Dan River Basin Association

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GOODBYE TROUT, HELLO SUMMER!

COAL ASH SPILL MONITORING UPDATE

RIVER HERO

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA WILD BLUEWAY

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION

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Meetings of the Board of Directors are held on the second Wednesday of February, May, August and November. The next meeting will be August 13, 2014.

NEWSLETTER

Editor: T Butler Designer: David Pinney

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First Saturday Outings (details at DANRIVER.ORG)

June 7: North Mayo River, Moore's Mill to Anglin Mill July 5: Staunton River, Long Island to Brookneal August 2: Smith River Cleanup, Mitchell Bridge to Morgan Ford

A Black Willow sapling, nurtured by students in DRBA's Streamside Trees in the Classroom program.

On the cover: Runners begin Trout-N-About 5.5K to benefit TIC. Photo Brian Williams.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



midnight. Amazingly, I didn't hear one person complain about By this May I was feeling tired, frustrated, and uninspired. All the grueling schedule. Energy remained high throughout the DRBA staff have been working 16-hour days. DRBA staff members met every morning to long hours, 7 days a week, since the decide who would attend which workshop so we could get to Duke Energy Dan River Station as many as possible. We also met before dinner to share what coal ash spill on February 2nd. we had learned. On the 8-hour drive back, we talked about We have made unprecedented nothing else but the new ideas and strategies we learned at progress, but our beloved Dan River Rally that could help improve and protect our local River still has a long way to go to natural resources. In the coming months you will see the result of DRBA's heal.

Tiffany Haworth with Amy Farinelli

At the end of May, DRBA investment at River Rally. We plan to launch several new staff acquired scholarships to initiatives related to conservation, protection, and restoration attend the national River Rally of our rivers and streams. But that's not all we brought from Pittsburgh: we all returned with renewed commitment and conference in Pittsburgh, PA. energy, and we were reminded of just how lucky we are to live Over 700 environmentalists from in the Dan River Basin, one of the most beautiful and amazing places on earth.

19 countries gathered for the four-day conference to learn about effective strategies to protect our waterways, share best practices to keep our water clean, and network with clean water advocates to build partnerships. It was an exhausting schedule, with keynote speakers every day at breakfast, lunch and dinner, workshops every hour from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and networking opportunities that didn't end until

PRESIDENT'S SPACE



trail, orange but not a bird, and didn't belong. It was a piece Greetings and salutations! Summer is a perfect time to get out of trash, a candy wrapper. The mother asked the boy to go and enjoy the trails and waterways get it for her and he replied, "The wind will blow it away in a in our beautiful basin. How lucky minute." The mother gently smiled and said, "The wind blew we are to live in this breathtaking it here for us. We are stewards of our land. The wind knows we will throw it away properly." The little boy asked what a area! The beauty is there, all around us, for us to stop and enjoy. It's the steward was, and the mother replied, "A steward is a quiet hero. "stopping" part that's hard! Someone who watches and takes care of the little and the big Not long ago, I was on a trail things. I would rather know that today I did one little thing with a friend. We were sitting for our trail, that we love so much, than to have nothing at all in a clearing, just enjoying the to give back to it." The oldest boy jumped up and said, "I want to be a steward!" and ran to the wrapper. The others, not to be peace and quiet when along came

outdone, joined in the race to become stewards of the land. As we rush about our busy lives, I do ask you to consider

a young mother and her three Allison Szuba. lively children. With wonderful abounding energy they were talking about each color they could this mother's wisdom and join her children in the race to be a see and comparing that plant or bird's color to other things in quiet and simple steward of each path you walk and each river their lives. Certain leaves were the same green as a coffee cup in you float. Thank you for making a difference! their house, a bluebird reminded them of blueberries, a cardinal

reminded them of egg yolks, buttercups, and a matchbox car. The mother took off her backpack and pulled out blueberries, strawberries, juice, and crackers. They merrily partook in refreshment, but continued to talk. One little boy saw something down the path that was the wrong color for the

strawberries or hummingbird food or a scraped knee. The sun

Are you receiving your email notices from DRBA? If not, please notify Robin Light, *rlight@danriver.org* to be sure your email address is up to date!

-Tiffany Haworth

-Allison Szuba

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You do if you enjoy fishing, hiking, biking, paddling and swimming outdoors! Please help us to protect our rivers, land and drinking water and teach our children about preservation of our environment.

Become a DRBA Sustainer!

Your monthly gift can be automatically billed to your credit card allowing you to make a measurable impact for our natural and cultural resources. Just fill in the pledge card below or pledge online at http://www.danriver.org/donate.

\$10/month can help to monitor one section of one river for one season.

\$25/month will plant 25 feet of riparian buffer to protect a waterway or build an educational sign on a trail.

\$50/month will give one classroom three environmental education programs or provide for mitigation of storm water at one location. **\$75/month** will give an educational and memorable experience on a river for 10 youth or buy water quality monitoring analysis for 5 miles of river.

Become a DRBA Sustainer at **\$100/month** and get a River Legacy Circle membership, provide a Trout in the Classroom program for one classroom or provide a clean-up of 10 miles of river.

Name

Address

Note: We will contact you to provide a credit card number for your Sustainer Gift. Please provide the best phone number and time to reach you:

Phone: ____

Best day/time to reach you:

Become a Sustainer online at www.danriver.org/donate or mail this pledge to:

Dan River Basin Association 413 Church Street Suite 401 Eden, NC 27288

In Season Gardens Pledge Support to DRBA

Glen and Gwendolyn Nergart of In Season Gardens, located in Danbury, NC, have agreed to donate 5% of the profits from their 2014 produce sales to support DRBA's conservation efforts. Thank you, Glen and Gwendolyn! Please support In

Thank you, Glen and Gwendolyn! Please support In Season Gardens and DRBA by purchasing your produce from the Negarts at the Stuart, VA Farmers Market! This message is provided by Robert Cardwell, Rockingham County Fire Marshal.

EDUCATION

DRBA Club at Patrick County High

It's been a busy spring for Patrick County High School's DRBA Club. Under faculty sponsor Elizabeth Wallace, teacher Rebecca Gibson, and DRBA volunteers Wayne Kirkpatrick, Lynn Regan, and Norma Bozenmayer, at in-school meetings the club has heard about DRBA's response to the February 2 coal ash spill, had an overview of macroinvertebrate water quality sampling, and viewed photos of the club's activities.

Out-of-school activities included a March litter cleanup at Lover's Leap that collected about 1,000 pounds of trash. In April the club joined USACE and DRBA volunteers to help the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF) plant 100 hybrid chestnut seeds at Philpott Lake, part of the effort to restore this icon of the Appalachian forest. A Sunday in May found the club paddling on Philpott Lake to view Calico Wall, and later that month they visited Mulberry Farm for a water quality demonstration. On Rye Cove Creek the club's DRBA sponsors demonstrated macroinvertebrate and coliform sampling, sediment level checking using a turbidity tube, and the use of an electronic probe to read dissolved oxygen content, pH, conductivity, and temperature.

DRBA Executive Director Tiffany Haworth presented each student a certificate for a DRBA membership. They also received mementos from the ACF and Patrick County Soil and Water Conservation Service, and stewardship certificates signed by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe and Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward.

Plans for next school year include a hike in Rock Castle Creek Gorge and visits to the Reynolds Homestead and the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

-Wayne Kirkpatrick

Goodbye Trout, Hello Summer

As summer approaches, students from area schools have been visiting the Smith and Dan rivers to say goodbye to trout they have raised in their classrooms. This year, Trout in the Classroom (TIC) reached over 2,500 students and released

Weather Warnings Available for Rockingham County

approximately 3,000 trout fingerlings into local rivers. In the highly anticipated culmination of the program, students, teachers, and parents experienced a memorable field trip to one of our beautiful streams. Some of these students have never set



DRBA staff member Krista Hodges and students releasing trout.

foot in the river, and TIC introduces them to water quality, life cycles, and the importance of protecting our water resources.

TIC has seen amazing success since it was established in 2005 by Martinsville orthodontist and conservationist Dr. David Jones, who understood the importance of having a living



system in the classroom and teaching environmental education and responsibility. TIC under DRBA has expanded to 42 tanks in Virginia and North Carolina raising brooks, browns, and rainbow trout.

Beginning each fall, trout eggs picked up from Virginia state hatcheries are delivered to area classrooms. Students and teachers care for the trout until they grow large enough to release in the river. Students get hands-on experience with the trout life cycle and learn about watersheds, pollution, ecology, and habitats.

DRBA has generated a handbook that relates TIC to Virginia SOL's. Teachers report that TIC's positive effects include fewer behavioral issues, better grades, higher test scores, especially in science, and opportunities for high-risk youth. Last fall, one student commented that "everything he tries to take care of ends up dying," and he didn't want anything to do with the trout. But on release day, he watched his trout swim away, stepped to the side, and exclaimed, "I think my trout's going to make it!" Connections like these reward the teachers' and students' attention and dedication.

Funding is essential to sustain TIC. DRBA is grateful for generous support from the Harvest Foundation, Dr. David Jones, the Stanley Foundation, Reidsville Area Foundation, local clubs, and private funders like the Frith family in Martinsville. The HVAC department at Patrick Henry Community College provides maintenance work on the chillers, the most expensive equipment for the system, and also has a TIC tank. The recent Trout-N-About 5.5K was a great success and will be continued in the future to help sustain the program.

More TIC sponsors are needed to continue this flagship DRBA program. For information about how you can help, please visit www.danriver.org or contact khodges@danriver.org -Krista Hodges

Kids & Snakes Meet at Philpott

Kids and parents got a close-up look at some slithery friends at Jamison Mill Kids Day hosted by DRBA's Friends of Philpott on June 14th. A variety of snakes were on display, including ones that can be found locally, like the Red Rat or Corn snake (Pantherophis guttatus) and the Mole King snake



(Lampropeltis calligaster rhombomaculata). Visitors had the opportunity to hold them and learn more about these beautiful and beneficial animals. Kids also got to paint their very own wooden snake and enjoy the Philpott train ride and free food. -Brian Williams

Streamside Trees in the Classroom

Next time you visit Bowen's Creek in Henry County, look for slender, graceful Black Willow saplings, including two about 4 feet tall. These young trees were planted by students from Magna Vista High School and Collinsville Primary, who nurtured them in DRBA's Streamside Trees in the Classroom (STIC) program. DRBA is grateful to Dr. David Jones, Martinsville orthodontist and conservationist, who provided

the willow cuttings for



the program. For more information, contact Krista Hodges, khodges@danriver.org.

-Krista Hodges





Stewardship

Coal Ash Spill Monitoring Update

Responding to the February coal ash spill from Duke Energy's Dan River plant, DRBA has partnered with several universities to develop a bio-assessment plan to monitor the river, beginning with the first 20 miles below the spill.



Coal ash contains heavy metals that persist in the environment and are highly toxic to humans and wildlife. UNCG researchers are working on baseline data for mercury, selenium, and other heavy metals to determine their longterm bioaccumulation. Other researchers from University of Maryland, Cornell, and Virginia Tech are looking at germanium as a tracer for coal ash and exploring chemical changes that affect the river's health. Tests indicate that

Photo Brian Willams

concentrations of mercury, which accumulates and magnifies in the food web, were not elevated in the water. However, mercury in sediment downstream of the spill site was over three times the concentration upstream.

Wayne and Betty Kirkpatrick joined DRBA staff in collecting data this spring on macroinvertebrate presence in the Dan River both within and upstream of the coal ash spill area. Leaf packs and Hester Dendy plates (types of artificial habitat) were placed in the river for several weeks to allow macroinvertebrates time to populate the habitat. With assistance from DRBA intern Collin Rachner, the material was retrieved and sent to Ferrum College where students of instructor Chekka Lash tallied numbers and diversity of macroinvertebrates. These initial data will provide a base line to monitor this stretch of the Dan to determine long-term effects of the coal ash spill on the aquatic life in the Dan.

On a June Sunday when low water levels exposed sandbars, DRBA staff using core removal tubes found coal ash sediments in layers 4 to 6 inches down below normal river sediments. Meritech Lab in Reidsville is analyzing samples for arsenic, lead, selinium and boron, and Virginia Tech is analyzing samples to determine trace elements that can indicate how far the ash has travelled. DRBA continues to partner with other Carolina and Virginia.

Wildlife and Coal Ash

It began with a phone report that raw sewage was pouring researchers and share data with state agencies in both North from a manhole cover into a tributary of Doe Run Creek in Henry County. Starting at Doe Run Park, Brian "just put on -Brian Williams and Wayne Kirkpatrick some boots and headed upstream" to find the "fairly remote" spill site in the woods. "The first hint of trouble was the dark gray/black coloration of the sand bars in the stream," he says. Half a mile farther on, he discovered a tributary tinged gray What happens to wildlife alongside a river that has been with an obvious odor and "a black layer of ooze, very nasty." polluted with thousands of tons of coal ash? That's what DRBA Soon he reached "an enormous 'volcano' of black sludge and volunteers hope to help determine. water boiling up out of the manhole and running into the Sponsored by Three Rivers Outfitters, on a crystalline creek."

Sunday afternoon, May 18, eleven DRBA members quietly

floated nine miles from the Duke Energy plant near Eden to the state line at Berry Hill Bridge, tallying wildlife we observed. Although none of us are pros, we carried a long list of birds that an expert had seen or heard at Dan River accesses near Eden.

Water birds we counted included Canada geese, cormorants, spotted sandpipers, and ducks. At our launch site, Duke Energy employees pointed out an osprey nest with two chicks atop an industrial tower. At the mouth of Cascade Creek we tallied 13 Great Blue Heron nests, many of which were occupied by parents and chicks.

Whitetail deer scurried along the bank; we found fresh tracks from beaver and raccoon; and we saw a couple of turtles enter the river. We heard horses, cattle, and a dog that live on farms behind the wooded buffer.

By far the largest group of wildlife were songbirds—wrens, cardinals, robins, and warblers—that sang from the forest. Sadly, many we heard were what we dubbed UCBs-"Unidentified Chirping Birds." We wished for trained birders!

DRBA's Brian Williams has shared the result of a river/ forest study designed to ascertain whether the forest is more important to the stream or vice versa. A scientist covered a mile of river with fine mesh netting; nothing could get in or out. He found that the macro-organisms and fish in the stream still flourished, but the biodiversity in the riverside forest dropped dramatically, as the animals and birds lost most of their food sources and moved away. So, contrary to previous belief, the river feeds the forest more than the forest feeds the river, and a healthy river helps to ensure a healthy forest.

DRBA is grateful to Three Rivers Outfitters for sponsoring this bio-assessment float on the Dan-the first of several this year. Whether you're a wildlife expert or not, do plan to join us for the next float to count what we see and hear and to enjoy the beauty of the river with other DRBA friends. Every bit of information we can tally will be useful in helping our beloved Dan River recover.

-T Butler

River Hero to the Rescue!

Last year River Network named DRBA's Brian Williams a national River Hero. Now, in addition to handling much of DRBA's response to the Dan River coal ash spill since February, Brian recently demonstrated why he's DRBA's river hero.

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Photo Brian Willams

Brian sent photos and GPS coordinates to Andy Lash at Martinsville Citv and Sewer. By next day, the Mr. Lash and crew had taken equipment to the site, where they determined

that the sewer line was clogged with enough grease-trapped debris to blow off the manhole cover. "They did get it cleaned out and flowing again and cleaned up the banks as much as possible," Brian reports.

And what of the consequences? "I am fairly certain Water the tributary from the spill site down to Doe Run is dead. Good news is, it will recover and the larger Doe Run creek, although affected, was large enough to dilute the raw sewage to a manageable level to prevent total loss of organisms," Brian says. But, he assures us, "I did take some fecal coliform samples and we will be monitoring the progress of the tributary as it recovers."

-T Butler

FEATURES

Southern Virginia Wild Blueway

On Monday, June 16, the grand opening of the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway was held at Staunton River State Park. Offering a unique paddling experience, the Blueway consists of three rivers and two lakes in Halifax and Mecklenburg counties, with some 32 public access points.

The Dan, Staunton, and Banister rivers provide over 100 miles of navigable water, 80 miles of which have been designated as Virginia Scenic Rivers. As many DRBA members know first-hand, the wilderness experience along these rivers is punctuated occasionally by historic waterfront towns, and nineteenth-century batteau navigation structures facilitate paddling even in drought conditions.

Kerr Lake (locally called Buggs Island Lake) and Lake Gaston offer flatwater boating. With over 1200 miles of shoreline, much of the Virginia side of the two lakes is public and undeveloped. Kerr Lake especially is renowned for excellent fishing, whether from boats or from the bridge near Clarksville that boasts the only bridge-mounted nighttime fishing light system in the United States.

DRBA's Tiffany Haworth and Brian Williams attended the opening. Among the dignitaries addressing the gathering was Halifax Town Manager Carl Espy, a long-time DRBA leader, who spoke about the historic and economic importance of the Dan River and the region.

-Brian Williams and T Butler

Meet EMI Recycling, a DRBA Corporate Friend

EMI Recycling was formed in 1991 as a division of EMI Imaging. "From Creation through Destruction," EMI's recycling division completes the confidential imaging circle as well as serving a much-needed demand in the community.

Not only does EMI Recycling take care of paper, but it also recovers plastic, metal, and other materials based on volume. Currently, EMI recycles almost 99% of all waste products they generate. Most of EMI's volume comes from local customers that previously landfilled their waste paper.

EMI is recycling a yearly average of 20 million pounds of materials, saving on average 150,000 trees and alleviating 26,000 cubic feet of landfill waste. EMI serves Franklin, Henry, Patrick, Pittsylvania counties and surrounding areas.

-Stephanie Keith

How Do First Saturday Outings Happen?

Many persons first become acquainted with DRBA through a First Saturday Outing (FSO). What has it taken to offer a free-to-the-public FSO every month since 2002?

First, the Outings Task Force, now chaired by Lucas Conkle, chooses a river or trail section to travel. Any permissions needed for access through private property are secured. A volunteer coordinator provides contact information and personal insight for publicity. Then, shortly before the outing, the coordinator scouts the route to be sure it's ready for prime-time.

On FSO day, "point" and "sweep" are designated, safety and point-of-interest information is shared, and a volunteer is found to write up the outing for Currents.

For the April 5 FSO on the upper Banister River, coordinator Carl Espy, Town Manager for Halifax, pulled extra duty. Personally involved in securing Virginia Scenic River designation for 63.3 miles of the Banister in Pittsylvania and Halifax counties, Espy provided details about the scenic status and arranged for DRBA's use of parking at the put-in.

In late March, Espy led the scouting team of Halifax County Administrator Jim Halasz, his son James, Lucas Conkle, Roanoke River Basin Association-Upper Reach Director Scott Murray, and Halifax resident Paul Lowery. The intrepid team volunteered to take out a massive downed oak tree just below Clark's Bridge to help make the first rapid less hazardous.

DRBA is grateful for the extra efforts our many volunteers like these exert to make our FSOs safe, educational, environmentally sound, and fun for all. To share your ideas for an outing and to volunteer, contact T Butler, Newsletter Editor, at members@danriver.org.

-TButler

OUTINGS

April 5 on the Upper Banister River

Twenty-four paddlers enjoyed the April 5 FSO on the Upper Banister in Pittsylvania County, perhaps the largest group to float this seldom-seen section in recent history. It was a gorgeous day-comfortably cool and filled with many signs of spring. Dog-tooth violets and stars of Bethlehem bloomed on the bank where paddlers stopped at an impressive rock outcropping for



Bannister Ledges

lunch. Fussing kingfishers and gliding hawks were also sighted. and swayed the bare limbs of towering sycamores above.

sweep, Mark Bishopric and trip coordinator Carl Espy made Gusts from westerly winds occasionally riffled the river surface sure all paddlers were accounted for as the boats stretched out into separate clusters during the 5-hour journey. Occasionally, Traveling ten miles from Clark's Bridge to Johnson's Mill a boater would need an extra push over a sunken tree trunk, Road near Chatham, Virginia, the group passed tree-lined so quick-dry clothing proved useful; some participants did get banks and pasture lands, rolling rapids, sandbars, natural rock wet! walls and ledges. Along early stretches were remains of low, At end of the excursion, as vehicles were shuttled from the man-made stone walls that once lined riverside dirt roads and take-out on Johnson's Mill Road, many of the group reviewed several fish weirs, vee-shaped rock structures built by Native detailed charts from Dr. William E. Trout's The Dan River Americans to funnel fish into nets or baskets. Atlas, (available at www.danriver.org.), while overlooking the "impressive" Markham Fish Dam, which Dr. Trout describes Whitethorn Creek, a large tributary draining much of the western river valley, empties into the Upper Banister from the as "one of the most accessible in Virginia."

Coles Hill area where two significant concentrations of uranium have recently drawn regional and national attention. A rock -Katie Whitehead and Carl Espy chimney just downstream from the creek near the Markham

Road Bridge stands as the only remnant of the house where Rachel Donelson Jackson, wife of President Andrew Jackson, was born.

Though the river level was slightly down from when DRBA scouted the route, there was plenty of water to paddle without portaging. Less experienced boaters could easily follow skillful lead kayaker Will Truslow through the Class-I rapids, around submerged sandbars and downed tree limbs. Alternating on the

June 7 on the North Mayo

DRBA's First Saturday Outing flotilla of 22 boats carrying 23 folks made its way down the North Mayo River on a warm, clear June 7. The river was very technical, but we were very, very well led by experienced paddlers Lucas Conkle and Will Truslow, who incorporated the help of many others to guide each paddler through the difficult parts. We were shaded by a rich, beautiful canopy over the lovely rocky stream. Our lunch break was at the historic Byrd's Ledge where explorer William Byrd crossed the river on his survey of the "dividing line' between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728.

-Betty Kirkpatrick

May 3 on the Smith

On May 3, 2014, 28 people gathered together with 32 boats for a 3.5 mile trip down the Smith River. The day was partly cloudy, with steady winds moving at approximately 15 to 20 knots, and the temperature ranged from approximately 70 degrees to the lower 80s. It was a perfect Spring day.

We began by unloading our boats at the Marrowbone Creek Access point in Ridgeway, VA, and parked our vehicles at the Gravely Nature Preserve, a short walk from the access. While the entrance ramp at the Marrowbone Creek Access point was rather steep, the ramp was paved, well-groomed, and wide.

Upon entering the Smith River, we noticed the Gravely



Boaters on the Smith

Nature Preserve on our right, and the reserve's high bluffs and bountiful rhododendrons. Wild azalea blooms greeted us a little downstream.

Further along, we passed where Leatherwood Creek entered into the Smith River from the left. At this point, I personally resisted the urge to "briefly" separate from our group

and explore this serene, beautifully-shaded, creek. Instead of separating, we traveled a little further, and subsequently enjoyed a wonderful lunch on a well-rounded boulder known as "Lunch Rock." Lunch rock provided us a convenient place to get out of our boats, eat, fellowship, and admire the beauty of our natural resources.

Our trip on the Smith River ended at the Mitchell Bridge Access point in Henry County. However, our journey was not over. Julia Pyron and Mark Bishopric with Three Rivers Outfitters provided us shuttle services back to the Gravely Nature Preserve. There T Butler graciously served us homemade brownies, and we were invited to explore the preserve's 75 acres which featured two miles of interpretive trails and various historic features.

In short, the DRBA volunteers provided another wellorganized, safe, informative trip, along one of our many natural and historic resources within our community.

More information about the Gravely Nature Preserve can be found here: http://www.danriver.org/content/File/gravely_ nat_preserve_brochure_2012.pdf.

-David Stone

Mayodan Mountain Bike Trail

DRBA and the Town of Mayodan have broken ground on what will become more than three miles of beginner and intermediate mountain bike trail at Farris Memorial Park. Historic and natural features will make the trail interesting for mountain bikers and hikers as well. These include several streams that cascade over small boulders and rock slabs; numerous natural rock outcrops; and several old rock walls, one of which is incorporated into a part of the trail layout. Volunteer work days will be scheduled through July and will pick back up in September when the weather cools.

This project is made possible by the Town of Mayodan,



DRBA volunteers learn mountain bike trail-building from experts at Farris Park.

Reidsville Area Foundation, REI, Greensboro Fat Tire, and DRBA members. To learn more about the project, contact DRBA staff member, Jenny Edwards, at (336) 339-6169.

-Jenny Edwards

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Releasing trout. See story on page 5.

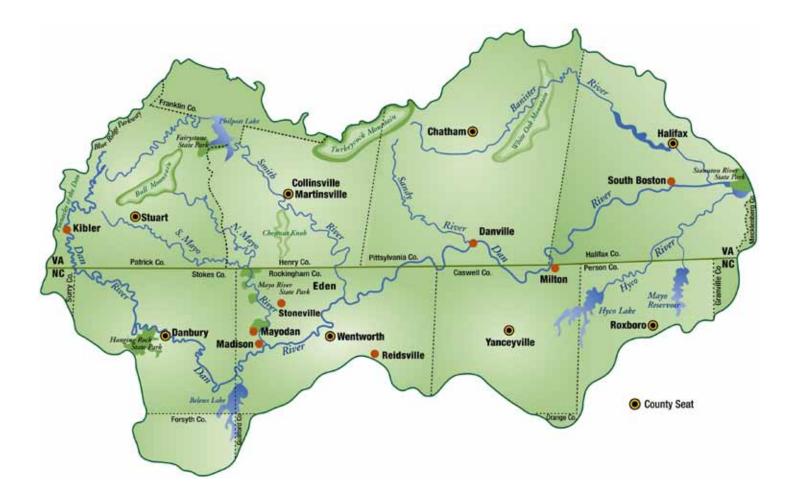
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