

CURRENTS

Volume 7, Issue 2

Spring 2008

WELCOME TO DRBA, JENNIFER, BRIAN AND BRIAN!

Katherine Mull announces, “We are happy to introduce DRBA’s new team, working for you on behalf of the Dan River region. They joined us early this year and have hit the ground running!”

from Georgetown University in Washington, DC and a master’s degree in landscape design from Conway School of Landscape Design in Massachusetts.

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Jennifer Doss – Rivers and Trails Project Manager, Virginia Office

With a degree in biology and outdoor recreation, Jennifer Doss, a resident of Franklin County, VA, has been working in the field of Environmental and Outdoor Education for over seven years, creating and facilitating activities to engage both children and adults.

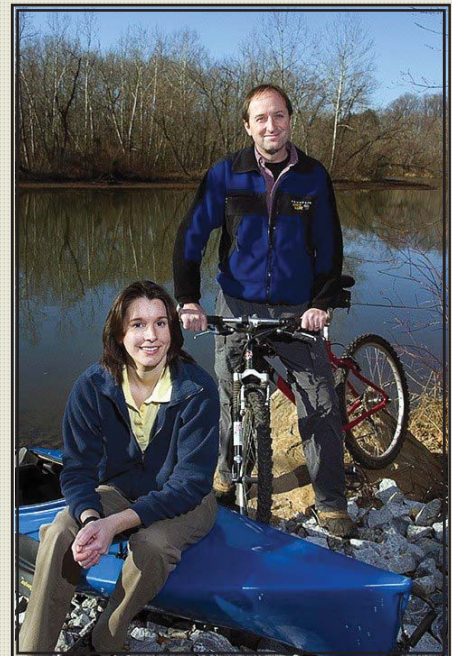
In Georgia, Jennifer worked with rehabilitated reptiles and birds of prey to educate the public about conservation issues. She continued that effort in Virginia by working for five years as a Park Interpreter at Occoneechee State Park where she created the park’s first Educational Outreach Program and gave numerous public presentations in a three-county area.

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Brian Higgins – Nature and Heritage Tourism Project Manager, North Carolina Office

Brian Higgins comes to us with eight years working as a project manager for the environmental consulting firm of Jones & Stokes and twelve years working as a whitewater river guide. His professional experience also includes stints with clothing company Patagonia, the National Audubon Society, and the Oregon State Legislature.

He has been an active volunteer with Seattle Urban Nature, Headwaters to Ocean (H2O), and community radio station KVMR in Nevada City, CA. Brian has a sociology degree



Jennifer Doss and Brian Williams

Brian Williams – Education, Outreach and Conservation Coordinator, Virginia Office

Brian Williams of Martinsville, VA has a background in wildlife biology and fisheries and in conservation, education and wildlife preservation. He has worked for Zoo Atlanta and was involved with a number of conservation organizations in Florida, working toward the preservation of the Everglades and coastal mangrove swamps. As a certified cave diver, Brian was the first person in Florida to be sanctioned by the Girl Scouts of America to lead caving trips for groups.

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Brian Higgins

DAN RIVER BASIN



ASSOCIATION

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

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Greetings from the Director



We have a terrific new team, new projects and new challenges for the Dan River Basin Association! We also have two challenge grants, and we need your help.

Our new team, Jennifer Doss, Brian Higgins, and Brian Williams have come on board to make sure that we all have places to get outdoors and enjoy the region's rich natural and heritage resources! Our new projects promote nature and heritage tourism, clean and healthy rivers and streams, and increased involvement of the community in taking care of the things we cherish most about the Dan River region.

Our challenges are many. On the regional level, a leading challenge is the need for DRBA to clearly evaluate the impacts of a proposal to mine uranium in our region.

Internally, DRBA needs to increase our support from individuals and business from across the watershed and in nearby metro areas.

We now have a major match before us. Thanks to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Miller Brewing Company, every extra dollar contributed (beyond current levels of giving) will be tripled!

If you have already helped, thank you! If not, please consider a special donation today!

Katherine K Mull

INSTALLATION OF STREAMSIDE PLANTING SIGNS

With the advent of spring come thoughts of planting, and this spring DRBA is turning its attention to a different type of planting – that of a sign. Coinciding with the April 5th outing, launching from Moratock Park in Danbury, DRBA will be unveiling its newly “planted” Streamside Trees educational sign.

Funded by CONTECH Stormwater Solutions of Portland, Oregon, these 2 ft. x 3 ft. weatherproof signs will eventually be located at two additional locations along the Dan River – one in Eden, and one in Danville. The signs colorfully illustrate the value of planting and retaining trees

and shrubs adjacent to rivers and streams to protect water quality, recreational values, food and habitat for fish and wildlife, and scenic and aesthetic values.

Coinciding with the planting axiom of “the right plant in the right place,” DRBA worked with Stokes County Public Works to locate just the right spot next to the river where it will be sure to get plenty of attention from visitors to this popular park. If you come out to the river on or after April 5th, be sure to stop and take a look!

Brian Higgins

PRESIDENT'S SPACE

DRBA continues to move forward, progressively achieving our goals of preserving and promoting our natural resources. Through DRBA's coordinating efforts, the Virginia legislature approved the North and South Mayo as State Scenic Rivers in January, 2008. The Gravely Nature Preserve will be officially opened in April. This 75-acre preserve offers great hiking along the Smith River through an outstanding hardwood forest and has a magnificent rhododendron grove.

Katherine Mull, DRBA Executive Director, has been very effective in finding and securing foundation grants. We have been able to double our

budget going into 2008. The Harvest Foundation and Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation have continued their vital support. Some of the other businesses and organizations that are supporting DRBA, which we also greatly appreciate, include Miller Brewing, VA Environmental Endowment, Golden LEAF Foundation, CONTECH Stormwater Solutions, Dominion, Rockingham Co. Tourism Development Authority, Henry County, Spray Mercantile, *Piedmont Magazine*, and NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

As can be seen, we receive support from a wide range of businesses and organizations. DRBA is a 501-C-3 non-profit organization that also de-

pends upon support from individuals. In order to maintain our non-profit status, we have to gain about 1/3 of our funds from entities that are not foundations. Your continued membership and further gifts are key to our success. Thank you very much for your support.

Will Truslow



SATURDAY OUTINGS

1 ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Great fellowship, delicious food, interesting speakers, volunteer recognition, new staff members, plans for the future, and a lovely hike on a beautiful spring day—DRBA's Annual Celebration had it all!

Convening in the historic Prizery in South Boston, the 55 members and guests enjoyed homemade goodies as they renewed friendships and examined displays. The meeting began with President Will Truslow's listing of DRBA's amazing accomplishments in 2007, including river accesses, trails, and parks; educational programs; and official recognitions and support. Our membership is over 300, and our budget has grown to over \$450,000. The full report is on the web site, www.danriver.org.

Executive Director Katherine Mull introduced our three new staff members, who are profiled above. Her inspirational projection for 2008, emphasizing education and outreach, promises protection of our streams through tree planting and water testing; more trails, parks, and river accesses; creation of river guides and maps; and more partnerships to shape a positive, sustainable future for the basin.



Ellen Jessee receiving "Conservators of the Year" award from Wayne Kirkpatrick for herself and husband Joe Jessee.



Forrest Altman with "Spirit of the Dan River Basin" award.

County Rivers & Trails (R&T).

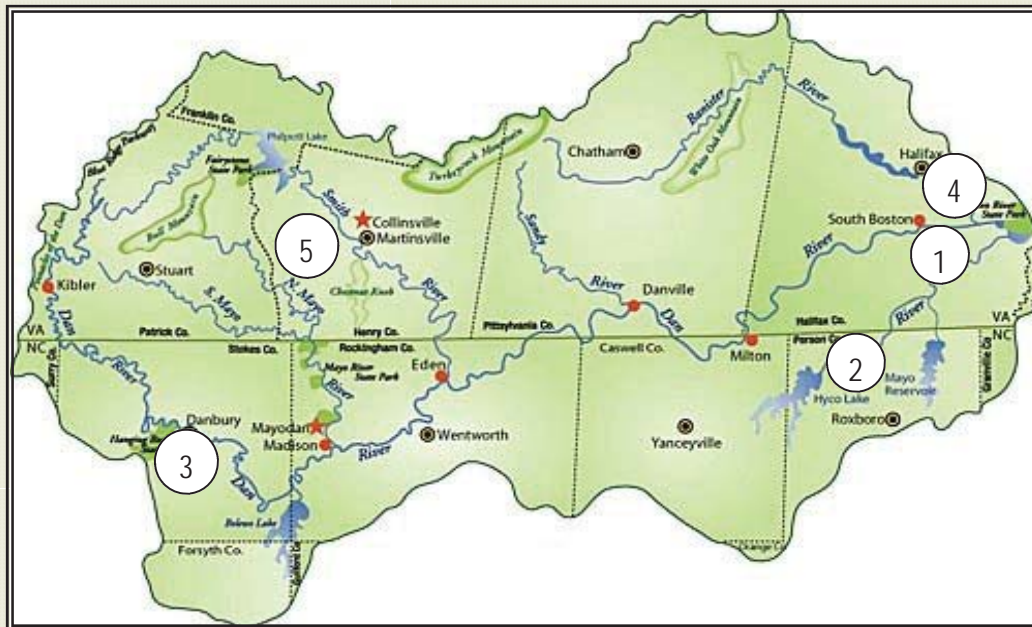
Framed river photos were presented to President Will Truslow, Treasurer Mark Bishopric, and Secretary T Butler, who was named Volunteer of the Year. Plaques were given to Henry County, DRBA's partner in developing recreational facilities, and to R&T for a long list of achievements.

Also recognized for their volunteer work were Dr. David Jones, Wayne and Betty Kirkpatrick, Carl Espy,

Paul Johnson, Lindley Butler, Alison Snow Jones, Richard Hopley, Kyle Hoover, the Bacteria Testing Committee, the Publicity Committee, the Outings Committee, the Board of Directors, DRBA officers, and our generous funders and donors.

New Board members elected are Alison Snow Jones, Milton Hundley, and Fletcher Waynick, and current officers were reelected for another year. All officers and Board members are listed on the web site.

Speakers Chris Jones of the Prizery, Sandra Tanner of Roanoke River Rails to Trails, and Douglas Powell of the Crossing of the Dan exhibit entertained and informed us about their respective programs. The historic Crossing of the Dan that saved the American army in 1781 provided an anchor for the hike on the proposed Tobacco Heritage Trail section from South Boston to Berry Hill Plantation that provided the conclusion for the day's activi-



The Recognitions Committee presented a new award, ties. "Spirit of the Dan River Basin," to Forrest Altman for his many contributions to DRBA's dreams, activities, and public face. Ellen and Joe Jessee were named Conservators of the Year for their leadership and contributions to DRBA and Martinsville-Henry

All in all, DRBA has a great deal to celebrate, and, thanks to organizers Carl Espy and Paul Johnson, we had a great deal of fun doing it!

T Butler

2 JANUARY 5: MAYO PARK HIKE

DRBA opened the year with a First Saturday hike on January 5 in Mayo Park, near Roxboro in Person County, NC. The hike, which was DRBA's first in Person County, followed the Red Tail Hawk Trail on one of the park's two peninsulas reaching into Mayo Reservoir. The wooded, hilly terrain offered excellent lake views from the trail as it circled along the shore.

The weather was chilly, but 24 DRBA members and guests participated in the event. Since the trail is wooded and the peninsula bounded by shallow arms of the reservoir, it is shielded from winds blowing across the wide expanse of the main lake.

Mayo Park, located 8 miles east of Roxboro and 3 miles from the Virginia line, is named, like the Mayo River, for Major William Mayo, a member of William Byrd's 1728 survey party. Started in 1996, the park has continued to develop new trails, now totaling more than six miles for hiking. Our group was very impressed by the cabins, tent sites, boat rentals, and other amenities. The canoe trail along Mayo Lake looks like an inviting future paddling trip for a summer First Saturday.

Paul Johnson

3 FEBRUARY 2: HANGING ROCK STATE PARK

Cool, wet woodland smells, upper piedmont long views, and the groundhog saw his shadow. This is what 35 eager souls, from 4 to 84 years young, enjoyed the first Saturday of February at Hanging Rock State Park. For all things there is a season, and this brown season allows you to see ground and rock formations not easily visible at other times.

We gathered in the parking lot where our leader gave us a tip about clothing: "cotton kills," and man-made fiber is recommended for cold-weather hiking. Sweating skin and wind chill create hypothermia. Off we went, determined not to sweat and to be better prepared next round.

The lake was dark jeweled, without blemish, as we began the on trail behind the lake house. Bright sunshine was already warming the 40-degree air. There were ice crystals, fallen from trees, from Friday's icing. The trail was in good shape, being rocky and well drained. We encountered only one wet rock staircase, and it was easily passed. As we gained higher ground, the trail was on the southern side of the ridge. The valley below, misty blue in the low rays of morning sunlight, stretched to the south and east. There were two moderately steep climbs of short duration.

At the 1.4 mile post we reached House Rock, a large granite outcropping that offers a stunning vista south and southeast. Three tall buildings could be seen on the

horizon at Greensboro. West of that were two bumps that were the Uwharries, just west of Asheboro. Closer and most prominent was a large cluster of buildings which was Winston-Salem.

After a short stop, we continued on, flushing several turkey vultures that took flight on our approach. They were our closest wildlife encounter.

After 0.8 mile further, we were on top of Cook's wall. Enormous rock buttresses with flat tops offered good seating for lunch. The view south and west was tremendous. Sauratown Mountain with its antenna bristles was in the foreground, and the white-faced knob of the Pilot was a beacon. Beyond that, on the horizon was Mt. Rodgers, which is on the NC/VA line. Dimly visible to the southwest horizon was Grandfather Mountain. By now the air was almost warm in the afternoon sun as we descended to our starting place.

Total time for the outing was just over 3 hours, and a good time was had by all.

Bryant Haynes



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MARCH I: RAIL TRAIL HIKE

The Annual Celebration on March 1 was followed by a hike on a proposed section of the Tobacco Heritage Trail from South Boston to Berry Hill Plantation. 36 members and friends of DRBA participated in the hike, which was on a section of rail right-of-way ceded to the Roanoke Rails-to-Trails by Norfolk Southern for recreational use.

We began with a visit to the site of Boyd's Ferry, known for its role during the 1781 Crossing of the Dan. Douglas Powell, who had just spoken about the Crossing exhibition under way at the Prizery, explained the significance of the site before we continued westward along the former railway.

After crossing Poplar Creek, we approached the neighborhood called Cotton Hill, named after the Halifax Damask mill which built the houses as mill-worker dwellings. There we were welcomed by Mr. Elvin Bane, a lifelong resident of Cotton Hill, and father of DRBA member Joey Bane. His reminiscences about the Depression and World War II added a touch

of vivid local color to our adventure.

Heading towards Berry Hill, we next reached the Biggy Hunt Memorial Wetlands Restoration Project, a 31-acre project along the Dan River which includes a large pond that will be overlooked by a visitor's pavilion. Carl Espy explained the plans for the site, which will enhance the future trail.

Finally we reached the corner of the Berry Hill property, where we visited Diamond Hill, one of Virginia's largest slave cemeteries. Marked by plain stones, the many graves were scattered over a large hillside overlooking the bottom land along the river. Just beyond the cemetery, we visited the ruins of a slave house of stone construction, quite large and imposing for a dwelling of this type.

We returned to South Boston feeling that the Tobacco Heritage Trail will be a great benefit to Halifax County and to tourism in the Basin.

Paul Johnson

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BUGS & KIDS & FISH—OH, MY!

Water quality educational efforts are well under way for 2008. Mid-January found DRBA's presentation and tub-of-bugs at the William Bethel Chapter of the DAR. In February, about 50 Woolwine Elementary School 6th and 7th graders braved a chilly and blustery wind to find excellent and diverse macroinvertebrate populations in Sycamore and Jack's creeks, Smith River tributaries.

At a March Smith River Trout Unlimited meeting, Brian Williams and Wayne Kirkpatrick presented the DRBA watershed education program, including the tub-of-bugs. Live macroinvertebrates are always quite a kid magnet, but to see some really big smiles, you should see avid trout fly fishermen hovering over the tub. Our work on the Virginia Environmental Endowment grant continued with a stream monitoring session in Pittsylvania County for 14 teachers, one administrator and one student.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC) releases are scheduled for May 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30 and June 5, and 6 on the Smith River behind the Bassett Historical Center. These releases are the culmination of hard work by and educational benefit to students in the TIC program. Most releases will occur between 10 am and 1 pm; a schedule will be announced later.

Additional water quality educational opportunities this spring include the Philpott Environmental Expo, Fieldale Heritage Days, VA Museum of Natural History, and Reynolds Homestead programs for the Explorers Club, Girl Scouts and the Roanoke County Gifted and Talented Program. Two Henry County middle schools, Laurel Park and Fieldale Collinsville, will conduct their 7th grade Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience with DRBA



volunteers.

DRBA's watershed education efforts are well established in the school systems of Patrick and Henry counties, with Pittsylvania County's involvement quickly growing. Our presence at festivals, museum programs and continuing education facilities continues. The success of this effort is due to the cooperative spirit of the school systems, civic organizations, public/private institutions and DRBA. Many, many individuals are enjoying the opportunity to learn about and experience nature. The skills they develop today will create a positive impact on our local environment for years to come.

Wayne Kirkpatrick

MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

DECEMBER 2007- FEBRUARY 2008

Memberships

Protector

Tom and Gloria Butler
Tom and Robin Taylor
Allen and Jenny Walton

Steward

T and Lindley Butler
Tom Edmonds and Margaret Gurley
Ted and Helen Jane Hodges
Jonathan and Julie Jobe
Earl Smith
Alison Snow Jones and David Pinney
Hollis and Karl Stauber

Corporate

City of Eden

Friend

Terry Painter
Eric Schaefer
Roseann Staaf

Rodney Thacker
Fletcher Waynick

Organization

Halifax County Historical Society
Rockingham County Partnership for Economic & Tourism Development

Family

Jennifer and Darrin Doss
Martha and Dwight Hopkins
Doug Poole
Julia Pyron
Bert and Jessie Smith
Brian Williams
Ezekiel H. Williams

Individual

W. Forrest Altman
David Bernard
Gloria T. Best
Scott Brannan
Barry T. Dunkley

Jeannie Frisco
Milton Hundley
Katie Latta

Douglas W. Powell
Charles Powers
Joan Ragland
William Renyer
Duane E. Wilson

Donations

Sponsor

Dominion
Joe and Ellen Jessee
Wayne Kirkpatrick
Spray Mercantile, LLC

Protector

Karen L. Giles
Kerry Mull, Sun Microsystems, Inc

Steward & Corporate

Nancy and Doug Henderson-James

Martha and Dwight Hopkins
Homer E. Wright, Jr.

Friend

Gregory and Phyllis Gendron
Mildred E. Mann
Fletcher Waynick

Other

Joni B. Carter

Honor Gifts

In Honor of:

Paul Ferguson, from
Kristen M. Poillon,
Restoration Systems

William W. Truslow, MD,
from Eva Scott

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE GRAVELY NATURE PRESERVE

Spring promises to be a busy time at the new Richard P. Gravelly, Jr. Nature Preserve. Several groups have already scheduled events, including the April 26 Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, to which all DRBA members will be officially invited.

Here's a partial calendar, with contact information:

April 26, 10 am: Nature Photography Workshop, including guided hike to see wildflowers. Henry County Pro-Am Photography Club, Randy Sweatt, 276-647-7135, rsweatt@embarqmail.com.

April 26, 2 pm: Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, refreshments, and walking tour. Jennifer Doss, 276-634-2545, jdoss@danriver.org.

May 24, 2 pm: Life on the Burgess Plantation. Guest speaker John Burgess 7th, great-grandson of John Henry Burgess, will talk about the history of the Burgess Plantation and the people who lived there. Jennifer Doss, 276-634-2545, jdoss@danriver.org.

Tuesday Morning Strolls, 8 – 9 am, June 3, July 1, and August 5, easy-paced walking tour of Gravelly Nature Preserve. Jennifer Doss, 276-634-2545, jdoss@danriver.org.

June 11, 8 am- 2 pm, Project Learning Tree Educators Workshop, free interactive workshop for teachers, home school parents, scout and youth leaders to learn exciting new ways to teach environmental education concepts. Sponsored by VA Dept. of Forestry; pre-registration required.

Jennifer Doss 276-634-2545
jdoss@danriver.org.

Virginia Museum of Natural History Summer Day Camps for ages 12-17, held at VMNH, including a day trip to Gravelly Nature Preserve; pre-registration required. Robin Jensen, 276-634-4188
robin.jensen@vmnh.virginia.gov

- June 23-26: Wet & Wild
- July 14-17: Forest Explorers
- August 4-7: Eco-Adventure

June 28, 9 am, Geo-Caching Day, to learn the sport of geo-caching, the fun adventure game for GPS (Global Positioning System) users. No experience or GPS unit necessary. Sponsored by VMNH; register at 276-634-4185.

Jennifer Doss

WELCOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS

continued from front page

Jennifer Doss: Jennifer's interpretation and customer service skills earned her the 2005 title of Virginia State Parks Employee of the Year. Jennifer has also worked with Virginia 4-H, leading canoe/kayak lessons, facilitating ropes course activities, and teaching Leave No Trace Ethics for hikers. Jennifer will help to develop new recreational opportunities on rivers, trails, and parks in Martinsville and Henry County.

"I am thrilled to be part of the DRBA family," Jennifer says, "and excited about all the new possibilities for recreation and conservation efforts in Henry County and the surrounding areas. I look forward to working on additional meaningful projects in the future."

Brian Higgins: Coordinating his work with DRBA's Virginia team, Brian will develop new products to promote sustainable economic development via nature- and heritage-based tourism. New river guides and print and on-line maps will encourage people to visit the region to paddle, hike, watch wildlife, fish or picnic. In addition, he will assist in water quality and river access programs in North Carolina.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to work on the Nature and Heritage Tourism Initiative for DRBA. The great need for this project in this region is only surpassed by the enthusiasm of all those I have met in the short time I have been here. I am looking forward to continuing to meet and work with everyone on this and other projects."

Brian Williams: Brian has authored numerous articles on reptile care, fish production, caving and diving. Locally, he has been a cornerstone of the Trout in the Classroom program, voluntarily maintaining 22 fish tanks and providing technical support to teachers in three counties, impacting over a thousand students. He will continue and expand this and other educational programs.

"Working within the community through education and outreach," Brian states, "my goals are to foster an environmental conscience and promote sustainable economic solutions for our future. Direct exposure to nature is essential for our physical and emotional needs. My continuing mission is to educate our communities on watershed resources and the importance of restoration and protection. My favorite quote is a Native American proverb: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children."

Katherine Mull

MARTINSVILLE HENRY COUNTY RIVERS & TRAILS GROUP UPDATE

In the few months that the new DRBA Virginia staff has been working, much progress has occurred in Henry County. Brian Williams and Jennifer Doss are improving DRBA's educational programming by developing a curriculum for outreach. They are spreading the word about the importance of streamside trees, thanks to resources provided by a DCR grant.

In the area of capital projects, the Richard P. Gravely, Jr. Nature Preserve is slated to open on April 26th; work to extend the Fieldale Trail will begin soon; and a grant proposal for a new outdoor classroom facility on Beaver Creek is being written.

Partnerships are a crucial component to the work of a non-profit. In addition to strengthening existing relationships with DRBA's partners, new partnerships are being created. Through television and newspaper interviews, a public forum, and a community trade show, Jennifer and Brian are bringing attention to DRBA's causes, promoting the recreational opportunities in Henry County, and encouraging stewardship of the land.

Jennifer Doss

Meetings of the DRBA Board of Directors are held on the third Wednesday of January, April, July, and October. All DRBA members are welcome to attend. The next Board meeting will be at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16 at the Eden City Hall.

Dan River Basin Association Officers

President, Will Truslow
 Vice President, Wayne Kirkpatrick
 Treasurer, Mark Bishopric
 Secretary, T Butler
 Corresponding Secretary, Barbara Solomon

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DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION

*There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes, By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more, From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before, To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.*

Lord Byron

Visit us on the web at
WWW.DANRIVER.ORG

DRBA Outings

April 5:

Dan River Paddle, Mora-
tock to Dodgetown

April 19 :

Hike, Horizons Park, Forsyth
County

May 3:

Smith River Paddle, Doe
Run Park

May 17:

Hike, Pinnacles Area

June 7:

Dan River Paddle, Milton to
Paces

June 21:

Picnic, swim, hike, Ellen &
Joe Jesse's place

SPRING HAS SPRUNG!

