



CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

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Programs, Projects and Possibilities
John Lamiman Remembered
An Emphasis on Water Conservation

Currents • Volume 21 • Issue 1

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Cover Photo: Joanne Hill



Members of the EAC, DCR staff, DRBA staff, board, members, and volunteers, and Henry County officials met on October 27, 2021, to hold a groundbreaking at the future site of the Mayo River State Park in Henry County, VA. Pictured are Adam Layman, Tim Hall, Tyler Carter, T Butler, Lindley Butler, Jeff Johnston, and Debra Buchanon.

A Long Time Coming -- The Mayo River State Park

The Mayo River is one of the liquid treasures of our basin that begins in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and meanders through remote and urban landscapes as it makes its way to the confluence of the Dan River near Mayodan, North Carolina. It has been a longtime vision for DRBA to see a state park created that would include land along the river corridor in both Virginia and North Carolina. This past October, thanks in part to funding from the Eco Ambassador Council (EAC), the dream is one step closer to becoming a reality.

Initially, North Carolina was the focus as it worked to protect and develop the area as a state park. With land acquisitions near the Virginia state line, it became apparent that continuing the work upstream on the Mayo River in Virginia was a priority and a unique opportunity.

With the EAC's investment, the site will open to day-use recreation through the development of nearly 5 miles of hiking/biking trails. A 6-8 car parking area will provide access to the site and interpretive signage will tell the story of the area's natural, cultural, and historic resources.

"The Dan River Basin Association first proposed the Mayo River State Park in Virginia in 2006," said Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director. "DRBA has invested a tremendous amount of time and energy into this project including hosting field investigations, identifying property owners in the study area, leading river evaluations, and sharing valuable information about the area's historic and natural resources. DRBA was key in planning the Mayo River State Park in North Carolina and the anticipated opening of Virginia's Mayo River State Park will seamlessly connect the two with plans to include river access for paddling and fishing, camping areas, and facilities for nature study. We are truly grateful for the investment from the EAC to support this long-time goal."

We're so impressed with the EcoAmbassador program, which has made the park a reality.

T Butler



"The goal of the EAC is to harness the collective power of regional businesses to protect, preserve and promote the natural resources of the Dan River Basin," said Tyler Carter, Chairman of the EAC and Commercial Banker at Carter Bank & Trust. "The EAC provides an opportunity for regional businesses to pool resources and shared actions for the benefit of local communities, stakeholders, and the regional economy."

Regional businesses are welcome to join the EAC year-round and become active members of this innovative and influential partnership of business leaders. Please contact Tyler Carter at Carter Bank & Trust, Tyler.Carter@CBTcares.com, or (540) 493-0582 for more information.



The North and South Mayo rivers meander through a predominantly forested corridor accented by steep forested bluffs, massive rock formations, and occasional open pastures. Stands of mountain laurel dominate the understory of many of the north-facing slopes and provide spectacular displays when in bloom. Wildflowers are abundant and varied. Smooth azalea, ranked as rare in Virginia, grows along the North Mayo River.

Deer, wild turkey, a variety of small game and non-game animals, and upland birds inhabit the region. Fisheries include redbreast sunfish, redbreast suckers, smallmouth bass, and rainbow trout. The Mayo River has been designated a Threatened and Endangered Species Water due to the presence of the federally and state endangered James spiny mussel. The state threatened orangefin . . . *continued on page 8*

Trout in the Classroom -- Special Delivery & Hatching before Holiday Break!

Students in this year's TIC program were surprised to see their newly-delivered trout eggs hatching a bit early this year!

Brown trout eggs were picked up the second week of November from the Wytheville State Fish Hatchery and delivered to classrooms in Virginia and North Carolina with students eagerly awaiting their arrival. While the eggs were not expected to hatch until after the Thanksgiving holiday, many schools were delighted to see them hatching before they left for the holiday break.



The eggs were all completely hatched by the time students returned from break and students noticed the tiny yolk sacs on the alevins.

Many schools were excited to get back to having the trout in their classroom after taking

a break last school year. Fourteen schools throughout Henry County, Martinsville, Franklin County, Patrick County, Pittsylvania County, Rockingham County, NC, and Guilford County, NC will be participating in the program during the 2021 -- 2022 school year.

Students will spend the next several months caring for the young trout, learning and researching about them, and watching them grow. Classroom presentations will be scheduled after the beginning of the year for the students to learn more about watersheds, the trout life cycle, and macroinvertebrates.

In the spring, the students will celebrate their healthy trout by taking a field trip to Bassett to release them into the Smith River.

"I am looking forward to seeing all of the students' smiling faces in the spring at the trout releases. The students and teachers work hard to take care of the trout and learn about them - the field trip is always a treat and opportunity for the students to share all they have learned about them."

Krista Hodges
Education Manager

Krista Hodges

The Inspire Clean Water Art Contest 2021

Protecting our Rivers and Streams and the Wildlife that Lives in Them is this year's theme for the annual Inspire Clean Water Art Contest sponsored by the Uptown Martinsville Rotary Club. The contest is open to students in grades 3 - 12 in the Dan River Basin.

The artwork should reflect the importance of protecting our waterways through the protection of storm drains. DRBA has already collected over 75 submissions from schools in Franklin County, Martinsville City, and Rockingham County, NC. The deadline has recently been extended to February 11, 2022, to allow for more submissions.

In March 2022 three winners will be chosen from nine finalists and the art will be painted on storm drains by the young artists in April. Winners will be recognized in regional media and on the Dan River Basin Association's website and e-newsletter in Spring, 2022. All nine finalists will receive a goody bag of nature items!

Krista Hodges



Examples of storm drain artwork are shown here. Interested in submitting your talents?

Please contact Krista Hodges at khodges@danriver.org

Winter 2022 • www.danriver.org

Rain Barrel Workshop at Pickle and Ash

In October, DRBA member and supporter Anna Clark Lester hosted a Rain Barrel Workshop at the recently opened restaurant, Pickle and Ash, in Patrick Springs. This generous donation included open space for the workshop, a big screen TV for the presentation, and yummy snacks! The workshop filled up within days of being offered.

Rain barrels are a great way to conserve water, our most precious resource. As stormwater is collected, it reduces the damaging water runoff through yards and pastures. The collected water can then be used for lawns, gardens, or indoor plants. The workshop was a huge success with 18 rain barrels going out across the basin.



Brian Williams demonstrates the work needed to build a rain barrel.

Brian Williams

Storm Drains get Purposful Reminders

The Boys and Girls Club of the Blue Ridge, the City of Martinsville, all three Martinsville/Henry County Rotary Clubs, and DRBA held a storm drain marking in October. Youth from the Boys and Girls Club marked storm drains throughout Martinsville indicating “Dump no waste, drains to river.”

Participants learned about the importance of protecting our stormdrains and about stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff is precipitation from rain or snowmelt that flows over the ground. As it flows, it can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and deposit them into a storm drain. Anything that enters a storm drain is discharged into rivers and streams that we use for fishing, swimming, and providing drinking water.



The grant-funded project was designed to inform the public and to discourage littering on our roads, in our parks, and throughout our communities.

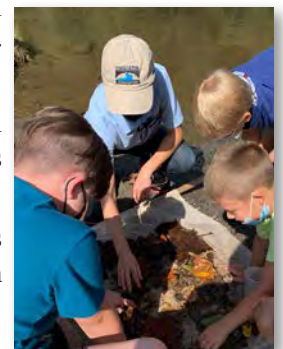
Krista Hodges

Trout Release with the Virginia Museum of Natural History

The Virginia Museum of Natural History (VMNH) and the Dan River Basin Association hosted a trout release at the Smith River in Henry County as part of Trout Unlimited’s “Trout in the Classroom” program! The trout, which were hatched and cared for at the museum, were released into the wild with the help of several student participants from the museum’s Homeschool Science & Engineering Academy.

In addition to releasing the trout, staff from DRBA provided several hands-on programs for the students that focused on macroinvertebrates and their importance to trout and nature as a whole!

The museum staff will begin the trout cycle all over again as new eggs arrive. Next time you visit VMNH, be sure to say hello to the new batch of trout inside the Wild Watersheds exhibit!



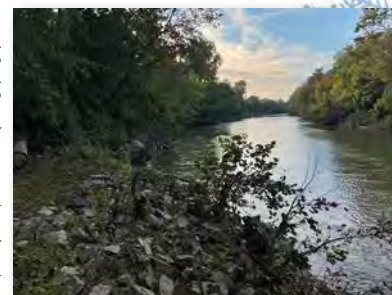
**Interested in becoming part of the solution?
Join DRBA today!
www.danriver.org**

Dan River State Trail

The North Carolina General Assembly has proclaimed the Dan River State Trail, in Stokes and Rockingham County, as part of the state parks system. This designation will allow opportunities for state-wide promotional efforts and state funding. DRBA has been recognized as the lead, key nonprofit partner with North Carolina State Parks.

The North Carolina State budget, passed in November, has included funding for the development of the Dan River State Trail System. DRBA is working with regional stakeholders to develop a plan for the new state trail along with a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Dan River State Trail system will further our efforts in recreation and stewardship by creating a full master plan that includes both the North Carolina and Virginia portions of the Dan River. River access, property management, and signage will all be part of the efforts in creating a cohesive Dan River State Water Trail. DRBA's NC Program Coordinator, Anna Wheeler, will be attending a State Trails meeting in January to continue learning about other group efforts to develop state trails.



Brian Williams

"Designating these trails as part of the State Parks system will ensure that we continue to develop and maintain these important resources for all North Carolinians," Roy Cooper, North Carolina Governor.

Source: <https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/PDF/2021-2022/SL2021-55.pdf>

Dedication of the John Lamiman River Overlook

DRBA board members and the Rockingham County Friends Meeting attended the private event and dedication of the John Lamiman River Overlook at the new Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing Park and River Access. The River Overlook was dedicated in memory of John Lamiman, a beloved English professor who suffered an injury to his spinal cord in 2010 that left his body paralyzed below the tops of his shoulders. With courage, creativity, and the tireless support of his wife, Claire, John learned "new ways of being alive, aware, vulnerable, patient, and appreciative."



John's students, colleagues, and friends from across the United States donated funds to help pay for John's care in his home. Upon his death in 2015, Rockingham County Friends contributed the remainder of those donations to DRBA to pay for this handicapped accessible River Overlook and to serve as matching funds for the park development.

The Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing Park and River Access has not yet opened to the public. Rockingham County is expected to hold a ribbon-cutting in early Spring, 2022.

Lake Reidsville Trail Completed

The city of Reidsville, along with Dan River Basin Association, celebrated the completion of a walking, nature trail at Lake Reidsville. Mayor Jay Donecker stated that this walking trail will bring new patrons to the lake and will give existing patrons another feature to enjoy. Tiffany Hayworth, Executive Director Dan River Basin Association explained how the trail was conceived in 2017. This event commemorates a new 2.25 mile extension of the existing trail around the lake granted by the Recreational Trails program of NC State Trails.

"When the pandemic first hit, the first part of the trail was a great place to get outside and enjoy getting some fresh air. Now that the trail is completed, we hope that people will continue to use the facilities at Reidsville Lake and walk the entirety of the trail to see the scenic views. Be sure to bring the family out for a great day at Reidsville Lake." remarked Chamber President, Diane Sawyer.



Tiffany Haworth

Source: <https://business.reidsvillechamber.org/news/details/lake-reidsville-celebrates-trail-completion-ribbon-cutting>

Electro sampling on the Smith

The Dan River Basin Association has a long history of working with The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VADWR). They provide us with trout eggs and trout food for our Trout in the Classroom Program and we assist the biologist with sampling studies and stocking fish.

The Smith River is sampled a few times each year by biologists utilizing electro-fishing techniques. This can be done wading with backpack generators in some cases. More often than not on the Smith, an electro-fishing raft is used. Probes are placed into the water and a current is generated; this creates an electrical field in the water around the boat. As the fish pass into the field, they are temporally shocked and come to the surface. A “netter” stands at the bow of the boat to net the fish which are then transferred to a cooler of river water. The fish are weighed, measured, and released. Unfortunately, there can be some loss due to the stress on the fish, especially sensitive are the trout.



We do not have the final tally for this year’s electro-fishing study but we did see some healthy brown trout in the stream and this data helps VADWR respond to the needs of the river by adjusting fishing regulations. DRBA’s involvement, as we advocate for a more consistent flow regime from Philpott generators, supports the latest data proving that the fish are healthier and that constant flows are making a difference. VADWR has now gone on record advocating minimum flows on the Smith above the historic lows during periods of no generation.

Brian Williams

Director’s Message

My favorite time to get out and hike is during the winter months. You can see things you miss during the summer. The quiet forest can calm even the most anxious mind, allowing a beautiful stillness for reflection and preparation for the New Year. These last 18 months or so have been unnerving for most, unbearable for some. Time spent in nature has been shown to lower blood pressure, ease anxiety and depression, and can even decrease the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. So, please, consider time outdoors this Winter instead of curled up on your couch watching TV. Your mind and body will thank you!

Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director

Hike and History in Rock Castle Gorge

As DRBA’s contribution to the Smithsonian Institution’s Traveling Exhibition, *Crossroads, Change in Rural America*, the public was invited to enjoy a hike and history on the Rock Castle Gorge Fire Road. The Rock Castle community along Rock Castle Creek spanned the early-nineteenth to the early-twentieth centuries with a population of about 200 residents among 20 families. Over that time, the first generation log cabins evolved into second-generation one-story sawn lumber houses and later to third-generation two-story houses with porches. The family names of the residents are still prominent across the region -- Cockram, Underwood, Hylton, Belcher, Conner – to name a few.



The Chestnut Tree Blight, the Great Depression, and Prohibition created an exodus from the gorge and the community never recovered. During the depression, the gorge was home to a Civilian Conservation Corps encampment. Today, a third-generation home still stands along with scattered dry-laid chimneys that serve as a testament to the once-thriving community. Thirteen hikers took in the beauty of the gorge, the cascading creek, and the history of this rugged area of Patrick County. Now part of the Rocky Knob Recreation Area, the trail can be found adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Wayne Kirkpatrick

New Projects and New Challenges

There are always new projects and new challenges for DRBA staff members, board members, and volunteers. The pandemic has created unique challenges worldwide. Fortunately, the work DRBA does in the basin's communities is outside and our efforts are never more evident than the projects recently completed and the new ones on our horizon.

Most recently, we responded to the tragic accident on the Dan River at the Duke Steam Plant low-head dam as well as new threats from possible gold mining, and the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP).

Ongoing projects include:

- developing plans to safely connect the uptown community of Fieldale to the Fieldale Park and Textile Trail. DRBA has proposed a crosswalk on Marshall Avenue and steps down the hillside at the back of the park to make the connection. A recently awarded grant from Virginia Outdoor Foundation allows work on this project to begin January 2022.
- receiving a partnership grant with the Corps of Engineers at Philpott lake to improve the existing boating access ramps directly below the dam. On the Henry County side, gravel was delivered from Boxley as Philpott staff did the work of embedding the shot rock, spreading gravel, and shaping the ramp. A canoe slide will be installed in January. The Franklin County side will also get new shot rock and gravel to fill in the erosion areas. Additional funds were contributed by Mr. Jimmy Franklin, a long-time Smith River Paddler and local resident.
- working with volunteers at the Jack Dalton Park Nature Detour trail. A Rotary Grant has helped fund the building of a new wooded trail off the main walking path.
- planning a new Rockingham County, NC park. DRBA staff and volunteers will assist with building new trails and a parking area at Belews Park.



- receiving a grant from the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia to enhance the back entrance to the Frank Wilson Park in Martinsville. Concrete steps leading from the Virginia Museum of Natural History will get landscaping and a new sign. The trail from the bottom of the steps will be rerouted and enhanced to be more welcoming to the user

- leading the way in the development of the South Martinsville river access. Grants from The Monogram Loves Kids Foundation (Monogram Foods) and the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia will provide a new Riverside Family Picnic Area with a covered picnic table, a small deck, a new set of steps, and a canoe slide for easier access to the river. A "River Experience" event with the Monogram employees and kids will be scheduled at a later date.

- incorporating the funding from the Eco Ambassador Council to work on improvements for the 15-mile mountain bike trails at Dehart Park in Woolwine, VA. A stakeholder group of tourism officials, volunteer trail builders, and avid trail bikers are developing plans to move forward on this project.

Brian Williams

Continued from page 3 --

madtom, and several federal species of concern -- rustyside sucker, riverweed darter, and Roanoke hog-sucker -- have been documented.

Historic resources in the area include late Woodland Period Indian village sites and fish weirs dating from 1000 – 1450. On the state line is Byrd's Ledge, where William Byrd's commissioners camped in 1728 during their survey of the Virginia-North Carolina boundary. Byrd named the rivers for William Mayo, a surveyor in his party. The Great Wagon Road, one of the most important backcountry migration routes in the southern colonies that brought tens of thousands of settlers into the backcountry from Pennsylvania to present-day Southern Virginia and the Carolinas, passes through the area.

Brian Williams

First Saturday Outings

October Paddle on the Mayo River

Thirteen paddlers enjoyed a pleasant and relaxing day paddling three miles on the Mayo River from the NC 770 Bridge to the 220 Business Bridge. The day featured the sounds of conversation and laughter as we enjoyed the gentle flow of the river. Some wildlife was evident – a brief glimpse of an otter and several ducks. Amid the fall leaves paddlers spotted a great blue heron and a couple kingfishers.

Several enthusiastic paddlers floated beyond the take-out to the backwaters of the Avalon Dam before returning upstream to head for home.

Wayne Kirkpatrick



and helping identify a variety of bird species that included a hermit thrush, redwing blackbirds, and a bald eagle.

While Mary kept her eyes to the sky, trail guides Sonya and Jessica helped point out some more terrestrial sights. Hikers spotted forest critters such as squirrels and deer. Several of our more exotic local species made themselves known as well. While no sightings were had, the group did discover several types of scat, which were identified as belonging to a coyote and another as belonging to a river otter.

In addition to critters and creatures, the group was, in fact, able to see the forest for the trees by acknowledging several interesting native plant species. Plants of interest included Bursting-Heart seed pods, a beautiful flowering bush; Cranefly Orchids one of the area's native Orchid species; and even some Passion Flowers, which still held some edible (if sour) fruit.

At about 3 miles, the 2.5-hour hike afforded an excellent excuse to enjoy a beautiful outdoor setting, get some exercise, and socialize with great company.

Brandon Driver

November Hike on the Great Blue Heron Trail

The Iron Ore Access at Haw River State Park hosted November hikers on the Great Blue Heron Trail. Seventeen hikers enjoyed the three and a half miles of a gently sloped natural surface loop trail on a mild, late fall day. Leaves cascaded gently as the hikers walked the iron-laden red ground and hefted small stones and finding them surprisingly heavy due to the iron content.

One feature along the trail was a fence encircled depression where some of the iron ore had been mined long ago. For a short distance, the trail bordered a Haw River headwater swamp, shallow and stump filled, with no discernable flow. As the group continued along the loop, the wetlands gave way to meadows and upland mature Piedmont forests of pine and hardwoods. It was a cool but comfortable day to be out in nature.

Wayne Kirkpatrick

December Hike in Angler's Park

It was a beautiful early winter morning for this month's featured hike at Angler's Park in Danville, VA. A strong turnout of 25 eager hikers, one well-behaved canine, and volunteer leaders Sonya Wolen and Jessica Driver were joined by Mary Foster of the Southside Bird Club. Mary lent her highly trained ears and eyes throughout the hike, answering questions

Join the Fun!

First Saturday Outings (FSO) are announced in DRBA's e-newsletter and on our calendar at www.danriver.org/events

You don't need to RSVP, just come out with your family and friends and enjoy a morning outdoors.

Recreation



DRBA Board Members Jessica Driver and Sonya Wolen hosted a community cleanup for Pumpkin Creek at Grove Park picking up over 50 pounds of trash. Proof that a few can make a mighty difference!



This year's virtual presentation -- dedicated to education, conservation and preservation



Krista Hodges explains the importance of Rain Barrels at a recent workshop



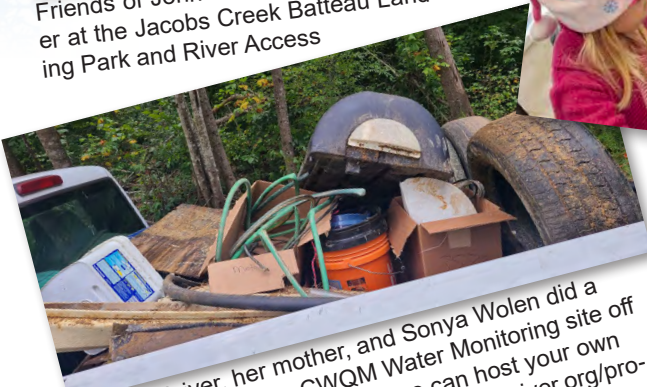
Friends of John Lamiman join together at the Jacobs Creek Batteau Landing Park and River Access



Fellowship and Fun at DRBA's staff and board Christmas Party



DRBA's Wreath for a Cause at the The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research Open House



Jessica Driver, her mother, and Sonya Wolen did a stream clean-up at a CWQM Water Monitoring site off Parker Road in Danville. You too can host your own clean-up at a site. Go to <https://www.danriver.org/programs/stewardship/clean-ups> and sign up!



The Dan River Basin

River Legacy Circle

Mike and Jane Haines
Paul and Patty May
Lee Templeton
Will and Mary Truslow

Benefactor Membership

Norma Bozenmayer
Tracie Heavner and Jim Frith
Shawn and Karen Gorman
Tiffany Smart

Protector Membership

Rebecca Adcock
Lucy H. Davis
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Marion Wolen

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Sandy and P.G. Bown
Ken and Luann Bridle
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Edward and Michelle Evans
Greg and Phyllis Gendron
Greg Grodem
Robert and Leonne Harris
Mark and Pippa Jordan
Harold and Edith Knight
Don W. Leathers
Phil Atkins and Jacky Miller
Johnny and Ashby Pinkard
Eric and Lorraine Tichay
Clark and Lisa Tyson
Terry L. Wood

Individual Membership

Henry Arlyn Bunch
Robert E. Burris
Bob Bushnell
Joshua Clay
Ward Collis
Jessica Davenport
Linda Drage
Barry Dunkley
Peter and Melissa Hairston
K. Joanne Hill
Ann B. Somers
Bryan Thompson
Janice H. Walker

Sustainer Memberships

Lindley and T Butler
Nancy Dethlefsen
Mark Estes
Amy Farinelli
Tiffany Haworth
Jarod and Krista Hodges
Joe and Ellen Jessee
Judith Jones
Vencint Joyce
Wayne and Betty Kirkpatrick
Sharon Olson
Allison Szuba
Fletcher and Ginger Waynick

Donations 9/16/2021 -

12/15/2021

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Lindley and T Butler
Bill and Flo Chittenden
Jessica Driver
Barry Dunkley
Martha J. Haines
Mike and Jane Haines
Peter and Melissa Hairston
Betty Heaton
Joe and Ellen Jessee
Judith Jones
Chris and Anna Lester
Phil Atkins and Jacky Miller
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Steve and Olivia Shelton



Karl and Hollis Stauber
Charles Treadway
James and Ginger Waynick
Sharon Wright

Corporate and Organization Donations

AmazonSmile
Carolina Canoe Club
Kroger Customer Care Program
Martinsville Uptown Rotary Club
Network for Good

Project Partnerships

Martinsville Uptown Rotary Club
Martinsville Rotary Club
Patrick Henry Community College

Chinqua Penn Trail Donations

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Apple Dumpling 5K Donations

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Brandon and Kristy Hughes
Stephen and Heather Jackson
Charles and Andrea Lawrence
Med Spa
Patrick County Eye Associates
Brenda Pineda
Lynn Regan
Trinity and Tracy Rigney
Denise Smith
John Hopkins and Elizabeth
Warriner

First Saturday Outings Announced

DRBA hosts a variety of free public outings on the first Saturday of each month. Whether a hike or paddle, these outings are a perfect way to get to know DRBA, explore a new place, learn something about our region, and meet new people. Outings are appropriate for all ages and abilities.

A tradition since 2002!

+++++

January 1

Ranger-led hike -- Fairystone State Park, 10:00 am

February 5

Hike along Tanyard Creek, Rockingham County, 9:00 am

March 5

**Celebrating 20 years of Making a Difference!
Annual Meeting at Eden City Hall, 9:00 am**

All events are subject to change due to inclement weather or government guidelines. Please check with the Dan River Basin Association website or the trip coordinator before leaving home for any event.

For additional information

<https://www.danriver.org/events>



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