

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

CURRENTS

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Spring 2009

Dan River Basin Association

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*Chad Hall and Robin Light
Join DRBA Staff*

River Water Quality Report

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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, July 15 at the Eden City Hall.

Dan River Basin Association Officers

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



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Photograph of the Boiling Hole, a class three rapid, on the Mayo River near Stoneville, NC. Taken by Tom Butler in December of 2008.

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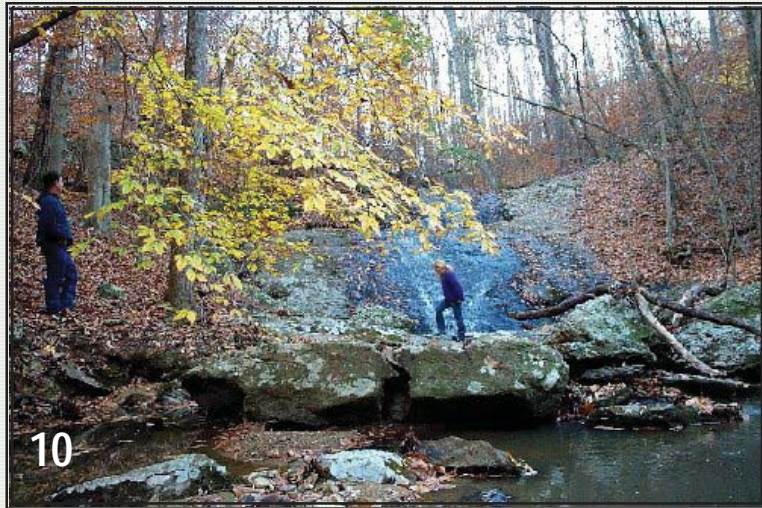
*DRBA Counting
Bugs with Friends*



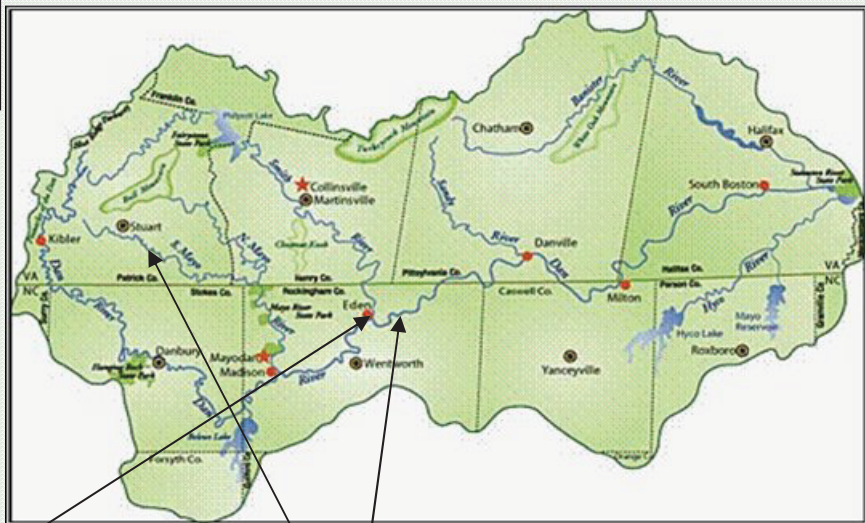
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River Water Quality: Better than thought – but with room for improvement



We are so pleased to announce the completion of a major study: The Dan River Watershed Assessment, Water Quality Study, funded by the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund. DRBA launched the study in response to NC reports indicating that portions of the Dan River were impaired due to turbidity and bacteria.

But North Carolina's process for developing and implementing river clean up plans could take as long as 13 years. Action was needed, and local government officials called upon DRBA for help.

DRBA volunteers and staff designed a project to gather information to better assess the conditions of the Dan and some tributaries. The goal was targeting management actions to ensure that local waterways support their designated uses, including fish habitat and recreation. Using extensive local knowledge, the team identified 17 strategic locations for study.

DRBA monitored bacteria, sediment and other parameters for nine months at these 17 sites. Teams of volunteers collected, preserved and delivered water samples to Pace Analytical laboratory in Eden, NC.

Volunteers analyzed duplicate samples using LaMotte ColiQuant EZ bacteria test kits. DRBA wanted to assess the degree to which volunteer-generated data and laboratory data yield similar information.

DRBA staff also developed and distributed landowner educational materials emphasizing the importance of streamside forest buffers in protecting water quality. DRBA installed attractive educational signs at prominent locations and developed an extensive web resource on streamside buffers on danriver.org.

With support from Southwings, DRBA conducted aerial reconnaissance to assess the land uses and degree to which waterways are protected by forested riparian buffers.

When results came together, DRBA met with stakeholders, including soil and water conservation districts and municipal public utilities officials. As data were reviewed and discussed, a larger picture came into focus with implications for management actions in the areas of agriculture, timbering, urban nonpoint source pollution and community planning.

Following is a brief summary of key findings. The complete study will be uploaded to the web in the near future:

DRBA detected relatively low levels of fecal coliform bacteria and turbidity problems in the studied portion of the watershed. However, the results reveal a need for further investigation in four areas: Jessups Mill and Town Fork Creek in Stokes County, and in Rockingham County the area upstream of Route 704 in Madison and the Smith River in Eden. A problem identified while testing the Smith River has been addressed as a result of this study.

The LaMotte ColiQuant EZ test kits used by volunteers do seem to give an equivalent result. Analysis of water samples using the LaMotte equipment is less expensive and more flexible with respect to timing. The results obtained from this study indicate that there is enough of a correlation between the ColiQuant samples and the samples analyzed by a certified laboratory that both broad patterns in the watershed and high level individual samples are detected.

DRBA thanks former board member Ken Bridle for his extensive analysis of the data and field support, and Cheryl Garrity, Mike Shahan, and Mark Bishopric. Thanks to Mike Vaughan, Kyle Hoover and Jeff Johnston for their assistance in the early phases of the study. Special thanks to Pace Laboratories of Eden, NC.

Katherine Mull

ROBIN LIGHT JOINS DRBA'S EDEN STAFF

DRBA welcomes Robin Light, our first Office and Accounting Manager. From her desk in the century old Spray Mercantile Building in Eden, she can look out at the Smith River in its rapid flow to meet the Dan. The rivers have changed little since time immemorial, but for Robin, her community along these banks could not be more different.

In 1978, after graduating from Rockingham Community College, Robin worked in what is now the DRBA office when it housed the administrative suite of Spray Cotton Mill, part of the South's vigorous textile industry. She was there on that difficult day in 2000 when Spray, like many mills, announced they must close.

Robin's family story is rooted deep in local history. She grew up on the family tobacco farm east of Draper, now part of Eden. Her childhood was defined by the annual cycle of tobacco, and she "can't remember a time not working on" the farm. After a long and labor-intensive growing season, her father pulled the tobacco with the help of Pat, the farm mule, who "was sweet *most* of the time."

Robin recalls that one time, after a severe cut on one of his fingers, she watched her dad as he sat stoically on the porch steps while his sister stitched him up-with out the benefit of anesthetic. "Tough was how this country was founded."



Robin muses, "You had to be tough." She speaks for many in the Eden area, strong people who did what was necessary to make a living and take care of their families.

After Spray Cotton Mill closed, Robin joined Dan River Incorporated, where she was responsible for cotton purchasing, later moving into accounts receivable after the manufacturing portion shut down. She was one of the last employees to be laid off when they closed in 2008.

Today, Robin's desk sits very close to its original location when she started with Spray. One day, not long after she joined DRBA, she noticed an old print hanging on a wall—a little boy, pair of sneakers in one hand and bamboo fishing pole in the other, wading in a creek. It was the very print she had picked out for her office just after her son was born, back when Spray Cotton Mill vibrated with humming machines. That picture now hangs over her new desk, still beside the Smith River, flowing as ever, as she and the town of Eden embark on the next chapter of their lives.

Jenny Edwards

PRESIDENT'S SPACE

I have had the distinct privilege of being DRBA's President for 3 years. I greatly appreciated having the opportunity to be a part of this grass roots non-profit organization. DRBA is emerging as one of the leading organizations in improving the quality of life through developing recreational opportunities and preserving our cultural heritage. Our budget has grown 400% through the efforts of our Executive Director, Katherine Mull, and the generous support of Foundations, businesses, and individuals.

As we move forward, we have high hopes of achieving many goals—a system of trails in each county, river accesses every five

miles or so, campaigns to prevent litter and raise public awareness on water monitoring, and an outreach program to reorient youngsters to the outdoors and teach them how their activities impact the environment.

In parting, I want to especially thank T Butler for listening, advising, scheming, and organizing with me on so many activities. We had many a conversation working out details of projects that were completed because of her efficiency.

Will Truslow



Chad Hall Joins DRBA Staff

DRBA welcomes Chad Hall to our Eden office as Program Manager to lead our Heritage Trails and Master Plan programs. With a grant from the Danville Regional Foundation, he will develop new opportunities for residents and visitors to walk for health, enjoy the outdoors, protect water quality, and foster opportunities for a desired quality of life in the region.

As part of a basin-wide initiative, Chad's tasks will include master planning, design, construction, and promotion of trails and heritage tours in Caswell County. Projects include walking trails for all ages and abilities, nature and heritage trails and tours, and linkages to landmark trails such as the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail, the VA Tobacco Heritage Trail, and the Race to the Dan as part of the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service.

Having grown up in rural Stokes County, Chad recalls life on the small farm. "We mostly grew our own gardens and also had fields of feed corn for the hogs and cows. We canned the veggies and froze the meat and that is what our family fed on for the next cycle. It was basically a self-sufficient farm. And

we helped in the fields of other families topping and priming their tobacco."

Chad Hall brings over 15 years of experience in planning, site design and regional revitalization. He holds a B.A. degree in Architecture with a minor in Geography from UNC-Charlotte.

With his wide-ranging experience and interests in hiking, kayaking, and canoeing, coupled with a farming and "hands-on" background, he is very excited by the opportunity to work with DRBA on many levels in Caswell County and beyond.



T Butler

DRBA Counting Bugs with the Friends of Philpott Lake and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Count Bugs

It sounds like little more than child's play to get in a stream and count bugs. And, according to Linda Drage, President of Friends of Philpott Lake (FOPL), it *is* a lot of fun. But it has a serious side, too. "This is about taking measure of the water quality around Philpott Reservoir," she says, "something everyone in the area has a stake in."

Mary Lawson, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conservation biologist stationed at Philpott Reservoir, is partnering with DRBA and FOPL to develop a water quality plan for the reservoir. A key component of that plan includes recruiting and training volunteers on macroinvertebrate water monitoring.

That's right: counting bugs.

It turns out that the numbers and kinds of macroinvertebrates living in streams are an indication of the stream's health. "Volunteer monitors are the eyes and ears of a watershed. There is a story in the water that is waiting to be told," says DRBA Vice President Wayne Kirkpatrick.

According to Jenny Edwards, DRBA staff, water monitors make a tremendous contribution to

Virginia. "Already," she says, "an army of volunteer monitors across the commonwealth provide valuable water data to the Department of Environmental Quality. What we'd like to do is expand that effort throughout the Dan River Basin."

In addition to in the Philpott Lake area, DRBA is working with teachers in Pittsylvania County and local leaders in Halifax County to train and form water monitoring teams. Under Wayne's direction, volunteer citizen monitors braved a chilly day in January to begin establishing base line data in streams near the proposed uranium mine in Pittsylvania County. So far, the data indicate acceptable ecological conditions for macroinvertebrates.

Much of the initiative is made possible with funding from the Virginia Environmental Endowment. The workshops are free and open to everyone. For information on upcoming workshops in Halifax, Pittsylvania, Franklin and Henry counties, contact Jenny Edwards at 276-340-2462 or jedwards@danriver.org.

Jenny Edwards

Uranium Mining Questions

Two large uranium deposits were discovered about 1980 at Coles Hill near Chatham and Gretna in Pittsylvania County, upstream from Halifax, South Boston, Kerr Lake, and Lake Gaston. The Walter Coles and Henry Bowen families, who own the land, formed Virginia Uranium Incorporated in 2007 and seek to mine the deposits. At today's prices the estimated 119 million pounds of uranium at Coles Hill is worth \$7-\$8.5 billion.

In 1982 Virginia placed a moratorium on uranium mining, stating that no permits for uranium mining will be issued until uranium mining regulations are established by statute.

In November 2008, the Virginia Coal and Energy Commission approved a study to determine whether uranium can be safely mined and milled in the Commonwealth and appointed a subcommittee chaired by Delegate Lee Ware Jr., R-Powhatan, to oversee the process. The subcommittee held public hearings in Richmond in December and at Chatham High School in January to receive questions concerning the scope of study.

At a meeting in Richmond in March, the subcommittee asked Dr. Michael Karmis, director of the Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research at Virginia Tech, to begin preliminary discussions with the National Research Council (NRC) regarding a study of uranium mining. The NRC, the staffing organization for the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), will review a scope of study drafted by Dr. Karmis and public comments submitted to the subcommittee and will recommend a precise statement of the study task and purpose.

The subcommittee anticipates the need for a second study to evaluate potential social and economic impacts of uranium mining, including the effects of public perception on new and existing businesses, schools, recreation, and tourism. The subcommittee has yet to decide what research entity might conduct such a study, what regions of the state will be considered, and whether this study will follow the NAS study or proceed simultaneously.

It is uncertain how long the studies will take—perhaps 1½ to 2 years. The cost is unknown and funding uncertain.

Comments submitted to the Uranium Mining Subcommittee from the chair of the Dan River Basin Association Mining Task Force emphasized two fundamental questions:

1: Is it safe to mine and mill uranium and store the tailings in Virginia?

2: Whether or not it is safe, how do people's perceptions of uranium mining affect the region?

Local interest in a study focuses on these two questions. The scope of study should also.

Uranium and its decay products have both radiological toxicity and heavy metal chemical toxicity. Substantial evidence suggests that any increased exposure to uranium and its decay products is associated with an increased risk of lung and kidney disease and neurologic, reproductive, and developmental damage.

The study should be designed to answer the basic question: Is it safe to live near uranium mining, uranium milling, and uranium tailings?

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) may not be able to answer this question by reviewing scientific studies. According to Dr. Doug Brugge, a public health expert, the necessary research has not been done to determine the health risks of exposure to heavy metals from living near uranium operations. Preliminary results from new studies are reinforcing health concerns.

The Halifax Chamber study group's report, *Community Concerns Related to Uranium Mining in Virginia*, available at halifaxchamber.net, includes important background material on the issue.

Katie Whitehead

DRBA's Annual Celebration, March 7, 2009

Fellowship with like-minded friends, delicious food, inspiring staff reports, volunteer recognition, plans for the future, and a lovely hike on a gorgeous spring day—DRBA's Annual Celebration had it all!

Meeting at Eden City Hall where DRBA's journey began seven years ago, 63 members and guests enjoyed homemade goodies as they renewed friendships and examined displays. Outgoing president Will Truslow described DRBA's vision for extending our successes into the future through more river accesses, trails, and parks; educational programs; water quality improvement and litter reduction; and broader financial support.

DRBA has 299 memberships from within and beyond the basin, and our budgeted project expenditures were \$450,000 in 2008, a 60% increase from the year before. For the 2009 year, our projects are budgeted at \$682,000. The Annual Activities report is on the web site, www.danriver.org.

Executive Director Katherine Mull praised the amazing dedication of our staff and volunteers, as well as DRBA's broad and rare vision of improving the health of our community and economy. She introduced our new staff members—Program Managers Jenny Edwards and Chad Hall, and Office/Accounting Manager Robin Light. All three work from our Eden office.

Staff reports from Jennifer Doss, Brian Williams, Jenny Edwards, and Chad Hall showcased Conservation, Recreation/Heritage, and Education. Conservation programs include water quality study, tree planting, and citizen water monitoring. In Recreation/Heritage, DRBA has introduced youngsters to our rivers, created the Gravelly Nature Preserve, expanded the Fieldale Trail, held the first Smith River Fest, preserved a historic slave cemetery, created a master plan for Henry County's rivers and trails, launched Caswell Heritage Trails, and is creating nature and heritage tourism strip maps. Education provides youth outdoor adventure programs, Trout in the Classroom, iImpact learning about litter, and a range of outreach programs. Volunteer and in-kind contributions have matched funding for several of DRBA's projects by up to 400%.

Many of these projects will continue and grow, as well as DRBA's involvement in looking at the science behind the proposed uranium mining and milling project near Chatham, Virginia, and the question of interbasin transfer of water from the Roanoke River Basin.

Julia Pyron presented recognitions and awards for several of our volunteers. DRBA's highest award, "Spirit of the Dan River Basin," was presented to Jeffrey Johnston, DRBA's river guide, geology consultant, water quality sampler, technology guru, unofficial river keeper, and founding president. The Outstanding Ser-

vice Award went to Paul and Patty May for their volunteer work on our rivers and trails

Framed river photos were presented to Service Award recipients President Will Truslow, Treasurer Mark Bishopric, and Outings Chair Paul Johnson, who also received a handmade walking stick and framed poem. Jennifer Doss and Brian Williams presented the Golden Shovel Award to Wayne Kirkpatrick, who volunteers at every trail construction opportunity.



Also recognized for their volunteer contributions were Linda Drage, Katie Whitehead, Dorcas Midkiff, Bonnie Cornwell, Forrest Altman, David Jones, Ellen and Joe Jessee, Cheryl Garrity, and Mike Shahan.

Elected to three-year terms on the Board of Directors were Lindley Butler, Carl Espy, Will Truslow, Wayne Kirkpatrick, T Butler, Mark Bishopric, and Kevin Moore.

Featured speaker was Kate Dixon, Executive Director of the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (FMST). She described the 1000-mile footpath from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks as "a trip across North Carolina." Proposed in 1977 by Allen de Hart, the trail now has 500 miles completed. It connects natural sites, using existing trails and public lands as much as possible. Paddle options are offered where foot trails are not yet available.

The trail's primary route follows the Dan River between Hanging Rock State Park and Belews Lake. Downstream of Belews Lake the alternate route continues along the Dan, Mayo, and Smith to Eden and thence across Rockingham County to Haw River State Park. Ms. Dixon invited DRBA to build local support for the route and to help in developing a more detailed plan for trail location, acquiring land or easements for the trail, and building and maintaining the trail. FMST organizes volunteers, builds support, helps acquire land and easements, raises money, and provides hiking information. DRBA will observe the Mountains-to-Sea Trail Month in October again this year.

Following lunch at local restaurants, some 35 members and guests enjoyed a walk on Eden's Smith River Greenway, guided by Lindley Butler.

T Butler

Eden Greenway Walk

“Eden has a treasure here,” commented one of the participants in the walk on the Smith River Greenway that concluded DRBA’s Annual Celebration on March 7. Some 35 members and guests, including 7-week-old Hunter Doss who snoozed in his stroller, took part in the round-trip hike, guided by historian Lindley Butler.

Lindley pointed out portions of the trail, which parallels the Smith River, that follow the unfinished roadbed built in the 1920s as part of industrialist B. Frank Mebane’s efforts to open up development on the east side of the river. Culverts from the original road still carry it across several small streams. The road originally led to the 1924 Fishing Creek Bridge, now known as Mebane Bridge, which was the subject of a 1929 lawsuit studied in contract law classes nationwide.

The Greenway meanders close to the river, where Canada geese and ducks splashed in the water, while spring peepers chirped noisily from small trailside pools.

The Eden Greenway is part of the alternate route of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, described by Kate Dixon, the featured speaker of the day. Enjoying her first walk on the greenway, she admired the setting and commented that she appreciated the number of users she met along the way.

The greenway is also a southern piece of the Smith River Trail system that DRBA envisions, on both land and water, from Philpott Lake to the Dan River. A new river access point, Island Ford Landing, is being constructed near the Meadow Road trailhead and picnic shelter as part of the paddle trail.

A link in a cross-state trail, a portion of a bi-state land trail, an important stop on a bi-state water trail, and a place to enjoy nature and friendly fellow-users every day—Eden’s Smith River Greenway is indeed “a treasure.”

T Butler

Henry County Updates

Trout in the Classroom: Trout in the Classroom (TIC) is in its fourth incredibly successful year, with 28 tanks located in Henry, Franklin, Patrick and Pittsylvania counties. Eggs were delivered to area schools in December, and each tank is raising as many as 100 brown trout. The program teaches the importance of clean water and a healthy environment and the value of our fisheries resource.



Started in Virginia by Dr. David Jones, who continues to be a major sponsor, TIC has grown statewide to such proportion that Trout Unlimited National has hired a coordinator for Virginia. Our program is still the state’s largest and most successful.

The culmination of the year’s program is the release of fingerlings into the Smith River at Bassett, VA Historical Center by students from all grade levels. Eleven release dates are scheduled between May 7 and June 5. The excitement of these releases is contagious, and the public is invited to attend. For dates and times, contact Brian Williams, 276-634-2545 or bwilliams@danriver.org.

Streamside Buffer Plantings: Continuing to implement a Water Quality Improvement Fund grant, DRBA has planted streamside trees along three impaired waterways this spring—at the confluence of Cope Creek and the Smith River in Bassett, at the Upper Smith River Waste Treatment facility in Fieldale, and on the Hodges Farm property along an eroded section of Jordan Creek. DRBA’s streamside buffer brochures were mailed to all property owners along the Smith River.

Education and Outreach: At Henry County’s Newcomers Club, DRBA staff described the trails, river accesses, and other recreational opportunities that DRBA has helped to make available and invited their members to take advantage of these resources.

Teamed up with the Smith River Chapter of Trout Unlimited, DRBA conducted a Fly Fishing workshop for the Environmental Enrichment Program at Snow Creek Elementary School. Students visited the “Tub-O-Bugs” to learn what types of insects are food for trout and why macroinvertebrates are important to water quality and stream health. Next, each student learned to tie a simple “wooly bugger” fly, and they were thrilled with their creations. Finally, they rotated to the fly rod casting station to learn the basics of fly fishing. It was a great partnership with local SRTU and a great opportunity not only to present the art of fly fishing but also to give the kids a “hands on” experience about the importance of trout and keeping our streams clean!

Brian Williams

Tanyard Branch Hike

Christmas was a flurry of visiting, family gatherings, presents, and eating, eating, and more eating. It was a welcome relief when January 3, the day of the DRBA hike along Tanyard Branch, dawned brisk, bright and sunny. We needed all the exercise we could get.

46 people and one dog met at Happy Home Christian Church where Milton Hundley and Will Truslow gave us an interesting introduction. We learned that 200+ million years ago, in the Triassic Age, the land we were on was a world of volcanoes, enormous water falls, and much different flora and fauna than we are used to today.

Our hike began down a lane, across a stream, and along a ridge through a beautiful growing forest of hardwoods until we reached the creek that was our destination. The creek bed looked like it had been picked up in the mountains and moved to the piedmont, all in one piece, including waterfalls. The conglomerate that appeared to be cement and small round river stones looked as if someone had spent a lot of money to build a beautiful creek bed in the Ruffin community. We knew better though, as Milton had already explained that the creek rock was material that had been under the huge water falls of the Triassic period. Fine silt and rounded pebbles have cemented into the rocks of the creek. It was a fine place for the dog, the small boys, and me to hop from rock to rock down the creek bed. Most of the people walked down the bank. Along the bank we got to see a rock formation that legend says was an Indian bake oven, or a place to grind corn. You can pick either one you want.

Lunch was on the banks of the creek near where it emptied into the Dan River. In the river, we saw a sluice that batteaux used in the river transportation era and paddlers use now.

With lunch behind us, we walked back through the woods. Milton showed us a piece of petrified wood that he found. When we reached our parked cars we had some curb service brownies, compliments of T Butler. They were one of the highlights of the trip.

I think all that went had an enjoyable hike and are looking forward to the next outing.

Jim Holmes

DRBA DOES IT RIGHT!

February 7, DRBA's First Saturday Outing, was in truth a Day of Promise. The perfect day we could all keep those New Year's resolution promises – I WILL get more exercise, I WILL participate in the outdoors, I WILL practice conservation by participation.

The location of the outing was the house and grounds of the Reynolds Homestead in Critz, VA. 63 hikers walked a mile and a half loop trail through the Forestry Research areas of the property, across rolling terrain through areas of pine, mixed hardwoods and a cut over.

The weather was perfect, a cloudless, brilliant blue sky, with perfect temperatures for the colorfully dressed hiking participants – the youngest only a few weeks old, the young adults, parents, children, seniors, and two active dogs – walking the hiking route. The gentle trek was complete with the sounds of leaves underfoot, the splash as small streams were crossed, and the descriptions of the forestry projects on the property

given by Kyle Peer, Superintendent of the Forest Resources Research Center.

We saw a couple of fish ponds where VA Tech is experimenting in fish farming, and a grass crop that has been planted to provide quail habitat. Kyle pointed out the spring that once provided water for the Reynolds Home and an old walnut tree that may have been at the site of the original house.

Following a lunch break, Lisa Martin, Program Coordinator for the Homestead, led a tour of the family cemetery and historic Reynolds house, where tobacco magnate R. J. Reynolds was born in 1853.

"Ah, the brain agrees to look at what the eye sees, and the eye agrees to look for what the brain wants" – the answer to January's promises – delivered on February 7, coordinated by Wayne Kirkpatrick and DRBA.

*Katie Latta, Wayne Kirkpatrick,
and Barbara Turner*

MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS

December 2008 – February 2009

MEMBERSHIPS

Benefactor

Carolina Canoe Club

Steward

Mary L. Berry and Richard
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T and Lindley Butler
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Miller Hodges
Fletcher and Ginger Waynick

Other

William Butler and
Rachel Christensen
Gregg Mason

In Honor of

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Daniel and Beth Mosca
Teresa Lea, from
Daniel and Beth Mosca
Aaron and Ruth Martin, from
Daniel and Beth Mosca
Dave and Gretchen Morris, from
Daniel and Beth Mosca
Edwin Penn and Walter Shark,
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Mary Schroll and Ted Linhart's
Marriage, from Joseph
and Ellen Jessee
Steve and Sharon Troxler, from
Daniel and Beth Mosca
William W. Truslow, M.D., from
Eva Scott

In Memory of

Jerry Armstrong, from
Carolina Cast Stone Company
William Neal Reynolds, from
T and Lindley Butler
William Neal Reynolds, from
Rita and J. P. Odum

DRBA Outings

May

*Paddle Smith River,
Marrowbone to
Mitchell*

June

*Paddle Dan River,
Danville to Milton*

July

*Paddle Mayo River,
Anglin Mill to
US 220 access*

Dan River Basin Association

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TO:

"Rock the River" Event and New Girl Scout Patch

DRBA is teaming up with the Virginia Skyline Girl Scouts with support from Staunton River State Park to host a day-long Earth Day "Rock the River" experience on April 25. The event will include river bank trash pick-up, canoe lessons with ACA instructors, and educational sessions about the negative impact of litter on river ecology. Participants will earn the first DRBA "Rock the River" Girl Scout patch.

The Halifax Improvement Council (HIC), which became interested in DRBA through a citizen water monitoring community meeting, recently joined as a "Rock the River" partner. HIC advises and educates local leaders, residents and students about litter control, recycling and environmental aesthetics. They are recruiting most of the volunteers for the event from the Town of Halifax.

Professional djembe drummers from Richmond, VA and Wilmington, NC are volunteering their time to teach participants about the historic river culture that gave rise to the djembe and to help participants create their own rhythm instrument. They will lead everyone in the closing drumming ceremony that sends a rousing Earth Day "thank you" to the river for all it gives to us.

This Girl Scout recruiting event is open to the public. Anyone interested in volunteering or attending the event should contact Jenny Edwards at 276-340-2462 or jedwards@danriver.org

Jenny Edwards

Mow or Let it Grow? Workshop

Cities and towns in the Dan River Basin are often located adjacent to the region's lovely rivers. Because a river view is much coveted, city workers often mow down to the water's edge, which is detrimental to the river's health. It is difficult for cities to balance the public's desire for a view with the river's need for a healthy buffer.

To demonstrate that allowing a buffer to grow can save maintenance costs (and taxpayer's dollars), DRBA partnered with Danville Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Virginia Recreation & Parks Society; Virginia Department of Forestry; and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to host a workshop for teachers, master naturalists, park directors, and managers on February 26. *Mow or Let Grow* was an engaging day-long learning session of presentations by storm-water and forestry experts, concluding with a "practical application" field walk along the river. DRBA created a temporary website to allow participants to access and share materials online.

DRBA plans to move the contents of that site to the DRBA website to provide even greater exposure. This program, funded by the Virginia Environmental Endowment, can be replicated in other areas of Southern Virginia. Anyone interested in having a similar workshop for their city or town should contact Jenny Edwards at 276-340-2462 or jedwards@danriver.org.

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