

# CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

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A photograph of two men in a wooden canoe on a river. The man in the front is wearing a blue life vest and sunglasses. The man in the back is wearing a blue life vest and a hat. They are surrounded by lush green trees and a cloudy sky.

**DRBA Making a Difference**  
**Dan River Game Land**  
**Mapping our Waterways**  
**Trout in the Classroom -- 13 Years!**

# Currents • Volume 17 • Issue 3

## Dan River Basin Association

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Cover Photo by Betty Kirkpatrick

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Dan River Basin Association represented by Lindley Butler. (3rd from right)

Photo by Cindy Adams

### Dan River Game Land—a Happy Ending

**O**n April 19 a ribbon-cutting was held at the new Dan River Game Land just upriver from Eden, NC. With a four-mile frontage on the Dan River, the over 1700-acre wooded property provides a critical buffer just above the water intake for the City of Eden and Dan River Water, which supplies much of Rockingham County’s drinking water. Now owned by the State of North Carolina, the land will be managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), which, with funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and Duke Energy Water Resources Fund, worked with DRBA members Phil and Adam Hunnicutt and Piedmont Land Conservancy (PLC) to purchase the property. Among PLC’s funders for acquiring acreage for the project were the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Without DRBA’s intervention in 2011, this project would not have been possible. Plans for a private landfill threatened to cover the property with a mountain of trash imported from all along the Eastern seaboard. DRBA established a task force, solicited funds, invested in public meetings and education about the project, and, for the only time in our history, filed a lawsuit to oppose the landfill. When the court ruled that DRBA

lacked legal standing, Rockingham County continued the fight, which ended when the NC Supreme Court ruled against the landfill project in December 2014. A recent challenge of one of the game land’s boundary lines will be settled by a survey and determination of legal ownership of the property in question.

NCWRC will continue managing the property for wildlife enhancement, hunting, and fishing. Along the river, at least one boating access is planned, and further improvements for recreational use will likely be made. DRBA will assist the wildlife commission in working out the details. According to the NCWRC, the public will be invited to contribute ideas for the game land’s development.

T Butler/Tiffany Haworth

*Do Great Things!*

*Join DRBA  
Today*

## Ringling in the Philpott Blueway Water Trail

With the ringing of the Blueway Bell, the Philpott Lake Blueway officially opened in May. Used to open the Southern Virginia Wild Blueway and the redesigned launch at Banister Lake, the Blueway Bell is the iconic signal that DRBA and our partners are opening a new water trail. Joining DRBA were the US Army Corps of Engineers, Martinsville-Henry County's Tourism Office, Franklin County representatives, Henry County congressional representatives, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

The Philpott Lake Blueway is a system of water trails easily accessible from surrounding parks, boat launches, and campgrounds. Designed



primarily for canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards, the water routes can also be utilized by motorized boats. Informational signs at nine access points around the lake provide maps to guide boaters from one location to the next, with distances and suggested routes to scenic hotspots.

Speakers at the dedication spoke about advantages of partnerships like this, increases in tourism and use of the lake's campgrounds and access sites, and the trail's encouragement to "get out and safely explore the lake." Franklin County supervisor Tim Tatum recalled his growing up along the shores of Philpott Lake and appreciated that our little secret in Southwest Virginia is no longer a secret and no longer just for motorized craft. Isaac Sarver of DCR noted the dramatic increase in citizens' requests for more

water access to our lakes and rivers.

DRBA thanks all the partners who helped create this Blueway on one of the most beautiful lakes in Virginia. To learn more, and to download a Philpott Lake Blueway guide, visit <http://www.danriver.org/our-watershed/about-our-watershed/philpott-blueway>

Brian Williams

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## Banister Lake Boat Landing Project

On April 20 the newly completed Banister River Blueway-Banister Lake Boat Landing off US-501 in Halifax was officially opened. The 40-year-old boat ramp's extensive rehabilitation was funded by VA Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries, Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, Duke Energy Water Resources Fund, Riverbank Fund, and a Dominion Environmental Stewardship Grant through DRBA.

The concrete boat ramp, stairs for launching canoes and kayaks, and new pier can be reached via a handicapped-accessible walkway.

Site amenities include a Southern Virginia Wild Blueway sign, seating plaza, gateway pole sign, light posts, and landscape plantings. Decorative benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles were donated by the South Boston Rotary Club.



Over 63 miles of the Banister River are part of the VA Scenic Rivers System, from US-29 in Pittsylvania County to its confluence with the Dan River in Halifax County. The access site is part of the Banister Lake/Banister River Recreation Area, which promotes and protects water quality, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and natural heritage experiences for economic development, tourism, and a more vital quality of life.

Carl Espy

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## Trout in the Classroom 2018

**A**nother amazing 6 months of kids and trout! DRBA thanks the teachers, students, parents and volunteers who helped make the 2017-18 TIC season a success. Participants included over 1000 students from 16 schools in Henry, Patrick, Franklin and Pittsylvania counties in VA and Rockingham County in NC, plus the Virginia Museum of Natural History.

The TIC program is one of DRBA's signature Environmental Education Programs. Originally funded by Dr. David Jones in Henry County in 2006, TIC is a national Trout Unlimited education outreach concept. Students raise Trout from eggs to fingerlings in 55-gallon cold water aquariums. The students are responsible for feeding, cleaning the tanks, and keeping a check on the water chemistry. TIC engages students in all the STEM categories, plus art and literature, and teaches fish and husbandry skills.

The program is even more special when college graduates come back and tell us about their experiences with TIC in grade school or high school. This season Daniel Morris, a student in Douglass Elementary School in Eden, NC, was releasing trout with his classmates. We always have assistance from adults—teachers, teacher aides, and sometimes parents. At this release, Daniel's big sisters, Chelsey and Kalleigh Morris, joined us.

After the students had released their trout, Chelsey told us about her experience with macroinvertebrates and learning about the Smith River through TIC over 8 years ago! She had come out to see her brother, who was now in elementary school, release his trout. It was so exciting to see these young women, now in their 20's, come back to see their younger brother in the same program. That's when you know the program has made an impact and is still relevant. Fortunately, we had brought extra fish from our home tank, so, of course, we let the sisters release trout again!

What a great day and what a great end to the season!

Krista Hodges / Brian Williams



education

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## Water Quality Lessons—A DRBA Foundation

**W**ater quality is key to DRBA's Stewardship and Education programs. Weeks before Woolwine Elementary third, sixth, and seventh-grade students released their trout into the Smith River, the two older grades sampled the release site for macroinvertebrates; their findings showed the water quality to be good to excellent. On Trout Day, DRBA's Krista Hodges, Environmental Education

Coordinator, had shared lessons about the trout life cycle, and Wayne Kirkpatrick had brought the Tub of Bugs to illustrate what trout eat once released.

Tub of Bugs display has also served to bring the natural world up close at three Earth Day events—VMNH, Halifax Farmer's Market, and Anglers Pride Park in Danville. DRBA volunteers shared the positive effects of riparian

buffers, reducing litter and pollution, and using good agricultural practices and environmentally responsible construction techniques. DRBA believes that both nature and mankind can



Wayne Kirkpatrick

## Patrick County Festivals & Adventures

Festivals and adventures abound near the headwaters of the basin! DRBA has been featured at two recent Patrick County events. The PC Showcase, a trade show for local businesses and non-profits, opened its doors to high school seniors and the general public. DRBA, along with more than 50 businesses and other organizations worked to promote the future of our community.

The Bushels & Barrels Festival, an annual event at the Virginia Tech Education Center in Critz, VA in its sixth year, allowed DRBA representatives to share our mission with folks from both near and far.

At an AIR:Shift workshop, businesses and the arts were challenged to partner innovatively to promote economic development, tourism, or problem-solving in Patrick County. As a result of this three-day workshop, funding has been provided to produce a map of the county's trails in hard copy. Information regarding the trail heads will be linked to DRBA's Interactive Map.

In addition, directional signage developed by local artists will be provided at the trailheads.

Two PC adventures are the third annual trip to VA Tech for 27 PCHS DRBA Club, Beta Club, and Rotary Interact students and the Rotary Club's month-long litter cleanup funded basin-wide by a grant from the Water Resources Fund.



*Members of Stuart Rotary Club collected trash along Commerce Street during Litter Clean Up Month*

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

## High Rock Ford Cleanup

On April 21, DRBA organized a cleanup of historic High Rock Ford, a crossing of the Haw River in Rockingham County. DRBA is partnering with the property owner, Museum & Archives of Rockingham County (MARC), to create a park there, including a river access and trail with interpretive signage.



Volunteers from MARC, RoundRock Design, Merit Pit Bull Foundation, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, RC Zoning, NC Wildlife Habitat Foundation, and High Rock neighbors joined DRBA in the cleanup. In a few hours the team pulled piles of trash out of the mature forest, including broken glass and lots of old barbed wire.

High Rock Ford, named for the huge rock outcrop that looms over the newly cut trail, was the site of a pre-Revolutionary mill. During the War of the Regulation it was a military campsite of Governor Tryon's army. A few years later, in 1781 General Nathanael Greene maintained his headquarters here before the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, a turning point in the Revolutionary War.

In true DRBA fashion, the volunteers enjoyed a bountiful riverside cookout and drawings for prizes. Dedication of the completed park is scheduled for the fall.

Jenny Edwards

## DRBA Welcomes New Intern

**F**aith Jones will be interning with the Dan River Basin Association during the summer months. Her projects will include serving on the Lindsey Bridge Dam - Dan River Restoration Team working to create fish passage and white water park for Madison; organizing river clean ups across the river basin; and GIS mapping of possible connections to the Mountains To Sea Trail in Rockingham County. She is a native of Rockingham County and recently graduated from UNCG with a BA in Geography with a concentration in Environmental Sciences.



## Be a Part of the Family! Join DRBA Today!

### From the Executive Director

Now more than ever in our 16-year history, DRBA needs you. We are facing pipeline development, uranium mining, fracking, coal ash, and changes to environmental regulations—all within our 3,300-square-mile watershed. We may be the **ONLY** watershed in the nation facing all of these challenges, all at the same time, and all while we continue to provide environmental education, water monitoring, riparian buffer planting, cleanups, master planning, advocacy, and other award-winning DRBA programs.

Without your support, we cannot successfully protect and promote our unique and beautiful natural and cultural resources. How can you help? Recruit new members, engage the business community to give, inspire friends and neighbors to donate. For these and other ways you can help, please contact me. Together we can discover the perfect way for you to make the biggest impact! (336) 627-6261.

Tiffany Haworth

*Editor's Note: Both the April and June First Saturday Outings (FSOs) were cancelled because of inclement weather or unsafe river conditions.*

**May 5: First-Timers on the Dan River**

Early on May 5th my two rookie kayaking compadres and I pulled into the Eden Wildlife Access—all three excitedly nervous, with our energies high. None of us had ever been in a kayak, and we didn't know what to expect. We were immediately greeted by several smiling faces and outstretched hands.

After consent forms were signed, everyone gathered around Mark Bishopric, our trip coordinator. He counted us off, and 36 adventurers were ready to paddle. Mark covered information about DRBA and thanked the private landowners who let us access the Dan from their property. He explained some of what we would be seeing on the trip and covered safety. We all piled into vehicles provided by Three Rivers Outfitters and headed out.

At the launch site everyone pitched in to ready the 33 vessels. After everybody was assisted getting into their river rides, we were off! Wow, what a wonderfully serene experience drifting down the Dan is! There is something ancient and wise about that flowing water. The history, time, and experiences it contains are humbling. Nature greeted us with indigenous bamboo, called river cane, and nesting blue herons feeding their chicks. We were reminded of our human engineering roots as we navigated around a beautiful stone pillar from the old Leaksville covered bridge.

The conversations were friendly, the laughter and camaraderie high. We concluded our 5.5-mile river adventure back at our morning meeting destination. Myself and my friends, old and new, finished the day safely, smiling, and dry. If I learned anything on this trip, it's that you don't need an airplane ticket to immerse yourself in nature, culture, and history. All you

need is a group of enthusiastic, willing, knowledgeable, and friendly folks. And, perhaps, a kayak. Thomas Carter

**June 2: Safety First on the River**



*Before launching, kayakers pause to learn about safety practices on the river.*

On June 2, with boat on my car, gear loaded, I was heading to DRBA's FSO when I checked social media before putting away the phone for an afternoon unplugged. On my news feed I saw that the trip was canceled. A localized storm had created flash flood conditions, making it too hazardous for the outing.

I had been particularly excited about this outing on one of the few parts of the Dan River that I haven't paddled; so it was a big letdown. But as Chair of the Outings Task Force, I know that this decision was not made lightly and that it was also a big disappointment to those who had pre-paddled this stretch and secured permission to

use a private access.

One of DRBA's great loves is sharing our region's beauty with everyone, and that is why we have these FSOs – so that regardless of skill, people can experience what our area offers. Unfortunately, the weather does not always cooperate. If we know that conditions will be unsafe, then by Friday evening before the FSO DRBA posts notification about a change or cancellation on the DRBA website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. If a

sudden and unexpected act of nature causes us to change or cancel an outing the morning of an FSO, then we post those updates as soon as we can. We also have volunteers at the put-in to meet anyone who did not see the updated trip information.

We hate that these two trips were canceled. I don't know when we can reschedule them, but I hope it is soon, and I hope the weather will be kind to us then.

Lucas Conkle



*This Heron Rookery found along the Dan River is a favorite site for paddlers each spring.*



## Memberships and Donations March 24, 2018 through

### Memberships -

#### River Legacy Circle

Mark and Mary Hill  
Bishopric  
Lindley and T Butler  
Graham Park, III  
George Sweazey

#### Corporate/Organization Membership

Spray Mercantile, LLC  
Three Rivers Outfitters

#### Steward Membership

Milton and Lloyd Barber  
Elizabeth Marquez  
Monty Mills  
Becky Mills  
James Muehleck

#### Family Membership

Lucas Conkle  
Rhonda Edwards  
Peter and Melissa Hairston  
Mike and Mary Linville  
Gary Miller  
Lonnie and Robin Smith  
Eric and Lorraine Tichay

### Individual Membership

Patricia Bentley  
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Michael and Phyllia Wenkstern  
Williamsburg Elementary School - Mrs. Carl's 2nd Grade  
Williamsburg Elementary School - Mrs. Robertson's 4th Grade

### Other Donation

Kurt and Norma Bozenmayer  
Thomas Carter  
Laura Gonzo  
Elizabeth Marquez  
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### Chinqua Penn 2018 Run With the Cows Event

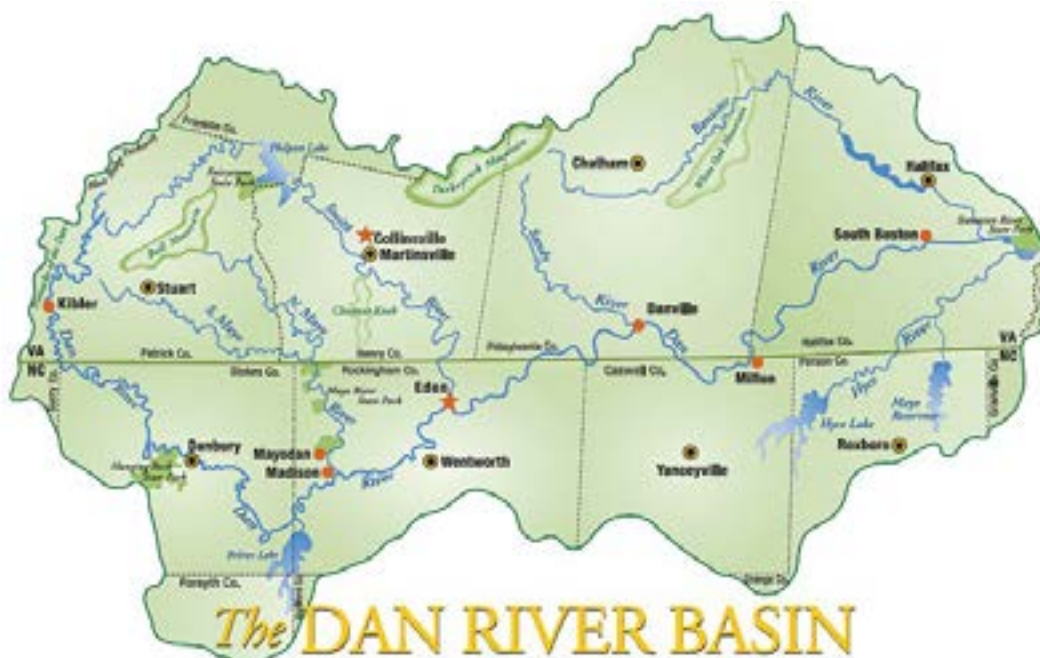
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## Summer FSOs

July 7:  
Philpott Lake from Jamison Mill Park

August 4:  
Dan River, Milton Access to Leggett's Bottom Access

August 25:  
Third Saturday Cleanup: Dan River, Lindsey Bridge to NC 704

September 1:  
Banister River, Terry's Bridge to Wolf Trap Access