

The background of the cover is a photograph of a clear blue sky with a bright sun in the upper right corner. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted trees and branches, some of which are covered in a light layer of snow or frost, suggesting a winter setting.

# CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

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Smith River Fishery Restoration  
Lindsey Bridge Dam Renovation -- Phase One Completed  
Meet our newest Staff Member  
Children Share "What does a Healthy River Mean to Me"

# Currents • Volume 19 • Issue 4 Dan River Basin Association

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To find out how, visit us at  
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Cover Photo: Katie E. Mahler



## Lower Smith River Fishery Restoration

Working together to help the Smith River recover its “trophy trout” status has been a labor of love for fishermen and activists who appreciate this resource. Partnering with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), DRBA volunteers and staff have been involved with Smith River improvement projects for more than 15 years. This past October volunteers from Smith River Outfitters (SRO) and Smith River Trout Unlimited (SRTU) joined DWR to conduct electro-fishing studies downstream of Martinsville dam. The number of trophy-sized fish (over 16”)

that were captured on this trip were dramatically reduced from the recorded numbers of previous years’ studies.

The section of river from the Martinsville Dam to the Smith River Sports Complex had become a trophy trout section after DRBA secured weekend flows that helped to keep the river cooler through hot summer weekends.

The fishery below Martinsville became known as the newest trophy-sized Brown Trout waters, attracting many fishermen to the “lower Smith.”



Hundreds of trophy-sized fish have been removed from the river over several years. Along with warm river temps, due to power outages at Philpott dam, the number of trophy fish has greatly decreased.

With assistance from DRBA and SRTU, in 2018 DWR began stocking fingerling browns in the lower Smith each spring; however, the subsequent high temps reduced their survival rate. In early December 2020, DWR brought 2500 larger fingerling brown trout to stock in the lower Smith, hoping that cooler water and larger size would help the fish survive and grow. Volunteers from DRBA, SRO, and SRTU assisted.



Sampling in 2021 will reveal whether this attempt was successful. Let’s hope for the best, as the Smith River has become known as an increasingly good fishery from Philpott to Martinsville. With some help, perhaps we can regain the trophy trout status on the lower sections.

Al Kittredge and Brian Williams

Be a part of something great



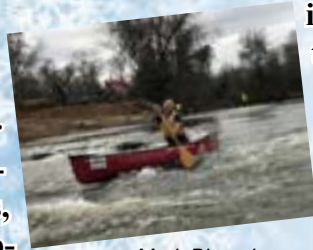
Join DRBA today!

## Lindsey Bridge Dam Renovation Completes First Phase

Using ten thousand tons of boulders, Engineer Kris Bass and US Fish & Wildlife Track Hoe Operator Ricky Powell have created seven crescent-shaped weirs at the Lindsey Bridge Dam Renovation Project in Madison, NC. The benefits of the project, first promoted by former DRBA program manager Jenny Edwards, include providing upstream access for the federally endangered Roanoke Logperch and James Spiny Mussel; improving the town's water intake system; and providing safe passage for recreational paddlers. This phase of the project has been completed a month ahead of schedule.

Replacing the present Lindsey Bridge with an arched bridge will eliminate debris-snagging columns and will provide a caged pedestrian walkway. The town plans

to improve the popular river access point with new landscaping, picnic tables, beach volleyball courts, educational signage, and rollaway portable restrooms. A special new feature will be handicap-accessible entry to the river,



Mark Bisopric paddles through the newly formed weirs

The Town of Madison is saving millions of dollars by renovating the dam with this project instead of replacing it with a conventional dam. In addition, revenue from the tourism it will attract promises additional millions in economic benefit to the Town of Madison. Clearly, this is a win for everyone.

Click here for

[CCT Productions Drone Video of Madison Fish Restoration Project](#)



### Volunteer Spotlight Jessica Driver

As we face a new year, it is a time to reflect on special people who helped us navigate 2020. Jessica Driver is one of those volunteers who kept the spirit of DRBA's education, recreation and stewardship in the forefront. Since 2015, she has faithfully waded into a Dan River feeder stream every month, collecting water samples for E Coli monitoring. Building on her familiarity with insects through her work at the Virginia Department of Agriculture, Jessica added quarterly macro invertebrate monitoring to her skill sets. She is on the ground, in the stream, and at the computer every month working diligently to help monitor the health of the water in our Basin.

Jessica volunteers to lead insect appreciation and awareness programs whenever possible. In light of 2020's social distancing edicts, this year she added kid-friendly videos on a wide range of science topics to her body of work. Venturing into the waters of kayaking and hiking on DRBA's outings, she shared her knowledge of fascinating insects along the way. Jessica's years of work with DRBA and her boundless environmental spirit have made her an important ripple in the pool of DRBA's work.

Sonya Wolen

## Donation Weekend Replaces Chinqua-Penn Trail's Run with the Cows 2020

When safety concerns during the 2020 pandemic forced cancellation of Run with the Cows 5K, Friends of Chinqua-Penn Walking Trail (FCPWT) held a donation weekend instead on September 26-27.



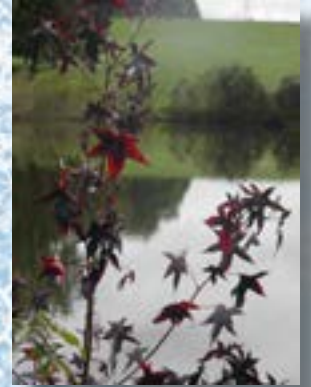
FCPWT thanks Cary Ware, who made bluebird houses and squirrel feeders to sell for the trail, and eighteen volunteers who staffed the donation/sales tent during the weekend.

Special thanks go to the following sponsors, whose names appear on the banner at the trailhead.

**Big Bull:** DRBA, Jacob B. (Skip) Balsley & Craig Cardwell, Home Trust Bank, Templeton Trailscapers, Town of Wentworth; **Mama**

**Cow:** John D. Love, John Strickland, Wentworth Animal Hospital; **Bouncing Calf:** Eden Jewelry, Pat Foeller, House of Health, In Touch In Life, Morris Heating & Cooling, Rockingham Chiropractic Center, Strader's Shoes, Robert L. Wheless, DDS; **Moo-Moo:** Lora Brewer, Pat & Steve Crist, Dick's Drive-In, Jim & Flo Putnam, Fletcher & Ginger Waynick.

The low-key fundraiser received outstanding support from the community through sponsorships and donations. From Big Bull sponsors at \$500.00 each to trail users who donated checks, cash, and loose change from their pockets, businesses and individuals contributed \$6,620.45 for maintenance and improvements along the trail.



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## Meet Melissa Mericle – DRBA's Newest Staff Member

Melissa Mericle joined the DRBA staff on October 1, 2020, as Office & Finance Manager. Selected as the top candidate from a group of over a dozen applicants, Melissa brings extensive professional experience, an impressive administrative and financial background and a passion for working with non-profit organizations. In the past, she has worked in a leadership role at Leaksville Moravian Church, Rockingham County Arts Council, Theatre Guild of Rockingham County and Barn Dinner Theatre.

"I am so excited to have Melissa join the DRBA staff," said Tiffany Haworth, DRBA's Executive Director. "Melissa not only is an avid hiker and a beginner kayaker, she has the skills to ensure DRBA's financial systems remain transparent, accountable and accurate. As expected, in just a short time, Melissa has become a critical member of the DRBA family."

Melissa lives in Stoneville, NC with her husband, Jeff, and is the mother of two grown daughters, Megan and Mandy. She volunteers with the Cooperative Christian Ministries Food Bank and hopes to continue working with local theatre groups when performances can resume.

"I am so excited to be a part of the DRBA family," says Melissa. "I love spending time outdoors hiking and camping with my own family, and now I have a bigger family that shares that passion. Working and learning about how to protect our natural world brings me a lot of joy."

Tiffany Haworth



## ***What Does a Healthy River Mean to Me -- DRBA Art Contest***

That was the theme for this year's art contest for students in grades 2-5. Krista Hodges, DRBA Education Outreach Manager, welcomed over 100 submissions from students throughout the basin in both Virginia and North Carolina schools.

Twelve finalists were selected along with six honorable mentions. These twelve finalists were showcased throughout Martinsville and Henry County between December 7 and December 21 for a Driving Tour open to the public.

Congratulations to all the students who participated. A complete list of winners, honorable mentions, and presentations can be found by clicking on [DRBA Art Contest 2020](#)



Second Grade  
1st Place - Hunter English  
Christian Heritage Academy



Second Grade  
2nd Place - Lillie Hodges  
Christian Heritage Academy



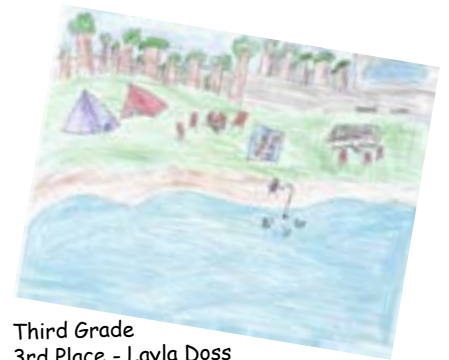
Second Grade  
3rd Place - Addison Wilson  
Albert Harris Elementary



Third Grade  
1st Place - Carla Portillo  
Hope Academy



Third Grade  
2nd Place - Izzy Mullins  
Hope Academy



Third Grade  
3rd Place - Layla Doss  
Christian Heritage Academy



Fourth Grade  
1st Place - Rose Dalton  
Christian Heritage Academy



Fourth Grade  
2nd Place - NyShawn Walton  
Albert Harris Elementary



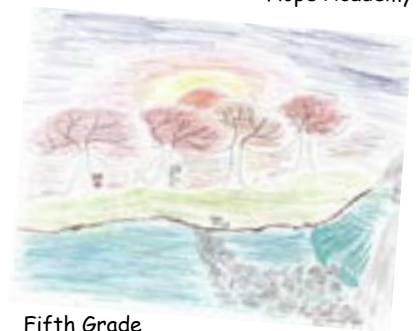
Fourth Grade  
3rd Place - Elizabeth Adannoy  
Hope Academy



Fifth Grade  
1st Place - Harmony Richard  
Williamsburg Elementary



Fifth Grade  
2nd Place - Keyona Taylor  
Williamsburg Elementary



Fifth Grade  
3rd Place - Cora Hacker  
Christian Heritage Academy

## October 3 FSO at Lake Reidsville

On a clear Fall Saturday, fifteen paddlers attended DRBA's first-ever outing at Lake Reidsville. As they paddled from the launch ramp to the confluence of Troublesome Creek, they admired the heavily wooded shoreline showing the first hint of fall colors. A large Hearts-a-Bursting shrub sported a full crop of reddish orange seed pods. Wildlife sightings included a Bald Eagle, several Great Blue Herons, a White Heron, an Osprey, a flock of ducks, a turtle, and a few fish.

First-timers on a DRBA First Saturday Outing, Aubrey and Linda Light sent their impressions:



“What a great time we had, and we met some of the best people anyone could hope to meet. Everyone was as friendly as they could be, very knowledgeable and excited to share with us what they have learned over the years.

We want to thank Three Rivers Outfitters for a great time. Mark was great, and we will be doing more business with him in the future. We want to go on some of the hikes with DRBA in the near future—probably the next one you have at Hanging Rock. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again. Thanks for a great time.”

## November 7 FSO at Hanging Rock

A clear, cool start greeted 28 participants in DRBA's November First Saturday Outing—a hike on the Cook's Wall Trail in Hanging Rock State Park. DRBA was proud to host twelve newcomers from the Raleigh Chapter of Outdoor Afro, a national not-for-profit organization with offices in Oakland, CA and Washington, D.C. We look forward to more adventures together.



The 2.2-mile, out and back, natural surface

trail offered sweeping views of the North Carolina Piedmont to the south and west, featuring Sauratown Mountain, Pilot Mountain, and the Greensboro and Winston-Salem skylines. A rock formation feature

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partway up the trail, called House Rock, is named for a “house-like” rock shelter overhang cavity that resembles a “living room.”



DRBA's free First Saturday Outings are open to the public, with everyone welcome to participate in our monthly hikes and paddles throughout the Dan River Basin. 2020 has been an exasperating year, with the pandemic requiring precautions to maintain physical distance and masking. DRBA follows the state guidelines for health safety, and we are happy to report no instances of exposure to the virus for our participants.

## DRBA Cancels December 5 Hike

When rising cases of COVID-19 caused statewide restrictions on the size of outdoor gatherings, DRBA cancelled its December 5 First Saturday Outing at Angler's Ridge Mountain Bike Trail. Instead, DRBA suggested some lightly-used trails across the basin where individuals and families might enjoy the outdoors safely.

- Person County, NC – Mayo Lake Park, <https://www.personcountync.gov/departments-services/departments-i-z/parks-recreation/mayo-park-and-lake/park-and-trail-maps>
- Caswell County, NC - Stream Walk Trail - Caswell County Senior Center, <https://www.piedmonttrails.org/maps-routes/oakwood-nature-trail/>
- Rockingham County, NC - High Rock Trail <https://themarkonline.org/high-rock-ford-trail.html>
- Stokes County, NC – River Bluffs Trail <https://www.hikingupward.com/NCSP/RiverbluffsTrail/>
- Patrick County, VA – I.C. DeHart Trail <https://www.visitpatrickcounty.org/trailhands/the-everchanging-reflection/#/>
- Henry County, VA – Mountain Laurel Trails <https://mountainlaureltrails.com/>
- Pittsylvania County, VA - Wayside Park Trails <https://www.vof.org/2020/10/15/wayside-park-pittsylvania-county/>
- Halifax County, VA – Paul C. Edmunds Memorial Park <https://www.oldhalifax.com/county/EdmundsPark.htm>

**Memberships 9/16/2020 - 12/15/2020**

*River Legacy Circle*

Joseph and Ellen Jessee  
Anna Lester  
Paul and Patricia May  
Lee Templeton  
James and Theresa Tobin  
Sherri Wright

*Benefactor Membership*

Tracie Heavner and Jim Frith  
Sharon M. Olson

*Protector Membership*

Jenny Clark  
Rusty Lacy

*Steward Membership*

Jonathan and Rebecca Adcock  
Larry and Brenda Baker  
Harvey Boysen  
Kurt and Norma Bozenmayer  
Lucy H. Davis  
Andrea Allen and Joel Deaton  
Barry Dorsey  
Karl and Deborah Fields  
D. Stephen Henderson  
Judith Jones  
Jeff and Melissa Mericle  
Henry and Nancy Moore  
James Muehleck, DDS  
Johnny and Ashby Pinkard  
Karl and Hollis Stauber  
Sam and Lea Thompson  
Paige and Frank Wiseman

*Family Membership*

Leslie W. Anderson  
Jeb and Diane Bassett  
Ken and Luann Bridle  
Robert E. Burris  
Bill and Florence Chittenden  
Ralph Horne and Kathryn Combs  
Lucas Conkle and Rachel Saylor  
Rhonda Edwards  
Michelle and Edward Evans  
Joe and Sue Graves  
Robert and Leonne Harris  
Harold and Edith Knight  
Don Leathers  
Cathy Marlowe  
Frederick and Laura Meder  
Phil Atkins and Jacky Miller  
Outdoor Designs, Inc.

Wid and Marie Painter  
Eric and Lorraine Tichay  
Lisa and Clark Tyson  
Robert and Phyllis Woodward

*Individual Membership*

Raven van den Bosch  
Arlyn and Susan Bunch  
Bob Bushnell  
Ward Collis  
Richard Dixon  
Michael and Elizabeth Doggett  
Sarah Dorsey  
Cheryl Garrity  
Shari Hopkins  
Lawrence H. Hulett  
Bill and Cathy McLeod  
Joe Mesot  
Dennis E. Reeves  
Mike Shelton  
Ann B. Somers  
Amy Stuart  
Jude Swanson  
Anne Woods

*Municipality Membership*

City of Reidsville  
County of Henry, Virginia

*Donations 9/16/2020 - 12/15/2020*

Lydian Altman  
Jonathan and Rebecca Adcock  
Marianne Aiken  
Mark Bishopric  
T Butler  
Lindley and T Butler  
Ward Collis  
Lucy H. Davis  
Barry Dorsey  
Joe and Ellen Jessee  
Kathleen Anderson and Peter Jonas  
David Jones  
Lenzie and Jean Kinyon  
Peggy Markham  
Christine Marze  
Phil Atkins and Jacky Miller  
Johnny and Ashby Pinkard  
Margaret Smith  
James and Theresa Tobin  
Will and Mary Truslow  
Elizabeth Warriner  
Brian Williams

*Corporate & Organization Donations*

Amazon  
Danville Master Gardener  
Association  
Kroger

*Stewardship Fund Donation*

Jenny Clark  
Jessica Driver

*Chinqua Penn Trail Donations*

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Jacob and Matilda Balsley  
Jan Bolick  
Health Paradigms PLLC  
Jim and Myra Holmes  
HomeTrust Bank  
William and Cheryl Kellogg  
Wayne and Betty Kirkpatrick  
John D. Love, Jr.  
Larry and Marsha Maddy  
Katherine Norins  
Samuel and Teresa Phillips  
James and Florence Putnam  
Scott and Kathy Smith  
John and Marcia Strickland  
Lee Templeton  
Lori Laxton Thorn  
William and Brenda Ward

*Eco Ambassador Council Founding*

*Member Donations*  
Carter Bank & Trust  
Jones and Deshon Orthodontics

*Donation for Green Schoolyard  
Phase 2*

Charity League of Martinsville and  
Henry County

*Donation for Jacob's Creek Bateau  
Landing Project*

Maddrey Etringer Smith Hollowell  
& Toney  
Rockingham County Friends  
Meeting

*Apple Dumpling Race Sponsorships*

Jones and Deshon Orthodontics  
Patrick County

*Wild and Scenic Film Festival  
Sponsorship*

Jones and Deshon Orthodontics

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# From the Director

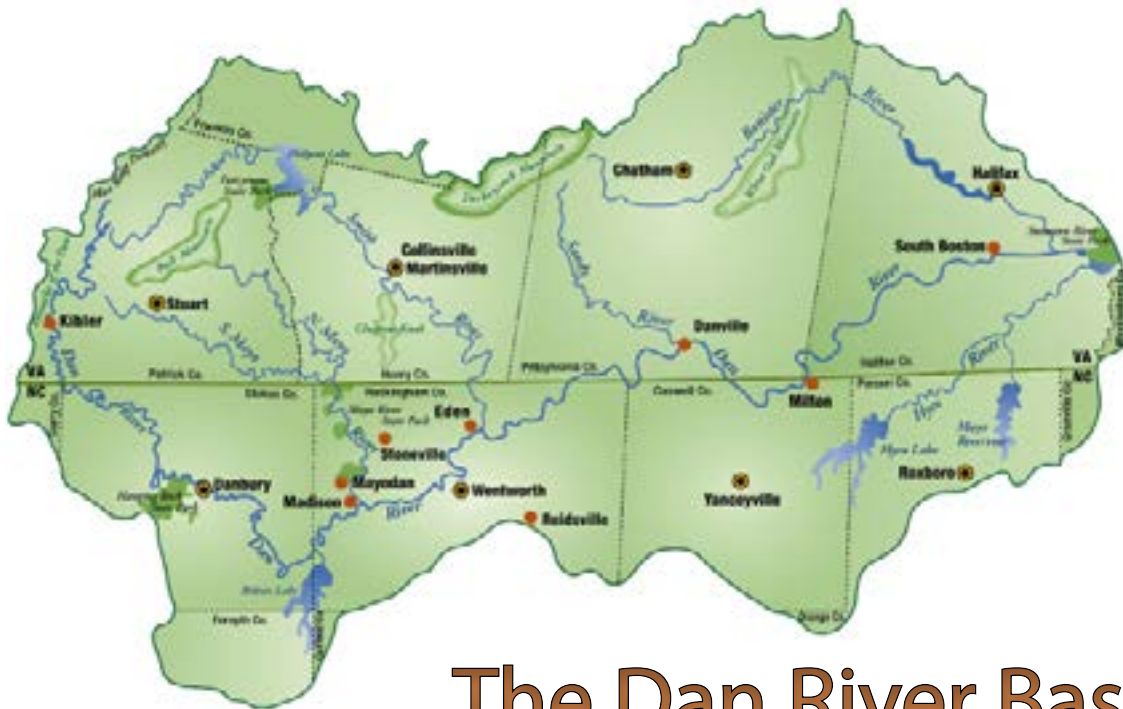
I think I can safely say that 2020 was not easy for anyone and that we collectively find ourselves wishing for a better year in 2021. This past year brought a substantial decrease in donations and memberships, social gathering restrictions that cancelled events and volunteer work days, supply chain issues that caused major project delays, and flood damage and destruction to dozens of DRBA trails and river access points. But none of these things prevented our making a huge impact this year. The creative energy invested by the DRBA board and volunteers and by our dedicated staff was phenomenal. We learned to work differently, but just as effectively, completing numerous projects despite all of the challenges.

Being able to enjoy our rivers and trails was our mental, physical, and spiritual salvation this year, helping us recognize what DRBA's work provides us, and what a great return we receive for our investment in DRBA. I hope you will join me in celebrating 2020 by feeling pride in your support of this critical organization.

I'm ready to ring in 2021 with a feeling of excitement for all we have planned for the coming year. I invite you to celebrate the hope of a new year by continuing your commitment to protect and preserve our environment.

*I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.*

*--John Burroughs*



## The Dan River Basin

## Calendar of Events\*

- January 2:** Virtual FSO  
**February 6:** FSO -- Hike at Reynolds Homestead  
**March 6:** FSO -- 20th Anniversary Celebration

\*All events are subject to change due to inclement weather or government guidelines. Please check with the Dan River Basin Association website or the trip coordinator before leaving home for any event.

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