

CURRENTS

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Recreation • Education • Stewardship



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Currents Newsletter

Design/Editing Monique Holland

Cover photo

Photo credit Anna Wheeler

Photo location Dan River in Eden, NC

From the Director

Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director

If you have received a printed copy of DRBA's Currents from us, you are an awesome, generous, caring person. I want to say, thank you, thank you, thank you! Only Friends of DRBA, those that invest in what we are doing, are getting this in the mail.

DRBA has more than 100 recreation, education, and stewardship projects and events planned this year including hosting cleanups and monitoring miles of trails and waterways, building, and enhancing dozens of parks, trails, and river accesses, teaching thousands of youth and adults about how to value, safely use and protect our natural resources and advocating for our region at the local, state, and national levels. We can't do any of this without those that choose to donate to support this important work.

We only hold two fundraising campaigns a year – Spring and End-of-Year. I truly hope you will consider a gift (any amount is appreciated) as we try to raise funds during our Spring 2024 Campaign so that we can continue our work to protect and promote our local natural and cultural resources.



Pictured here: DRBA staff members Anna & Keith stop on their way back to the office from a Stokes County Commissioner meeting to do a quick cleanup at Moratock Park.

DRBA Board of Directors

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DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

—VEES PROVIDE VITAL EDUCATION OUTREACH SUPPORT AS NEED GROWS—

As a non-profit, the Dan River Basin Association relies on dedicated volunteers to fulfill its mission. Rooted in our mission, environmental education plays a strong role in the work that DRBA does in the 16-county service area. Annually, around 10,000 youth of all demographic backgrounds and ages are reached.

This work would not be possible without volunteers that have spent countless hours over the years assisting DRBA's environmental education staff in programs such as Trout in the Classroom.

Many times volunteers met DRBA's Education Outreach Manager, Krista Hodges, at the stream side to collect macroinvertebrates and educate youth on

the importance of clean water as the youth released their trout fingerlings into the cold water of the Dan River headwaters and the Smith River. With DRBA's education outreach continuing to grow, the need for more volunteers has also grown.

In 2023, DRBA developed and launched the Volunteer Environmental Educators (VEE) program.

This program focuses on training qualified environmental educators who have a passion for environmental conservation and protection, and want to share their knowledge with youth. Anyone interested must complete an online application, and once selected, attend a two-hour training and complete a background check.

Once trained, the volunteer educators are able to assist the environmental education team with hands-on programs, presentations, and events throughout the Dan River basin.

DRBA's current environmental education team includes Education Outreach Manager Krista Hodges and Assistant Educator Regina Flora.

Over the last six months, DRBA has trained 16 volunteer environmental educators. Many of the trained educators were previous or current Citizen Water Quality Monitors (CWQMs) that have volunteered with DRBA over the last two decades and were looking for more volunteer opportunities.



I am thrilled to have a diverse team of talented, volunteer environmental educators to share their knowledge and passion with youth throughout the Dan River basin. The VEE program allows DRBA's education outreach to become more sustainable, especially during the busy seasons.

Krista Hodges, Education Outreach Manager

VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

Norma Bozenmayer, a retired chemistry teacher, volunteered with DRBA as a Citizen Water Quality Monitor in Patrick County in 2016-2018. She joined the VEE program in October 2023.

"I've led environmental clubs and been involved in water and environmental protection most of my life ... I thought being a DRBA VEE would be a great addition to my retirement activities," Bozenmayer said. "I am so impressed at the amount of school programs that are done weekly by DRBA and I love being a part of DRBA's amazing educational projects, working with, and learning from Krista and Regina. My favorite topics to teach so far are macroinvertebrates and water quality as I feel they can relate to everything in the environment."

This spring, DRBA has over 35 education outreach programs scheduled including trout releases, classroom presentations, events and field trips. DRBA is currently scheduling programs for this summer and planning for the fall. With the help of volunteer educators, DRBA hopes to reach more youth annually and in more areas of the basin.

A seasoned volunteer educator, Jessica Driver, is a VEE ambassador. All new volunteer educators attend events and presentations with VEE Ambassadors or DRBA staff for the first year, or until comfortable. Jessica has volunteered with DRBA for nearly a decade. She started in 2015 as a Citizen Water Quality Monitor in Pittsylvania County and has monitored a stream alongside Sonya Wolen, also a VEE and CWQM, for nearly a decade.

"Volunteering with the Dan River Basin Association is a rewarding experience made easy by their caring and inclusive community. With a wide range of opportunities, there is something for everyone to get involved in," Driver said.

One of the responsibilities of a VEE is to assist with recruiting and training new VEEs. Volunteering allows people of all ages and backgrounds to inspire and engage people, and it is a wonderful opportunity to develop skills, enhance personal growth, connect with others and have a meaningful impact in today's world. DRBA plans to train more new VEEs later this year. Anyone interested, can visit the website at www.danriver.org/VEE to learn more and complete the online application.



RESTORATION

Bog Turtle Habitat Work



At DRBA, staff and volunteers are always ready to help and that's just what we did this spring at I.C. Dehart Memorial Park. Listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, the federally protected bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) is protected from collection and possession. Loss of habitat and poaching are the two main threats facing North America's smallest turtle.

Bog turtles need wetlands or microhabitats characterized by soft muddy bottoms, interspersed wet and dry pockets,



vegetation dominated by low-growing grasses and sedges, and a low volume of standing or slow-moving water.

Bog turtles rely on this habitat for foraging, nesting, basking, hibernating, and sheltering. They prefer areas with ample sunlight, high humidity and perennial saturation of portions of the ground in which to bury themselves to get cool during hot summer months. Bog turtles generally retreat into more densely vegetated areas, under the roots of trees or shrubs, or in rock walls to hibernate from mid-September through mid-April, depending on latitude.

I.C. Dehart Memorial Park has an old pond which has now become a marshy bog where these tiny turtles reside. Invasive plant species have threatened their habitat and Master Naturalists, DRBA, Virginia Tech Wildlife Club and State DWR worked together to restore the bog.

Volunteers came clad in waders and gloves and brought all types of brush axes, pruners and even chain saws to help cut down the woody growth and reopen the bog.

If you find yourself at I.C. Dehart in the spring and early summer, take a slow careful stroll along the boardwalk through the bog and see if you can spot one of these secretive and tiny denizens of the wetlands sunning on a tussock or disappearing into the muck!



MARKING STORM DRAINS

Project Update



Thanks to grant funding from NC Community Foundation, homeschool students in Western Rockingham partnered with the Madison Rotary Club to place custom storm drain markers throughout the Town of Madison.

These markers will serve as a reminder that stormwater flows to the river and for people to think twice about pollution. Markers emulate the Madison River Park theme to further reinforce the connection of the storm drains to the river park, where locals and visitors enjoy various activities throughout the year.



Volunteer Environmental Educator, Lindsay Pegg, assisted staff in a quick demonstration of various pollution points through a watershed model to the students and Rotary volunteers.

Here's a peek at what those markers look like!



REFORESTATION

BALLOU PARK PROJECT

Since 2018, Ballou Park has lost over one hundred trees from storm damage, old age, and other environmental factors. DRBA is partnering with the City of Danville, Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension groups to enhance the nature experience for park visitors and to improve wildlife habitat by replanting native trees at Ballou Park in Danville.

Through this multi-year project, the partners will educate community members through a variety of programs, events, and volunteer opportunities related to trees including proper tree planting methods, advantages of increasing canopy cover, how trees help stabilize soil and keep water clean, and how trees support wildlife.

This spring marked the first tree planting event on April 19th and took place at Ballou Park. The inaugural reforestation event brought together partners to educate visitors and begin planting the first eight trees.

The event hosted around 150 visitors including Boy Scout troops, Girl Scout troops, the Boys & Girls Club of Danville and members of the local community. Trees were planted in the park every fifteen minutes with groups and visitors over a couple of hours.

The Dan River Basin Association taught visitors about watersheds and the importance of riparian buffers in protecting our waterways, and about different types of macroinvertebrates that can be found in our local streams and rivers.



The relationship between trees and macroinvertebrates ties into the food chain as the leaves from the trees fall into the waterways and many of the macroinvertebrates feed on the leaves. Later, fish and other organisms feed on the macroinvertebrates. The absence of trees along streams is detrimental to the macroinvertebrate population and the overall ecosystem.

SAFETY WORKSHOPS

The Dan River Basin Association is excited to partner with Outdoor Women by Jo to host six kayak safety classes throughout NC lakes!

Outdoor Women by Jo, based in Summerfield, NC, has the mission of instilling education, empowerment and excitement about outdoors in women whether it's through kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, hiking or camping, riding, shooting and so much more!



They fulfill their mission by holding training events in different recreational outdoor activities that allow attendees to learn at their own pace, no matter their skill level.

These events are aimed at beginners with little to no boating experience. With this partnership, attendees will be able to paddle with new confidence and ease as they are taught basic strokes and maneuvers to help you have more fun paddling and to prevent injury.

Training will start from the beginning with guided instructions on how to get in and out with less chance for capsizing, how to handle the boat, seating and foot adjustment, paddle grip, and forward, reverse and side strokes instruction and practice. No experience is necessary – now is your chance to try something new!

Dates are subject to change due to weather and logistics, but events will be posted on DRBA's event page and co-listed on Outdoor Women by Jo's pages.

Upcoming classes are:

- **Sunday, May 19:** HaRo Lake
- **Saturday, July 13:** Lake Reidsville
- **Monday, July 15:** Lake Reidsville
- **Tuesday, July 23:** Hyco Lake
- **Tuesday, August 20:** Mayo Lake
- **Tuesday, August 27:** Farmer Lake

Visit DRBA's event page by scanning the QR code!



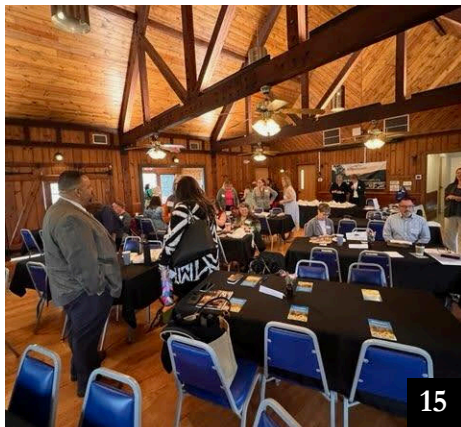
DRBA





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- 1: Ballou Park Reforestation Event
- 2: Halifax Youth Conservation Camp
- 3: VMNH Reptile Festival
- 4: Eco-Learning Station pavilion construction
- 5: Reidsville Area Foundation Inclusive Leadership Training
- 6: DRBA received gift at Purina Plant Grand Opening
- 7: PBS filming DRBA's TIC on the Smith River
- 8: Native Art Day with Dillard Academy at West Rock Trail
- 9: Martinsville Bulletin news coverage
- 10: PBS NC video shoot on the Mayo River
- 11: Tails on Trails hike at Lake Reidsville
- 12: Virginia Conservation Network Meet & Greet
- 13: Water Treatment Class on the Smith River
- 14: Trail Town Weekend paddle at Eden Gamelands
- 15: Patrick County Tourism Summit
- 16: Trail Town hike at Smith River Greenway
- 17: Harvest Foundation cleanup at Fisher Dam
- 18: CWQM Training
- 19: RLC event at Haines Tree Farm
- 20: Rain barrel disinfecting workday
- 21: Stuart Rotary Trail Celebration
- 22: Franklin County Earth Day Fair



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IN YOUR COMMUNITY



YEAR OF THE TRAIL

..... IN REVIEW

2023 was The Year of the Trail, but the impact is still being seen today!

The 2023 Year of the Trail campaign aimed to celebrate and draw attention to North Carolina's vast network of trails, greenways, and blueways. Those efforts showcased the state's diverse landscapes ranging from mountain vistas to quiet rivers.

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 2021 designating 2023 as the state's Year of the Trail. Special programs and events went on throughout all 100 counties.

The North Carolina Year of the Trail campaign became the largest statewide celebration of trails and outdoor recreation in state history.



Rockingham County Tourism Manager Lindsay Pegg at Year of the Trail event in Eden, North Carolina



Throughout the year, DRBA, with various partners throughout the state and counties, assisted in scheduling countless Year of the Trail events, proclamations, and celebrations throughout the basin. The City of Eden was graciously requested to be one of ten Trail Town Weekend Celebration locations for the year.

Events throughout Rockingham County were scheduled, including a kickoff party at Reynolds, hiking at over five locations, and two paddles. Within the Dan River Basin, Rockingham County had over 30 events throughout the year, Stokes had over 20.

The impact was heard throughout the state. Legislators approved funding for the Great Trails State Fund, a one time 25 million dollar investment in trail planning, construction, and maintenance.

DRBA is lucky to have such an amazing coalition that advocates for the future of trails and conservation in the Great Trails State Coalition.

For more information on the Year of the Trail visit the Great Trails State Coalition website or scan the QR code below.

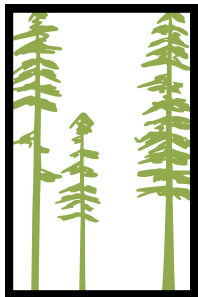


The success of the 2023 North Carolina Year of the Trail campaign is a testament to strong partnerships and collaboration and a shared passion for the outdoors. What's next? The trails movement is just beginning. Whether you paddle, bike, walk, or ride -- trails connect people to places, to nature, and to one another.

Lindsay Pegg, Tourism Manager



STAY ON TOP OF DRBA'S ACTIVITIES!



"DRBA's April FSO started off rather cold and windy but warmed up quickly. As we launched onto the Banister River from King's Landing in Halifax, ancient bridge support columns and

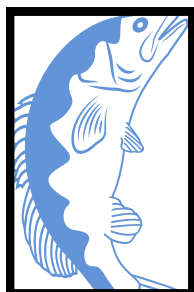
river gauging devices were still visible and intact. The trees were in full budding after a long winter's slumber and the birds were very active also. The six mile voyage was most pleasant as we made our way to the take out point at the US 360 bridges," Tony Wayne Smith said.



The WaterShed will be a place for outdoor learning programs and community gatherings on the banks of the Smith River in Bassett, VA. More than 100,000 youth have been inspired at this site to become

advocates for the environment through DRBA's Trout in the Classroom program, but currently there is not a place for instruction, shade from the elements or even a place to sit for the students.

The WaterShed is expected to be completed by the end of 2024. Thank you to the Eco Ambassador Council, Harvest Foundation, County of Henry and Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia for providing support to DRBA to construct an open-air pavilion, design and install interpretive displays, purchase education supplies and a restroom.



DRBA held its Annual Business Meeting on March 2, 2024. More than 50 people attended the virtual meeting where DRBA staff and volunteers presented highlights of the organization's 2023 projects and financials. Also at the meeting four nominees were voted on to the board of directors by DRBA supporters.

Scan the QR code for video of the meeting!



DRBA and the US Army Corps of Engineers at Philpott Lake partnered together to open the first Gift Shop at the Philpott Lake Visitor Center ([directions](#)) on April 22, 2024. The Gift Shop sells Philpott Lake souvenir

items and profits from sales will support DRBA's environmental education programs. The starting capital for the Gift Shop was funded by the [Eco Ambassador Council](#) (EAC), a coalition of regional businesses that combine their investment to protect, promote and preserve the environment. With over 500,000 visitors annually to Philpott Lake, the Gift Shop has potential to support educational programs for thousands of youth.



DRBA's 22nd Annual Celebration will be June 1, 2024 from 10:00 am – Noon at the Dan River Church in Danville, VA. There will be great food, DRBA merchandise, reports from the DRBA staff, volunteer celebration,

and a talk from Keynote Speaker Jessica Smith, Horticulturist/Arborist for the City of Danville. Jessica is a NC Certified Plant Professional and International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist and head of the Ballou Park Reforestation Project. Sign up for [DRBA's E-Newsletter](#) so you don't miss any details prior to the event!

Scan the QR code to sign up for the newsletter!



DONORS

1/1/24 - 3/31/24

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Patsy Skinner (donation in honor of Anna Wheeler)
James W. Stokes (donation in memory of Ralph E. Shank, Jr.)
Eric Tichay (donation to Environmental Education Fund)
Brian Williams (donation in honor of Jerry Rachner)
Marion Wolen (donation in honor of Sonya Wolen)

Donations to the Butler Legacy Fund

Tom and Gloria Butler

Corporate and Organization Donations

The Community Foundation of the Dan River Region
Duke Energy Foundation
Harvest Foundation of the Piedmont
Pickle and Ash
Reidsville Area Foundation

Eco-Ambassador Council 2024

Clark Gas & Oil
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Project Partnerships

NC Office of State Budget and Management

Thank you, Donors!



To visit the DRBA donor page, scan the QR code.





We appreciate your support of the many things DRBA stands for in the basin - whether you are participating in our outings, volunteering, or talking about us on social media - it all counts!

Right now, your gift is critical for DRBA's success. Your financial support helps us to continue to do the work we do in the basin.

Thank you! You truly make a positive impact for the thousands of people who live, work, and play in our region when you give your time and treasure to DRBA.



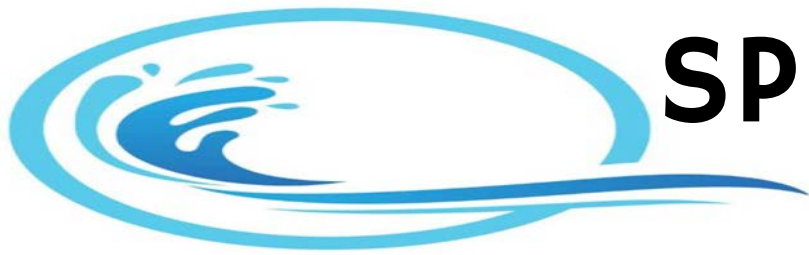
LET'S WORK TOGETHER!

To build trails, parks and river accesses in every community in our region.

To provide water quality training and supplies so that dozens of volunteers can continue to monitor our waterways monthly.

To support volunteers who want to clean-up our trails and waterways, advocate for clean air, water and land and promote conservation, recreation and preservation.

To creatively work with, and for, educators to ensure our youth have access to in-classroom, virtual and in-the-field environmental education programs.



SPECIAL NOTE!



You are the reason DRBA is Successful.

You value our local natural and cultural resources and generously invest your time and treasure to ensure these amazing resources are around for future generations. We truly appreciate your support - whether you are a donor, participating in our outings, volunteering, or talking about us on social media - it all counts! Right now, your support is critical for DRBA's success. Your gift will help us continue to do the incredible work we do. We have so many projects planned in 2024 and your generosity will help make them a reality.

Your generosity will support...

- ◆ Building trails, parks and river accesses for people of all ages and abilities.
- ◆ Supplies to clean-up our trails and rivers and provide monthly water quality monitoring.
- ◆ Advocacy at the local, state and national level to protect our natural resources and promote conservation.
- ◆ DRBA's work to ensure access to the outdoors and quality environmental education.

Thank you for caring! Any gift is appreciated.

Your support is so important to our region, thank you!

For those who give \$1,000 and above, you will become a supporter of the River Legacy Circle.

Learn more at www.danriver.org

Please include this form with your payment OR donate online: danriver.org/donate

Name: _____

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413 Church Street, Suite 401, Eden, NC 27288

More Info? (336) 627-6270
drba.nc@danriver.org

Stay in touch!

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THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND OF DRBA!

Dan River Basin Association
413 Church Street, Suite 401
Eden, NC 27288



Mark your calendar for DRBA's 22nd Annual Celebration and FSO both on June 1!
To view DRBA's calendar of events, visit danriver.org/events or scan the QR code.



You can protect nature from anywhere,
anytime. Give today.

www.danriver.org/donate

