



Dan River Basin Association

CURRENTS

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UNPRECEDENTED MOMENTS
DRBA GOES DIGITAL
DUKE CLEANUP COMPLETED

Currents • Volume 19 • Issue 3 Dan River Basin Association

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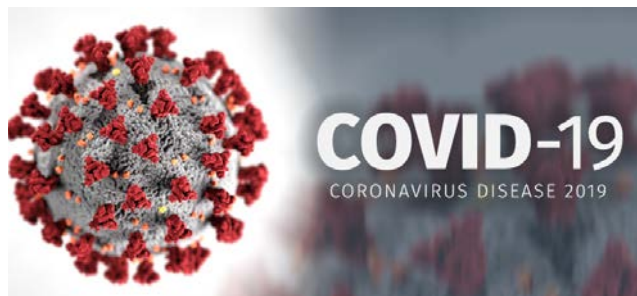
Tiffany Haworth
Betty Kirkpatrick
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Kali Slaydon
Brian Williams

DRBA'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Internally, DRBA was well prepared to shelter in place. DRBA program staff have always worked seamlessly from office, home, car, or forest. Because we cover such a wide geographic area, we're also adept at communicating and working via phone, email, text, and video chats.

However, our ability to work externally changed dramatically. Our first crisis was saving thousands of Trout in the Classroom trout babies when schools closed. Working quickly, we saved every one of them and produced a video so students who raised them from eggs could “virtually” see them released into the river. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oraB80K55Co&feature=youtu.be>



Then we had to quickly figure out how to continue to effectively, efficiently and safely:

- Utilize volunteers
- Keep our citizens engaged and inspired to value, explore and protect our natural and cultural resources
- Provide promised environmental education for dozens of classrooms
- Move forward with trail and river access construction projects
- Maintain master planning schedules and acquire public input
- Manage our administration and finance responsibilities remotely

Thanks to DRBA Board members, staff and key volunteers, by the end of March we had met most of the challenges. The Garden Club of Eden's donation helped us purchase Zoom for online webinars and meetings. Teachers helped us design virtual educational programs and made time for us in their online school day. Our Citizen Water Quality Monitors continued monitoring our waterways without interruption. We coordinated with contractors and volunteers to maintain social distancing when constructing trails and river accesses. Working with funders we determined innovative ways to gain public input. We started Lunch with DRBA webinars. We launched the DRBA at Home page on our website. We successfully held a “virtual First Saturday Outing.” Our new “host” computer at DRBA headquarters allows the Treasurer and Finance Committee to work remotely from home.

*Transition has not been easy,
but our new tools allow us to
continue our work without pause
or postponement.*

Executive Director Tiffany Haworth

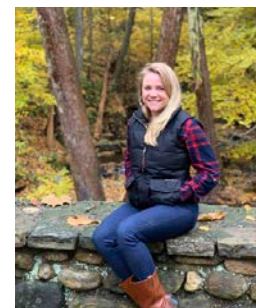
Soon we will be able to gather in person for outings, events and volunteer opportunities. But for now, DRBA offers numerous ways for the communities we serve to volunteer, get outdoors, and learn something new.

Tiffany Haworth

ANNA KREAGER REJOINS DRBA STAFF

With great pleasure, DRBA announces that Anna Wallace Kreager rejoined the DRBA staff team on June 1, 2020. A Patrick County native, Anna received a degree from Virginia Tech in Humanities, Science, and the Environment and was a fellow in the Earth Sustainability Program. She worked with DRBA from 2011 – 2013, first as a volunteer, then as a project coordinator, helping develop the Patrick County Rivers & Trails Master Plan and the Dan River Basin Watershed Prioritization Atlas. She and her husband, Conrad, moved to Montana where in 2017 she received her J.D. from the University of Montana Law School with a Certificate in Native American Law.

Returning to Patrick County in 2018, Anna worked as a private attorney until rejoining DRBA. Tiffany Haworth comments, “We are so pleased to have her back on the DRBA staff, working part-time assisting with office responsibilities, advocacy, master planning and stewardship projects.”





Constructed in 1952 by the Army Corp of Engineers, Philpott Dam has served to control flood waters during high rainfall.

For the first time in the dam's 68 year history, Philpott Dam was breached on May 22, 2020.

PHILPOTT DAM SPILLWAY BREACHED

For the first time since it was completed in 1952, the Philpott Dam was breached this May. In earlier high-water events, some water splashed over the spillway section of the dam, but this time sustained flows poured over the edge. The huge waterfall was fascinating and beautiful, though scary for some people downstream.

The US Army Corps of Engineers manages the hydropower and flood control functions of the dam in consultation with numerous stakeholders, including power companies, municipalities, wildlife resource commissions, farmers, fishermen, and DRBA. As the lake level rose, water was released through the generators, the low flow valves, and the sluice gates, all of which are controlled releases. Because of the USACE's weekly conference calls with the stakeholders, the region's water managers were prepared for the breach. The spillway functioned exactly as it was designed to do, and there was no danger to the downstream community.

Brian Williams

CAPTURING THE RUNAWAY PROPANE TANK

Torrential downpours super-saturated Henry County in late May, so that 5 more inches of rain on May 24 caused flash flooding, landslides, road closures, downed trees and power lines, and historic flows in the Smith River. A huge rock and mud slide dislodged a 1000-gallon propane tank at Philpott powerhouse, sending it into the river. Two days later the head of Henry County Public Safety called on DRBA's Brian Williams to help retrieve the tank from the still-raging water before it reached the Martinsville Dam.



Stuck on a strainer

A drone had located the massive tank caught on an island below Fieldale. As the rescue crew headed upstream toward the island, the small motor on their boat blew, forcing them to float downriver to their starting place. So much for Plan A. Plan B was to drive up near the tank and access it from the bank. When they reached the river's edge, the tank was gone. Switching to Plan C, as darkness fell Brian paddled his solo canoe downstream to a strainer that had captured the tank, where he attached ropes and cable, secured the tank to the bank, and paddled out in the dark.

Within two days the river had dropped enough for the Franklin County Swift Water Rescue team to retrieve the leaking tank, cap the leaks, load the tank onto a flatbed truck, and return it to the gas company for refurbishing. A replacement will go to the Philpott powerhouse.

Smith River access ramps are now open, with silt, trees, and debris removed, and the river level is safe for most paddlers. However, paddlers should use caution, as logs, trees, and debris have washed into the river, and currents and depth may be different after the flood.



Headed home

Brian Williams

PROJECTS UPDATES

River Clean-ups

Delayed by unprecedented flooding and the Corona virus, cleanups may resume in late July. If you help clean up trails or river accesses, please tell Brian Williams, bwilliams@danriver.org who is keeping track of volunteer hours.

Henry County, VA

- Spencer Penn Meditation Path: Butterfly boardwalk is installed; trail completion is expected in July.
- Smith River Sports Complex Dog Playground: Trail is complete; fencing should be complete by mid June.

Rockingham County, NC [Delays caused by rain and flooding]

- Lake Reidsville Trail: 3/4 mile of 2.5-mile project is complete. July ribbon cutting is planned.
- Eden Otter Holt: Interpretive sign is installed at Island Ford. A volunteer day is coming soon!
- Lindsey Bridge Dam Project: Land acquisition and permitting are taking place; rock hauling for weirs is to begin in July.

Brian Williams

COAL ASH REMOVAL COMPLETED

On February 2, 2014, the nation's third largest coal ash spill occurred at Duke Energy's Dan River Steam Station at Eden. Coal ash, the byproducts of coal combustion to generate electricity, was stored in lagoons near the river. A stormwater pipe below one of the lagoons burst, releasing 39,000 tons of ash into the river, polluting some 70 miles of the Dan River. DRBA joined other environmental organizations in the lawsuit brought by Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) to ensure cleanup of the spill.

To prevent future coal ash spills, cleanup included removing all ash from the lagoons. Some went to Roanoke Cement Company for "beneficial reuse." The rest was excavated and hauled to lined landfills, both on-site and in Jetersville, VA. A judge overseeing the coal ash removal received semiannual reports from the company.

Frank Holleman of SELC notified DRBA at the end of May, "They've just about finished Dan River. They found another 1000 tons under the second lagoon. Yet more cleaned up! Good news."

Over six years after the spill, Duke Energy's final report to the judge shows nearly 4 million tons of coal ash safely removed. Since the new power plant on the

site is fueled by natural gas, coal ash is no longer produced there. And that is definitely good news for the river!

MAYO RIVER STATE PARK MASTER PLAN

The North Carolina Mayo River State Park was established in 2003 as one of DRBA's earliest projects. Now NC Division of Parks and Recreation is seeking public input for the park's master plan.



For background on the planning process, see the recording of DRBA's webinar with planner Brian Starkey at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr5v4s82aWI&feature=youtu.be>

To add your voice in this process, go to www.mayomasterplan.com.

GRANT PROVIDES LEARNING FROM THE DAN RIVER

In the upcoming school year every Pittsylvania County 6th grader will receive environmental education focused on the Dan River, thanks to a two-year grant to DRBA from the Virginia Environmental Endowment. Called "Students Taking on Environmental Matters," the STEM Project is in partnership with the county's public schools at the STEM Academy in Chatham.



Classroom science instruction covering human impacts to the environment will be coupled with water quality monitoring investigations on the river to foster students' learning about their own community and encourage informed decision-making about their civic responsibility.

In the second year, the same students will dive deeper into understanding the freshwater environment and ecosystems. At the end of that year each 7th grader will create an environmental awareness project to share with the community and the younger 6th graders.

Since the supplies and resources are reusable, teachers can continue fully integrating environmental watershed-based learning into their curriculum for future students.

LUNCH WITH DRBA WEBINAR SERIES

During the ‘stay-at-home’ Phase I, DRBA staff have worked to develop several educational webinars. *Lunch with DRBA* was developed to help keep people inspired about protecting and preserving our natural resources while staying sheltered in place. Virginia Program Manager, Brian Williams; Krista Hodges, Education Outreach; and Executive Director Tiffany Haworth wanted to give DRBA members and the general public a fun way to connect with DRBA and the environment (and learn something new!)



The *Lunch with DRBA* webinars have been live each Wednesday at noon since April 15 and have attracted over 100 viewers. Webinar ideas have come from DRBA board of directors and staff as well as DRBA members. The webinars provide “a weekly dose of virtual learning and cool experiences” states Haworth.

You can find a description of each event and a link to past webinars at <https://www.danriver.org/programs/environmental-education/webinars> and a registration link is provided for any webinars that are planned for the future. After July 1, the webinars will be offered at noon on the last Wednesday of each month. We are always looking for panelists and topics; everyone is welcome to offer suggestions!



New Trails & River Accesses in 2020 and *Rain Barrels and Reducing Your Water Footprint* were only two of several Lunch with DRBA webinars.

From the Director

I expected 2020 to be a year to remember, but never could I have guessed how much the world would change. Sheltering in place, quarantining, social distancing ... these are new phrases in our vocabulary. I feel blessed that my sphere of special people is currently all safe and healthy. I feel especially lucky to live in a place abundant in beauty and opportunities to engage with the natural world.

That’s why I choose to support DRBA. It helps me stay grounded and better able to see the positive things that surround me. Being a part of this group of generous and caring people, I know I am changing our region for the better, for every person who lives, plays and works here. Thank you for joining me in your continued support of DRBA. I have no doubt, we will get through this together.

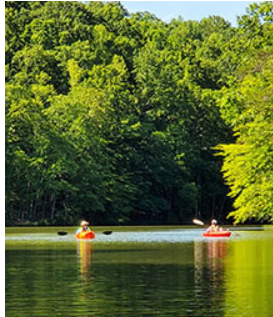
Tiffany Haworth

FSO AT BEAVER CREEK RESERVOIR JULY 4

After cancelling the April and May outings and redefining the June outing because of the global pandemic, DRBA members believe that with appropriate precautions we can safely enjoy a flat-water lake paddle in July.

We invite friends to celebrate Independence Day with DRBA on the water at the Beaver Creek Reservoir in Martinsville, VA on July 4 at 10:00am.

Built in the early 1950s, the man-made lake covers about 175 acres. It is owned and controlled by the City of



Since no motorboats are allowed on the lake, the reservoir remains one of the calmest flat water floats in the area.

Martinsville, for which it serves as the primary source of drinking water. Participants will paddle to the furthest point where Beaver Creek feeds into the lake along with two other branches of water. This out-and-back paddle will total approximately 4 miles, with easy options to turn back at any time during the float.

The boat ramp is located on Boat Ramp Drive (off Redskin Drive),

Martinsville, VA (36°44'49.3"N , 79°52'16.9"W). Participants should dress in synthetic fabric, be prepared to get wet, and bring boat, paddles, life jacket for each boater, lunch or snacks, and water. Hats and sunscreen are highly recommended.

Each participant is encouraged to follow state issued guidelines by practicing social distancing and by wearing a mask when launching or disembarking at the ramp. All participants will be asked to sign a waiver.

Boats and gear may be rented from Three Rivers Outfitters in Eden, NC, 336-627-6215, www.3-r-o.com, or from Smith River Outfitters in Bassett, VA, 276-618-1457, www.smithriveroutfitter.com.



WELL DONE, MY FRIEND. WELL DONE!

Since she came on board in 2008, Jenny Edwards has served as a program manager for DRBA, first in Virginia and later in Rockingham County, NC. Throughout her twelve-year tenure at DRBA, she has created networks with multiple partners to promote river and trail recreation, to coordinate cleanups and water quality monitoring, and to provide opportunities for youngsters to experience and take care of nature. Jenny served as acting executive director in Spring 2011 after Katherine Mull's departure.

I had a calling in my heart to work with an environmental organization. . . DRBA was the perfect fit.

A talented and successful grant writer, Jenny coordinated planning for municipal trails and greenways, including animal shelter trails for socializing shelter dogs and the Rockingham County Pathways Plan. She also coordinated the creation of "Rockingham County Jobs, Forests, and Rivers," a plan to ensure the future health of our water and forests, and was part of the DRBA team that dealt with the coal ash spill in 2014. One of Jenny's signature projects is the Mayodan Mountain Bike Trail, which has hosted regional and even national races.

In January, Jenny left DRBA to accept the position of executive director of the Rockingham County Education Foundation, whose mission is "to provide leadership, advocacy and program resources to increase the education levels of residents to make our community thrive." Clearly, Jenny continues her devotion to helping others. In addition, she is an avid kayaker, hiker and outdoor enthusiast and currently serves as Secretary and a founding member of the Old Time Scotch Collie Association, an initiative to conserve this nearly extinct breed.

Jenny, we miss you and wish you great success in your new endeavor. We hope you'll join us on our rivers and trails often!



Mycah, Zeke, Simeon and Issac attended Lunch with DRBA when Krista Hodges introduced macroinvertebrates as water quality indicators.. Later they visited with Wayne Kirkpatrick to study the “bugs” and the health of the Mayo River in Stuart, VA

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. . . .



Dan River 501 Bridge Riverdale - Lower Downtown South Boston

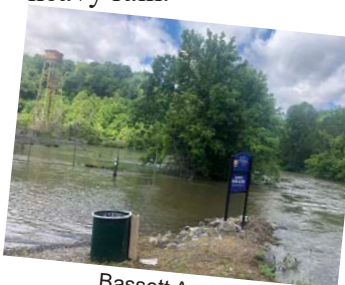


Klyce St. access under 6" of water from the Dan/Matrimony Creek.



Smith River Greenway in Eden, NC

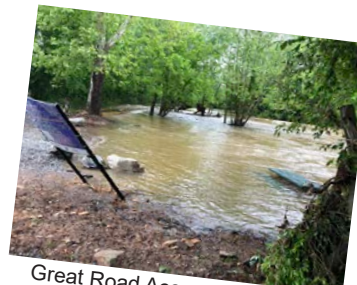
Accesses along the Smith River in Virginia were flooded in May. Debris above or below the surface of the river makes a fun sport dangerous. Always check with local outfitters or the USGS website before kayaking after a heavy rain.



Bassett Access



Kayak surfaces in debris days later



Great Road Access in Bassett



Philpott Marina

DRBA held a Virtual FSO in June asking folks to submit their June 6 activities . . .



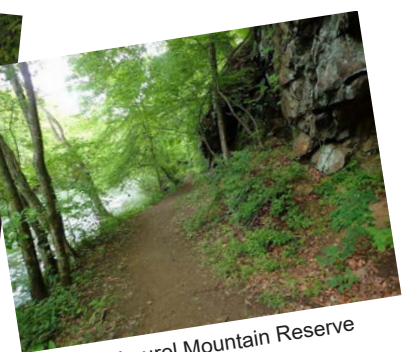
Fun on the Banister River



Hidden Roads Trail



Chinqua-Penn



Laurel Mountain Reserve

Memberships 3/04/2020 - 6/15/2020

Sponsor Membership

River Legacy Circle

Mike & Jane Haines
 Kathleen Anderson and Peter Jonas
 Edwin & Alice Penn
 Hugh Citty and Margaret Petty
 Will And Mary Truslow

Benefactor Membership

Tom & Gloria Butler
 George E. Sweazey
 Tom And Robin Taylor
 Protector Membeship
 Peter Adams and Marty Carruthers

Steward Membership

Larry Baker
 Russell & Sherry Easterbrooks
 Carl Espy IV
 Joe & Sue Graves
 Peter and Melissa Hairston
 Tiffany Haworth
 John Hopkins
 Debora Horning
 Coy and Linda Park
 Rex & Judy Rouse
 Sonya and R Wolen Gilbert
 Terry Wood

Family Membership

David and Traci Morton
 Robert O'Neal
 William & Deborah Henderson

Anne Lee Gravely
 Mike & Lusanna Vaughan
 Luanne Cherochak
 Steve & Debra Younts

Single Membership

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 Charlene Bowling
 Paul and Ivey Butler
 David & Nancy Clark
 Marie Dehart
 Jessica Driver
 Keith Elliott
 Mark Estes
 Ann Garbett
 Courtney Haworth
 Kelly Heath
 K. Joanne Hill
 Carol Love
 Elbert "Bob" Mason
 Tim Ottaway
 Thomas Raab
 Carl and Robin Whiting-Smith Smith
 Thaddeus W. Solomon
 Angela D. Stallings
 Andy and Bonya Tredway
 Curtis Turner
 Janice Wilkinson
 Robert & Phyllis Woodward

Donations 3/04/2020 - 6/15/2020

Sponsor Donation

Will And Mary Truslow

Benefactor Donation

Tom & Gloria Butler
 Joe & Ellen Jessee
 Leaksville Garden Club

Protector Donation

Lindley & T Butler
 Mark Estes
 Jeffrey Johnston
 Nat Greene Flyfishers
 Samuel & Nancy Wheatley

Steward Donation

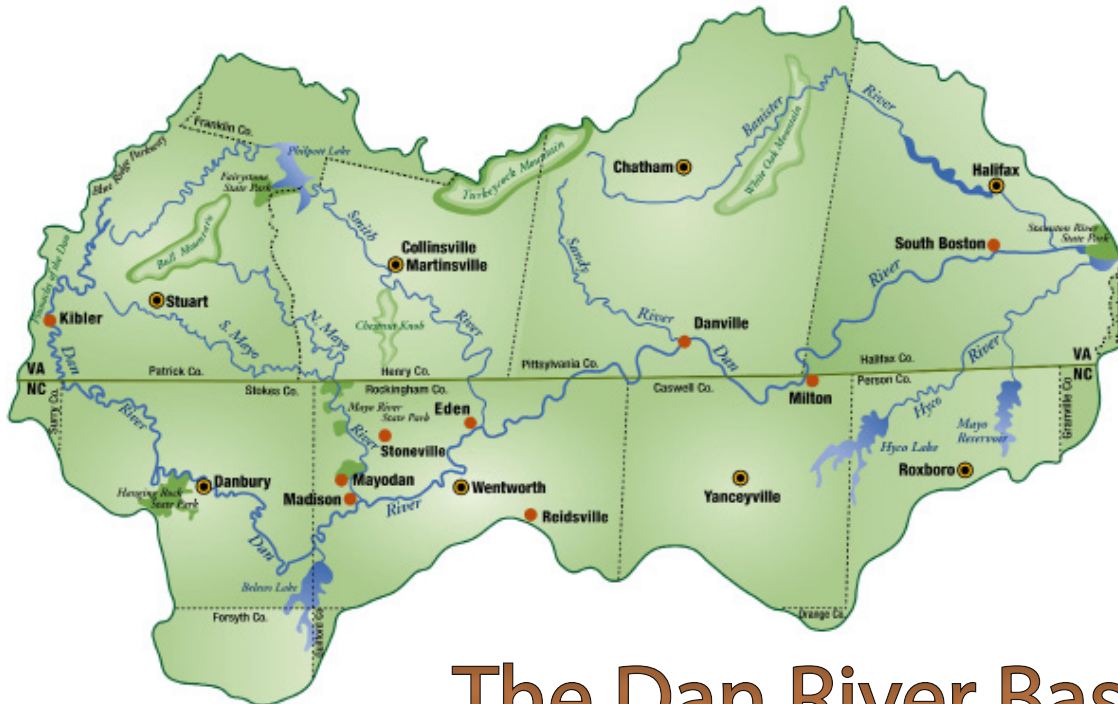
Debora Horning
 James & Theresa Tobin
 Womens League Of Eden

Other Donation

AmazonSmile Foundation
 David & Nancy Clark
 Tiffany Haworth
 Elbert "Bob" Mason
 Thaddeus W. Solomon
 Angela D. Stallings
 Anne Sweazey

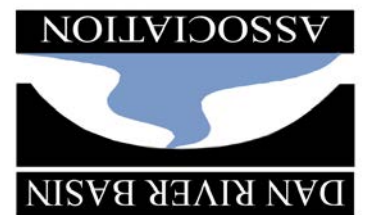
Chinqua Penn Trail Donations

Lindley & T Butler
 Teresa Lea, Integrative Healing Arts
 Therapy Centre



The Dan River Basin

www.danriver.org



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

First Saturday Outings

July 4 -- Beaver Creek Reservoir; Martinsville, VA

Look for additional outings by visiting

<https://www.danriver.org/programs/recreation/first-saturday-outings>

