



Dan River Basin Association

CURRENTS

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Philpott Celebrates 65 Years

DRBA Making a Difference

Education • Community • Recreation

Currents • Volume 17 • Issue 1

Dan River Basin Association

North Carolina Offices

413 Church Street, Suite 401
Eden, NC 27288-3242

Tiffany Haworth
Executive Director
336-627-6261
thaworth@danriver.org

Robin Light
Office/Accounting Manager
336-627-6270
rlight@danriver.org

371 NC Hwy 65
Reidsville NC 27320
Jenny Edwards
Program Manager
336-339-6169
jedwards@danriver.org

Virginia Offices

3300 Kings Mountain Road
P.O. Box 7
Collinsville, VA 24078

Brian Williams
Rivers & Trails Program Manager
276-634-2545
bwilliams@danriver.org

Krista Hodges
Education Manager
276-634-2592
khodges@danriver.org

308 Craghead Street
Danville, VA 24541
315-209-5055

Currents Newsletter

Editor
T Butler

Design/Production
Betty Kirkpatrick

Publisher
Rich Seybert, Felts Printing

Photo Credits:
Peyton Cherry
Jenny Edwards
Krista Hodges
Wayne Kirkpatrick
Brian Stewart
Brian Williams

Just waiting for you inside

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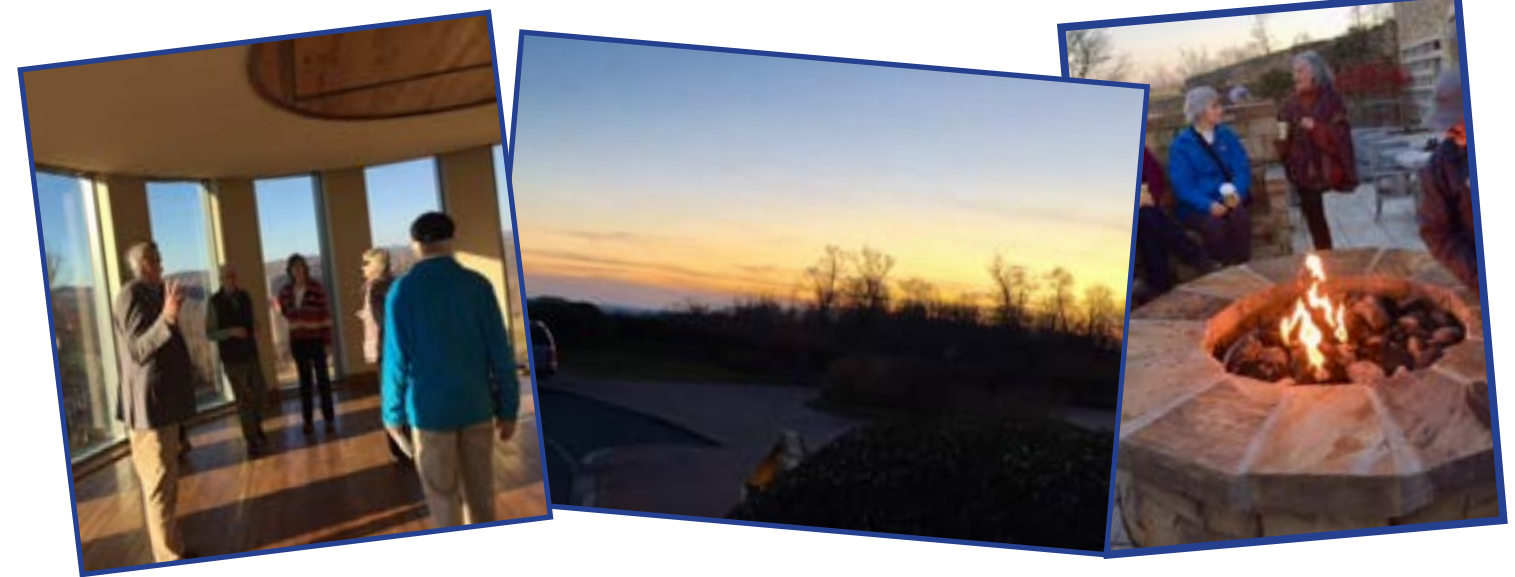


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Cover Photo by Brian W. Stewart, Park Ranger, Philpott Lake



RLC members and their guests enjoyed a tour of Primland Resort, a beautiful sunset and a fireside chat.

River Legacy Circle

Members Tour Primland

On Sunday afternoon, December 3, DRBA's RLC members toured the 12,000-acre Primland Resort near Meadows of Dan. Centered on the Lodge, a sparkling jewel of cedar and stone, this hideaway rests in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Tiffany Hayworth and the Primland team warmly welcomed us to the Galaxy Room with delightful hors d'oeuvres, pastries, and coffee prepared by the culinary staff.

While one group toured the picturesque grounds by shuttle, the other walked through the exquisite Lodge. Guides for each group pointed out multiple ways that Primland embraces environmentally responsible practices. The grounds were pristinely manicured, with deer and wild turkeys along our path and native rhododendron flourishing at every bend. We viewed the impressive golf course, sensational cottages, and breathtaking vistas. As an extra treat, a curious redtailed hawk swooped down near us as we scanned the Pinnacles of the Dan across the Dan River Gorge. Perfectly timed, we returned to the Galaxy Room and exchanged venues.

The elegant Lodge was filled with original art from across America and Aboriginal paintings from Australia. In the Great Hall, the enormous Fraser Fir Christmas tree and stone fireplaces provided a warm, festive atmosphere. We leisurely made our way through guest rooms, the Spa, the swimming pool, the theatre, the game room, and the library before climbing the spiral staircase to a world-class observatory. To conclude our exhilarating day, we gathered at the outdoor fire pit to enjoy hot chocolate and s'mores.

Peyton Cherry

News From Martinsville/Henry County

DRBA continues working with dozens of stakeholders on Smith River flow issues, now that the power house at Philpott Lake has been repaired and generation has resumed. The delicate balance between support for the river's trout fishery and recreational use depends on careful timing of water releases from the dam. DRBA's Brian Williams reports, "Our continued communication with the US Army Corps of Engineers and Dominion Power Company has been invaluable and our input is respected regarding Smith River decisions."

Trail extensions and new trails are being planned in Martinsville and Ridgeway, with new trail possibilities added to the updated master plan. Stay tuned!

The Citizen Water Quality Monitoring program is thriving in MHC, with many CWQM volunteers entering reports into the online database. Anyone interested in CWQM training is invited to contact Krista Hodges at (276) 632-2592 or khodges@danriver.org.

Brian Williams



Philpott Dam has returned to generation status following a fire in the powerhouse March, 2016

COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Apple Dumping 5K Event

Thirty registrants for the 2017 Apple Dumping 5K vied for top honors over the 3.1-mile course along the Mayo River Rail Trail in Stuart. The event enjoys strong support from community businesses and individuals. Proceeds benefit trail development and enhancement in Patrick County. DRBA thanks the 2017 sponsors that included 13 businesses and many volunteers from Fire/Rescue/Public Safety and course managers.



Help Plan a New Park!

Public input meetings for a new passive park near Belews Lake in Rockingham County will help determine the park's infrastructure. On property donated by Duke Energy, the park is being planned with help from an advisory committee that includes a DRBA director. Parking; areas for play, pets, and picnicking; trail alignment; and physical features to accentuate—all are being discussed. See the DRBA e-news for time/location for public meetings January 11, February 8, and March 19.



Matrimony Creek Trail Underway

Phase I of a trail along Matrimony Creek in Eden is currently in process, thanks to funding from the Duke Energy Water Resources Fund. When completed, the trail will begin at a trailhead on Washington Street and meander along the beautiful creek to the upper "falls" about one mile north. Please note that the trail corridor has not been completed and is not yet open to the public.

Phase 2 of the project is underway, and community members, city staff, elected officials, and DRBA are working with a generous landowner to make the to-be-developed creek-side trail accessible to adjacent neighborhoods, students, city residents, and visitors to Eden.

The project is made possible by the City of Eden, Homer Wright and family, The Conservation Fund, Reidsville Area Foundation, RoundRock Design, and DRBA members. The project manager is Johnny Farmer, Director of Eden Parks & Recreation.



PCS Trail Being Developed

Inspired by the Duke Energy Trails initiative, Piedmont Community Services (PCS) in Patrick Springs has requested development of a half-mile natural surface trail on its campus to help clients incorporate outdoor walking into the healthy lifestyle that PCS promotes. Project partners in this new initiative include DRBA, DRIT, and Stuart Rotary. DRBA is very proud to be engaged with these partners to promote improved quality of life for basin residents.



Philpott Celebrates 65 Years

A year of festivity awaits us as Philpott Dam celebrates 65 years! Authorized by Congress in 1944 and constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers, the dam was designed to tame the Smith River, to prevent the flooding of local communities, to provide hydropower and to create a reservoir that now provides an outstanding venue for a multitude of recreational activities.

Nestled among the rolling foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge, Philpott Lake is a scenic wonderland of over 3,000-acres with 100 miles of pristine shoreline. More than 7,000 acres of forested land surround the lake. Visitors to the lake are always amazed at the natural beauty of the area.

The Visitors Center provides information about recreational activities available at Philpott and the special events planned by the USACE and the three surrounding counties. Mark your calendar for DRBA's First Saturday Outings slated for July 7 when we paddle from the Jamison Mill Park access.

DRBA enjoys an ongoing partnership of environmental and recreational stewardship with the Corps and looks forward to this year of celebration.



Run with the Cows a "MOO-ving" Experience!

"Run with the Cows," supporting the Chinqua-PennTrail, was not just "ANUDDER" 5K. Part of the Piedmont Race Series, the September 24 event drew 82 registrants who ranged in age from 10 to 72 and hailed from up to 100 miles away. All runners and walkers earned "MORE COWBELL"!

In the men's competition, Henry Stevens lived up to his "top banana" costume by coming in first, followed by Owen Wood and Jorden Lamothe. The top three women were Addie Schoenberger, Reba Slivka, and Caroline Woods – all UDDERLY AWESOME!

Friends of Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail thank our participants and sponsors, whose contributions maintain and enhance the trail. See ChinquaPennTrail.org to learn more!



Interactive Map Update

Promoting the Dan River region for tourism and economic development, the Dan River Implementation Team continues to update the interactive map (<http://www.danriver.org/interactive-map>). Next steps include engaging more tourism/economic development personnel from across the basin and meeting with a facilitator to determine an approach to managing the effort long term.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

My goodness, it's COLD outside! Fortunately, frigid temperatures don't keep DRBA staff and volunteers from monitoring the quality of water in our local rivers and streams. Every month of the year, Citizen Water Quality Monitors (CWQM) test to ensure our water is safe for drinking, recreation and wildlife.

For many, the anniversary of the February, 2014 Dan River coal ash spill is a reminder of the critical importance of protecting our waterways. Here at DRBA, we never need reminding. Our volunteers and staff are working hard year-round. You can be one of them! Look for free CWQM trainings in your area in 2018. These sessions fill up fast, but you can get on the list now. Contact Krista Hodges at (276) 632-2592 or khodges@danriver.org.
Tiffany Haworth

EDUCATION

MHC After 3

What do middle and high school students do after the school day ends? For nearly 100 in last fall's Martinsville/Henry County After 3 program, they participated in DRBA's natural resource-related activities. Teams of students competed to pick up the most litter around their campuses and athletic fields, using the Litterati App to track how much litter they collected and where it was picked up. DRBA's Krista Hodges noted that using technology for the friendly competition "only added to their experience." Altogether, they removed 1,500 pieces of litter, mostly plastic, from their school grounds.



As a reward for their work, DRBA's Brian Williams brought his "Snakes Alive!" program, a most requested presentation, into the classroom for everyone to enjoy. Williams' live reptiles provide hands-on opportunities to interact with snakes and overcome fears and misconceptions about them.

DRBA has partnered with MHC After 3 for over a decade, providing a variety of personalized outdoor educational programs for hun-

dreds of students. This spring's offerings include planting wildflower seed balls around campus and monitoring the water quality of nearby streams.

Duke Energy/RCC TRAILS Program

Rockingham Community College's inaugural TRAILS class, Basic Trail Building, attracted 18 participants, including private landowners, state park and county employees, AmeriCorps volunteers, and nonprofit staff—all trail users and builders. Under TRAILS executive director Tim Johnson, the four-day class included both the science of trail building and practical hands-on experience. DRBA participant Wayne Kirkpatrick comments, "Duke Energy, DRIT and RCC can and should be very proud of this curriculum, the Executive Director and associated RCC personnel of the TRAILS program."



Join DRBA today!
www.danriver.org

RECREATION

Hanging Rock to Moratock October 7

The weather had been warm and sunny for a couple of weeks before the first Saturday in October. Perfect paddling weather! That Saturday started out damp and foggy enough to make driving difficult, an ominous beginning to a paddling trip. But by the time we arrived at Hanging Rock Access, the fog had burned off and the day was cloudy, but pleasant. There were 24 people and almost as many boats gathered to participate in the first Saturday paddle. The coordinators were friendly and well organized. Soon the shuttle had been set and everyone was getting on the river, not a small feat with that many people.

The section of the river was beautiful. There are gray cliff walls, wildflowers and trees just starting to show their fall colors. The river was low, but not particularly challenging, so there was plenty of time to become acquainted with

the others on the trip. It was a friendly group of people with varied interests and paddling experience. The low water made the trip slow, and lots of folks got stuck at some point, but no one complained.

Lunch on a bar in the river provided a chance to let everyone chat. Then towards the end of the run it started to rain, perhaps raising the water level a smidge, but mostly promising a better water level in the near future. Lots of pictures were snapped, and altogether it was a lovely day on the Dan River, ending in brownies at the takeout. It was our first experience with DRBA, but won't be our last.

Dee Edelman



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TSO Hike with Ralph Lutts October 21



Educator and historian Ralph Lutts guided nearly 30 hikers through the woods along an old road bed and beside the Dan River near Meadows of Dan on October 21. As we hiked across his and wife Sue's property, he shared stories about a long ago post office and other community landmarks. The long abandoned Wild Cat Road, once an oft traveled thoroughfare, reminded us how the landscape changes over time. The Dan River was a modest stream here, between headwaters not far upstream and Townes Lake, the upper lake of Danville's hydroelectric complex, not far downstream.



Following the hike, a covered dish meal at the home of Wayne and Betty Kirkpatrick provided great food and conversation into the evening. This annual Third Saturday Outing event will visit the Town of Stuart's 1916 DC Electric Generating Plant in 2018.

Hike Along the Sandy River November 4

November 4 dawned as a cool, dreary day with a threat of rain. But a small, hardy group enjoyed an easy hike along the Sandy River, one of the basin's major tributaries of the Dan River. Organized by Lucas Conkle, hike leader and personal friend of the property owners, this unique area of the basin provided a rich experience to the eager hikers.

The Sandy sported high banks and gently flowing, crystal-clear water that reflected the changing fall leaves. One hiker, a Master Naturalist and avid birder, pointed out Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings. It was one of those days where the wildlife seemed as interested in the people as the people did in the wildlife. The birds fluttered among nearby bushes and trees at eye level, providing a close-up viewing opportunity.

Pittsylvania County's Sandy River traverses only 30 miles from its headwaters to its confluence with the Dan and is the only river in the basin entirely contained within a single county.



Knight-Brown Hike December 2

Driving toward the Knight-Brown Nature Preserve, I expected to be underwhelmed, but hoped that reconnecting with old friends and acquaintances would make this walk in the woods worthwhile. We were greeted warmly by outing leader, Will Truslow, who told us this 180-acre parcel was given to Piedmont Land Conservancy (PLC) by Cecelia Brown to honor her partner, Paul Knight, who was from Stokesdale, to preserve this beautiful property. Truslow briefly described the terrain, the route we would take, the creeks, and flora we should encounter.

The trail quickly led our crew of 22 hikers and 3 dogs downhill towards a boulder-laden creek, to the appropriately named Creekside Trail. We encountered volunteers working on an Eagle Scout project. Ken Bridle, PLC Stewardship Director, graciously shared details about the project: enhancement of an area to create a vernal pool, a safe haven for salamander eggs to hatch. The hike progressed through stands of mature beech and sycamore trees, other hardwoods and several varieties of ferns described at the entrance kiosk. Next, the Leatherwood Trail, named for the small shrubs alongside the trail. Along the property boundaries, more pine trees co-existed with hardwoods and mountain laurel. After descending to the creek, we finished by climbing to the parking area.

Kudos to DRBA for introducing us to the Knight-Brown Preserve, a hidden gem and a great way to spend a cool December morning.

Harry Welker, Jr.



Working to protect and promote the Dan River Basin through recreation, education and stewardship.

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EXPERIENCE THE SEASON WITH DRBA

January 6 Hike on Fieldale Trail

February 3 Hike at Staunton River State Park

March 3 Annual Celebration at Wade Mecum

April 7 Paddle Mayo Beach to NC 770 Access

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION
413 Church Street, Suite 401
Eden, NC 27288-3242



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Students from NC and VA schools decorated their trout tanks with either a holiday or a winter theme. The students are excited about the soon to be delivered eggs! This is DRBA's 13th year bringing Trout in the Classroom to students. In addition to Martinsville City schools, participating counties include Franklin, Pittsylvania, Patrick, Henry, Rockingham, and Guilford.

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