

The Newsletter of the Dan River Basin Association

CURRENTS

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DRBA TURNS 10

HERITAGE INITIATIVE

FRACKING IN THE DAN RIVER BASIN

NEW TRAILS ADDED

TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM



NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE
413 Church Street, Suite 401
Eden, NC 27288-3242

Tiffany Haworth
Executive Director
336-627-6271
thaworth@danriver.org

Jenny Edwards
Program Manager
336-339-6169
jedwards@danriver.org

Robin Light
Office/Accounting Manager
336-627-6270
rlight@danriver.org

VIRGINIA OFFICE
3300 Kings Mountain Road
P.O. Box 7
Collinsville, VA 24078

Brian Williams
Rivers & Trails Program Manager
276-634-2545
bwilliams@danriver.org

Krista Hodges
Education Outreach Coordinator
276-634-2592
khodges@danriver.org

Regenia Spencer
Administrative Assistant
276-634-2591

CASWELL OFFICE
Chad Hall
Program Manager
336-344-0608
chall@danriver.org

STOKES FIELD OFFICE
Dale Swanson
Stokes Program Coordinator
336-593-3722
dswanson@danriver.org

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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 held
February 15, 2012, 5 p.m. at Eden City Hall.

CURRENTS

Staff

Editor: T Butler
Design: David Pinney

Cover photo by Betty Kirkpatrick

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-Photo by Brian Williams

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Photo by Lucas Conkle

In 2012, DRBA celebrates our 10th year as the only bi-state nonprofit organization focused on preserving and protecting our region's natural and cultural resources. Although I've only been on the DRBA staff for 8 months, I've been a supporter of the organization for well over half of its life.

As with any birthday, it's a time for us to take a look back at what has been – and to look forward to what will come. The

list of what's been accomplished in the last decade would fill up a 100-page newsletter, but here are a few highlights:

- The communities that DRBA serves have cleaner rivers and more access to outdoor recreational activities
- Students are getting better grades in math and science because of DRBA in the Classroom

- Local businesses are making more money because of sustainability programs
- Families are walking, paddling, fishing and biking more
- More tourists are coming to visit our beautiful area.

DRBA truly has made an enormous impact. Now it's time to look forward to what's next for this amazing organization. That's up to you, its members. DRBA exists because you care about our water and land, because you want future generations to be able to enjoy the outdoors, because you believe that our beautiful and unique cultural and natural resources can help our economy succeed. You will determine the next ten years of accomplishments and successes by giving your time, talent and treasure.

I'm looking forward to a year of celebrating a decade of DRBA. Let's invite everyone we know to be a part of the DRBA family in 2012!

–Tiffany Haworth

PRESIDENT'S SPACE



Photo by Betty Kirkpatrick

Ten years of success as a unique bi-state environmental organization. Ten years of delivering a mission of preserving and promoting the natural and cultural resources of the Dan River basin. Ten years of achieving positive economic development through education, stewardship and recreation. Ten years – a decade of DRBA!

This year, like the preceding nine, has seen challenges and successes. The combined support of time, effort and dollars from donors, foundations, staff and volunteers has enabled DRBA to rise to the challenges and achieve the successes of the past year and the past decade. DRBA's next decade holds great promise for continued successes, but also guaranteed challenges.

Please join the DRBA Board of Directors in helping continue DRBA's success in meeting the challenges of this

region. Every donation up to \$10,000 will be matched by the DRBA Board. Make your dollars double today!

–Wayne Kirkpatrick



Illustration by David Pinney

FEATURES

Heritage Initiative Moves Forward

On December 2, over twenty representatives from arts, cultural, historical, environmental and tourism organizations from across the Dan River basin joined DRBA staff and volunteers at the Reynolds Homestead to discuss how to market this beautiful region to attract tourists, businesses and families. This was the third meeting of the Dan River Valley Heritage Initiative (DRVHI).



Photo by Tiffany Haworth

“It was another successful meeting,” said T Butler, co-founder of DRBA and Secretary of the DRBA Board of Directors. “DRBA hopes to attract people and businesses to this region by promoting its beautiful natural resources and unique cultural attractions. Every organization showed great willingness to collaborate and partner to achieve this vision.”

DRVHI Plans for 2012 include a historical driving tour developed by regional historical societies; an interactive map on DRBA’s website that highlights paddling, fishing, hiking, cultural, historical and arts attractions; collaborative promotion of events and services of regional organizations; and a list-serv where DRVHI organizations can share information.

“We still have a lot of work to do,” said Tiffany Haworth, DRBA’s Executive Director. “But we are all committed to promoting all the Dan River Valley has to offer and boosting our local economy as a result.”

–Tiffany Haworth

Come Walk A Shelter Dog!

In November more than 30 volunteers broke ground on a new walking trail in Rockingham County. The Animal Shelter Trail links the county’s governmental center with the new animal shelter, providing a place for volunteers to

exercise shelter dogs.

“We are very happy about this new trail,” says shelter director Kevin Baughn. “It’s a beautiful wooded path for getting the dogs out, interacting with people and enjoying some exercise. And of course well-socialized dogs are much more likely to be adopted.”

Funding came from DRBA, REI, and Rockingham County; Prillaman Landscape Dimensions provided more than \$1,000 in in-kind services; and Reidsville’s Office City furnished Community Coffee. The trail is expected to open to the public next spring.

–Jenny Edwards



Rockingham Community College Science Club volunteered to build the Animal Shelter Trail



C.D. and Skyler Prillaman operated the trail building machine

More Trails and Improvements in Henry County

Beaver Creek Reservoir: The new Rock Ridge Trail is boot-and-bike ready, thanks to support from the Harvest Foundation. Beginning at the picnic pavilion parking lot, the low-impact natural surface trail winds through a beautiful hardwood ridge past rock outcroppings, eventually meandering down to the shore of the 750-acre lake, then back up into the woods to form a one-mile loop. Plans call for continuing the trail around the shoreline in the future.

A new sign at the reservoir, “This is Your Drinking Water,” explains the purpose of the lake and the importance of keeping our waterways clean and litter-free. Installed by students from Carlisle School, with support from the City of Martinsville, this sign attempts to mitigate litter problems near the reservoir. A partnership with DRBA and the Martinsville Rotary Club will provide plantings to address erosion near the parking area.

Textile Heritage Trail: An extension of the Fieldale Trail, this is a 2500-foot loop where Henry County’s rich contributions to the textile industry will be showcased. Not

far from the historic Fieldcrest Cannon factory, the trail was supported by the Economic Development Corporation and Dominion Power and includes a 1200-ft boardwalk, the first of its kind on the county. Five interpretive signs will be installed along the trail to provide users a sense of the area's importance in providing sweatshirts, socks, towels and linens to our nation. So much history right under our feet!

Roy Mitchell Memorial Trail: Yet another new project, Phase I of this trail at Lauren Mountain Preserve will be ready for hikers by the new year. The half-mile trail includes a scenic bridge across a small tributary of the Smith River, an easy out and back trail along the river, and beautiful views of rock outcroppings and the sycamore and beech trees along the mountain flanks. Lauren Mountain Preserve is the property of Dr. David Jones, whose generosity in granting an easement has made the trail possible. When funding becomes available, Phase II will take hikers up the ridge and across the top of the mountain to form a loop trail. Access is provided at a pull-off on Wells Hollow drive near the Trent Hill Bridge and the Bassett Canoe Access.

River Access: The Smith River Sports Complex canoe access ramp area has been improved with the help of volunteer labor and Henry County. A new Eagle Scout project will install an observation deck nearby. Plans to improve the existing trails include additional river view areas, observation decks and benches.

–Brian Williams and Krista Hodges

Trout in the Classroom: Kids and the River

'Tis the season for giving – precious little bundles of brown trout eggs, that is! Bundles of about 200 eggs were delivered to each of 30 eagerly awaiting classrooms, officially kicking off the 7th season of Trout in the Classroom.

The eggs are eye-ups at this point, meaning that dark eye spots and even some movement can be seen within the egg, promising that some eggs will hatch before Christmas break! Right after they hatch, the next stage of the trout's life cycle is known as the alevin, which has a yolk sac as its source of food for the next few weeks.

When the kids return from break, excitement and education continue as they watch these tiny little guys grow over the next few months. The students will learn how to care for the fingerlings and grow to understand that without someone to take responsibility for their care, they will not survive. The students will also monitor the water quality and learn how an ecosystem functions. Once the students recognize their connection with the brown trout and the world around them, they often want to help keep our waterways and environment healthy.

In October, thanks to a partnership with the Martinsville Speedway, NASCAR driver Jimmie Johnson visited a TIC tank at Rich Acres Elementary and then travelled with students to the Smith River to release the trout fingerlings! This event had wide media coverage, and Mr. Johnson expressed great interest in the program.

At a recent Smith River Trout Unlimited meeting, state biologist Scott Smith reported higher numbers of Brown Trout in the river. The current practice of bringing one generator at a time online at Philpott helps enhance the fishery through reduced scouring and increased trout food supply. Additional improvement will come with stream bank restoration and stabilization to reduce silt in the river. The state is considering permitting release of some TIC fingerlings below Martinsville Dam, where Brown Trout are surviving well.

–Krista Hodges, Wayne Kirkpatrick

A Look at Fracking in the Dan River Basin

The Dan River Basin may soon be opened to natural gas extraction by fracking. According to the gas industry, natural gas provides “clean” energy that will create tens of thousands of jobs. However, a careful look at its environmental and economic impacts reveals serious downsides.

Natural gas is considered clean because, for electricity generation, it produces about half the carbon emissions of coal. However, the drilling and fracking technologies used to release gas trapped deep in shale beds draws millions of gallons of water, threatens ground and surface waters, disrupts natural and scenic areas, and requires the construction of roads, pipelines and noisy compressor stations.

For some, environmental impacts of drilling may seem acceptable trade-offs for economic gain. Landowners hope leasing and royalty contracts will provide income. The gas industry promises jobs in regions, like the Dan River Basin, that desperately need them. However, many landowners in other states regret signing such contracts. They have been saddled with hidden fees and “production costs.” In some cases the companies have left behind pools of contaminated water contained only by plastic liners and a thin layer of soil, thus meeting contractual obligations for “restoring” drilling sites. Landowners have had to pay for damages to land, crops, livestock and water.

As for jobs, out-of-state temporary workers fill most of the higher-paying positions. A Penn State study found that the number of jobs created by drilling in Pennsylvania was about half of industry projections. Further, staff members at the Energy Information Administration (EIA) doubt the industry's projections for profitable shale gas extraction. One EIA analyst likened them to a “giant Ponzi scheme.”

Fracking is now illegal in North Carolina, but the

legislature mandated the NC Department of Energy and Natural Resources to study its environmental and economic impacts and may reverse current policies. The final report will be presented to the legislature in May 2012.

More information, including a map, can be found at www.portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest.

—Sarah Ladd

Stewardship Update – Landfill

DRBA's opposition to the Special Use Permit for the proposed landfill on Dan River just west of Eden continues on its projected track. The 1,700-acre property being considered for a regional landfill has 4 miles of river frontage. In September, on behalf of DRBA and adjoining neighbors, DRBA's attorney filed objections to the Rockingham County Planning Department's acceptance of the application and its interpretation of the local zoning ordinance. This case was heard by Rockingham County's Board of Adjustment on November 14. A 6-5 majority of the Board of Adjustment agreed with DRBA's position; however, to overturn the Planning Staff's actions we needed to receive 9 out of 11 votes.

DRBA will be appealing this decision by Rockingham County to the Superior Court in early January. At this time no further action has been taken on the Special Use Permit application.

Please assist our legal efforts to continue opposing the location of a landfill on the Dan River by sending a donation to DRBA's Stewardship Fund. We must raise approximately \$25,000 to continue to oppose approval of the Special Use Permit application that may be considered by Rockingham County to allow a landfill on this property.

Send your contribution to DRBA, 413 Church Street, Suite 401, Eden, NC 27288, or donate online at www.danriver.org/Members/Gifts_Donations. Thank you!

—Mark Bishopric

Branding Outdoor Recreation in Stokes County

In partnership with Stokes County Economic Development, DRBA has received an \$800 grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation to create unique signs for outdoor recreation areas in Stokes County. A prototype informational kiosk will be developed, with plans to place similar signs at trail and river access points throughout Stokes County.

“Uniform signage will create brand identity that will help citizens and visitors recognize quality recreation sites throughout Stokes County,” said Dale Swanson, project manager. “And providing space for sponsor recognition will

enhance our ability to engage partners to support our work in the future,” he added.

The grant is awarded from the Bill Johnson Trust to Benefit Stokes County, established to honor the leadership and vision of the late William Howard Johnson, Jr., of Walnut Cove. The Winston-Salem Foundation administers over 1300 funds to support charitable programs in greater Forsyth County, awarding more than \$18 million in 2010. To sponsor a sign, call Swanson at 336-593-3722.

—Nancy Bell

This Winter in Caswell County

Heritage Trails Master Plan: The first draft is complete! This community-based, conceptual plan is a blueprint for trails, greenways, and blueways to connect people and places in Caswell County. After proof-reading and final revisions, it will be presented to the public.

Art and Poetry Exhibits: As the first phase of DRBA's “river awareness” campaign, school children in Caswell County submitted twenty-eight art pieces and twenty poems based on the theme, “Dan River and Caswell County Trails.” In addition to being featured in the Caswell Messenger, the artwork and poetry will become a travelling display, building up to a River Days festival in 2012.



A child's perspective of the Dan

Caswell County Heritage Driving Tour: Over 20 “not-to-miss” sites and scenes across Caswell County comprise the driving tour, now in its final design stage. This spring, come



A new trail is born. Photo by Chad Hall.

and tour through the county's storied past amidst a beautiful landscape, focusing on the historical and cultural aspects of the community. It will make an excellent trip, especially for artists and history enthusiasts.

Caswell County Heritage Calendar: Just in time for the Brightleaf Hoedown and the holidays, DRBA intern Hillary White helped create the Caswell County Heritage Calendar featuring photos of places in the county alongside quotes from famous authors. Response to the calendar has been very good.

Multi-use Trail System Expands: On October 22, volunteers cleared the first loop of the hybrid trail system in Yanceyville beside Oakwood Elementary School. After some stumps are removed, mountain bikers can join the walkers and joggers already using the new trail. Over 2 miles are planned for this trail, which should progress rapidly with continued volunteer assistance.

—Chad Hall

MillerCoors Stewardship Day



Photo by Tiffany Haworth

In honor of Water Stewardship month, over 15 volunteers from MillerCoors participated in a cleanup and beautification effort at Draper Landing Access on the Dan River in October. Organized by DRBA and MillerCoors,

with help from the City of Eden, they picked up litter along the river and planted trees.

Drew Lucas, MillerCoors environmental health and safety awareness representative, commented, "It's important to us at MillerCoors, where water is used in every part of the brewing process, to keep our water clean. We want to make sure we're doing our part to maintain and preserve our natural resources."

This is the third year of MillerCoors' participation with DRBA, with earlier projects at Island Ford Landing and Leaksville Landing. MillerCoors 10 brewery locations and corporate facilities across the country partner with local non-profit organizations and host volunteer events designed to improve water quality every year. "Water is our most important resource and key to a secure future for our business and the communities where we operate. For years, our goal has been to brew and package more beer while using less water," said MillerCoors Chief Executive Officer Leo Kiely. "Given our roots near the Rocky Mountains and on the shores of Lake Michigan, we are mindful of our

environmental footprint and take water very seriously."

Stewardship Days are just one way DRBA partners with local businesses. DRBA takes groups of employees or management teams on paddling or hiking trips, conducts in-house workshops, and develops sustainability initiatives that save companies money.

If your company wants to help protect our natural resources—and inspire employees, build customer loyalty and increase your bottom line—please call the DRBA office near you or email thaworth@danriver.org for more information.

—Tiffany Haworth

Rockingham County Pathways

DRBA and Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) are working with Rockingham County citizens to create a master plan for trails, with support from Reidsville Area Foundation, the county and all municipalities. Six public workshops, other presentations, and an online survey are collecting local input.

Tourists cite recreational trails as a top priority for visiting a location. A trails master plan on a locality's web site tells prospective residents and investors that a community values quality of life and has a vision for the future. Moreover, ten miles of rail trail yield \$500,000 average annual benefit to a local economy, and homes near recreational trails are more valuable than comparable homes elsewhere.



Wentworth officials participate in the trail workshop

As our economy diversifies, localities are increasingly planning amenities, such as trails, that attract knowledge-based companies. Indeed, recreational trails are taking off throughout the Dan River region! DRBA is excited to be part of all this energy and expects to accomplish much more with recreational trails in 2012.

To learn about Rockingham County Pathways and participate in the survey, visit www.rockinghamcountytrails.org. Business, civic or religious organizations interested in a presentation about the project may contact Jenny Edwards, DRBA Program Manager, at 336-339-6169 or Jesse Day, Regional Planner with PTRC, at 336-294-4950.

—Jenny Edwards

ADVENTURES

October 15 at Singletree

“Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird, I would fly about the world seeking successive autumns.”

—George Eliot

For many of us, autumn is our favorite time of year. By the time this is being read, autumn 2011 will be a recent memory. My wish is that the clarity and brightness of a perfect October day in the North Carolina foothills still reverberates with those of us privileged to participate in the hike at Singletree Gun & Plough.

For a DRBA first-time hiker, it was a great opportunity to make some new, nature-loving friends, as well as renew some old acquaintances. I'm grateful to our hostess for generously sharing this pristine, private property and soaring vistas. And, what a lovely light lunch DRBA's staff provided for us hikers – just perfect!

Even though the trail was steep and a bit slippery here and there, we all descended safely through the early fall leaves dappled in vibrant sunlight to the banks of the Dan. The river was quiet, moving slowly at a friendly pace, beckoning us to explore its shore. I imagined the native tribes and early settlers who must have enjoyed this spot. Hikers' voices drifted through the woods – shouts, chatter and the ringing clarity of a child's voice. Even though I found myself a bit breathless during the ascent, it seemed a happy time for all – young, older and in-between – away from the humdrum of our daily lives.

Thank you, DRBA, for introducing me to this beautiful part of our state and the opportunity here to share my reflections. I look forward to our next hike and seeing everyone there as well!

—Patricia Madden

From Marrowbone to Mitchell on November 5

Hug the rock. No, it doesn't mean to start a meaningful relationship; it's good advice if your kayak gets stuck. This was just one useful safety tip Wayne Kirkpatrick gave the group about to venture down the Smith River on a cold, sunny November Saturday.

Gathering at Marrowbone Creek were 19 people of all backgrounds and races, but with this in common: a love of the environment and a passion for paddling. Everyone was friendly and supportive. The river's icy water was calm

where we put in; little did I know that ripples were around the bend.

The first white water I saw, I felt a little pang of panic, visualizing my kayak tipping over and dumping me into the chilly water. I carefully watched how everyone maneuvered through the rocks and ripples. Wayne's helpful hints echoed in my head. I paddled through the ripple, got stuck on a rock, hugged it, and made it successfully through.

At the two-thirds mark of the trip, the group divided. Some went to the lunch rock, while others paddled up Leatherwood Creek to see waterfalls. I chose the lunch rock. Basking in the sun, munching a sandwich, and enjoying good conversation was just the break I needed. Eventually everyone returned and relaxed in the sunshine.

By the last part of the trip my confidence had grown, and with encouragement from everyone in the group, I felt at ease in my kayak and more comfortable going through difficult areas of the river. I was able to enjoy the beautiful foliage and bird life.

At the end of the trip Brian Williams greeted us at the edge of the river, and everyone helped bring the vessels up the hill to our waiting cars. Joan Ragland's pumpkin squares were the perfect ending to a perfect day.

I thoroughly enjoyed the day and appreciated everyone's company. This is a great event that DRBA sponsors, and I would highly recommend it to anyone. You will definitely see me at a DRBA outing again!

—Courtney Haworth

December 3rd along the Mayo and North Mayo Rivers

On a sunny Saturday, DRBA members, friends, and guests met on a back road in Mayo River State Park. We set off on a hike following along the Mayo River and successfully crossed Fall Creek off the Mayo River, with all 44 hikers remaining dry. Following the creek, we encountered a breathtaking waterfall over worn rocks into a basin. Here, we learned about the history of the Deshazo Mill that used this water to power its wheel.

After time for photographs, we headed back along the creek and resumed following the Mayo River. We passed the confluence of the North Mayo and South Mayo rivers, hiking along the North Mayo. We reached a large rock outcrop, overlooking the river and covered in ferns. This beautiful site is Byrd Rock and sits along a series of small



Photo by Lucas Conkle

rocky waterfalls. Lindley Butler read from Byrd's journal about his early exploration of the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia. Byrd named many streams, including Matrimony Creek where, like his wife, the water was "exceedingly noisy and tempestuous."

On our hike back to our cars, we admired the beautiful surroundings, discussing holly berries, pipsissewa, and rattlesnake orchids. We also saw the freshly chopped stumps and trees of some resident beavers. We safely returned to a tray full of brownies after a beautiful day of fellowship and nature.



Photo by Lucas Conkle

—*Samanthe Tiver*

River Clean-up: Observations of a Non-Member

Despite forecasts of blustery weather, eight good citizens met on October 1st for DRBA's annual participation in NC Big Sweep. The Smith River in Eden was chosen for litter collection in what turned out to be a most pleasant and productive effort. T and Lindley Butler led the group, with careful instruction on safety, plus interesting information about the history, natural and human, along that stretch of the river.

So, how does one accomplish river clean-up of litter, mostly along the banks, from a moving canoe or kayak? Teamwork. Whether fishing out trash, holding the bag, or steadying a canoe for another to step out and collect plastic bottles, this is not a task accomplished solo.

Rewards? A very pleasant paddle along a beautiful stretch of river, fly-overs of a graceful Great Blue Heron and

a fussy Kingfisher, congenial conversation, and that sense of accomplishment that comes with completing a worthwhile task together.

As always with litter clean-up, some strange items were found: an unbroken automobile headlight, loads of plastic bottles, and one life-size Curious George, grateful for his rescue from the river.

All in all, twenty-one bags of garbage collected, a little more practice in river negotiation for this novice, and the realization that whatever the threat to this river basin, whether garbage or greater, teamwork is the key, and this group can accomplish it!

—*Susan Lassiter*



Above: Hikers enjoying the fall and winter landscapes along the Dan River. Photos by Brian Williams

MEMBERSHIPS

Sept. 16, 2011 | Dec. 15, 2011

Sponsor - River Legacy Circle

B. H. Cooper Farm & Mill, Inc
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Joe and Ellen Jessee
Dr. David Jones
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LOCATION KEY

WINTER IN CASWELL COUNTY P.7

FRACKING P.6

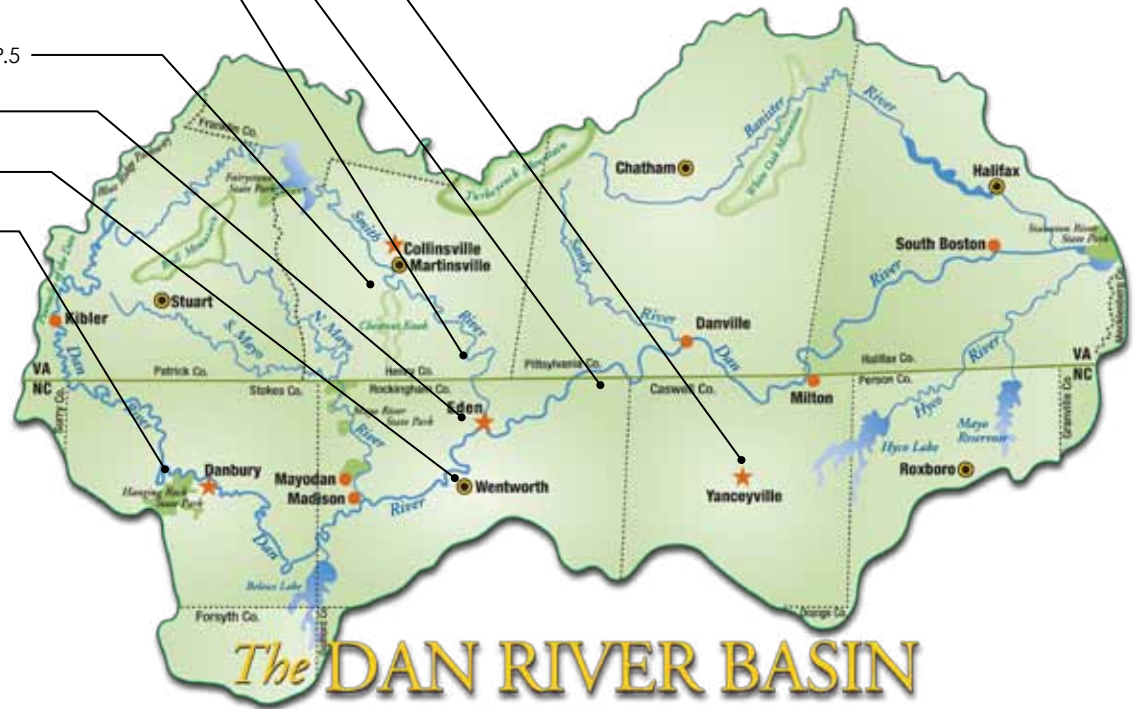
SMITH RIVER TRIP. P.9

HENRY COUNTY TRAILS P.5

LANDFILL P.7

SHELTER TRAIL P.5

SINGLETREE HIKE P.9



DAN RIVER BASIN ASSOCIATION
413 Church Street, Suite 401
Eden, NC 27288-3242



WWW.DANRIVER.ORG