



CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

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DRBA CELEBRATES 13 YEARS

WARRIOR TECH ACADEMY ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

ALL NEW DRBA RACE SERIES 2015

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA WILD BLUEWAY DEDICATION

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Cover Photo: Trillium in the spring, on the banks of the Smith River; W. Kirkpatrick

Editor's Note

With this issue, DRBA welcomes a new layout designer for Currents—our dedicated long-time volunteer Betty Kirkpatrick, who has graciously offered to provide this service. She's undertaking it at the same time we're experimenting with an 8-page newsletter printed in color, instead of the 12-page issue in mostly black-and-white. As always, online recipients receive their copies of Currents in full color. Most announcements of upcoming opportunities will appear on DRBA's website, Facebook page, and e-newsletter.

DRBA sends hearty thanks to David Pinney, Currents professional designer for 17 issues, from Winter 2011 through Winter 2015. We wish him great success in his artistic career and look forward to continuing our association with him through his DRBA membership. Thank you both, David and Betty!

DRBA Celebrates 13 Years

DRBA's Annual Celebration, held at the Southern Virginia Higher Education Center in South Boston on March 7, marked 13 years of successes. Welcomed by Halifax County Tourism Director Linda Sheppard and Halifax Town Manager Carl Espy, 42 members and guests enjoyed delicious refreshments, fellowship, and a stimulating program. Justin Kerns of Mecklenburg County Tourism described the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway on the Dan and Banister rivers and Kerr Lake, the first such trail of many envisioned in the basin.

New board members elected are Jennifer Atkins of Pittsylvania, Rebecca Gibson of Stokes, and Sonya Wolen of Danville. Volunteer awards went to Kurt and Norma Bozenmayer and Patty Williams. The Partnership Award was presented to Averett University, the Corporate Partners Award to MillerCoors, and the Spirit of the Dan Award to the entire DRBA staff.



DRBA Staff was recognized with the **Spirit of the Dan Award** for their work with the coal ash spill in 2014.



Tiffany Haworth presents the **Corporate Partner Award** to Eric Tillman of MillerCoors

After lunch, 20 participated in a hike led by Paul Johnson on the South Boston segment of the Tobacco Heritage Trail, opened in 2012. After visiting a riverside exhibit commemorating the Revolutionary War Crossing of the Dan, hikers proceeded to Cotton Mills Park where the Rails to Trails project begins. Following the trail through wetlands, hikers reached a new pavilion overlooking the Duck Habitat. From there they visited Diamond Hill Cemetery, which includes many unmarked graves of enslaved workers on the Berry Hill Plantation, one of the largest such cemeteries in southern Virginia.



Hikers survey the remains of a home built for skilled slaves of the Berry Hill Plantation

Coal Ash Spill Fallout

Duke Energy has been fined \$102.2 million for violating the federal Clean Water Act and allowing 39,000 tons of coal ash and 102.2 million liters of coal ash-contaminated water to spew into the Dan River on February 2, 2014. North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources also has fined Duke Energy \$25 million for failing to follow regulations for protecting waterways. Duke Energy has stated from the beginning that it takes responsibility for the spill and will clean it up, at the expense of its shareholders. After the company removed approximately 10% of the coal ash from the bottom of the river, the EPA declared the cleanup completed.

As part of the plea agreement, Duke Energy has set aside \$1.5 million to benefit the Dan River Basin's waterways and help restore the region's economic and

community vitality. Environmental and economic damage to the region is greatest from Eden, NC to Danville, VA. Stakeholders, including DRBA, are meeting with Duke officials to select projects best able to achieve these goals. At the second of two public meetings facilitated by the UVA Institute of Environmental Negotiation, specific projects will be discussed.



Town Creek the day after the Duke Energy coal ash spill, February 2014

Wayne Kirkpatrick and T Butler

Magna Vista Students Study Energy Sources

In February, DRBA's Krista Hodges participated in a discussion about renewable and non-renewable energy sources conducted by students in Magna Vista High School's Warrior Tech Academy. Their roundtable discussion was facilitated by teachers Hillary Robinson and Marie Cumbie.

Participants in DRBA's TIC program, the student groups extensively researched topics such as fracking, uranium mining,



MVHS students Joshua Wilson, Jimmy Davila-Ortiz, Cierra Moyer, Shantell Branch, and Cameron Gibbs

and the coal ash spill. They expressed interest in alternative energy sources and recognized the importance of conservation, water quality, and ecosystems.

Warrior Tech Academy Director Lindsay Favero praised the students' level of involvement. "Several of the collaborative groups mentioned a heightened sense of civic responsibility and obligation to educate others on the topics of hydraulic fracking, uranium mining, and the coal ash spill."

"... the students are learning about real world problems... and realizing that their own choices can make a difference when it comes to energy usage."

K. Hodges

Krista Hodges

Patrick County Programs

Water Quality

DRBA volunteers continue TMDL Water Quality monitoring, taking monthly samples at 16 sites along the North and South Mayo rivers in Patrick and Henry counties. Fortunately, all have been below the DEQ threshold for impairment.

To protect water quality, trees will be planted alongside the Mayo River Rail Trail (MRRT), and BSA Troop 65 is installing pet waste stations at both the MRRT and the DeHart Park walking trail.

The Tub of Bugs

This popular program has visited Laurel Park Middle and Williamsburg Elementary schools as part of the TIC program, teaching students that clean water is vital for macroinvertebrates, trout, and people.

Patrick County High School DRBA Club

Currently in its third year, the club plans a field trip to historic Vade Mecum resort in Stokes County, NC and a hike in Rock Castle Gorge in April.

Wayne Kirkpatrick



Members of Boy Scout Troop 65 of Stuart, VA worked to install grant funded pet waste stations at DeHart Park

DRBA volunteers serve as TMDL Water Quality monitors at over 15 sites in the basin



The ever-popular Tub of Bugs provides an exciting learning experience to children of all ages

Join the Fun!



www.danriver.org

Join DRBA!

Spring 2015 • www.danriver.org

FSO: January 3, Hike to Byrd's Ledge

Editor's Note: Guest Stephanie Floros and member Eric Tichay reported on this trip. Both voices are included here.

SF: Thirteen hearty DRBA members and guests deemed homemade brownies and a damp, bracing hike alongside the Mayo River the perfect way to welcome 2015.

ET: Coordinator Lindley Butler pointed out landmarks, beginning with a Native American fish weir and the mill sluice near Anglin Mill Bridge. Our 2.5-mile hike followed the river to Fall Creek, where we encountered a breathtaking waterfall over worn rocks into a basin. Deshazo Mill used the waterfall to power the mill's water wheel.

SF: Forging the creek was even more of a challenge due to slick moss on the rocks, but the DRBA leaders and more experienced hikers made sure we all crossed safely. The brownies more than made up for my one wet sock and squishy hiking boot. Plus, I learned a few tips about which moss to avoid when stepping on rocks—the brown is very slimy.



Hikers pause on the ledge crossed by William Byrd to mark the Virginia/North Carolina line in 1728

ET: After crossing the creek, we resumed following the Mayo to the confluence of the North and South Mayo rivers. Just upstream, we reached a large scenic rock outcrop covered with attractive resurrection ferns, and overlooking waterfalls. This beautiful site is known as “Byrd’s Ledge.” Here William Byrd, leader of the survey party that established the border between Virginia and Carolina in 1728, crossed and camped on the west side of the North Mayo River. We took our lunch break at the enchanting rock ledge and reflected on the survey party’s experience.

On the return hike, we admired our beautiful surroundings. Beech, sycamore, oak, pine, mountain laurel, holly, and rhododendron bordered the path. We saw the chopped tree stumps of resident beavers, turkey feeding areas, and buck scrape on small saplings.

SF: A highlight was the class III “Boiling Hole” rapid that requires kayakers to navigate around rock outcroppings. It must look different from a seat in a kayak than it does from dry land. I’ll know more about the view from a kayak come spring when we join DRBA for a debut kayak outing—here’s hoping the brownies make an appearance again and that I remember to bring extra socks.

Resurrection fern thrived in several locations, and I learned that it deserves its name because it revives after drought. An eye-catching plant that looked to have small blooms turned out to be a tree fungus, even though this one was growing in the ground. When you hike with DRBA, you go home smarter than when you arrived!

The composer Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) once said, “Spring won’t let me stay in this house any longer! I must get out and breathe the air deeply again!” What better way to do that than on one of DRBA’s beautiful trails? Come on out and breathe deeply!

Allison Szuba, President

FSO: February 7, Reynolds Homestead

Thirty-six hikers, including 15 DRBA members, participated in DRBA's February outing at the Reynolds Homestead in Critz, VA. The antebellum brick house was the home of Hardin and Nancy Reynolds, parents of Richard J. Reynolds, founder of RJR Tobacco, and grandparents of Richard S. Reynolds, founder of Reynolds Aluminum. The house and 750-acre Forestry Research Center are managed by Virginia Tech.

On the crisp clear morning, Forestry Superintendent Kyle Peer led the group through a newly constructed greenhouse, by two research ponds, and through a loblolly pine study being compared with similar tracts in Badin County, NC and in Brazil. Peer explained how three stream crossing systems using different design specifications and materials were evaluated for minimizing sediment runoff. Developing and encouraging the use of Best Management Practices to minimize erosion on tree farms or other agricultural lands are critical to maintaining water quality throughout our basin.



Kyle Peer explains one of the many techniques studied for stream crossings

As the hikers returned to the Homestead center as the day warmed into the 50's, the Director of the Reynolds Homestead, Julie Steele, offered us an opportunity to tour the restored home. The hikers, from six counties throughout the basin, then shared snacks and stories with old and new friends.

Mark Bishopric

DRBA Race Series

Announcing an exciting opportunity to support DRBA and three great efforts while having a blast! Visit the DRBA web site for details on how to participate in three run/walks, have a chance to win prizes, have fun and enjoy the outdoors!

The Trout-N-About 5.5K on May 30, Run with the Cows 5K on September 27, and the Apple Dumpling 5K on October 17 will get your heart pumping and help DRBA promote some special projects.

Sign up today! www.danriver.org



King's Bridge Landing Dedication

The Town of Halifax invites everyone to the official opening and dedication of the King's Bridge Landing access point to a 7 1/2-mile section of the Banister Blueway, part of the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway (sovawildblueway.com).

Friday, April 24
2:00 p.m.

1041 Bethel Rd, Halifax VA 24558
(GPS 36.776208, -78.917834).



When I meet someone who fishes, paddles, hikes, bikes, loves birding or just values breathing fresh air or drinking clean water I always say, "If you use it, then please help us protect it." DRBA members, sustainers and donors do this every day. Thank you!

Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director

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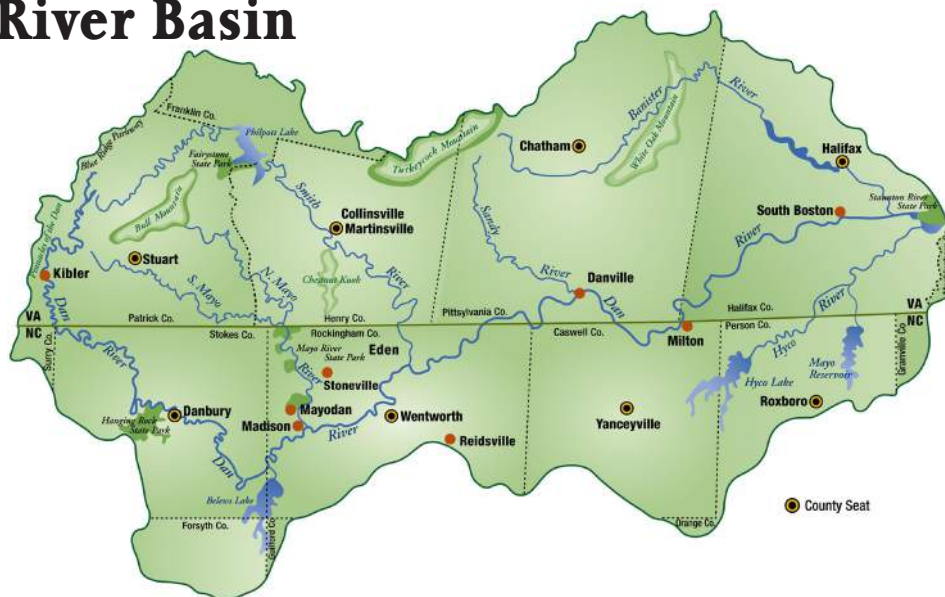
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Donations for Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail Project

Leslie Anderson
Lindley and T Butler
Rebecca Hook

The Dan River Basin



Spring First Saturday Outings

April 4

Jones Lake paddle and hike

May 2

Mayo River Float
NC 770 to Business 220 (optional
paddle to Avalon Dam)

June 6

Dan River Float
Jessup's Mill to George's Mill



Jones Lake



Mayo River



Dan River at Jessup's Mill

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