

CURRENTS

FALL 2004

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Dan River Basin Association Joins North Carolina Big Sweep for October "First Saturday Outing"

The annual clean up of roadways and waterways in North Carolina extends later than usual this year to make clean-up of hurricane damage a part of the statewide effort.

Coordinators in the Dan River region have adopted a flexible schedule to facilitate planning by team leaders. In Rockingham County, Big Sweep activities will take place during the week of Saturday, September 25 to Saturday, October 2. In Caswell County, the 4-H Club will clean up a section of Stoney Creek School Road September 18, led by Brandi Wagner, Director of Caswell's 4-H Program. Reports are due mid-day October 2.

The Rockingham County contingent of the Dan River Basin Association, in cooperation with the Rockingham County Naturalist Club, will clean up a tributary of Jacobs Creek with Team Leader Milton Hundley on Monday, September 27 and a section of the Dan upstream from Jacobs Creek with Team Leader T Butler on Saturday, October 2.

Caswell muscle-boaters of the Basin Association plan to sweep the Dan from Angler's Pride Park in Danville to Milton Wildlife Access, led by Robbin Turner of Leasburg. Jim Moorefield of Dan River Anglers' Association will coordinate motorboat removal of heavier items like automobile tires. Both groups will meet at 8:00 at Anglers' Pride Park on October 2.

At its meeting September 6, the Caswell County Commission declared October 2 Big Sweep Day. The county landfill on Highway 86 north of Yanceyville will be open until 3:00 with free tipping on that day for participants in the Big Sweep.

T Butler, Coordinator of Rockingham's

Big Sweep since 1997, has been particularly effective in getting many groups to participate. She hopes to have every mile of the region's major rivers as well as both of the large lakes swept of debris this year. "With Scout groups, civic clubs, school groups, and athletic teams out in force," she says, "we should have cleaner waterways by early October."

Butler and Sara Jo Durham, Stokes County Big Sweep Coordinator, will lead a team cleaning Belews Lake.

"We need many more participants on the rivers, lakes and creeks, as well as along our roadsides," Butler said. Even youngsters can help with parks and playgrounds." Butler is active in the Rockingham County Beautification Council, Secretary of the Dan River Basin Association, and a member of the state Board of the Big Sweep.

Forrest Altman, Caswell Big Sweep Coordinator, had a unique angle on waterways clean up.

"I've lost so many hats in the rivers that I feel obliged to help clean up what others lose in the rivers—or throw in carelessly," he said to the reporter for the Danville Register & Bee.

Plastic bags, the most frequent item picked up by Big Sweep volunteers, are particularly lethal to sea turtles when they float out into the ocean. Turtles mistake them for food, and they can block the turtles' digestive tract. Fishing line is another hazard, particularly to birds, which become entangled in lines, carry them to nesting sites and may starve when the lines become tangled in the tree.

The North Carolina Big Sweep has two main purposes: removing debris and educating citizens about litter. Because industry has been known to reject

North Carolina because it is "too trashy," the Big Sweep has extended its mission to include working for a litter-free state.

The Big Sweep, a statewide clean up of waterways and of roadways that affect the cleanliness of waterways, began in 1987 as the Beach Sweep. It quickly moved upcountry, becoming the Big Sweep in 1989, the only statewide clean up of waterways in the United States.

Record keeping by the Big Sweep organization is based on data cards filled out by volunteers. Information on the debris picked up helps officials "plan for the protection of wildlife and drinking water supplies, since litter on roadsides and beaches ends up in rivers and in coastal estuaries, affecting shellfish populations and even sea turtles."

Submitted by T. Butler

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First Saturday Outing July 2004

THIS IS DRBA! NOT CSI

For those of you who have not heard of our July trip, the most memorable words spoken were, "This is **DRBA!** We do canoe trips. This is not CSI!" Later still one ponders exactly **why** did Forrest start talking after lunch about the many uses of "Willie" in a Shakespeare sonnet?

Early in the morning we assembled at the Prizery to learn about the February 1781 Crossing of the Dan in South Boston. Having watched too many Hollywood versions of historical river crossings, one never considers this to have been that big of a deal. Then having taken a few NCDENR sponsored river &/or water workshops, it is well reinforced that "river crossings take place at the ford of the river". (I always try to get that term for my assignment 'cause I can use the example of "Johnny Reb" and the "Mean Yankee" meeting in the ford of the river during the Christmas cease fire to exchange 'bacca and coffee. Or exchange "Evil British Troop" with "Mean Yankee". We've all seen that movie anyway.

The Prizery is a 1890s era tobacco warehouse currently under renovation as an arts and welcome center. The first floor currently houses an exhibit of tobacco history. The second story exhibit at the Prizery will commemorate the crossing of General Greene's Army which was pivotal in the later surrender of Cornwallis. In summary, Greene bought up or took possession of all water craft, utilized it to move his troops across, then left none behind for Cornwallis to follow. Some of our group stayed to further tour the building while others traveled to the Hyco River bridge boat landing to begin the four-mile paddling trip.

Our river party consisted of eight canoes and fourteen adults, no children, no dogs. This is significant in hindsight.

The river was up a bit but not rough. No rapids to speak of. No flipping over. No excitement. Paddling was needed on this trip. No sitting back and letting the rudder take care of the ride. We saw bottle brush shrub, beaver dams, white heron, and gold finch.

Then we stopped for lunch. There the discovery was made of the severely decomposed remains of one Mr. Willie Harris who had been missing since late March. Paul Johnson can provide you the details of riding shotgun with law enforcement personnel back to the Flats on Sunday to recover Mr. Harris.

It was a bit humbling to speculate as to Mr. Harris's fate. Or to realize that with all our electronic pacifiers, we were helpless to tell someone where we were, out there in the confluence of the Dan and the Hyco, on some indistinguishable spit of land.

Most disappointing of all was that 30 seconds after our discovery, the opening credits, bright lights and blaring 60s rock music, did not roll. Some hunky ranger, CSI, or deputy (insert fantasy here) in reflector Rayban's didn't come speeding up in a red powerboat to take charge. No, this wasn't CSI South Boston.

By Freda Pyron

Photo Contest Entry by Kyle Hoover of Oakridge, NC



This photo was taken on a cool October day in 2002 at Mayo Beach from the rocks overlooking 'Boiling Hole.' Jeff Johnston and I spent the day running the rapid and walking back to a put in above the rapid. It was a beautiful day of canoeing; enjoying the cool autumn air and colored leaves of the sycamores and river birches. Jeff had just bought a new camera and was in the canoe about to run the rapid. I borrowed the camera to get a few shots of Jeff and noticed a nice photo I would like of an eddy I spotted from atop the rocks. I snapped the photo just in time to get a few of Jeff running the rapid. Funny thing was, Jeff went through the rapid standing up and Guy, Jeff's canine counterpart, got a little antsy and shuffled just enough in the boat to send everyone into the water. I am pretty sure I got a few photos of the mishap-but to this day have never seen those pictures...

Kyle

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

First of all, let me express my appreciation for being nominated and elected to serve as President of the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA). The organization has grown dramatically since its inception and has the potential to develop and expand into a number of areas that will accommodate many concerns that are beyond the basic scenic and recreational enjoyment of the Dan River and its tributaries. Among these concerns are river monitoring for commercial and agricultural originated runoff and discharged pollutants that affect water quality. I am not an environmental extremist and do not advocate DRBA's becoming an organization that would be considered as such. But I do believe we have an obligation by Charter to prevent further degradation and seek and undertake measures to improve the water quality and surrounding environment of the Dan River basin. This is not to suggest that we search for some obscure microorganism that can be used as an obstacle to prevent or delay badly needed improvements in public infrastructure such as bridges, highways and utilities.

I believe that DRBA should avoid taking specific positions and be considered an unbiased, scientifically based source of data and information that will lend credibility and objectivity to issues of concern to the Dan River basin. I also believe we should assertively promote the Dan River Basin for tourism to attract visitors and their dollars to help stimulate the economy of the region. We should also be proactive and aggressive in our search and application for project funding by state, federal and foundation organizations. In addition, DRBA should encourage, assist and support local county and municipal projects by providing recommendations, guidance, in-kind and financial support for projects involving the acquisition of property along the Dan River and its tributaries for parks or obtaining new public accesses.

I encourage anyone to contact me with any feedback, suggestions, concepts or ideas that can enhance, promote, or contribute to the prosperity and enjoyment of the Dan River Basin and our region. Feel free to contact me by email at tedmonds@caswellcountync.gov or by telephone at 336-694-6093 (work) or 336-234-8921 (home).

Tom Edmonds President, DRBA

If two or three persons should come with a high spiritual aim and with great powers, the world would fall into their hands like a ripe peach.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The next Board meeting will be Wednesday, October 13, at 4:00 p.m. at the Danville Water Treatment Plant. The meeting is open to all Dan River Basin Association members.

DRBA Joins NC Big Sweep Cleanup

Continued from page 1

Anyone interested in participating is urged to call the coordinator for Stokes, Rockingham, Caswell or Person County for information and materials.

Forrest Altman 336-234-8556 Caswell Coordinator

T Butler 336-349-5727 Rockingham Coordinator

Sara Jo Durham 336-593-2847 Stokes Coordinator

WANT TO KNOW MORE? Contact:

John Hill 336-597-7806 Person Coordinator

September 4th DRBA Outing

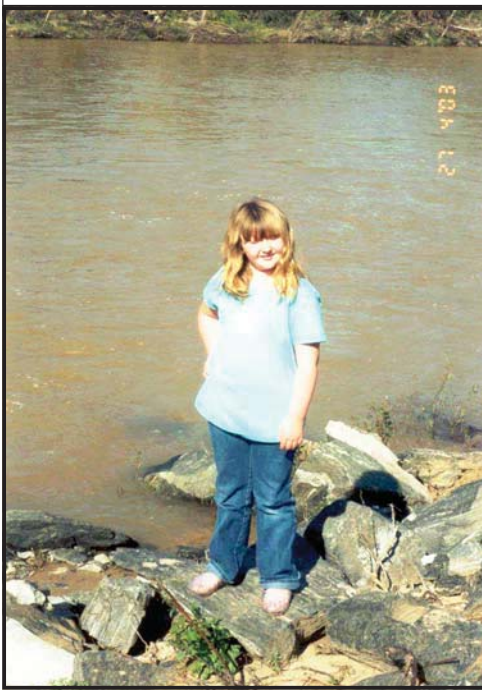
The First Saturday Outing in September was a combined trip with the Piedmont Land Conservancy that paddled 10.5 miles of the Dan River from Danville to Milton, NC. We had a fairly large group of thirty people and included first time paddlers, seasoned veterans and three children three years old or less. The trip organized at the Dan Daniel Park and headed over to Angler's Pride Park for the put-in. In short order, all of the drivers headed down to Milton to run the shuttle. Thanks to Carl Cook and Rob Ruefenacht who let everyone pile in their cars to come back in.

We had marvelous weather with it being plenty warm, slightly overcast and no threatening storms while hurricane Frances was creating chaos down in Florida. This section of the Dan River is a quiet section in terms of rapids with only a bare ripple here and there but very lush with large trees hanging by the riverbanks. There were several historic spots on the river such as William Byrd's camp at Coy Creek and Blanch Ferry site that were hard to pick out. Forrest Altman and I were hoping to have a GPS to better locate these areas. Only late in the trip did we find out that someone did have one along.

The riverbanks were still moderately wet and muddy from one of the recent storms that raised the water level leaving it hard to find a good place for a lunch stop. Fortunately, we came across a large stone beach in the middle of the river that was perfect to pull up on and eat lunch. After this we made our way on down at a leisurely pace enjoying the scenery and the company on the trip. We paddled for over two hours before finally stopping to stretch our legs. Mike Vaughan spotted close to this point that we had just past a V-formation made of stones that was an old fish trap. This turned out to be close to the end and once we started paddling again we quickly crossed under the power lines not far from the take out. Everyone paddled well and we were down to the Milton in four hours wishing we had more to go.

submitted by Will Truslow

Photo Contest Entry by
Julia Pyron of Stoneville, NC



A seven year old Ashley Parham stands at the put in at Madison near Pine Hall Brick. We spent the day exploring, says Julia.

Volunteers Work Appreciated

One thing I have learned since I joined DRBA, be careful of what you wish for. Last year when I joined I asked "what can I do to help?" It took a while to find the right fit, but this year I became sales chair. I could say that I got more than I bargained for, but I have learned so much and have met a lot of new and interesting people.

I would like to thank a few people that have assisted me with DRBA activities. My daughter Ashley Parham is a good sport about coming with me to all the events. Ashley works hard and enjoys interacting with the other volunteers. Margaret Gurley helped with the Dan River Boat Race tent in August. This was my first experience in setting up the tent and placing out our displays of brochures and our sales items. I appreciated Margaret's willingness to jump in and do whatever she felt was necessary. Forrest Altman helped with both the Dan River Boat Race and Eden's RiverFest in September. I always enjoy watching Forrest interact with people. He is so enthusiast and full of knowledge.

If you missed RiverFest, you missed seeing the wonderful displays that Dorcas Midkiff worked on. Dorcas put together a computer presentation and three display boards that depict the history of the batteau and of DRBA's batteau as it was flipped, stuffed with oakum, flipped again, and sunk at the canal in Eden. Both works can be used in years to come for future festivals and for presentations to groups.

I would also like to thank 3 River Outfitters for being the central location for dropping off and picking things up this year, for transporting our displays to and from RiverFest, and for sharing their space with DRBA at RiverFest.

Julia Pyron,
Sales chair – sales@danriver.org

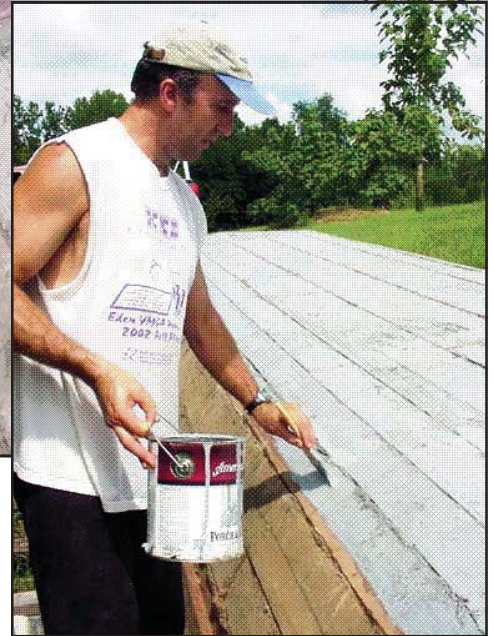
Update: Batteau DAN RIVER



Volunteers from through out the Dan River Basin met to flip the batteau over on its belly To apply oakum to exposed crevices.



Workers Used putty knives to get into tight places.



Committee Chairman Mike Covey paints the batteau bottom to cover the oakum and wooden hull.



Weeks later a new crew of volunteers met to flip the batteau over again and launch into the Spray Cotton Mill canal.

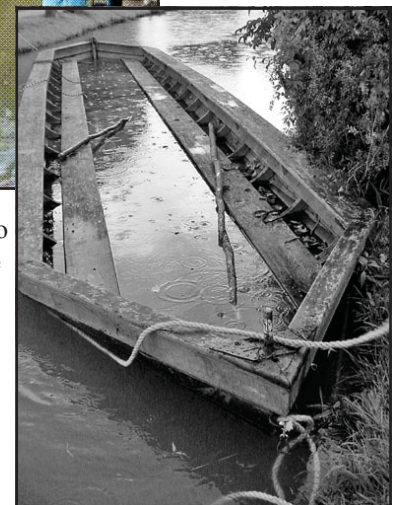
The batteau was maneuvered by polls along the canal, under a low bridge, to come to rest in front of the Spray Cotton Mill.



The batteau **DAN RIVER** was then allowed to fill with water and partially sink in order to let the timbers swell and tighten around the oakum. It was then pumped out, new leaks were filled with oakum and allowed to soak. The batteau is now floating, water free, awaiting her carriage, so to speak, a new boat trailer designed to fit her great length.

Also in the planning stages are new wooden seating, cushions, a canopy to shield from sun or rain, and costumes for the crew.

Volunteers are needed to help in the next stages of getting the batteau **DAN RIVER** up and running. Contact person is Mike Covey.



DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION

The Dan River Basin
Association
PO Box 103

Phone: 336-342-1415
E-mail: members@danriver.org

To preserve
the natural and
cultural resources
of the
Dan River Basin
by promoting
stewardship,
recreation
and
education.

Attention Members!!!
Rain from Hurricane Jeanne postponed Monday's Rockingham County cleanup. We'll meet at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday at Fuzzy's Barbecue in Madison and carpool to Barham Road to clean up a roadside and creek. For further information, contact T Butler (336-349-5727) or Milton Hundley (336-623-8681).

Editor:
Dorcas Midkiff

Contributing Writers:

T Butler
Tom Edmonds
Freda Pyron
Julia Pyron
Will Truslow

Photography:
Dorcas Midkiff
Kyle Hoover
Julia Pyron

**Scheduled Saturday outings
For Remainder of 2004**

October 2
River Clean up.
See page 3 for contacts.

November 6
Hike on the proposed Eden
Greenway, Eden, NC.
Contact: Mark Bishopric at 336-
627-6215 or 3-RO.com.

December 4
Mistletoeing on the Upper Little
River

near Lillington, NC We will
meet at Hardees in Lillington
at 10:00 a.m. Bring large gar-
bage bags and a long pole. Be
prepared to cooperate with oth-
ers to bring home
luscious mistletoe sprigs.
Contact: Forrest Altman at
336-234-8556 and
musakulu@gamewood.net.

Hope to see you there!

