughan and Barry Dunkley are working together on water quality monitoring data, and Chairman Ken Bridle is working on Power Point presentations to be used for raising public awareness of the river. The main problem with the water quality above Danville is sediment, which is being monitored and can be addressed with the aid of governmental programs in both states. Below Danville there are chemical pollutants. Stokes County member David Hoskins reported that he has acquired a shop at the Hanging Rock access, which he wants to make a stewardship center for the river, offering boat rentals and a coffee shop. He hopes to work with public schools to create a wetlands trail. Other projects in the county are renewing and creating river accesses and forming a county tourism board. DRBA President Jeff Johnston reported that the Executive Committee is constantly bombarded with information, requests, and offers regarding river basin issues, with various entities asking for our input, resources, and ever-growing clout. The committee solicits the Board's oversight while needing the ability to act quickly. The need for a strategic plan was discussed.