

The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of a leaf floating in water. The leaf is the central focus, showing its veins and a mix of green and yellowish-brown colors. The water is dark blue and slightly rippled, with other leaves visible in the background and foreground, some appearing as soft, out-of-focus shapes. The overall mood is serene and natural.

CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

DANRIVER.ORG • VOLUME 15, ISSUE 1 • Winter 2016

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE WATER

**DEQ Continues Partnerships • Monitoring Classes
Ongoing • River Bank Funds Put to Good Deeds**

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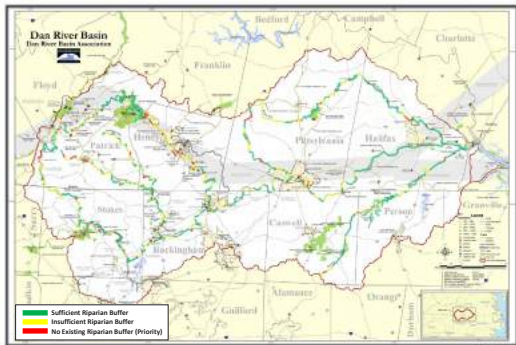
River Bank Fund Projects

Since June DRBA staff have worked on seven projects funded by the River Bank Fund, managed by the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region. Nearing completion are Citizen Water Quality Monitoring handbooks for trainers and participants, which will first be used in South Boston in partnership with the Roanoke River Basin Association.

A year of sediment testing in areas most impacted by the coal ash spill is underway at 5 sites between Eden and Danville. DRBA, DEQ, and local municipalities are also exploring impacts on cities' water supply. Results analyzed by DRBA staff and university researchers will be shared at a 2016 symposium.

Riparian buffers are being addressed with demonstration sites and a catalog of different types of vegetation to plant. A site at the Danville YMCA should be planted soon, with two more sites ready this spring and the riparian buffer catalog published by April.

Six riparian buffer presentations have been completed since June, reaching community and school groups in Danville and Pittsylvania County. Participants in Averett University's Week to Engage surveyed the Danville Riverwalk Trail



Riparian Buffer Assessment Map

for areas needing vegetation. A new River Protector Program will soon be initiated on the DRBA website and in a brochure. A launch to property owners will coincide with Earth Day, 2016. By May an online map of river and trail access points should be completed. Efforts are being made to create new river access sites between Danville and Halifax County.

Finally, DRBA is working on a Dan River Water Quality Planning Assessment. Priority riparian buffer areas in Danville, an area of the Smith River, and the river corridor between Eden and Danville have been assessed by volunteers and staff, with more to be done this spring. A "Grid Template" for regional planning is complete, including plans for Water Quality, Trails & Greenways, Blueways, and Tourism. Beginning in January, interns from local colleges will help identify regional plans.

Tiffany Hayworth

Dan River Basin Community Stakeholders Implementation Team

Dedicated to promoting and improving the stewardship, enjoyment, and state of the Dan River, the Dan River Basin Community Stakeholders are working with

Duke Energy to implement projects such as marketing, agricultural extension outreach, website development, community college programs, and stakeholder assistance. Project proposals and budget estimates are due by the end of 2016.

ON BEHALF OF OUR WATER QUALITY

[EDITOR'S NOTE: DRBA CONTINUES TO WORK DILIGENTLY TO ENSURE CLEAN WATER IN OUR BASIN. THIS IS A PARTIAL LIST OF RECENT ACTIVITIES.]

EDUCATION:

- MASTER NATURALISTS TRAINED IN MACROINVERTEBRATE SAMPLING
- EIGHT TUB OF BUGS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PRESENTATIONS AT LOCAL SCHOOLS
- WATER QUALITY TRAINING SESSIONS IN DANVILLE

STEWARDSHIP:

- COLIFORM SAMPLING OF NORTH AND SOUTH MAYO RIVERS FOR VA DCR
- MACROINVERTEBRATE MONITORING IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

PARTNERSHIPS:

- VIRGINIA WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH CENTER'S ADVISORY BOARD
- DRBA AWARDED VA DEQ CITIZEN WATER QUALITY MONITORING GRANT FOR 2016
- REPRESENTED DRBA AND THE VA CITIZENS FOR WATER QUALITY IN RICHMOND AS A SIGNATORY TO RENEW CITIZEN MONITORING PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALLIANCE FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY; VA DEQ; VA DCR; AND THE VA SAVE OUR STREAMS PROGRAM. THE PURPOSE IS SUPPORTING AND IMPLEMENTING THE VIRGINIA CITIZEN WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM.

Virginia Water Monitoring Council Conference

goals for the Chesapeake Bay, sessions addressed sewage leaks, stormwater management, reducing trash and toxins in our waterways, dealing with failed septic systems, and educating householders about ways to improve water quality.

Membership in the VWMC, free and open to the public, is encouraged for all who are interested in water monitoring issues in Virginia. More information is at <http://www.vwrrc.vt.edu/vwmc/default.asp>.

“Exploring Emerging Water Issues” was the theme of the November Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Conference in Henrico, VA. After a keynote address on nutrient reduction



Volunteers attend VWMC Conference

Eric Tichay

New Park and Access on the Dan

DRBA partnered with Rockingham County to obtain a \$91,000 grant from Duke Energy’s Water Resources Fund to create a river access and environmental park on the Dan River. The 3.4-acre park will provide environmental and historical education, hiking, fishing, and picnicking, as well as a public boating access between Madison and Settles Bridge. Public meetings in early 2016 will allow further public input.

For more information, contact Jenny Edwards at jedwards@danriver.org or (336) 339-6169.

Jenny Edwards

Chestnut Tree Restoration

DRBA volunteers recently cleared forest growth from hybrid American Chestnut trees planted near Philpott Lake. DRBA, the USACE and the American Chestnut Foundation are partnering to establish a population of fungus-resistant trees that, genetically, are

15/16 American Chestnut and 1/16 fungus-resistant Chestnut. The goal is re-establishment of this former king of the Appalachian forest. Of 100 saplings planted last spring, 57 are alive. Re-



Volunteers work among the Chestnut saplings

placements for the lost trees will be planted next fall.

Andy Lash bush hogged open areas where weeds had overgrown. Using a weed-eater blade, he removed briars and small invasive saplings near the Chestnuts. USACE Ranger Mary Lawson and DRBA volunteer Wayne Kirkpatrick cut larger saplings, then inventoried the living/dead Chestnut trees.

Patrick County Happenings

DRBA’s Tiffany Hawthorn and Brian Williams made a presentation to the Patrick County Board of Supervisors, discussing Riverbank Fund grants awarded to DRBA and DRBA’s activities supporting water quality, tourism, and trail development within the county. They invited Patrick County to consider a DRBA membership.

Representatives of six agencies celebrate the 17-year-old partnership implementing the Virginia Citizen Water Quality Monitoring Program. DRBA’s Wayne Kirkpatrick, representing the VA Save Our Streams Program, stands second from the right. Other signatories include the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay,

Virginia Citizens Water Quality Monitoring Program

organizations and reaffirmation of their for supporting and



DEQ joins local forces for another year

the VA departments of Environmental Quality and Conservation & Recreation, VA Citizens for Water Quality, and VA Water Monitoring Council. The specific responsibilities of each partner are spelled out in the agreement, with the shared goals of creating and supporting water quality monitoring programs throughout the Commonwealth.

Wayne Kirkpatrick

Stream Monitoring 2016

DRBA's Krista Hodges and Amy Farinelli recently began DRBA's second year-long monitoring program in Danville, hosting a training session to certify volunteers in Coliscan Easygel procedures for monitoring E. coli bacteria. You are invited to another training session on February 20, 2016 at 12:30pm in Danville.

"We are very excited to begin another year of monitoring and citizen science in Danville," says Hodges. "Government agencies and scientists can only monitor so many streams due to time and resources....Volunteers are helping us bridge that gap and better understand the state of our local waters."

Thanks to a VA DEQ grant, twelve DRBA volunteers conducted monthly monitoring sessions in 2015, providing baseline data for

six streams. Except for two sites, the streams measured consistently low for E. coli bacteria, allowing us to focus mostly on new sites in 2016. Professor Laura Meder of Averett University provides important support, encouraging environmental and biology students to participate in the program and providing lab space for DRBA staff and volunteers to incubate, process, and analyze monitoring samples. A senior biology student will serve as

an intern this spring. For their continuing collaboration with DRBA, Averett University won DRBA's Partnership Award this past year.

Under a higher level grant from DEQ, key improvements will be made in 2016. With a Quality Assurance Protection Plan and equipment that meets certain DEQ standards, the year's data will be entered in the DEQ online database, to be used statewide.

At least 18 volunteers are needed to cover nine sites. All will test for E. coli bacteria, like last year. The two sites of concern from 2015 will also be monitored for macroinvertebrates to help understand the streams' ecological health.

"We have seasoned volunteers returning to the program, plus some new volunteers, but we still need more," says Farinelli. "The E. coli monitoring takes only about 30 minutes each month to collect the water sample, data, and drop everything off at the Averett University lab. It is a short amount of time, but the commitment of our volunteers is what makes this program possible for us to sustain."

Please email Amy Farinelli at afarinelli@danriver.org for more information and to RSVP about the February 20 training session.

Amy Farinelli
Krista Hodges

From the Director

It's incredible how in the past three years we've been on the front lines of the threats to our beautiful waterways, such as fracking, coal ash waste, and litter. We've provided environmental education programs to almost 1,000 youth. We've started a storm drain project, produced a documentary, opened several miles of trails, trained citizen water quality monitors... and so many more amazing things.

Thank you to our members, our supporters and our volunteers. We couldn't do anything without you!

Tiffany Haworth



Duke Energy volunteers from across North Carolina helped finish the three-mile Mayodan Mountain Bike Trail at Farris Memorial Park in August.

Volunteers completed the vital hand work on the trail, improving the trail surface, building rock beds, and ensuring for water management on the trail. They also built a kiosk.

This project is made possible through Mayodan's DRBA municipal membership, with other support from Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, Reidsville Area Foundation, REI, HandsOn Charlotte, and Blue Ridge Trail Works.

Jenny Edwards

FSO December Lauren Mountain Preserve

After an 8-hour drive home from Pennsylvania, Suzy, my 13-year-old Labrador, and I welcomed news of DRBA's 1.5-mile trail outing in Bassett, VA. I thought it a good opportunity for her to get out!

Seven of us and my old dog took the trail on a crisp Saturday morning, weaving slowly up the hillside, our feet crunching the fall leaves. About halfway up we noticed a speckling of beautiful geodes (geology friends, please forgive me; I don't know the name of the stone). Poor Suzy caught one in her paw and needed help removing it. Spying green leaves, we were lucky to have Ellen along to point out what they were. I learned about wild heart-leaf ginger that did smell of ginger but isn't traditionally used in cooking.

At the top of the hill were some great views of the Smith River and surrounding areas. The way back down was more switchbacks, then along the Smith where we spotted what we thought to be a cozy den of river otters that had left tracks on the bank. This part of the trail was a piece of cake—flat and wide, with plenty of rock formations and vegetation.

My old girl hopped into the car as happy as could be at the finish. I enjoyed the walk and the company and I look forward to more outings.

Vicky Lippert



Lauren Mtn. Trail

West Rock Rivers & Trails Group

Meeting monthly in western Rockingham County, the WRRTG has been involved in developing the Mayodan Mountain Bike Trail, starting a mountain bike club at McMichael High, bringing the Dan River Boat Race to downtown Madison, creating a website highlighting downtown businesses, improving Lindsey Bridge and 704 accesses, and assisting Mayo River State Park in developing a new access. Their new strategic plan emphasizes developing trails and accesses, as well as enhancing residents' health and recreational and economic opportunities.

For more information, contact Jenny Edwards, jedwards@danriver.org or (336) 339-6169.

Jenny Edwards

2015 DRBA Race Series Winners

DRBA's first annual Race Series included three fundraisers: Trout-N-About 5.5K in Fieldale, Run with the Cows 5K on the Chinqua- Penn Trail, and Apple Dumpling 5K on the Mayo River Rail Trail. Nearly 150 participants supported DRBA's environmental education, the Chinqua

Penn Trail, and Patrick County trail development.

Trout-N-About winners included females Lisa Perez, Rebecca Adcock, and Dakota Fix; males Dwayne Williams, Mark Joyce, and Jonathan Adcock; and masters Jodie Berger and Aman Sarwary.



The home stretch at the Apple Dumpling 5K

Run with the Cows women leaders were Rebecca Adcock, Boots Vandemark, and Sarah McGrath; top men were Joshua Eleby, Mark Joyce, and Montel Bryson. Kids' Fun Run winners were Jacob Durham, William Robinson, and Ronan Robinson. The Apple Dumpling Festival 5K in Stuart saw male winners Dwayne Williams, Mark Joyce, and Brad Holt; female winners Rebecca Adcock, Julianna Overby, and Elizabeth Warriener; and masters winners Jerry Burge and Sarah Brinks.

DRBA thanks all sponsors and participants who made the series a success.

Members Only Third Saturday Outing

The Pinnacles of the Dan rise sharply from the Dan River gorge in Kibler Valley, challenging limb and lung of those who make the ascent. When DRBA members joined the Kirkpatrick's for the October Third Saturday Outing, seventeen hardy hikers scaled the Pinnacles.

Only a mile each way, the trail to the peak rises nearly 900 feet. After we passed through thick brush and open woods, rock outcrops led upward. From the rounded, wooded summit, spectacular views ranged up to vibrant blue sky, down along the



Hikers climb the steep grade to the Pinnacles

gorge's sheer sides, and out across the valley to Primland Lodge over a half mile away.

Back in Stuart, we greeted other DRBA members and enjoyed a meal from everyone's favorite covered dish.

Memberships 09/01/15 - 11/30/15

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 City of Martinsville
 County of Henry
 County of Rockingham
 Town Of Stoneville
 Town Of Wentworth

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9/01/15 - 11/30/15

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Chinqua Penn including Run With The Cows 5K Race

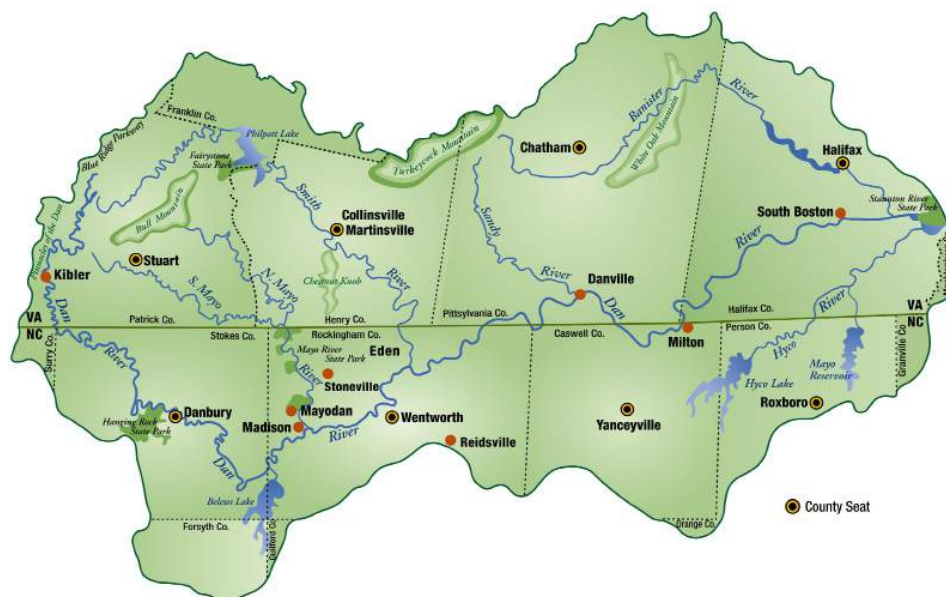
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Apple Dumpling 5K Race

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Ask About Your
 Membership in
 the River Legacy
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MARC, Wentworth



Tanyard Branch Hike



Annual Celebration hosted by the MARC in
Wentworth
March 5

Hike to Tanyard Branch Waterfall
February 6

Lauren Mountain Preserve
January 2

DRBAs Winter 2016 FSOs . . .
. . . where the warmth of friends can always be found



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