

CURRENTS

Volume 5, Issue 2

SUMMER 2006

MEETING THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the age of four-and-a-half years, the Dan River Basin Association has taken its most exciting and momentous step. The Association's first Executive Director, Katherine Mull, officially began her tenure with DRBA on June 19, 2006.

"We are very pleased to have Katherine Mull in this position," stated Will Truslow, President of the Association. "She brings experience and expertise that are a perfect fit for our needs, and her enthusiasm is inspiring."

Hailing from northern Virginia, Katherine most recently served as Senior Environmental Planner with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission. Prior to her employment in that post, she was the Potomac Riverkeeper.

With a strong background in business, including an undergraduate business degree from the State University of New York at Albany and an MBA from the University of Virginia, Katherine has numerous honors and publications to her name. She has served on several boards of directors for boating, environmental, and arts organizations. She founded the Friends of Sugarland Run, in which she designed Project Clear Water, a model to other groups for citizen training in erosion and sedimentation problems.

According to Lindley Butler, who chaired the committee that hired Katherine, "We are extremely fortunate to have Katherine Mull as the first Executive Director of the Dan River Basin Association. She has worked in the environmental community at the national and local levels, and her grounding in business, government, science, and planning gives her the ability to understand and speak to many sides of the issues we face in our region."

Within her first two weeks in the Dan River Basin, along with settling into a new home, Katherine opened DRBA's new office in Mayo-



dan that Forrest Altman describes as "fine and beautiful and capacious."

Located at 103 South Second Avenue, the office is on the town's main business street—US 220 Business—near the Madison-Mayodan Recreation Center where DRBA's earliest organizational meetings were held in 2001. Support from the Town of Mayodan and additional money, time, and furnishings donated by DRBA members have enabled the Association to open the office.

Located in the town named for the Mayo and Dan rivers whose waters supplied and powered the textile mill around which the town arose, the DRBA office is near the new Mayo River State Park. Later this year the park's interim office will be opened close by.

An avid canoeist who moved two canoes to her Rockingham County home, Katherine learned about the position from a fellow paddler, a friend with whom she served on the board of the American Canoe Association. She has already paddled on the Smith and the Dan with several DRBA members, including a run at Kibler Valley.

When Forrest Altman met Katherine at the Mayodan office, he asked her about what attracted her to come to this area and lead the Dan River Basin Association's work. In reply, Katherine commented, "I was inspired by some of the writings of DRBA people, especially Jeff Johnston's phrase about

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DAN RIVER BASIN



ASSOCIATION

Preserving
the
Natural
and
Cultural
Resources
of the
Dan River
Basin
by Promoting
Stewardship,
Recreation
and
Education

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FIELDALE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

With a stream monitoring display and trail map exhibit staffed by Katherine Hebert and Ellen Jessee, the Martinsville-Henry County Rivers & Trails (MHCR&T) affiliate of DRBA joined the Fieldale community to celebrate its first annual Fieldale Heritage Festival on May 20, 2006.

plastic container held crayfish and various stream bottom dwelling creatures whose presence and numbers are used in stream monitoring procedures to assess the health of streams. While children played with the crayfish, parents learned about stream monitoring and the future Fieldale demonstration trail and rail to trail from Fieldale to uptown Martinsville.



Fieldale was founded in the early 1900's when Marshall Field & Company decided to expand its textile operations located in Spray (now Eden), North Carolina to produce towels and built Fieldcrest Towel Mill on the Smith River near Martinsville. The area is a valley, or dale, so it was named Fieldale. The mill took care of the community it created and actually arranged for financing of the first stretch of road to be paved in Henry County, which was between Fieldale and Martinsville. At one time the mill at Fieldale employed as many as 1500 people, but by 2000, Pillowtex, which had purchased the mill in 1997, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Although Pillowtex emerged from that bankruptcy, it filed bankruptcy again in 2003 leading to disposition of all its assets, the loss of 8000 jobs nationally and the loss of 950 jobs at the Fieldale plant.

Although the community has experienced hard times, the community center and pools, which the mill helped organize, are continuing to operate with community support and efforts are underway to have Fieldale listed on state and national registers of historic places. Joey and Kathy Arrington have renovated the historic Field-

crest Lodge into The Clubhouse Bed and Breakfast. During the festival, full to capacity shuttle buses left the festival grounds every 15 minutes to the Lodge for tours. MHCR&T and Henry County are working closely with the community to construct accesses to the Smith River and a community trails system to enhance the quality of life and encourage economic development in the area.

Organized by local residents to showcase community spirit and area history, the festival featured historical displays, music, antique cars, children's games, vendors and, later in the evening, street dancing. With close to 1000 people attending, young people and their parents surrounded DRBA's "critter pickin' plastic pond" (dubbed by Dave Rotenizer, Martinsville-Henry County EDC tourism director) the entire day. Provided by Wayne Kirkpatrick, chair of the stream monitoring committee, the large

Submitted by Ellen Jessee

A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Dan River Basin Association and Trout in the Classroom (TIC) formed an exciting partnership this spring to promote shared goals of stewardship and education for students in Henry County, Patrick



County, and the city of Martinsville.

Dr. David Jones, a Martinsville orthodontist, supplied 19 aquariums, support materials, equipment, and brown trout fry to area schools and the Virginia Museum of Natural History. For over three months, students and teachers collected data, regulated feedings, monitored water quality and successfully raised the trout to fingerling size. Events were later held to release the trout into the Smith River.

DRBA's efforts in stream water quality monitoring using the VASOS protocol of determining the density and diversity of a streams' macroinvertebrate population (the main diet of trout) was a natural companion to the TIC project. Linking the two concepts, through both classroom and streamside demonstrations, gave the students a broader perspective of the impact

this project would be making on the environment.

The DRBA presentation illustrated the water cycle, rural versus urban effects on a stream of storm water runoff, types of pollution, the importance of preventing pollution, hands on identification of macroinvertebrates, and a mini ecosystem of macroinvertebrates.

The Smith River provided a beautiful panorama as the students and teachers bid goodbye to their trout during a series of releases. While 2000 or more students participated in the school wide program and were responsible for the care of the trout, 1500 participated in the release of over 2000 trout into the Smith River during 16 separate events. The DRBA program was presented at these streamside releases as well as at six additional class-

some are planning to implement curriculum changes to parallel the TIC and DRBA project.

DRBA and TIC look forward to the next school year when the students will have the opportunity to begin the program at the egg stage. The impact of this project for the local environment, the brown trout fishery of the Smith River, the local economy, and the broadened education perspective of our students cannot be overstated. The initiation of this project, its financial support, and the dedication to its successful conclusion belong solely to Dr. David Jones. DRBA is proud to collaborate with and participate in such a valuable effort. Thank you, Dr. Jones for the opportunity to join this endeavor.



room sessions.

The teachers found creative ways to relate the young trout and their health to science, math, art, history, government, and writing. The enthusiasm generated by this hands-on project has been unprecedented, the teachers say, in producing students who want to come to school to learn. School administrators have been so impressed with the overall positive effect on classroom participation that

*Article and Pictures submitted by
Wayne Kirkpatrick*

**CONGRESSMEN PREVIEW
PLANNED RAIL TRAIL**

Ignoring the morning drizzle on Saturday April 22nd, US Representatives Rick Boucher and Virgil H Goode, Jr walked along a portion of the old Danville & Western railroad tracks with members of the Martinsville Henry County Rivers and Trails Group. The walkers covered about 1.5 miles of the 7.5 mile route also known as the *Dick and Willie* line.

Congressman Boucher led the effort to provide \$400,000 in federal funds to assist Henry County and the local Rivers and Trails

Group in converting the rail line to a hiking and biking trail. The local community views the development of this trail, which will ultimately reach from the city of Martinsville to Fieldale, in Henry County as an important part of local tourism, economic development and fitness efforts.

Prior to beginning the walk, the Congressmen viewed stream monitoring efforts conducted by Wayne Kirkpatrick, Vice President of the Dan River Basin Association, at nearby Beaver Creek.

The Martinsville Henry County Rivers and Trails group is part of the Dan River Basin Association and is currently working on providing river access points along the Smith River in addition to monitoring several local waterways and creating the Rail Trail.

Submitted by Barbara Jackman

MAY 2006 FIRST SATURDAY OUTING : Staunton River

What a beautiful day for a float! After checking the weather forecast daily for the past week and seeing rain forecast for Saturday, the absence of any cloud cover and temperatures in the 70s were welcomed sights.

DRBA members and guests met at the Food Lion parking lot in Brookneal, VA at 10:00 AM on Saturday May 6th for a scenic and educational trip down the Staunton River. Our trusted river guide, Terry Painter, led the small convoy of vehicles with canoes and

the Roanoke Navigation Company and responsible for the construction of all of the batteau navigation walls, wing dams and sluices between Long Island and Brookneal.

At the site of the old Melrose Ferry we had 3 participants take out of the river. The remaining 7 paddlers continued down the river to fish trap rapid where we all remained upright while running the tricky rapid. After the rapid we stopped for a short time to exchange details of our experience.

Just down the river from fish trap we pulled up to river right and paused for lunch and a welcomed chance to stretch our legs. After lunch we continued down the river and arrived at Cat Rock Rapid. We pulled up to the rock before the rapid and discussed our options of running the rapids to the right or left of the rock. Some paddlers chose to left path while others chose the right. All attempts at both paths were successful. Shortly afterward, we rounded the bend in



kayaks through the twisting back roads of Campbell County to the put in at Long Island. The final count before beginning our float included 8 canoes or kayaks and 10 people.

We proceeded down the river, maneuvering carefully through the rock garden at Hale Islands and stopping for a break and history lesson at the former site of Pannill's Bridge. Terry informed us that Pannill's Bridge was constructed by the slaves of Samuel Pannill in the 1830s. It stood until the end of the Civil War, when retreating Confederate soldiers burned it down. Still visible from the river today are the remnants of the stone piers in the center and left side of river and the still standing pier on the right side of the river. Pannill, who was owner of nearby Green Hill Plantation, was also the President of

the river to see the Highway 501 bridge at Brookneal and the take out immediately afterward.

Thanks to Forrest Altman for shuttling us back to our vehicles at the put-in.

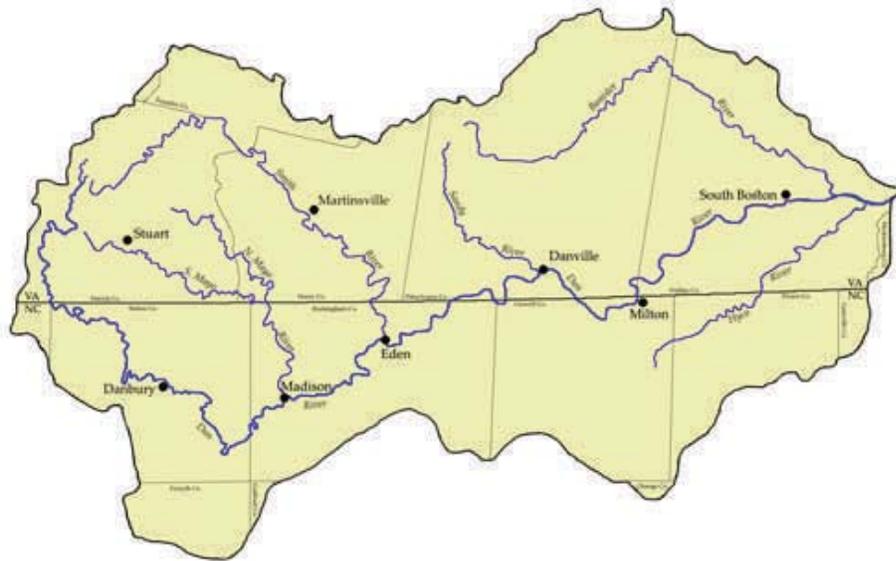
Overall, it was a perfect day for a spring float. The sky remained sunny all day with comfortable temperatures. Even the occasional tailwind helped our paddling efforts in some of the flat-water stretches. Thanks to Terry for coordinating this float.

Submitted by David Tingen

JUNE 2006 FIRST SATURDAY

On June 3, the attendance record from April was almost met, with 25 boats on a popular eleven mile trip on the Smith River, which begins in Virginia and ends in North Carolina. Kirby Wilkins of Reidsville coordinated this trip from Mitchell Bridge near Ridgeway to Eden. In low water, no rapids were higher than Class 1, but the current was swift throughout the trip and remains of old fish traps and navigational structures were visible. The trip is through a beautiful, isolated wilderness with little evidence of human intrusion besides the Morgan Ford Bridge located seven miles into the trip. Only in the last couple of miles coming into Eden was there any sign of civilization. Mark Bishopric met us at the take out, and organized a shuttle using a van and trailer to reunite paddlers and boats with the vehicles left behind in Virginia.

Submitted by Paul Johnson



APRIL 2006 FIRST SATURDAY OUTING: COMMEMORATIVE Hanging Rock to Moratock

On March 31, it seemed an eternity since our last DRBA paddling trip, but by ten o'clock on April 1 we were on the river again and it felt as if no time had elapsed. Winter seemed like just a bad dream with the temperature around 70 degrees and sunny skies, conditions that returned for the May and June outings. 35 paddlers in 27 boats made this the best-attended First

Saturday anyone could remember, so the perfect weather must have played a part in bringing out this many members and friends. The stretch from Hanging Rock access to Moratock Park in Danbury is the most popular on the entire Dan River, and with good reason. It offers a convenient length of six miles, a steady supply of gentle undemanding rapids, and delightful scenic views starting at the put in with a vista of Hanging Rock. As we

paddled downstream, the rocky banks rose as much sixty feet above river level, in places honeycombed with small caves. At Moratock Park we were joined by other DRBA members for a picnic commemorating DRBA's first-ever First Saturday Outing in April 2002.

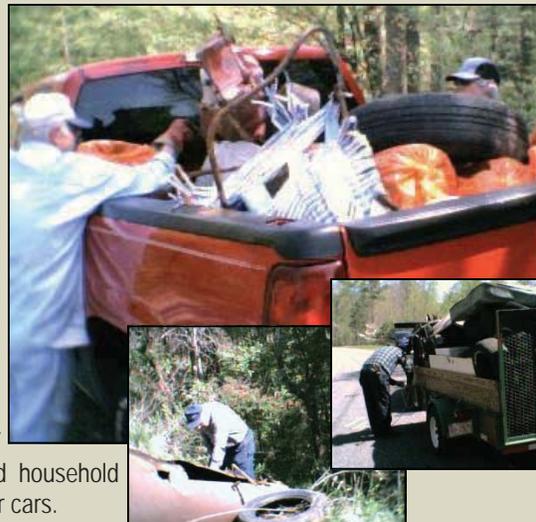
Submitted by Paul Johnson

MEMBERS' "SPRING CLEAN" EFFORTS NET \$500 PRIZE

Rockingham County's Spring Clean to clean up the roadsides, streams and illegal dumps took place April 17-29 this year.

The Rockingham County contingent of the Dan River Basin Association, in cooperation with Rockingham County Naturalist Club, went to work under the indefatigable leadership of Milton Hundley.

Milton canvassed the county and found several places that needed our attention. The amount and variety of trash illegally dumped was an eye opening experience for the television reporter and crew who came to a Williams Road dumpsite for a story about the cleanup efforts in the county. Our efforts didn't stop there. There were many more such sites to clean throughout the county. Our team pulled truckloads of tires, appliances, oil drums, plastic bottles, assorted household objects (stoves, for example) and parts of trucks and/or cars.



When the tally finally came in, DRBA had collected 10,440 pounds of trash - a total that earned us a prize (one of two given this year) of \$500.00.

Thank you to everyone who was able to participate this time. Your efforts have not only contributed needed funds to the Association but have also and most importantly made this county a cleaner, healthier and more beautiful place.

Submitted by: Barbara Solomon

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MINUTES

12 April 2006, 5:00 – 7:05 p.m.
Danville Water Treatment Plant, Danville, VA

Present: Mark Bishopric, John Buck, Lindley Butler, T Butler, Barry Dunkley, Carl Espy, Clark Graves, Paul Johnson, Ben Lackey, Wayne Kirkpatrick, Julia Pyron, Barbara Solomon, Will Truslow, Mike Vaughan; Kathy Hebert

Absent: Roger Adams, Ken Bridle, Tom Edmonds, Paul Ferguson, Ellen Jessee, Jeffrey Johnston, Ben Murdock, Tom Taylor, Robin Yount

Guests: Forrest Altman, Jo Lackey

New President: Will Truslow expressed appreciation for the honor and challenge of serving as President of DRBA.

Executive Director and North Carolina Office: Lindley Butler, Chair of the Personnel Committee, reported that Katherine Mull has signed a contract to serve as our first Executive Director, with a starting date no later than June 15. She will be in Rockingham County this coming weekend to look for a house, and Board members will be invited to meet her for lunch on Saturday if that suits her schedule.

The Executive Director's benefits package includes a stipend for health insurance, twelve holidays, twenty personal days, and a travel allowance. [Note: Both Katherine Mull and Kathy Hebert will attend River Rally at DRBA's expense.]

The need for a Hospitality Committee and an Office Committee was noted. Lindley will compile a list of titles for a professional library to be provided for both offices.

MHC Rivers & Trails Group: Kathy Hebert reported that Rivers & Trails held a strategic planning meeting on March 31 at which a five-year plan was developed. One goal is to connect the Henry County projects to other Virginia and North Carolina projects. Plans were made for water quality monitoring, community relations, blueways, trails, fisheries, and fundraising.

The question of a Rivers & Trails logo design was discussed. The Board decided that for the sake of unity all DRBA affiliates and chapters will use the DRBA logo accompanied by the name of the group, emphasizing that DRBA is a single organization with branches.

Kathy is designing a Rivers & Trails brochure and a web page to go on DRBA's website. The Board approved of the drafts of both publications that she presented and offered suggestions for improving them.

Congressman Rick Boucher, who obtained the \$400,000 federal transportation grant for Henry County's rail trail, will walk on a portion of the trail on April 22. All Board members are invited to attend.

A roundtable on Virginia trails is planned for May 17 for

planners and tourism directors in much of Southside Virginia.

Lindley Butler reported that Henry County will purchase the Gravely property. Details of the purchase must be worked out with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and the Virginia Museum of Natural History. We believe that DRBA will still take the option, to be reimbursed by Henry County after July 1.

Caswell Trails: Forrest Altman described his dreams of connecting Caswell County residents with one another and with the rest of the Basin. He proposed creating Caswell Trails, an organization that could become like MHC Rivers & Trails. The Board agreed that Forrest would be forming a chapter of DRBA with emphasis on Caswell County and recommended that he make that clear from the beginning. Will Truslow commended Forrest and expressed our hope that the same thing will happen in other counties.

Brochure: Lindley Butler circulated a draft of the basin map that emphasizes the major geological features and will include county seats. The map is to remain the centerpiece of the brochure. The Board's suggestions included using photos that residents would easily recognize, labeling each picture, and including a list of benefits of membership.

Outings: Paul Johnson presented a list of First Saturdays for May 2006 – April 2007. For the September outing, Will Truslow has arranged with the Hemlock Access owner in Stokes County for us to use that as our take-out. The access has been closed because of inadequate law enforcement. We hope that DRBA can help local residents and officials solve that problem and reopen public access points in the county.

For the October outing, an overnight camping trip on the batteau, perhaps camping at Pace's, was discussed. We would offer to clean up the site as a first step.

The Executive Committee has suggested expanding our outings beyond the First Saturdays, making it possible to offer more challenging paddle or hiking trips. These would be planned locally and publicized to all members.

Barbara Solomon hopes to send a list of outings for the year to those who inquire about membership in DRBA.

Festivals and Displays: Julia Pyron noted that we need another banner and another tent by September's multiple festivals. She asked for information about additional festivals in which DRBA may set up our booth.

Paul Johnson commended Mark Bishopric for the success of the batteau reenactment of the Crossing of the Dan at South Boston, despite inclement weather. The publicity has been excellent.

Roanoke River Basin Roundtable: Wayne Kirkpatrick and Kathy Hebert gave a presentation about DRBA to the Roanoke Roundtable, which asked for our help. The Board agreed to offer advisory help.

Grants: Mike Vaughan is working on a grant proposal to Annie Penn Community Trust for additional work on the Chinqua-Penn Trail, including a boardwalk along a pond. The first phase of the trail project has been highly successful, with the brochure attracting many users.

Next Board of Directors Meeting: The next meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 11 October 2006.

MEMBERSHIPS RECEIVED MARCH – MAY, 2006

Sponsor

Sam W. Smith, Inc., in memory of Mary J. Smith

Protector

Carolina Canoe Club, Inc.

Corporate

Patrick County Tourism Division

Organization

Three Rivers Outfitters
Women's League of Eden

Friend

Hilda Brody
Price Watt
Fletcher Waynick

Family

Will Butler, Rachel Christensen, & Alexander Butler
Ted R. Currin
Charles C. King & Frankie Jean Chandler
Neil & Ann Fair
Kenneth & Rebecca Knight
Andrew, Julie, & Alexandra Talbert
Michael G. Wenkstern

Individual

Ray Barker
Mike Burchell
Debby Cardwell
Steven D. Carpenter
Walter R. Hairston, Jr.
Jim Murray
Lynda Purcell
Weldon C. Reynolds
John Stiles
Jim M. Wilson



Editor:
Dorcas Midkiff

Associate Editor
T Butler

Contributing Writers:

Forrest Altman
T Butler
Katherine Hebert
Barbara Jackman
Ellen Jessie
Paul Johnson
Wayne Kirkpatrick
Barbara Solomon
David Tingen

Photography:

Tom Barbour
Jeff Johnston
Wayne Kirkpatrick
David Tingen
Martinsville-Henry Co Office
of Tourism
Barbara Solomon

DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION

KATHERINE MULL
Executive Director
PO Box 65, Mayodan, NC
27027
336-548-DRBA (3722)
kmull@danriver.org

KATHERINE HEBERT
Virginia Planning and
Program Director
P.O. Box 7, Collinsville, VA
24078
276-634-2545
drba.va@danriver.org

Visit us on the web at
WWW.DANRIVER.ORG

First Saturday Outings

August 5:

Dan River Boat Race, Madison, NC

Alternative:

Mayo River Paddle

September 2:

Paddle on Dan from Moratock
Park to Hemlock
Access

October 7:

Bateau overnight trip on Dan:
Milton (or Danville) to
South Boston



PRESERVING THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE DAN RIVER BASIN
By Promoting Stewardship, Recreation and Education

I went to the woods, because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

KATHERINE MULL IS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Continued from front page.

parks and river access places as 'a string of pearls.'

"I'm impressed with the river folks I've met so far," she added. "I like the challenge of working in a watershed in two states and of working in an area that is facing serious economic issues. I really like DRBA's visionary, proactive rather than reactive approach to the Basin.

"You live in a beautiful area, and I'm inspired by what people are doing to protect the area's scenic value before it's too late."

Forrest's positive first impression of Katherine Mull quickly grew to his feeling "immensely grateful that she was persuaded to relocate to the Dan River Basin."

"Working with Katherine is a real joy," adds T Butler. "Her positive outlook and her enthusiasm about the area's resources and possibilities, plus her background and talents, portend a bright future for the Dan River Basin

Association. We're delighted that she's here." Editor's Note: Katherine Mull can be reached at 336-548-DRBA (3722) or kmull@danriver.org. Be sure to identify yourself as a DRBA member.

*Story submitted by Forrest Altman and T Butler
Ms. Mull's photo by Tom Barbour*

