



The Newsletter of the Dan River Basin Association

CURRENTS

DANRIVER.ORG • VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4 • FALL 2012

**DRBA & PARTNERS CLEAN
SMITH RIVER**

**RIVER HISTORY DISPLAYS
FOR THE MARC**

REI GRANT FOR DRBA



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Meetings of the DRBA Board of Directors are held on the second Wednesday of February, May, August and November. The next meeting will be on November 14.

CURRENTS

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On the cover: A large haul of tires on the Smith River.

-Photo by Brian Williams

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



DRBA Director Tiffany Haworth

Despite often dire news about the environment, I believe this is an exciting time for DRBA and its mission. In the past year, I have seen growing concern and involvement from government, organizations, families, even children, about environmental issues. I have personally witnessed entire communities join together to stop threats to their natural resources, and win.

This growing understanding of the social, health and

economic value of abundant fresh water, outdoor recreation, development of trails and river access, sustainability and

clean air is encouraging. Conservation is moving from the sidelines to the front lines as the intricate connections between environmental health, natural diversity, our economies and human well-being are better understood.

I truly believe no organization is better positioned to help expand our region's ability to attract tourists, business and families. But we can't do it alone. We need you, we need local businesses, we need local governments, we need the schools, we need families, we need kids, we need everyone to join the effort.

DRBA members know better than anyone that without nature there isn't life. You know that we can live without oil, but we can't live without clean water. Talk to your family, your co-workers, your friends and your neighbors about DRBA. Inspire them to become members and/or volunteer. This fall, urge them to get off the sidelines and join us in the game!

-Tiffany Haworth

PRESIDENT'S SPACE



DRBA President Fletcher Waynick.

As the DRBA Family moves into fall we face many challenges and many opportunities. We are in the midst of a membership drive so that we may continue to be a strong organization with the resources necessary to respond to the needs of the region.

We are also involved in a very important fund raising effort for our stewardship fund so that we can continue to defend the

Dan River and its tributaries from those who would threaten

their viability as a source of clean water for the Basin.

While all of these efforts are noble, it was during a recent event in Stokes County, during a conversation with a long time DRBA member and his son, that I remembered the reason many of us first got involved with DRBA: the love of the outdoors and this great resource that we in the Basin are lucky enough to host; the chance to view wildlife and spend a day fishing or just floating down the river in a kayak, canoe or an old inner tube.

Let's make sure that this great river basin is here for future generations, a clean and safe resource to be enjoyed, and not a polluted mess to be avoided.

Thank you for all you do for DRBA!

-Fletcher Waynick

Are you receiving your email notices from **DRBA?**

If not, please notify Robin Light, rlight@danriver.org
to be sure your email address is up to date!

FEATURES

Jay Lankford and Annette Bradsher, Flintrock Farm



Jay Lankford, Annette Bradsher

DRBA welcomes new River Legacy Circle members, Jay Lankford and Annette Bradsher, owners of Flintrock Farm, the largest year-round equine facility in North Carolina and home to more than 100 horses and mules. The scenic 350-acre property has been in Annette's family since the 1940s when her parents began a dairy farm. She grew up on the land and is fiercely,

yet practically, dedicated to its preservation. Flintrock employs best management practices in waste treatment, trails, stream crossings and formalized conservation easements along Troublesome Creek in Rockingham County.

In their Saddlebags Gift Shop, browsers find unique hand-made items from across the Piedmont, including the exquisite pottery of Jenny and Allen Walton, also DRBA members. Flintrock Farm is available for special events such as weddings, parties, and retreats. In May, Jay and Annette hosted a DRBA members-only outing that included a hayride with Jay's mules, conservation hike, pinto bean supper, and lecture on Syngenta water quality and pollinator initiatives presented by Dr. Jennifer Shaw, Head of Sustainability—all this complete with a rolling vista of grazing horses.

—Jenny Edwards

DRBA Provides River Displays for the MARC

Rockingham County boasts a new regional museum in the 1908 courthouse in Wentworth—the Museum & Archives of Rockingham County (MARC). After several years of planning and months of renovation and upfit, the museum opened on August 11 with a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, "Journey Stories." Among the local displays are two that feature the rivers, thanks to DRBA.

For an exhibit about local Native Americans, DRBA's

Brian Williams created a poster with photographs of fish weirs in the Dan, Mayo, and Smith rivers. A diagram illustrates how the vee-shaped structures in the river bed were used to funnel fish into a waiting basket or net.

A six-foot-long model of a batteau built by talented carpenter Mike Covey, DRBA's first vice president, is a popular display among school children who are touring the museum this fall. Eden artist Dorcas Midkiff created two boatmen, a canvas awning, and cargo for the model, which has been displayed previously in other museums, public buildings, and festivals throughout the basin. Historian and DRBA founding board member Lindley Butler provided the story of batteau traffic on the rivers. Illustrations include the map from DRBA's "Batteau Navigation Trail" brochure and a photograph of the Eden batteau mural painted by DRBA member Kitty Williams and Jack Stone.



The six-foot-long model of a batteau built by Mike Covey.

On the "green" beside the courthouse is the replica batteau Dan River, courtesy of Three Rivers Outfitters (3RO). 3RO operated the batteau on the Dan for several years, before it foundered in high water and was held fast in sand. In 2010, a joint effort by the NC Underwater Archaeology Branch, 3RO, DRBA and other volunteers recovered the batteau. It now sits on its trailer at the MARC where a DRBA-created sign tells its history.

Closed temporarily after the Smithsonian exhibit travels on, the MARC will reopen in November. Hours are Wednesday-Friday, 2:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. For more information, see www.themarconline.org.

—T Butler

Anna Wallace Joins Team DRBA

Anna Wallace, who has been serving as a DRBA intern and volunteer for over a year, has joined the DRBA staff as part-time Project Coordinator. A



Anna Wallace, DRBA Project Coordinator.

resident of Stuart, Virginia, Anna is directing several projects in Patrick County. These include developing a Patrick County Recreation Master Plan, being the lead DRBA contractor to assist Piedmont Triad Regional Council with assessing impaired water and land in Virginia, starting a DRBA Club in Patrick County, assisting the Martinsville-Henry County office with Trout in the Classroom tanks

in Patrick County, and building new trails in Patrick County.

Anna earned her Bachelor's Degree in Humanities, Science and the Environment from Virginia Tech, where she also participated in the Earth Sustainability Program.

"I am thrilled to be a part of Team DRBA! I feel very fortunate to be working with such an exceptional group of people toward a mission that I am passionate about."

As she has been doing, Anna will work with other DRBA staff throughout the basin as needed. She will soon be located out of a new Patrick County, VA office. She can be reached at awallace@danriver.org. Please welcome Anna to Team DRBA!

Caswell County River Days

In partnership with Henry County Public Schools and DRBA's first River Days Festival was held on Saturday, June 16 at Farmer Lake in Yanceyville, NC. The family-focused



Fun times at the River Days Festival

event promoted water safety and education. Activities enjoyed by the over 100 children and parents included water quality education, using the Tub-of-Bugs; River and Trail Storytelling by Dr. Forrest Altman; fish casting lessons; a buffer education game; and educational booths and vendors.

The most popular activity was getting out onto the lake in canoes and kayaks. Several of the children – and some of the parents – did so for the first time in their life. The smiles on their faces displayed their excitement and wonderment at the end of the day.

REI Grant for volunteers

Our friends at REI (Greensboro) recently provided a grant of \$5,000 to be used to recruit, train and reward DRBA volunteers.



Left to right: Kara Montgomery (Store Manager), Nancy Bell (DRBA Resource Director), Valerie Justis (REI Outreach Specialist), and Fletcher Waynick (DRBA Board President).

Tiny Trout Come to Rockingham County

Over seven years, DRBA has brought Trout in the Classroom (TIC) to over 15,000 students in five Virginia counties. This past school year, TIC stepped over the state line to Ms. Gina Gammon's class in Leaksville-Spray Elementary and Ms. Amber Holland's class in Stoneville Elementary in Rockingham County. As 4th grade teachers, they cover wildlife habitats, adaptation and ecology, and the TIC program was a valuable teaching tool in their science curriculum.

"DRBA's TIC has brought to life the science curriculum in 30 classrooms in Southern Virginia," said Tiffany Haworth, DRBA Executive Director. "We're grateful to the financial sponsors who made it possible to bring this award-winning program into Rockingham

County schools. Our students are now getting the same opportunity to raise and release their very own trout.”

Adds Jenny Edwards, Rockingham County Program Manager, “The students are completely responsible for raising trout from eggs to fingerlings, which means they must grasp and interconnect concepts such as PH levels, temperature, oxygen levels and more. The trout depend upon the student’s understanding of biology and mathematics, and that gives meaning to those subjects in ways that books simply cannot do on their own.”

Students keep daily journals, noting observations connected to their curriculum and recording the different stages of the trout’s life cycle.

June Nealy, Principal of Leaksville-Spray Elementary, observes, “The students who participated in raising those



trout, when they performed writing exercises about the tank, wrote more and were more engaged in their writing, and that skill is critical to their academic success. That’s



Students from Stoneville Elementary celebrate the release of their trout.

why I was so excited about the opportunity to have a trout tank in our school.”

Besides providing a living incentive to learn math, biology, language and other subjects, simply having a fish tank in a classroom contributes to the general learning environment.

“You could feel the calmness in that classroom with the trout tank,” said Nealy. “The students were very engaged. There was what I call ‘academic noise,’ but no unnecessary noise ... there was a dramatic difference between that classroom and a typical 4th grade class.”

DRBA’s TIC program is recruiting volunteers. For more information on how you can become involved in this exciting environmental program, contact Krista Hodges, Education Outreach Coordinator at khodges@danriver.org.

DRBA Partners Clean 30 Miles of Smith River

On August 4 DRBA partnered with Smith River Trout Unlimited (SRTU), Henry County, and Gateway Streetscape to accomplish a historic first: 30 miles of the Smith River were targeted for cleanup in a single day. Thanks to an advertising blitz, over 200 volunteers and local companies come out to pitch in and pick up, willing to spend a Saturday getting muddy, dirty and wet on behalf of the community.

A healthy community starts with healthy water. Clean and healthy rivers provide everything from clean drinking water to recreation opportunities to fish and wildlife habitat. DRBA’s continuing mission is keeping our waters safe and clean.

SRTU, also committed to clean rivers and a healthy watershed, has officially adopted 30 miles of the Smith River from Philpott Dam to Mitchell Bridge. SRTU has registered with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to hold two cleanups each year. According to Vice President Lisa “Cricket” Hall, “We have an amazing resource in the Smith River not only as a fishery but for the other recreational opportunities it offers as well. It can be a real draw for tourism with all the new trails, river access sites, fishing and paddling opportunities—but not unless it gets cleaned up and stays that way.”



—Photo by Brian Williams

The biggest story for the clean up this year was tires - 690 of them! At this year’s National River Rally, Krista Hodges and Brian Williams learned that Bridgestone Tire Company has a program for taking all tires removed from a river clean-up. By registering DRBA for the Bridgestone program, Hodges and Williams arranged for all 690 tires removed

from the Smith River to be disposed of free of charge. Huge thanks to the folks at Bridgestone!

River users from all over the region were



Tires collected on the Smith River.
-Photo by Brian Williams

involved. Some volunteers came out before the actual day of the cleanup to help pull tires and debris from the river, and others came to help cook so volunteers could share a meal together after a long day on the river.

Participating in river clean-ups is just one way that DRBA members help give back to the rivers and streams they love. Rivers connect us to each other, to nature, and to future generations. DRBA is proud to be part of the volunteer efforts that keep our rivers clean and healthy. DRBA and SRTU thank the partners and many sponsors that helped make this event a huge success.

-Brian Williams

Smith River Fest Attracts Record Crowd

The fifth annual Smith River Fest was held on August 11 at the Smith River Sports Complex. More than 1,500 people came out to paddle, race or just enjoy the vendors and activities. DRBA partnered with Henry County Parks and Recreation, Martinsville-Henry County EDC's Tourism & Film Division, Smith River Sports Complex, Activate Martinsville-Henry County and the Boys & Girls Club of the Blue Ridge to organize and stage the event.

Six years ago, Henry County Administrator Benny Summerlin suggested to DRBA's Jennifer Doss and Brian Williams that they might obtain a special water release from Philpott Dam for a weekend event celebrating the river. From there the festival has grown to be an annual celebration for novice and experienced paddlers of all ages and anyone wanting to enjoy the outdoors along the beautiful Smith River.

The lower field at the access ramp was once again converted into a "river village" with over 60 vendors of foods and arts and crafts, a rock climbing wall, a petting zoo, free rides and games for kids, nature displays and activities, and live music by the Boys & Girls Club Steel Drum Band and Will Zimmer and Friends.

Over 50 paddlers competed in the downriver race. A special addition this year was the "Hellgrammite Hustle" 5K Mud Run, hosted by Activate MHC. Over 130 racers

competed on a course built by volunteers and staff from all the organizing partners. Spectators could watch the action from several locations as racers ran through mud pits, over obstacles and down the creek.

This year's event was dedicated to Benny Summerlin for his vision for the future and love of the Smith River and our region. Sadly, Benny passed away less than two weeks after the festival, but his memory will live on through the Smith River Fest and the great outdoor recreational opportunities that he helped to develop in our region.

Stomping with our Friends in Stokes

Hundreds of people attended Stokes Stomp, a popular annual festival in Danbury that features local music, food and artisans. Once again DRBA sponsored "kids kayaking" and



provided an information table with plenty of outdoor related products for sale. DRBA's new line of merchandise was a big hit with folks of all ages: kids loved the multifunction whistles, water enthusiasts purchased the dry bags, and outdoor recreationalists took home DRBA's comprehensive river guides and other books about the history of the region. To check out what's new in the DRBA store, visit our new website: www.danriver.org.

Seasoned kayaker Dale Swanson shares his love of the sport with kids at Stokes Stomp. - Photo by Jenny Edwards.

Field to Friends

A local foods organization, Field to Friends (F2F), is holding its annual local foods network conference on October 18, 2012, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm at the Spencer-Penn Centre, Spencer, Virginia. Details can be viewed at <http://farmcreditofvirginias.wordpress.com/2012/09/19/2012-local-foods-network-conference/>.

F2F's mission is to educate, cultivate and empower sustainable food communities by bringing recognition and opportunities for local food from the field to our friends. The theme of the second annual conference is Taking the Product to Market. Attendees will have an opportunity to explore marketing ideas and resources for getting your farm products to the consumer.



-Wayne Kirkpatrick

OUTINGS

Women in Nature WINS!

It's 9 a.m. on a Saturday at Gravelly Nature Preserve, and on the small lawn are a dozen women in the downward dog yoga pose. Most are new to yoga, trusting and moving in unison in the dappled light, quiet, contemplative. They are participating in a new program called, Women in Nature – Body & Soul.

WIN immerses women of all ages into nature, teaches them some new skills, and introduces them to other women who want to be outside, away from obligations. Each activity takes place in a different setting and has a theme.

Today's theme is creativity. After yoga, the women embark on a silent hike, encouraging them to experience the preserve fully. They use their cameras to capture nature from different perspectives, allowing their creativity to take over. In the canopy birds sing, and a cracking branch reveals an on-looking doe. Quietly, one points out poison ivy, and the rest of the group make a wide circle around the unassuming plant. Midway through the hike, when the trail comes alongside the roaring Smith River, the women pause, and conversation begins. Wading in the shallow water at river's edge they photograph Rose Mallow, Forget-me-Nots, colorful river rocks and the river itself. The seldom seen "walking fern" is spotted, and cameras click.

In sharing the morning together, new friendships are forged, and the women make dates to explore other hiking trails on their own. Each receives a book for the photos they have taken today and the opportunity to save a spot on future adventures.

"This is a great way to experience how beautiful our region is," says Linda Drage. Although her wrist is broken and a leg is sore, she makes her way down the path with the enthusiasm of someone much younger. "I helped clear this trail, and I'm proud to be sharing it with others today."

–Nancy Bell



–Photo by Nancy Bell

Mark Your Calendars!

Among upcoming events of interest (details on DRBA web site):

November 3, Lower Dan/Banister paddle.

December 1, Hike at South Boston.

DRBA Dogs Celebrate Blue Moon

DRBA celebrated the "Blue Moon" of summer on August 31 with a members-only DRBA Dog Hike on the new nature trails at Rockingham Community College in Wentworth, NC. One did not



need a dog to enjoy the hour-long, twilight hike with trained naturalist, Joy Fields, who shared with hikers the folklore of native plants. The hike ended with - what else? - homemade moon pies (chocolate moon pies for people and carob moon pies for the dogs!).

July 7 on Talbott Lake

Only three weeks into our retirement, my husband Tom and I were ready to try out our new kayaks. We saw the article about DRBA's trip on Talbott Lake, and took the chance to paddle this isolated mountain lake and get introduced to DRBA. After meeting in Meadows of Dan and driving to the put in, the 35 people quickly got underway.

As we paddled upstream we followed the natural winding bends of the Dan River along its now flooded steep and winding course cut over millions of years down the steep Blue Ridge escarpment. The lake has the look and feel of a wide river without the current. High canyon walls rise

on either side, and the last white blossoms of the rosebay rhododendrons that lined the banks covered the water. The mid-day sun was hot, but there was plenty of shade along the banks for this quiet invasion of paddlers.

Small side creeks flowed into the lake, and we stopped at the mouth of one about two miles up the lake to eat lunch on a high rock and visit with some other “first timers.” When we finished we paddled the last half mile to the spot where lake suddenly changed back into a small mountain stream. The water temperature dropped suddenly as the cold water spilled across the rocks into the lake. We had a glimpse of what the river was like some 80 years ago, before the dam was built.

Maybe it was the time of day and the heat, but I was surprised at the lack of wildlife. That changed when a fellow paddler noticed large bear tracks on one side of the stream leading into the water and reemerging on the other side.

After a paddle back to the take out, everyone worked together to get boats and people up the steep path and loaded up. We had a very special day to celebrate our new retirement and a great introduction to the folks of Dan River Basin Association. We look forward to joining in on more trips.

—Mindy DeCesar

August 4 in Kibler Valley

A fast flowing stream, a beautiful day, a green valley and a DRBA flotilla; what could be more fun?

Will Truslow coordinated the paddle on the Dan River coming out of Kibler Valley. Here the Dan is normally shallow, filled with cobblestones and small boulders, and cannot be paddled. But when water is released by the City of Danville Hydroelectric Plant, the stream becomes a fast ride while dodging the rocks. The first section below the dam is for skilled whitewater paddlers, but few have experienced the less turbulent 2nd section. Although we had no big rapids or difficult boulder fields, the fast flow with abundant rocks required better than beginner skills. Several paddlers capsized, and while not dangerous, the fast water made recovery a little challenging.

DRBA thanks Les Slate for allowing river entry on his private property. The take-out was 5.5 miles away at the “swimming hole” on Sawmill Lane. The group was also thankful to Wayne Kirkpatrick and his team for prior scouting and debris clearing. Downed trees or other blockages are sometimes issues on the smaller streams.

28 people enjoyed the valley where the stream ran between steep uninhabited ridge lines with remnants of an early railroad visible. We lunched with permission at the Horton cabin but unfortunately had to continue on

before the planned evening birthday party began. The cake sure looked good.

While it was my first time on this part of the Dan, it was grand. I’ll be back and I now have the desire to travel the “unknown” 3rd section in 2013.

—Joel Deaton

September 1 on the Dan

The September paddle was a 5.5 mile trip from Jacob’s Creek to Eagle Falls in Rockingham County. The day was hot and humid, but 29 boats and 35 paddlers enjoyed the leisurely float to Eagle Falls, where the choice was to run the ledges or the sluice. That was where the adventure began with most not following Lucas’ recommendation to run the sluice side. Yes, sometimes the guide really does know best. The ledges presented navigational challenges, but eventually everyone made it, some wetter than others. The takeout made the Settles Bridge access easy by comparison. But everyone pitched in and ensured both paddlers and watercraft made it to the top of the STEEP embankment.

This was Elaine’s and my first paddle with DRBA and it won’t be the last. As newcomers, we were concerned that it might be a cliquey group, but that wasn’t the case. Lucas Conkle and Wayne Kirkpatrick made it a point to include everyone. It was great fun to be with a great dedicated group of paddlers who enjoy being on the river. If you didn’t go on this trip, you missed a memorable adventure.

—Rich Schoeller

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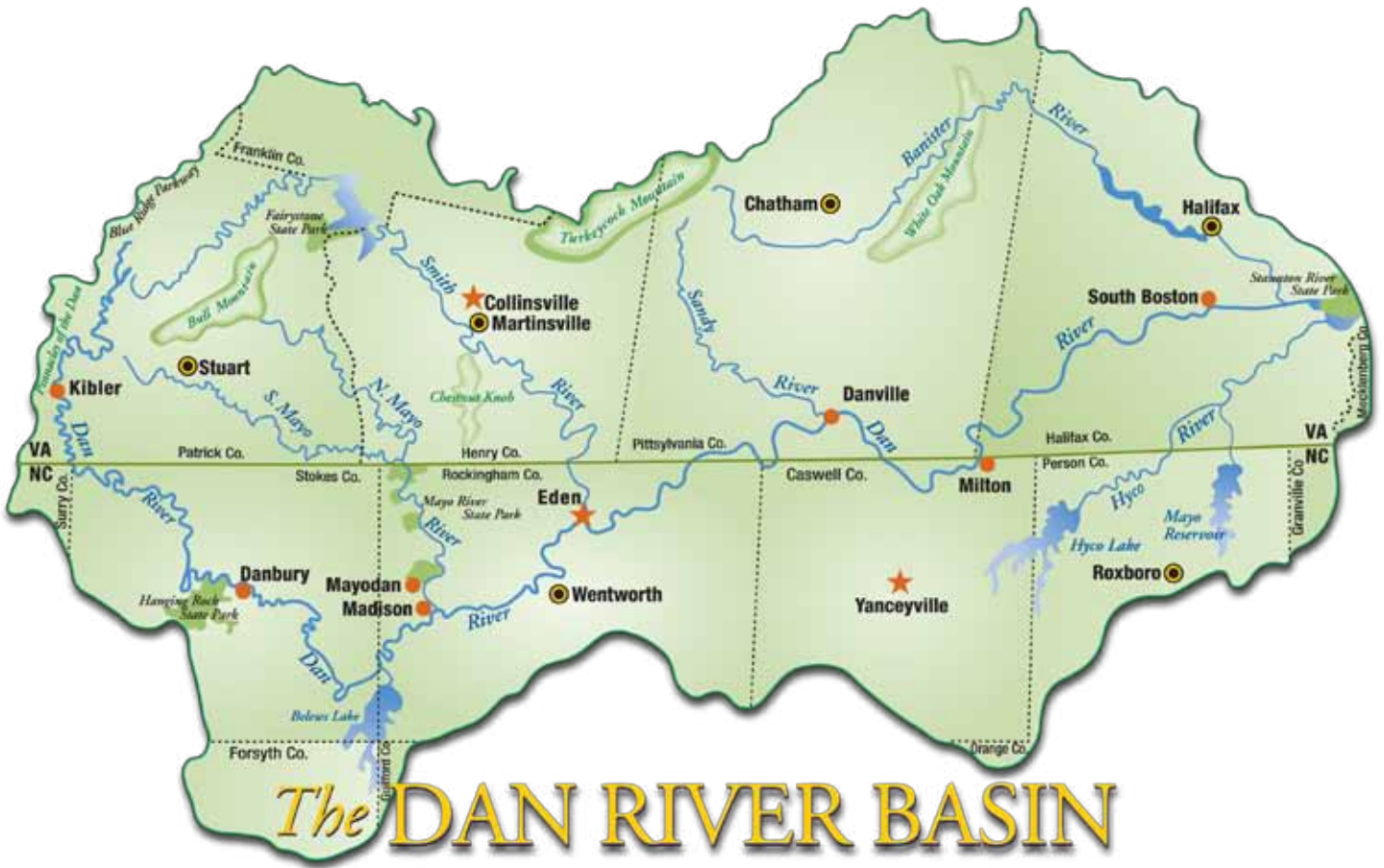
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