Many who have visited the Gravely Nature Preserve in Ridgeway know that the Burgess Family Plantation was located on the property in the 1800’s. Thanks to Samuel Hairston of Eden, a historic cemetery has been discovered nearby on Old Mill Road. This small wooded plot is the final resting place of his great-grandparents, John and Jane Burgess, former slaves and residents of the Burgess Plantation. John Burgess, fondly known as Uncle John, was a house servant who went to Civil War at the age of ten with his then owner John Henry Burgess. After being freed, Uncle John married Jane Cousins of Eden and together they raised a family on the Burgess Plantation. Upon discovery of the cemetery, Samuel and other descendants began planning with DRBA to document and restore the family plot. On a cold morning 14 volunteers cut saplings and removed debris while DRBA’s Jennifer Doss and Brian Williams located, marked, and inventoried grave sites. Vernon Hairston of Ridgeway, whose mother was buried in the cemetery, busily cut down trees that had reclaimed the land as the teenagers dragged the limbs away.

**DRBA Makes an iIMPACT**

DRBA has a new program combining trash, art and an environmental message. “iIMPACT: Speaking Out For Rivers Through Art & Action” is a basin-wide project to raise awareness of the impact of consumer waste on watersheds and wildlife. Since plastic is among the most detrimental of all consumer waste, iIMPACT puts a special emphasis on it. Participants pick up discarded materials—okay, trash—from sidewalks, parking lots, river banks, and then turn the material into “objets d’art.”

Really.
Let’s go paddling! The river access at Snow Creek near the Dodge-town Bridge over the Dan in Stokes County is now officially open for paddlers to use. This is possible through an agreement between the Davis Chapel Historic Association and DRBA. We greatly appreciate the DCHA allowing this access to be open for paddlers. This is a key link in providing conveniently spaced access points for Dan River trips. Thanks to the DCHA Board.

We have excellent news about the beginning of a trails project in Caswell County. Many thanks go to the Danville Regional Foundation for sponsoring this.

I want to thank all of you for your time and support of DRBA through 2008. Also, your financial support of DRBA is vital in continuing our efforts to provide new opportunities for recreation and protecting our natural resources. I hope you will renew your membership and if possible to increase your level of support.

Will Truslow

President’s Space
**Saturday Outings**

**October 5 Saturday Outing**

Twenty-one paddlers in seventeen boats put in at the newly opened Snow Creek Access to continue our trip down the Dan River in Stokes County in commemoration of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. This was the second of two perfect days to enjoy the beauty of the river and to pick up trash from another section of the river for the NC Big Sweep program. Although we picked up a number of bags of trash (Thanks, Lindley and T, for putting the tires and bulky trash in your canoe), over all I was surprised at how clean the river was.

This section of the river had some truly magnificent scenery. We stopped for lunch on a sandy beach across from Mount Horrible, a huge rock monolith. This was an impressive chunk of rock. Broken chunks of rock the size of a small bus lay in the river at its base. By special permission we were able to take out at the Hemlock Golf Course Access. T had brownies and local apples for everyone. It was an enjoyable and productive day.

Sam Thompson

**DRBA Fall Hike and Picnic**

On October 18, DRBA held its annual fall celebration at the farm of Wayne and Betty Kirkpatrick in Stuart, Virginia. Festivities included the choice of a hike up Bull Mountain, a stroll around the farm, or a trip to the Apple Dumpling Festival in Stuart. These activities were followed by a covered dish meal at the Kirkpatrick farm.

I opted for the hike up Bull Mountain, as most did. We were shuttled about five miles to the base of the mountain, and we started out by climbing over two tall gates. This set the tone for the rest of the hike—steady and relentless, not at a great incline, but about three miles of up.

OK, keep going, that's probably the top around the next bend. Nope, that's not it, next bend, nope not this one, on and on. No level stretches to rest my legs, but I have to keep going steadily. I have to keep up with Mike Vaughan and Joe Jessee. These guys have a few years on me; I should be able to take them. Hmm, why are they always ahead of me? They're comfortably chit chatting the whole way up, while I'm struggling. Well, I think I got whipped by two better hikers on this day, ha, ha. Shortly before reaching the summit we came upon the find of the day, beautiful closed gentian, a diminutive bluish lavernder flower resembling an old style Christmas tree bulb.

The top was finally attained, where we took lunch near the old fire tower and the abandoned one-room ranger's living quarters. The real payoff for me though was on the way down. By bulling my way up I missed all the wonderful natural beauty surrounding us. So many sights to see, sourwoods in their red maroon fall colors, a small American chestnut, destined to die of blight, a rhododendron in bloom, colorful oaks, sweet fern, and exquisite tiny field milkwort. Thank you, Ellen for your hard work in identifying this flower.

We saw a beautiful caramel colored fungus resembling a brain coral, trailing arbutus, false foxglove, and so much more.

On the way back, we stopped at two reminders of the perils of mixing planes, fog and mountains. Near the trail was a WWII military training flight crash site, memorialized by part of the plane's propeller. Wayne drove us to see a cross erected to mark the Hendricks' racing family plane crash site, just below the ridgeline in the distance.

Back at the Kirkpatrick farm Wayne took us on a hayride. Touring a part of his farm, we encountered an old ball field and grandstand. The outfield fence had been the South Mayo River. I guess you needed a good supply of baseballs for those games. We also encountered a pumpkin and gourd field with the “great pumpkin” still on display.

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THE HIGHEST PEAK OF THE SAURATOWNS

The final First Saturday Outing for 2008 was our longest hike of the year, and when we reached the summit of Moore’s Knob the temperature was 25 degrees. You might think turnout would be down on a gray cold day, but that would underestimate the hardiness of DRBA members. Our seventeen hikers came from six counties in both states. One of the most inspiring aspects of DRBA is the way it brings together people from all over the basin to enjoy our most beautiful hiking and paddling destinations.

The Moore’s Wall Loop trail at Hanging Rock State Park is not only beautiful but diverse, starting with a mile through wetland areas upstream of Hanging Rock Lake. Much of the trail was on boardwalks, and the dry stretches passed through a rhododendron thicket. An especially beautiful spot on the hike was a large stand of holly trees flanked by shrubs with blue and purple berries along the boardwalk. As we began the slow ascent to the summit, mountain laurel was still plentiful in the lower elevations. An hour into the hike we were high enough to see the peaks of Cook’s Wall and Hanging Rock, the two lower pinnacles in the park. The terrain becomes very rocky as the trail approaches the summit, where grand views open up across the Dan River Basin to the north. We stopped to enjoy the first view from the top, and then proceeded to the boulder-strewn landscape along the top of the ridge to the observation tower at the summit of the mountain.

Even though it was breezier and colder at the summit than when we started down below, the grand views kept us there more than half an hour to enjoy lunch and explore Moore’s Wall. Our 360° view now included Greensboro and Winston-Salem to the south, the Blue Ridge to the north and west, and just below us the lake and bathhouse where we had started our ascent. The return to our cars at the lake was a steep descent taking less than an hour, and no one regretted spending the cold morning climbing such a beautiful mountain.

This was my last outing to coordinate as Outings Chair for DRBA, and there is no other site in North Carolina that provides such an inspirational vista of the entire basin. I look forward to returning to Hanging Rock State Park as a warm weather Third Saturday hike.

Paul Johnson

Water Quality, Festivals, and Presentations

Fall is a busy time for DRBA’s outreach, including the beginning of the school year, fall festivals on many weekends, and cleanup of our watershed. Here are a few recent activities.

In Patrick County, Woolwine 6th and 7th grade students, led by teacher Rozina Turner and DRBA’s Wayne Kirkpatrick, sampled macroinvertebrates in Sycamore and Jack’s creeks, finding healthy populations of these indicators. Woolwine and the other schools participating in the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program recently received their trout eggs, marking the beginning of year four of the ever-growing program. Hats off to David Jones, Brian Williams, and everyone involved with making this the premier Trout Unlimited TIC program in the USA. (See banner photo)

Among the enthusiastic groups for whom DRBA has presented programs recently are the Virginia Conference of Garden Clubs, whose members enjoyed a Smith River float that featured a bald eagle sighting; and the Patrick County Historical Society, which Wayne Kirkpatrick addressed about DRBA’s history, batteau navigation, and the local Mayo River Rail Trail. In addition, many citizens voiced support for this trail at the October Patrick County Board of Supervisors’ meeting, where the Board authorized the next planning steps for the trail.

Wayne’s tub-o-bugs display and photos of DRBA’s outings and projects were again popular features at DRBA’s festival appearances this fall. Beginning with the August 2 Dan River Boat Race in Madison, DRBA’s booths also attracted visitors at Stokes Stomp, Patrick County Agricultural Fair, Brightleaf Hoedown in Yanceyville, and the Reidsville Downtown Fall Festival. DRBA’s extensive children’s program at Eden Riverfest brought families to Leasville Landing for a puppet show and fishing lessons. Kudos to DRBA’s staff and many volunteers for their excellent outreach and educational efforts at these events.

DRBA representatives attended a presentation at the Danville Institute of Higher Learning about health issues associated with uranium mining. Dr. Doug Brugge of Tufts University School of Medicine spoke at length about potential adverse effects from exposure to byproducts of uranium mining. Later, members of DRBA’s Mining Task Force addressed issues that the state’s study of uranium mining in Virginia should encompass.

Participating in several river cleanups in the basin, DRBA members in Rockingham County alone were responsible for removing some 5 TONS of debris from rivers, streams, and roadsides through NC Big Sweep. Long-time paddlers report that as more and more responsible citizens are floating our rivers, the amount of trash found in the rivers has dwindled. A hearty thanks to all who carry out their own trash and collect what others have left behind!

Wayne Kirkpatrick & T Butler
A flotilla of kayaks, with paddles dipping on alternate sides, wet and reflecting in the bright sunshine – at a distance – were reminiscent of dragonflies darting about glistening in the sun. DRBA's November 1 float began at the spacious NC 704 access near Madison-Mayodan and took out at a private access at Jacob's Creek. Participants in the four-hour float included thirty-nine kayaks and canoes with forty-four persons, one dog, and one cat.

Lindley Butler, Professor Emeritus of History, shared his knowledge of the batteau navigational structures on the river that were constructed in the nineteenth century. An attractive and very informative brochure is available. Several sluices and wing dams were included on this trip. Directly beneath the US 220 bridge, paddlers were challenged by Cross Rock Rapid Sluice, where strong currents carried watercraft in directions which boaters did not always choose. Later, paddlers encountered the most impressive Slink Shoal Sluice and Wing Dams. At this site, paddlers rapidly travelled through the lengthy sluice and then between the four pairs of log-crib rock-filled wing dams which form the river’s channel. At least one stone fish weir (a funnel-shaped fishing structure) was clearly seen, evidently built by American Indians hundreds of years ago. The lunch stop was at Lone Island Ford, an island known to have existed since Revolutionary War times.

This outing provided glorious weather, vivid fall color, historical and cultural knowledge of the region, and the camaraderie of fellowship and stories as we shared the autumn river adventure.

In 2006 the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources issued a water quality report listing segments of rivers across the state that do not meet water quality criteria for their designated uses. Among those rivers were the Dan and the Smith, and news stories generated local concern.

In response, DRBA volunteers and staff have designed a water testing program to gather additional data to better assess and address any problems. Former DRBA board member Mike Vaughan established Standard Operating Procedures for a study to measure bacteria and sediment levels in local rivers and streams. Mark Bishopric, Ken Bridle, Kyle Hoover, Jeffrey Johnston, and Wayne Kirkpatrick assisted in the design of the study and/or the collection of data. Meritech Labs in Reidsville donated laboratory services so that several samples at each of 17 sites could be taken.

To extend the testing period, establish trends, and design an action plan, DRBA was awarded a grant from NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund. Volunteers Mark Bishopric, Ken Bridle, Cheryl Garrity, Jeffrey Johnston and Mike Shahan collect monthly samples at each of 17 stations covering almost 90 miles of the Dan and tributaries in NC.

According to Mark Bishopric, “We hope to document bacteria levels during various seasons to capture impact of different weather and river conditions. We also want to see opportunities throughout the basin to make improvements in practices that affect water quality.”

Strategically located data collection stations help pinpoint potential sources of bacteria and sediment, such as leaking septic systems, cattle access to streams, or lack of cover crops on exposed fields. Sediment can carry pollutants and smother fish eggs. As potential pollution sources are identified, DRBA will work with area professionals to help provide resources to correct problems.

DRBA volunteers collect duplicate water samples, which are preserved and analyzed. They maintain chain of custody records and ensure that one set of samples reaches a certified laboratory within the designated holding period. With Mike Shahan taking the lead, a second set of samples is incubated and analyzed at DRBA offices.

A former Quality Assurance expert with Ball Container in Reidsville, Mike says, “I learned a few things about our rivers. I have enjoyed the Dan River for so many years, canoeing, camping with family and Boy Scouts, I thought I’d give back a little. I look forward to getting out and doing this.”

At the end of the study, results from the analysis of the two sets of samples will be compared to determine whether volunteer-generated data provide information comparable to that of a certified lab. By using volunteer-generated data, DRBA will be better able to continue and expand the program beyond the current grant period. DRBA will report on findings in the first quarter of 2009, when the project is complete.

Many thanks go to Cheryl, Jeffrey, Ken, Mark, and Mike for braving all kinds of weather conditions to take the pulse of our rivers and streams.

Katherine Mull
Several area youth volunteered, including Brandon Hairston, who dug through leaves searching for fieldstones and other signs of graves. Excitement filled the air each time someone yelled "I found another stone!" A total of 18 graves were located. Family members positively identified the burial sites of four individuals and compiled a list of eight others known to be buried somewhere in the cemetery. Afterward, family members gathered at God's Love Ministries in Ridgeway to enjoy a pot-luck lunch and share information about their ancestors. Among the 25 relatives were the last three living grandchildren of Uncle John and Jane. In addition to sharing family memories, they filled out ancestry charts that will help DRBA and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources formally document the property and protect it.

The owner of the property, James Morrison, was very happy to see the historic cemetery being restored. Norris Funeral Services of Martinsville has generously donated a stone marker for the project that will be erected soon. Family members plan to install fencing and continue maintaining the cemetery. Anyone with information on the cemetery or those laid to rest there is asked to contact Jennifer Doss at 276-634-2545.

Jeff D. Bulla  
Ward Collis  
L. Alex Jordan, Jr.  
Terry Mayew  
Ted Midkiff  
Sharon M. Olson  
Christina L. Oosthoek  
Douglas W. Powell  
Teresa Roberts  
John Stiles  
Joy Thomas  
Roger Ward  
Jerry S. Weston  
Jacob Woodall  
Dr. Gordon R. Woody, Jr.

Ezekiel H. Williams

DONATIONS
Steward  
Ezekiel H. Williams  

Friend  
Coy Park  

Jennifer Doss

Stuart, Virginia 4H students advise iIMPACT by testing the art project ideas before DRBA offers them to other groups in the basin.
DRBA Partners with River Traders to Form Monitoring Teams

It was a chilly overcast December day, but that made the fresh chili, homemade brownies and hot coffee at River Traders taste that much better. That's when DRBA teamed up with this river outfitter to bring together citizens in Halifax County to discuss forming water monitoring teams. Only one citizen monitoring team currently exists in Halifax County, and DRBA hopes to improve that number with this new initiative. DRBA's Wayne Kirkpatrick, certified water monitor, demonstrated macroinvertebrate and chemical water monitoring techniques.

At DRBA's request, local owners Bob and Judy Bateman hosted the meeting, immediately offering to “warm up the [store] cabin and put a pot of coffee on” for the group. It is a natural fit for DRBA, which promotes environmental stewardship and nature-based tourism, to partner with local businesses. After enjoying the Batemans’ hospitality, everyone left with a complimentary River Traders coffee mug.

River Traders is near Staunton River State Park in Scottsburg, VA, on a quiet road “far from any neon lights,” as Bob puts it. He and Judy have helped people from around the world enjoy the rivers in Halifax County by providing boat rentals, shuttle service, bait & tackle, snacks & ice, and plenty of free advice. In addition to learning about water monitoring, meeting participants could see the Batemans’ extensive collection of photographs that convey the spirit of the area’s outdoor recreation. My favorite photo shows their golden Labrador, Cody, sitting in the back of their pickup truck, with a Buddha-like gaze at a curious young buck deer not three feet from the tailgate. Bob laughs when asked about the photo, and simply says that Cody “wouldn’t bite a ham sandwich.” I’m not surprised that this delightful couple has such a great dog.

Jenny Edwards

Rivers & Trails News

Martinsville/Henry County Rivers & Trails Group continued its practice of having interesting programs at its monthly meetings this fall.

September 11: Jim Beard of VA Museum of Natural History spoke about local birding sites, including lakes, rivers, wetlands, and upland forests and meadows. DRBA is seeking funding for a Beaver Creek preserve that will serve hikers and birders.

October 9: David Perry of Western VA Land Trust spoke about land conservation through purchase and easements. R&T sponsored two workshops on conservation in November.

November 13: Sandra Tanner of VA Tourism Corporation spoke about the Tobacco Heritage Trail and Governor Kaine's vision to expand it across Southern Virginia to form the “Beaches to Bluegrass Trail.”

Ellen Jessee

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, January 21 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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Sam Thompson
Will Truslow
Brian Williams
I’ve begun to appreciate the generational patterns that ripple out from our lives like stones dropped in water, pulsing outward even after we are gone.

Anne Cassidy

2009 TUESDAY MORNINGS STROLLS

Grab your shoes and come for a stroll! At 9:00 on the first Tuesday of every month, an easy-paced guided walk will be held in Henry County. The free program is now a partnership among DRBA, Henry County Parks and Recreation, Activate Martinsville-Henry County, and the YMCA. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes appropriate for the weather (indoor strolls are scheduled for cold days) and bring water to drink. Pre-register by calling 276-634-2545.

Schedule

January 6- Liberty Fail Mall (meet inside beside Goody's)
February 3- Martinsville YMCA (meet at the front lobby)
March 3- Fieldale Trail: Phase I (3521 S. River Road, Fieldale)
April 7- Fieldale Trail: Phase II (same address as above)
May 5- Uptown Spur Trail (Meet at the Gazebo on Lester Street)
June 2- Doe Run Park (270 Dupont Road, Martinsville)
July 7- Richard P. Gravely, Jr. Nature Preserve
(2525 Eggleston Falls Road, Ridgeway)
August 4- Jack Dalton Park (3300 Kings Mountain Road, Collinsville)
September 1- Fieldale Trail: Phase I
October 6- Fieldale Trail: Phase II
November 3- Uptown Spur Trail
December 1- Liberty Fail Mall