

ANNUAL MEETING TO STUDY WILD & SCENIC RIVER STATUS AT THE CROSSING JANUARY 16

Editor: K. Paul Johnson

Contributing writers: T Butler
Forrest Altman John Lamiman
Lindley Butler

Photographs: Steve Carpenter

Technical Assistance: Carol
Ann Beadles

DRBA Officers:

President: Jeffrey Johnston

Vice President: Mike Covey

Secretary: T Butler

Treasurer: Lindley Butler

The young Dan River Basin Association, founded in January of 2002, will hold its annual membership meeting Thursday, January 16, 2003, at 7:00 p.m., in the Pepsi Building at The Crossing, beside the former AMTRAK station, on Craghead Street, in Danville, Virginia. After election of officers and other business conducted by President Jeffrey Johnston, the Association will hear four speakers explore Wild and Scenic River status, focusing on the histories of the New and Staunton Rivers and the outlook for the Dan. The panel discussion will be moderated by Dr. Forrest Altman, author of *The Dan River Book: Odyssey, Epic, Guide*. Speakers will be drawn from Virginia and North Carolina.

The first speaker, Counselor Norman B. Smith, a member of the Greensboro law firm of Smith, James, Rowlett & Cohen, was active in achieving the status of National Heritage River for the New River. He will focus on the advantages which have accrued from the river's recognition as Wild and Scenic. The second speaker, Mr. Tom Stutts, of Alton, Virginia, was active in achieving Virginia Wild and Scenic designation for the Staunton River from Long Island to Brookneal and will discuss the campaign. Mr. Stutts coordinated the widely praised exhibit on the Staunton River now open at the South Boston, Halifax County Museum of Fine Arts and History at 1540 Avenue Street in South Boston. Karen Cross, Director of the Outdoor Program of Danville Parks and Recreation and member of the Board of Directors and the Recreation Committee of the Dan River Basin Association, will address the prospects for the Dan River's future status in the state of Virginia. The final speaker, Dr. Kenneth Bridle, of Walnut Cove in Stokes County, North Carolina, a conservation biologist, a member of the Association's Board of Directors and its Stewardship Chairperson, has conducted inventories of natural resources in the Dan River region for the Piedmont Land Conservancy. He will discuss the outlook for the Dan River's future in the state of North Carolina. Following these presentations and an exchange among the panel members, the floor will be opened for questions from the membership and others in attendance. (F.A.)

Winter DRBA Activities

- December 7: Sprig Outing on Upper Little River
- January 4: Rail/Trail Hike Sutherland to Ringgold
- January 16: General Meeting in Danville
- February 2: South Boston Museum Visit

(details by email/postcard)

NEW DAN RIVER PADDLE ACCESS AND RIVER PARK IN EDEN

On September 12 Robin Yount, director of the Rockingham County Tourism Development Authority, announced that the city of Eden received a \$49,500 grant from NCDENR Division of Parks and Recreation for a paddle access and river park at the site of the historic Leaksville Landing. Faye Shelton, director of county planning and zoning, applied for the grant after the site owner, DRBA's president Jeff Johnston, donated a half-acre for the access. Leaksville Landing, the only extant batteau port in the river basin, contains well-preserved remains of nineteenth century mooring cribs and a wharf. According to river historian Lindley Butler, "The historical significance of Leaksville Landing has been recognized by a state historical marker, and it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Through this access and park a new generation of Eden's citizens will rediscover the river and realize how important the river has

been to this city." Leaksville Landing will be the eighth paddle access on the Dan and Mayo Rivers in Rockingham County. Work is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2003 and should be completed by summer. (L.B.)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL BOARD MEETING

The Board met at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville. As of the meeting date, we had 110 paid memberships. Our receipts thus far totaled \$4,207.20; disbursements \$1,699.17; balance on hand \$2508.03. We have purchased six logo images from graphic designer Francine Smith, and the arch design was printed on a banner for use at festivals, first displayed at the Dan River Boat Race on August 3. The board authorized Lindley Butler to purchase 500 boat stickers and 500 vehicle window stickers at a cost of \$340, using the same design. T Butler created a certificate for the Reidsville Free Clinic fundraiser that awards a canoe ride for two on a DRBA First Saturday outing. The board agreed to make similar awards available in the future. Steve Carpenter is to chair a Nominating Committee for officers and board members to be voted on in the January general meeting. The Virginia Canals and Navigation Society in the spring is expected to draw about 50 conference attendees for Friday night to Sunday afternoon. Lindley Butler will be the keynote speaker.

As president of DRBA, Jeff Johnston has been appointed to a committee for conservation of Troublesome Creek in the Cape Fear Basin, for which Rock House Creek in the Dan River Basin is the control creek. He circulated "Water Quality and Recreational Use Plan for the Mayo River," a graduate project by Will Butler at Virginia Tech, which Will has donated to DRBA. Rockingham County is publishing a river brochure and featuring the rivers on its website. We need notification of river events in 2003 to be published on DRBA's website. The board authorized purchase of an 11'x11' awning for use at festivals.

Ken Bridle reported that Bill Ross is working on the idea of a Piedmont state park, probably linear in nature, perhaps connecting with the Mountains to the Sea trail and partnering with Virginia. The Dan and Mayo have significant historical and natural resources that would fit the concept nicely. Steve Carpenter reported that the website is to include the logo, mailing address, and links to committees. He has received several offers of design help from DRBA members. More pictures were needed for the brochure, especially from areas other than Danville, Rockingham County, and Caswell County.

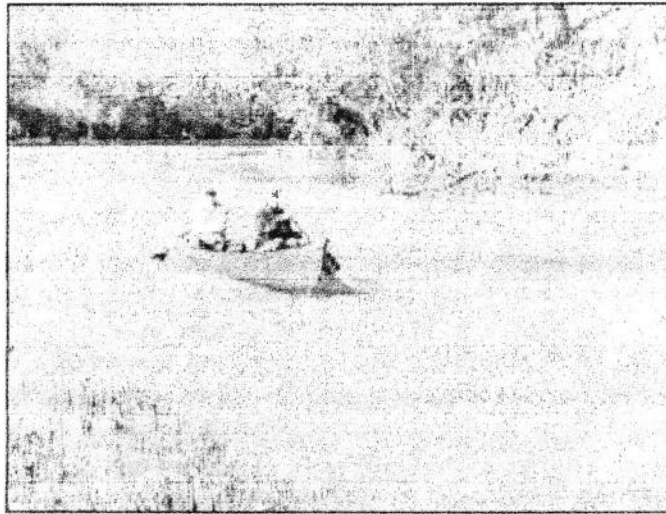
Mike Covey spoke about Rockingham County's need for signs designating river names and boat accesses. He and Jeff are working as DRBA representatives with the county's tourism office and NCDOT to get the signs up. DRBA was providing a water safety demonstration for fifth graders at the Project Wet program at Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Center near Reidsville on Friday, September 27. Forrest Altman encouraged DRBA to provide boat rides at the Stokes Stomp September 28-29, despite the logistical difficulties of hand-carrying boats. T Butler sent out an appeal for volunteers for this and other fall events. DRBA was partnering with the Rockingham County Beautification Council, sponsor of Spring Clean and Big Sweep, at booths for the Reidsville and Eden festivals in October. DRBA's cost is one \$25 registration fee.

Mike Covey suggested investigating how to have notification of Kibler Valley's water releases sent to interested persons. Paul Ferguson described the process of having a USGS gauge installed, citing the \$10,000 installation cost and the \$1000 annual cost as the primary considerations. Danville currently funds the gauges at Francisco and Wentworth. Mike Covey and Jeff Johnston have spoken to several civic clubs in Eden regarding about 18 miles of trails along Matrimony Creek and Dan River in Eden that can be developed for recreational use. The DRBA officers planned to talk about this project at the county's tourism commission meeting later that week.

The Long-Range Planning Committee scheduled an initial meeting on Saturday, October 5. (T. B.)

DANVILLE TO MILTON TRIP REPORT

The water in the Dan River was high enough to seem "normal" and offer a Fall trip between the anglers Pride boat ramp in Danville Va. and our take out at Milton N.C. This was DARBA's monthly outing, the first Saturday of November. This 10 mile section is, as is the tradition for these trips, not a challenge to the canoe enthusiast, but a pleasant paddle and a nice section for a family outing and people wanting to get the feel for paddling on the river. Occasional riffles and shoals offer opportunities to read, navigate, and make painless mistakes. Though the morning was clear and blue and the foliage moving into high color an irregular stiff cold breeze might have encouraged one to stay in the car or by the fire, but remember, when you are on the river you are low; the banks and riparian woods block the wind. With clear sky, sun, and the exercise of paddling we were quickly shedding jackets on a 50 degree day while certain board members were huddled in the stands suffering the Carolina football season. We, on the other hand, were joined by the economic development directors of two counties (Tom Edmonds and Don Moss going east to west) plus Steve Carpenter from Person County. Kyle and Kristen Hoover represented Guilford county. Guy brought Jeff Johnston to be his stern man, while Forrest Altman was on his home section of the river and tried to describe some of the differences between the replenished river and its appearance during the historic drought of the summer. (J.L.) *(to be continued)*



DRBA'S FIRST GRANT AWARDED

Miller Brewing Company announced Thursday, November 14 that the Dan River Basin Association is among 26 nonprofit organizations in North Carolina to receive a grant. Miller's philanthropy covers a broad spectrum of organizations that improve quality of life and education, build community, and enhance the environment. DRBA's grant of \$6,300 is to preserve by digitizing several thousand slides of Rockingham County amateur naturalist Floyd Rich, who was the driving force behind establishing the Dan River Canoe Trail and paddle access points. His stunning pictures, which document common, rare, and endangered flora on the Dan, Smith, and Mayo Rivers, were showcased in the beautiful brochure "Wildflowers of the Sauratown Mountains" that was produced for Hanging Rock and Pilot Mountain State Parks. When completed, the digital photos, an unparalleled resource, will be deposited in the Rockingham Community College Library. (L.B.)

2002 BIG SWEEP RESULTS

Four North Carolina counties in the Dan River Basin—Caswell, Person, Rockingham, and Stokes—conducted successful Big Sweep cleanup events in September 2002. As part of the international cleanup of litter and debris from our waterways, 1861 volunteers in these counties cleaned 92 sites along 245.5 miles of rivers, streams, lakes, and roadsides, retrieving 268 tires and over 35 tons of debris.

DRBA member Robbin Turner, first-time coordinator for Caswell County, praised the county's Exceptional Children's classes, whose "coordinator, students, and their parents were fantastic about participating and getting information in." Robbin adds, "We were only able to clean a small portion of the Dan River as our boats were full after a short while. Thanks to Forrest Altman for all his help and many helpful ideas for the next year. I was new at this and hope next year we will have more involvement in Caswell County as now I am more familiar with what I need to do."

Stokes and Rockingham Counties received recognition at the statewide meeting November 12 for fielding all-time record numbers of volunteers—792 and 981, respectively, with Stokes boasting the largest per-capita participation in North Carolina. T Butler, Rockingham County's coordinator for the sixth year, was elected to the state board. She noted that across North Carolina nearly 15,000 volunteers pulled out 285 tons of trash and debris that pollutes our waters, entangles wildlife, threatens our health, and damages our economy. (T.B.)

DRBA'S REMARKABLE FIRST YEAR

Little did organizers of the Dan River Basin Association realize a year ago that not only would the Association establish itself throughout the basin in 2002, but also a number of projects would be started and many completed. For a fledgling group, we have a solid membership base in all of the basin's counties, a Board representative of the entire basin, and enough funds to operate the Association and finance some projects. We have publicized the river for thousands of people at such public gatherings and festivals as Stokes Stomp, Madison's Dan River Boat Race, Rockingham County Folk Festival, Eden Apple Festival, and Reidsville's Antique Alley Festival. Thanks to the hard work of editor Paul Johnson, we have an excellent newsletter, "Dan River Currents." We hope soon to publish a full-color brochure and an annual calendar of events, and work is underway on our website.

Dozens of new people have been brought to the Dan River through our popular "First Saturday Outings," which have paddled the Dan River from Hanging Rock to Hemlock Golf Course in Stokes County, from Madison to Eden in Rockingham County, and from Danville to Milton in Pittsylvania and Caswell Counties. We have also had excursions to Kibler Valley and to the Upper Little River for gathering mistletoe.

Members have won a cash award for participation in Rockingham County's Spring Clean in April, as well as recognition for our contributions to North Carolina Big Sweep in September, where 1861 volunteers from Stokes, Rockingham, Caswell, and Person Counties cleaned up 92 sites and retrieved over 35 tons of trash from our waterways. Early in our existence, DRBA achieved nonprofit incorporation and 501(c)(3) status. Our funds have come from memberships, donations, cash awards, and sales. Beginning with Forrest Altman's popular Dan River Book and map and Danny Rickett's Danville poster, sales have expanded to include an association T-shirt (nearly sold out, with a second version underway) and our new boat and window stickers.

Our recent grant encourages us to develop new ideas about river stewardship and education. Our long-range goals remain focused on parks, paddle access, cultural preservation, natural conservation, river trails on land and water, a Riverkeeper, educational opportunities in the schools, Streamwatch, and scientific and historical research. (L.B.)