

A photograph of two young girls sitting on a grassy area. The girl on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a pink and white jacket, holding a thin green plant stem. The girl on the right is wearing a colorful striped sweater and is smiling. In the background, there are trees and a parking lot with cars.

CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

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Toward a Brighter Future

**Creative Classrooms • Continuing the Cause on Uranium
Trails to New Destinations • Water: Pure and Simple**

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Dan River Basin Association

NORTH CAROLINA OFFICES

413 Church Street, Suite 401
Eden, NC 27288-3242

Tiffany Haworth
Executive Director
336-627-6261
thaworth@danriver.org

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

371 NC Hwy 65
Reidsville NC 27320

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

VIRGINIA OFFICES

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 Manager
276-634-2592
khodges@danriver.org

308 Craghead Street
Danville, VA 24541

Amy Farinelli
Program Manager
315-209-5055
afarinelli@danriver.org

Currents Newsletter

Editor
T Butler

Design/Production
Betty Kirkpatrick

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Krista Hodges
Wayne Kirkpatrick

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Krista Hodges

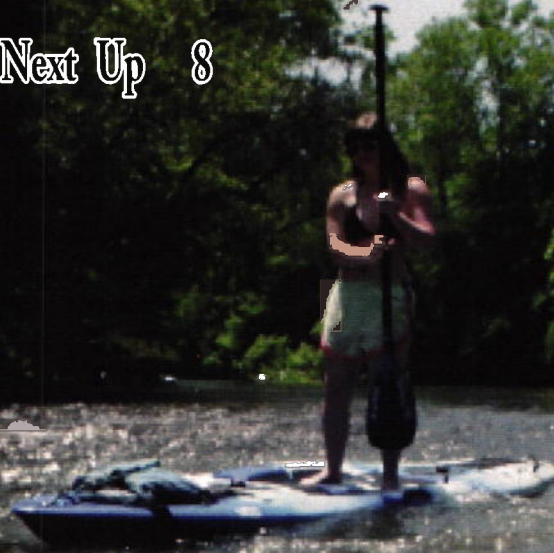
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Cover: Students work to plant a sapling grown in DRBA's STIC program

Uranium Mining Ban in Courts

Virginia Uranium, Inc. (VUI) has filed two lawsuits seeking to overturn Virginia's 33-year-old uranium mining ban.

(1) In federal court in Danville, VUI argued that the federal Atomic Energy Act preempts state laws related to uranium mining. DRBA and the Roanoke River Basin Association (RRBA), represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), filed a "friend of the court" brief supporting the VA Attorney General's successful motion to dismiss the case.

VUI has appealed that ruling to the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, where SELC also filed a "friend of the court" brief on behalf of DRBA and RRBA explaining why the trial judge's ruling was proper. Arguments should be heard this fall, and SELC on behalf of DRBA and RRBA will pursue every opportunity to participate.

(2) In Wise County state court, VUI argued that the mining ban violates the VA constitution by prohibiting uranium mining, which deprives VUI's property of economic value without proper compensation. On behalf of DRBA and RRBA, SELC filed a "friend of the court" brief supporting the Commonwealth's argument that the ban is a legitimate exercise of Virginia's authority to regulate activity within its borders.

The judge denied VUI's demand of \$483 million in compensation, ruling that the statute of limitations had expired. However, the case will proceed on VUI's request for a judicial order that state agencies ignore the ban and process VUI's mining permit applications. RRBA, DRBA, and SELC will participate in every way possible to defeat the lawsuit.

Olga Kolotushkina

Riparian Buffer Demonstration Sites

Riparian buffers are the natural vegetation extending from the edge of the stream bank several dozen feet onto land. This vegetative zone protects the stream by filtering pollutants from runoff, controlling erosion, and providing wildlife habitat.

DRBA has recently completed Riparian Buffer Demonstration sites to show examples of good buffers, hoping to inspire property owners to plant their own! Come and see for yourself:

protecting the Dan River—YMCA and Camilla Park in Danville, VA; protecting the Mayo River—DeHart Park in Stuart, VA; and protecting the Smith River—Smith River Greenway in Eden, NC and Beaver Creek Reservoir in Martinsville, VA.

Dan River Basin Water Quality

Reflecting its high priority to DRBA, our water quality activities span the basin. Quarterly macroinvertebrate sampling is conducted by DRBA board members Jennifer Atkins in Pittsylvania County and Sonya Wolen in Danville. Semiannual macroinvertebrate sampling of the Smith River and Sycamore Creek in Patrick County is carried out by Woolwine Elementary School's 6th and 7th grade classes, most recently in May. Also in May, the Woolwine Kindergarten class released their TIC trout into the Smith River.

DRBA's Tub of Bugs gave over fifty students an Earth Day experience at the VA Museum of Natural History. Kids on the Move, a VA Tech extension program, brought fifty eight-to-twelve-year-olds to Dehart Park and Campbell Creek, where they learned about the role of macroinvertebrates as indicator species and the importance of stream buffers for water quality. Also at DeHart Park, DRBA's Brian Williams presented a water quality program on riparian buffers to the Patrick County High School Horticulture and Landscape Management classes.

The cities of Danville, Stuart, and Halifax are participants in another program to protect our waterways and our drinking water: marking storm drains with the message "Dump No Waste – Drains to River." This reminder encourages us to keep storm drains free of trash, pet waste, motor oil, paint, and other materials, since storm drains empty directly into our rivers and streams.

Wayne Kirkpatrick



Join DRBA today!