

CURRENTS

Spring 2005

Volume 3, issue 1

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION DESIGNATED as a Stream Watch Group in North Carolina

The Dan River Basin Association, following its designation by the state of North Carolina as a Stream Watch Group, is initiating stream watch activities on the Dan River and its tributaries in North Carolina and Virginia, beginning at the annual meeting on Saturday, April 9 in Stuart, VA.

Dr. Ken Bridle, a conservation biologist and DRBA's Stewardship Chair, with colleagues Brenda Martin, Wayne Kirkpatrick, and Maurice Vaughan, will direct the Stream Watch program, which is now seeking volunteers throughout the watersheds of the Banister, Dan, Hyco, Mayo, Sandy and Smith Rivers and their tributary creeks.

Who may volunteer? According to Bridle, volunteers may be "as varied as the bodies of water" they decide to adopt: elementary and high school students, scout troops, businesses, and retired persons.

Brenda Martin, a teacher of high school biology and ecology in Stuart, Virginia and member of the Board of Directors of the Association, is a certified stream monitor and has directed many student groups doing stream monitoring. Wayne Kirkpatrick, a dairy farmer from Patrick County and fellow Board mem-

ber, is also a certified stream monitor.

Asked what is required of volunteers, Dr. Bridle said: "Energy and commitment." Stream watchers are encouraged to become the local experts on their stream's dimensions, history and wildlife, and to collect data that can be used on behalf of the stream's best interests. "Once you learn to understand what it is your stream is trying to tell you, you will be able to translate its concerns to others."

Stream watching is important, Bridle stated, because waterways are among our region's most valuable resources. "Their waters anchor us, giving us a sense of history and place. Their calming strength is a source of inspiration. They are a crucial part of our environmental neighborhood, our habitat."

Bridle, who lives in Walnut Cove, in Stokes County, North Carolina,



Charles Patterson, Jay Gilliam, Sandy Tobler and Brenda Martin collect small water-dwelling creatures from the South May River near Stuart, VA to determine the river's water quality.

claims that habitats, like neighborhoods, need to be protected. Clean waterways, he claims, are as important as safe neighborhoods. "The quality water in our streams affects the quality of life for all living things.

"But growth, development and carelessness threaten the health of even the most pristine streams. Pushed to their limits by the increasing demands of our society, our streams and rivers now show signs of stress." *continued page 5*

Annual Membership Meeting Schedule

DRBA's Annual Membership Meeting will be held Saturday, April 9, 2005, at the dairy farm of Betty and Wayne Kirkpatrick near Stuart, Virginia. Two major items of business are scheduled: election of officers and Board members and a demonstration of biological stream monitoring by Brenda Martin and Wayne Kirkpatrick, assisted by Stewardship Chair Ken Bridle and Stream Watch Chair Mike Vaughan.

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FIRST SATURDAY OUTING January , 2005

January Hike on the Ringgold-Sutherland Rail Trail

January 8, 2005 started out a dismal, foggy, drizzly, cool day, one that only Forrest would start an "adventure" on. Nevertheless, a trusty group of 23, not including the cat, started out on a hike of the Sutherland/Ringgold Rail trail. After a bit of interesting piloting on the shuttle, we started at about 11:00 from the eastern end of the trail. There were three bikers and the aforementioned cat along with various sizes and shapes of hikers that braved the morning. As additional hikers joined us from the western end, our numbers swelled to a grand total of 31.

The trail is good for walking and riding bikes. The flat, well maintained trail has mile posts every 0.5 miles. Good for measuring how many times to say "are we there yet?" We waited until we got to the 0.5 mile marker. In addition to the walk we got a chance to check out the now famous five-arch trestle and a special tour of Judge Dodson's old farm.

The hardest part of the walk, besides walking 5.5 miles, was the muddy incline we descended to get under the bridge to picnic.

Obvious signs of rock climbers who use the bridge's arches for practice were evident from the clasps attached up and down the stone walls. The kids enjoyed talking to the cat and climbing the slopes to the bottom of the bridge deck.

Next stop was the old farm and personal tour by Judge Dodson and his brother. Highlights were the opportunity to climb a 350-year-old oak tree, drawing buckets of water from the hand-dug well, and a really good visit with the Judge. We could see how proud he is of the property.

On the wildlife side we saw several turkey vultures, a couple of red-bellied woodpeckers, a recently departed red fox, and a few stray dogs.

Good times were had by all, lunches enjoyed, and the special tour a real treat for all of us. All ended about 3:00, and as for our weary bones, young and old alike, that pretty much concluded our day.

Looking forward to the next trip in February!!

Submitted By Steve Carpenter

FIRST SATURDAY OUTING February , 2005

Hike to Revisit Snow Creek Restoration Project

What do you know about modern attempts to restore watersheds? What is the difference between restoration and enhancement? What does it mean to do mitigation? What are the costs and benefits to the landowners and to society?

In its February 5 First Saturday Outing, the Dan River Basin Association members and guest observed an important stream restoration project on Snow Creek in Stokes County, one of the major tributaries of the upper Dan River. A hike of two to three miles took the group along the 4000 feet of the creek that has undergone extensive restoration over the past year.

Association members and guests who visited the stream on a "before" tour in January, 2004 noticed changes that have been made. Trip Coordinator Ken Bridle, who is Stewardship Chair of the Basin Association and principal biologist of Ecologic Associates, pointed out interesting species of plants and animals both in the water and on the banks of Snow Creek.

Bridle described how the project has helped to restore the creek and demonstrated the techniques used to determine channel geometry and stability, as well as the dynamics of stream flow and sediment transport.

We also learned about the system of natural channel design and how it is being used in all the watersheds in North Carolina and around the world. Members of an interdisciplinary design team combine the talents of hydrology, biology, and engineering to design a stream restoration.

We hiked along the bank and in the channel of the creek, prepared to see a creek in a whole new way. We learned to read the river and understand how changes in land use in the watershed are reflected in the health and stability of our creeks and rivers.

Snow Creek Restoration Project



DRBA Needs Volunteers

When you joined DRBA, you probably expressed interest in helping with certain activities related to fulfilling our mission. The wide-ranging possibilities mean that lots of volunteers are needed, and we are calling on you to join at least one of the committees that need you now. Here are four that especially need your help.

Display Committee: DRBA presently has displays at the Eden City Hall and the NC Welcome Center on US 29 just south of Danville. Funded by a grant from Progress Energy and created by the hard work of DRBA volunteers, these displays were made to be very easy to handle and transport. They have the potential to be shown anywhere in our Basin area. Volunteers are needed to **schedule, pack up, and set up displays every few months.**

Stewardship Committee: The Stewardship Committee is presently working on setting up a stream monitoring program. Volunteers are needed to **test their neighboring streams a couple of times a year** to gather data in order to monitor changes in our waters. Our Annual Meeting on April 9 is scheduled to teach stream monitoring techniques, and we have DRBA members with the expertise and certification to train us. This is a great way to involve your children, friends, and neighbors.

Education Committee: The Education Committee needs volunteers to help, well, **educate.** The possibilities are endless: articles in newspapers, outreach to our schools, presentations at schools and civic organizations....

Festival Committee: Last, but not least, volunteers are needed for the Festival Committee. Volunteers are needed to **help set up and staff our**

tent at local festivals. We display our brochures, answer questions about what we do, sell tshirts and books. From personal experience, it is a great way to meet new people and see old friends. If you only volunteered for a couple of hours, it would help relieve our two members that worked all the festivals last year.

Before you stop reading and say to yourself, "I am not qualified" or "I do not have the time," please hear me out. Ask yourself: why did I join DRBA? Was it because of your interest in preserving our rivers, your interest in learning more about our rivers, your desire to have companionship while drifting down our rivers, or was someone you know a member or one of our leaders and you thought it must be a good organization if they were in it?

The perks of being a member are good fellowship, visiting places you would not normally visit, shuttles on outings, broadening your knowledge base and much, much more—all for a mere \$25.00. What is great about DRBA's still being in its infant stage is that there are no hard and fast rules or qualifications to serve on a committee or the Board of Directors. The only qualification is the willingness to contribute a few hours of your time to help out.

Each organization is only as good as its members. DRBA is a wonderful organization, but we need your help. If you are interested in joining any committee or have any questions, please contact T Butler at members@danriver.org or Julia Pyron at sales@danriver.org.

Submitted by Julia Pyron

PHOTO GALLERY



January Hike on Ringold Southerland Trail



Fairy Stone Lake, viewed from Iron Mine Trail and Iron mine entrance along trail, both at Fairy Stone State Park



Batteau Model at Eden City Hall Display



Just Two Months Until River Rally 2005!

Registration Now Open for the National River Rally 2005

River and watershed protection activists from around the country will gather for the sixth annual National River Rally May 20 through May 24 at the Keystone Resort in the Colorado Rockies. The River Rally is a comprehensive national conference for everyone working to understand, restore and protect rivers and watersheds. Staff, volunteers and board members of all experience levels are encouraged to participate in four days of learning, sharing and celebration. Nearly 100 workshops will cover emerging policy issues, fundraising, technical issues, watershed science, hands-on watershed protection skills, and much more. The event includes field trips and expanded networking opportunities. Early registration is highly encouraged due to the fantastic location for this year's River Rally. Please visit <http://www.rivernetwork.org/rally> to register or email T Butler at members@danriver.org to learn more.

About Rally Registration

Go to <http://www.rivernetwork.org/rally> to register or get additional information. General registration for staff and board members of River Network Partner organizations is \$625, and includes four nights of lodgings, peak hour shuttles from the Denver airport, and most meals (Tribal Day registration is an additional \$125). Discounts are available for non-profit groups registering three or more people. Late fees will apply after April 8.

DRBA Exhibits River Photographs

Want to know more about the rivers in our area? The Dan River Basin Association has two photo exhibits on display that can introduce you to our rivers' history, beauty, and recreational activities.

One display is in the City Council meeting room, Eden City Hall, 308 East Stadium Drive. The show consists of four separate displays, three of color photographs featuring River Flora, River Features, and River Fun, with emphasis on why Rockingham County and surrounding areas are important destinations for ecotourism. Also on display is a 1/10th scale model of a batteau made by Mike Covey and Dorcas Midkiff.

Many of the wildflower photos are from the collection of the late Floyd Rich, long-time president of the Rockingham County Naturalist Club.

At the North Carolina Welcome Center on US 29 just south of Danville is another photo display that

emphasizes historic aspects of the Dan River, including Eden's Hamilton Street Bridge, now being destroyed, and nineteenth-century batteau traffic on the river., and a replica batteau on loan from Larry Willard for this project.

Last fall, volunteers from Dan River Basin Association prepared the Association's forty-foot-long batteau replica for use on the river. A photo essay at the Welcome Center documents their work.

Available at both exhibits are guides to Rockingham County rivers—the Dan, the Mayo, and the Smith—and Dan River Basin Association information.

The displays were enabled by a grant from Progress Energy Corporation. Portions of both were shown last fall at the South Boston Museum of History and Fine Arts. The exhibits will be at the Welcome Center through March and at the Eden City Hall through the spring.

The song of the river ends not at her banks but in the hearts of those who have loved her. *Buffalo Joe*

FIRST SATURDAY OUTING March 5th : Fairy Stone State Park Hike in Patrick Co.

I arrived at Fairy Stone early in order to check the area to make sure everything was alright for the hike. As I passed the park office, I noticed I was being watched. A good sized doe was grazing on the hillside between the road and the office. She kept careful watch on me until I had passed at which point she then continued her breakfast.

I headed back to the parking area to await the arrival of anyone who may have taken a chance on the day. We ended up with 15 hearty souls ready and willing to hit the trail.

The parking area was covered in snow left behind by the previous Monday's storm. I could tell from that point we were in for an adventure. We headed into the woods on the connector trail immediately going uphill in a mixture

of snow and mud. By the time we reached Turkey Ridge Trail, I had already seen quite a few snowballs flying from one place to the other. The kids were sure enjoying it if no one else was.

We emerged from the woods and ended up at the spillway in a sun drenched, grassy plot that was perfect for our picnic lunch. A half inflated basketball became the center of attention for the young boys after they finished their meals. Needless to say they did get a little wet.

After sharing a good view of the lake and mountains we returned to the parking lot and several wet and weary adventurers left for home. There were still 5 brave individuals willing to tackle Stuart's Knob. This hill doesn't look too bad, but wait til you start climbing

it. The first stretch brought us to one of the mine openings. Though there was a bit of debris near the entrance, you could see inside quite well. This was an interesting part of the hike since you were looking into an important part of local industry from around the turn of the century. We continued uphill until we reached a side trail on the left, which after quite a steep ascent, rewarded us with another iron mine entrance. Both holes were blocked by heavy steel barricades to prevent curious onlookers from going inside and getting injured. According to the map, most of where the town of Fayerdale was located is now beneath the waters of the lake. Farther down the ridge another placard gave much deserved recognition to the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was

responsible for the original construction of the park in the 1930's. From here we were provided with a good view of the beach and related facilities. Soon after, everyone said their good-byes, piled into their vehicles, and began their journeys eastward bringing an end to one great day of outdoor enjoyment.

Well almost. I decided to head back into the park and take in one more trail. I was rewarded near the end of the Oak-Hickory Trail by getting the opportunity to watch a small group of deer pawing and feeding on a slope along a small branch. Now that's gotta make a great ending to a great day.

Submitted by Joey Bane

EXCERPTS FROM JANUARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Next Meeting: The next Board of Directors meeting will be at **4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20** at the Danville Water Treatment Plant.

Bateau: Eager to get the bateau on the river this season, the Board discussed its sale or lease to Three Rivers Outfitters. The Executive Committee will work with Three Rivers to make the final decision.

Stream Monitoring: Brenda Martin reported that she and Wayne Kirkpatrick have volunteered in Virginia's Save Our Streams program, which they will demonstrate at the general meeting in April. Brenda and Ken Bridle attended the Citizen Environmental Monitoring Summit in Bristol, VA, which verified that benthic monitoring like what will be demonstrated in April is easy, reliable, and useful. The procedure is to check a stream four times in a year to set the standard, and then monitor for changes. Forrest Altman suggested that DRBA might provide a manual on use of the data in VA and NC.

Martinsville/Henry County Initiative: John Buck reported that the Harvest Foundation has funded a consultant from the Southern Environmental Law Center to organize a group to explore the area's use of natural resources for tourism. T and Lindley Butler gave a program at the December meeting introducing DRBA. At the January meeting, the group decided to pursue accesses on the Smith River, beginning with the upper river between Philpott Dam, where there is an access, and Koehler. They plan to place accesses at Bassett Furniture Company and at Koehler. The lower river is more difficult because of the number of landowners. Jeff Johnston commented that 3R-O can help locate willing landowners, using their existing contacts in the area. Other interests being pursued are rail trails and bicycle trails.

Website: David Tingen of Roxboro, our new webmaster, is redesigning our website to make it more attractive, interactive, and user-friendly.

Display Committee: T Butler reported that Dorcas Midkiff and Larry Willard have agreed to serve on a Display Committee with Forrest Altman, Steve Carpenter, Barry Dunkley, and Paul Johnson, who

handled the South Boston Museum exhibit. DRBA's photographs are currently displayed at the NC Welcome Center on US 29 through March, and at the Eden City Hall through as much of 2005 as we wish. Paul has recently learned that the Stokes County Historical Society would like a DRBA exhibit in their county library this spring. Jeff Johnston said that Mark Bishopric has offered to store the display materials at Spray Cotton Mill when they are not in use. Mike Covey has volunteered to make a 1/10 scale model of a bateau to augment the exhibit.

Grants: Bateau Navigation: Lindley Butler reported that the Rockingham County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) has given DRBA about \$8000 to publish a brochure on the Dan River bateau navigation system in the county.

Chinqua-Penn Trail: Mike Vaughn has submitted a request (later approved) to the Annie Penn Community Trust for about \$8000 to fund a brochure, parking lot and trail improvements for the Chinqua-Penn Trail.

Z. Smith Reynolds: Will Butler is writing a Z. Smith Reynolds grant proposal for DRBA to hire staff for three years.

Designation as Stream Watch Group *continued from front page*

Those in the best position to notice the signs of a stream's distress, Bridle believes, are its neighbors, those who live along its streams and use its waters. The realization that local residents are best suited to keep an eye on their nearby waterways is what prompted the founding of Project Stream Watch.

With Stream Watch, citizens' groups "adopt" a waterway, or a portion of one, and act on its behalf. Stream watchers become the adoptive parents of a stream and, as such, become its primary caretakers.

With the help of Virginia and North Carolina state agencies, Stream Watchers become informed stewards, learning how to react to changing stream conditions. Local efforts combined with state support allow both states' 75,000 miles of waterways to be thoroughly monitored by those with the best view—local residents.

Plans are now underway to begin training Stream Watchers at the next annual meeting of the Dan River Basin Association in April. A part of the meeting will take the form of a hands-on training workshop. Meetings of the Association are open to the public.

Resource persons for this training, in addition to Ken Bridle, Wayne Kirkpatrick, and Brenda Martin, include Maurice Vaughan, a retired professional environmental chemist and a member of the Dan River Basin Association.

Those interested in joining the Stream Watch effort may reach Ken Bridle at 336-591-5882 (kbridle@mindspring.com) in North Carolina or Brenda Martin at 276-694-3191 (bcmartin62@hotmail.com) or Wayne Kirkpatrick at 276-694-4449 (wynbtyk@earthlink.net) in Virginia.

Submitted by Forrest Altman

Annual Meeting Schedule *continued from front page*

The schedule for the day is as follows:

10:00 Arrival, welcome, light refreshments and announcements
11:00 Business Meeting
12:00 Picnic Lunch (bring your own)
1:00 Hike to stream, stream monitoring demonstration and workshop
2:30 Tour of working dairy farm (located on a tributary stream of the South Mayo River)
3:00 Departure

PLEASE... " DON'T BRING YOUR PETS; THE COWS DON'T LIKE 'EM, CAN'T UNDERSTAND 'EM. "

To reach the Kirkpatrick farm: Traveling west on U.S. 58, turn left on Woodland Drive. Travel .9 mile. Turn left on Commerce Street. Travel .2 mile.

Port-a-john will be available.
Bring lawn, camp or picnic chair.

4th Annual Clean Water Lobby Day

We are 3 1/2 weeks away from Clean Water Lobby Day, and it's coming fast. On April 6th, residents from all over the state will converge on the state capitol to speak with legislators about water quality and quantity in North Carolina.

The Clean Water Lobby Day is sponsored by water quality and river basin advocacy groups from across North Carolina. Last year's Clean Water Lobby Day brought over 150 activists to Raleigh to speak to their legislators about the importance of clean water.

Please visit www.nconconservationnetwork.org for more information on this event.

Dan River Basin Association

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*To preserve
the Natural
and
Cultural Resources
of the
Dan River Basin
by promoting
Stewardship,
Recreation
and
Education*

Men may dam it and say that they have made a lake, but it will still be a river. It will keep its nature and bide its time, like a caged animal alert for the slightest opening. In time, it will have its way; the dam, like the ancient cliffs, will be carried away piecemeal in the currents.

Wendell Berry

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First Saturday Outings

April thru July 2005

April 2: 10:00 a.m. Five-mile downhill hike through stunning Rock Castle Creek Gorge near Meadows of Dan, VA. The old roadbed alongside the mountain stream provides a beautiful walk with a variety of wildflowers blooming at the different elevations. Bring lunch and water. Free and open to the public. For details, contact trip coordinator Will Truslow at 336-547-1903, willtruslow@hotmail.com.

June 4: 10:00 a.m. Paddle trip on the Dan River in Rockingham County from NC 704 in Madison to Settle's Bridge. This is the premier section of the river for viewing nineteenth-century structures built for batteau navigation and still functioning. Bring lunch, water, canoe or kayak, and boating gear. Free and open to the public. For details, contact historian and trip coordinator Lindley Butler, 336-349-5727, members@danriver.org.

May 7: 10:00 a.m., Paddle trip on the Dan River in Stokes County from NC 89 Bridge to the Dan River Company takeout. This is an especially scenic section of the river, with high bluffs and wooded slopes. Bring lunch, water, canoe or kayak, and boating gear. Free and open to the public. For details, contact trip

COME JOIN US

