



CURRENTS

Dan River Basin Association

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Krista Hodges Recognized by Virginia Association of
Science Teachers

Friends of DRBA -- A New Tradition

Welcome Back -- The Roanoke Loggerch

Currents • Volume 22 • Issue 4

Dan River Basin Association

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2023 Projects Review	3
South Mayo River Dam Removal and Mitigation	4
M.C. Martin Park – Danville.....	5
From the Director	5
Krista Hodges Recognized by Virginia Association of Science Teachers	6
Morgan Griffith Joins in Trout Release	6
Sensory Garden Installed at Albert Harris Elementary	7
Conserve Our Water Series Concludes.....	7
Floating Lotus	8
Friends of DRBA -- A New Tradition	8
Eden Seniors Create a Mural.....	10
The Roanoke Logperch Makes its Appearance	10
RoCo Blueway Guide -- A Study of the Rivers and Lakes in Rockingham County.....	11
Eden River Fest Celebrates 20 Years	11
Communities, Rivers, and DRBA	12
Lunch with DRBA -- Inspired by Nature	12
First Saturday Outings.....	14
Friends of DRBA.....	15
Calendar of Events	16

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2023 Projects Overview

DRBA has been busy in 2023! It would be impossible to tell you all that's been accomplished with your support this year, but here are some highlights!

Recreation Successes!

IC DeHart Trail, Woolwine, VA -- Trail directional signage, a new changing station, and a new kiosk were installed this year on the 15+ mile trail system. DRBA also designed a new brochure to help promote this hidden gem in Patrick County, VA.

Fieldale Connector Trail and Steps, Fieldale, VA -- New steps were constructed to allow people to access Fieldale Park from the town of Fieldale increasing accessibility and promoting health and wellness. Landscaping was added to encourage users to enjoy the park.

Patrick & Henry Community College Beaver Creek Campus Trail, Martinsville, VA -- Thanks to the Eco Ambassador Council, a new 2.5-mile trail was designed and constructed on the P&HCC Campus. New directional signage, a kiosk, and an observation deck were also added to enhance the experience for hikers

MC Martin Park, Danville, VA -- The project began in June 2023 with generous funding from the Eco Ambassador Council and the local community. A community cleanup of the park was the first step and volunteers of all ages attended. Over the next six months, DRBA will work with Danville Parks & Recreation to build a trail and an overlook deck as well as benches and historical signage.

Rockingham County Outdoor Recreation Master Plan, NC -- DRBA will complete the first county-wide master plan by December 2023. This three-year project

has been in partnership with all of the towns and cities in Rockingham County, NC and will provide a roadmap for future outdoor recreational projects.

Year of the Trail, NC -- DRBA has hosted numerous hikes and paddles on trails in the North Carolina regions of the Dan River watershed all year to celebrate the state's declaration of Year of the Trail.

Dan River State Trail, Stokes and Rockingham County, NC -- DRBA is completing the Master Plan for the Dan River Trail and will be hosting public input meetings in November 2023.

Dan River Corridor Study, Stokes, Rockingham, and Caswell, NC -- DRBA will complete the Dan River Corridor Study by the end of December 2023. This study focuses on riparian buffers, endangered species, and land/water use on the NC side of the Dan River.

First Saturday Outing (FSO) -- DRBA hosted FSOs, a free and open-to-the-public hike or paddle, almost every month in 2023. The average attendance has almost doubled since 2022!

Education Successes!

Snow Creek Elementary School Green Project, Franklin County, VA

DRBA is at the end of the first year of a 2-year project to turn an entire elementary school green! We'll be adding an outdoor classroom and garden, starting a girl's science club, and ensuring all grade levels have an environmental education curriculum. The Roanoke Women's Foundation funds this project.

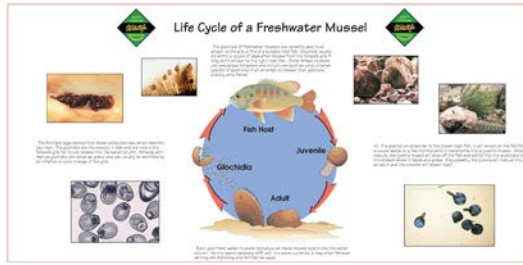
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South Mayo River Dam Removal and Mitigation

Back in 2021, DRBA began working with Piedmont Land Conservancy on the Dan River Conservation Design Plan. A plan, along with subsequent online resources, was developed to identify critical habitats for endangered species and to devise methods to protect the land and natural resources that support these areas. Included in the regional plan was a watershed area extending from Rockingham and Stokes County in North Carolina through Patrick County in Virginia. During the course of building the plan, several dams were identified on both the Mayo River and the Dan River that should be considered for removal or some type of mitigation that would allow for fish passage and support a safe channel for recreational boaters.

Staff identified the dam locations, contacted aquatic resource protection property owners and spent time in the field. We also met with aquatic biologists from the North Carolina Division of Wildlife Resources, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Aquatic Barrier Removal Task Force, the state and federal agencies to be involved. Many emails, meetings, and discussions followed about a course of action. All agreed that as many of these dams as possible should be removed. The dams in question in Virginia are all early 20th-century construction built for mills or hydropower. All are out of service, and many have partial breeches and deterioration.



and added these to the Southeast (SARP) database. We identified the field by photographing these locations. We also met with biologists from the Virginia Division of Natural Resources, the Town of Stuart, and the Aquatic Barrier Removal Task Force with SARP. After convincing them to become involved, we visited the dam sites on the South Mayo.



The first step in any dam removal project is to contact the dam or property owner for approval. DRBA staff have been working with property owners and thus far have received approval from two property owners. Both VADWR and USFWS agreed to send biologists to the field for species surveys including fish and mussels. Mussels cannot move upstream on their own. Their unique adaptation for spreading out involves attaching eggs to fish gills. These glochidia are parasitic and must attach to the gills or fins of a suitable host fish. An aquatic barrier such as a dam prevents the movement of fish upstream and therefore mussels can not propagate to sites upstream of dams once an area is extirpated of existing populations. Mussels are nature's natural water filters and are important to many freshwater systems. The removal of aquatic barriers is important in many rivers and streams that have been dammed up or blocked by culverts, etc.

The first mussel survey through the town of Stuart was conducted in August by the state Malacologist for Virginia, Brian Watson with a team of field biologists and DRBA staff assisting. Unfortunately, no mussels were found, but as Watson stated "not finding anything is still data. We don't know historically what type of mussels occurred here, but they most surely were at some point extirpated and not able to repopulate. We found a variety of mussels, including the endangered James River Spiny, downstream of the last dam so we think the dams upstream are prohibiting the movement of mussels to repopulate the areas."

In October, DWR aquatic biologist Mike Pinder conducted the first fish survey of the stream in the same area where we had completed the mussel study. USFWS service staff and DRBA staff also assisted. At the time of this article, another survey farther downstream is also being conducted. This involves "electro-fishing" which consists of walking along the stream with a back-mounted generator and shocking the water. The fish are temporarily stunned and can be captured in nets. The fish are identified and released. Data for the type of species, their numbers, and stream data that includes depth and width are collected. So far, we have collected 20 species of fish in the section of the river from the Mayo River Trailhead to upstream one and a half miles representing a good diversity of fish. We also collected at least one species that is under review to be listed as endangered, the Orange-fin madtom (*Noturus gilberti*). Another rare fish known only to the Roanoke River Basin is the beautiful Rustyside Sucker (*Thoburnia hamiltoni*). We found a good population of each of these species. A full report will be available after the surveys are completed.

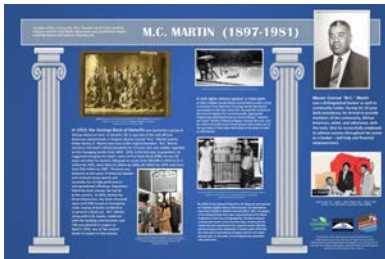
DRBA staff are working with VADWR and USFWS to find suitable funding to remove at least two of these aquatic barriers with the hope that more can be removed. The community and region will gain both biodiversity and safer recreational opportunities. The environmental benefits are real -- cleaner water from the mussels, and a richer biodiversity that towns along the Mayo Rivers can promote and celebrate.

M.C. Martin Park – Danville



Maceo Conrad “M.C.” Martin was a distinguished African-American banker as well as a community leader. During his 19-year bank presidency, he strived to provide all members of the community with the tools that he successfully employed to achieve success throughout his career as a banker – self-help and financial empowerment.

Together with the family of M.C. Martin, the Eco Ambassador Council and the city of Danville Parks and Recreation, DRBA staff are helping the community add amenities to this park dedicated to Mr. Martin’s legacy. A short walking path is being added to border the creek and end with an observation deck. New signage will be added to showcase Martin’s accomplishments and inform visitors about water quality. Park benches will be installed with the names of community members who donated to the effort.



The first step was a community cleanup of the area around the creek. This small creek goes underground through a culvert and a storm drain and we wanted to daylight some of the overgrown areas as well as remove trash and debris. The cleanup, held in June with several family members, DRBA staff, and park volunteers, made for the perfect opportunity to meet Mr. Martin’s family and get a good day’s work done around the creek.



Our next steps include constructing the path with the help of the Danville Parks and Recreation department and then installing the observation deck, signs, and benches. Another workday will be scheduled to help with the trail, bench, and sign installation and will include an additional cleanup.

We appreciate our association with Mr. Martin’s daughter and granddaughter, Paula Smith and Jill Smith Handy, the strong support of the Eco Ambassador Council, Danville Parks and Recreation, and other members of the Martin Family.



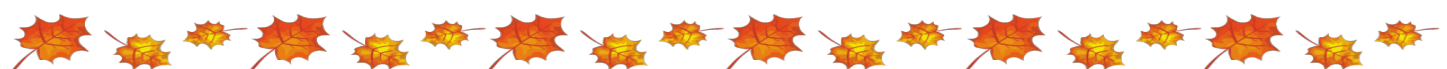
From the Director

Autumn is always a time for me when I try to make time to go outside, take a walk in the woods, and get lost in thought while marveling at the changing landscape. On a recent hike, my thoughts concentrated on DRBA. I was walking on a trail that DRBA designed, found funding for and then constructed. I was literally walking on a celebration of DRBA’s talented staff, its committed leadership from its Board of Directors, its passionate scores of volunteers, its generous donors, and its effective network of partners.

As the weather cools, I hope you will take the opportunity to enjoy nature. I hope if you choose to paddle, you will take a moment to celebrate the dozens of DRBA volunteers who give their time to attend cleanups, monitor water quality, and teach youth about the importance of protecting our natural resources through DRBA’s environmental education programs. If you decide to walk on a trail or visit a park, I bet you’ll see a DRBA logo somewhere and be reminded about the DRBA donors, partners, and volunteers who made that outdoor asset a reality.

We can’t do what we do without you. While you are out and about enjoying Fall this year, please know you are appreciated while you enjoy the positive impact of your generosity in every corner of the Dan River watershed.

Tiffany Haworth, Executive Director
Dan River Basin Association





Krista Hodges Recognized by Virginia Association of Science Teachers

Krista Hodges, DRBA's Education Outreach Manager, has been selected by the Virginia Association of Science Teachers (VAST) to receive this year's award in the category *Informal Science Education*. The organization recognizes exemplary contributions to science education through its annual Recognition in Science Education (RISE)

awards program. The RISE awards are presented to outstanding educators at all levels. Krista will be recognized at the 2023 Professional Development Conference held at The Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, VA in November.

Krista joined the DRBA team in 2011 as the Education Coordinator and was later promoted to Education Manager in 2015. She is a graduate of Averett University where she majored in Biology with a focus on Environmental Studies and Ecology. Krista leads a variety of DRBA environmental education and outreach offerings including coordination of the award-winning Trout in the Classroom program, Streamside Trees in the Classroom and Citizen Water Quality Monitoring training. She works tirelessly to develop new environmental education programs for the entire Dan River Basin. Krista and her family love being outdoors hiking, biking, paddling and managing their family farm.

Congratulations to Krista Hodges for this recognition!



Congressman Morgan Griffith

Joins in Trout Release

In August, Congressman Morgan Griffith joined the Henry County homeschool students to release native brook trout into the Smith River in Fieldale, Virginia. The trout had been delivered to the Virginia Museum of Natural History in October of last year when they were in their first stage of the life cycle – the egg. The students have visited the museum's "Watershed Hall." since then to care for the trout and to learn about the different stages of the trout life cycle and the food web.

At the Smith River, students learned about river ecology, water quality, and aquatic insects called macroinvertebrates. The macroinvertebrates found on this day were crayfish, a hellgrammite, crane fly larvae, and encased caddisfly larvae. They were found in a nearby tributary of the Smith River. The students learned that these will be a food source for the trout once they are released into the river. Students also tested the temperature of the river to see if it matched the temperature of the trout tank at the museum. After learn-



ing about the Smith River and the food web of the trout, students chose a name for each trout and released them into the river.

Brook trout are Virginia's state fish and are the only trout native to Virginia, although rainbow and brown trout are also found in the Smith River. Congressman Griffith encouraged the students to pay close attention to the colors of the young trout before they released them. The young trout already look similar to adult trout as they boast the brook trout colors of bright orange and white striped fins.

This was Griffith's second trout release with the Trout in the Classroom program as he previously visited the Bassett area to release trout in 2012. Before he left the release, Griffith told the students, "There's nothing better than playing in the creek, thanks for inviting me to play in your creek today."

Find out how you can support
DRBA's Education Program
www.danriver.org/support-drba/



Sensory Garden Installed

at Albert Harris Elementary

DRBA worked with Albert Harris Elementary to expand its green schoolyard this summer by installing a sensory garden. The sensory garden was designed by Krista Hodges, DRBA's Education Outreach Manager, and Albert Harris Elementary's STEM Teacher, Ms. Laurie Witt to include different elements that appeal to and stimulate all five senses. Research has proven that sensory gardens encourage tactile learning, but also meet the requirements of VA social-emotional learning standards.



The garden



included wind chimes, a sand pit, a wind spinner, multi-color stepping stones, a bird bath and feeder, pollinator and edible plants, and colors that create a calming effect. The garden is located near the monarch waystation, greenhouse, and rain barrel system for students to use in their out-of-the-classroom learning.

The sensory garden earned Albert Harris Elementary a second-year badge with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Virginia Naturally program.

The sensory garden addition was made possible through a grant from the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia and the Dan River Basin Association which facilitated the creation of the project.

Conserve Our Water Series Concludes

The final Rain Barrel Workshop in the Conserve Our Water series was held at Two Witches Brewery in Danville, VA in September. Over 25 participants attended the workshop with 22 barrels going out all over the basin.

The participants plan to install their rain barrels at their homes where they will be used to water gardens or farm animals, or to meet other outdoor watering needs.



Through the generous support of the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region, each participant received all the tools and materials necessary to build their own rain barrel for only \$10 and included a water protector kit, DRBA gear, a rain barrel conversion kit, and a barrel. A value of over \$200.00!

A rain barrel is a tool that can be used to reduce stormwater runoff and help save money on water bills. Once set up, a rain barrel can collect free rainwater that can be stored and later used to water edible gardens, trees, and lawns. A 55-gallon rain barrel can provide enough water to supply a small garden or livestock for about one week. Incorporating a rain barrel into our daily lives limits stormwater runoff and erosion, and saves water that can be used during droughts.

Installing a rain barrel is one of the easiest ways to reduce a citizen's water footprint and help recharge our rivers, lakes, and aquifers. In a national survey by DC Urban Gardeners, a rain barrel lowered water bills by about \$35 a month in the summer.



Floating Lotus

DRBA's Floating Lotus event was held at sunset on September 28 at the new Riverside Park in Axton, VA. People had an opportunity to donate to DRBA and receive lotus flowers in memory or honor of people they love.

Although only a handful of people attended the event, many more generously donated in the memory and the celebration of loved ones.

Those who attended were treated to homemade cheesecake by the Broadway Baker of Eden, NC while they set their flowers afloat. Everyone had an opportunity to write a name or memory on a biodegradable and environmentally safe slip of paper and attach it to their flowers.

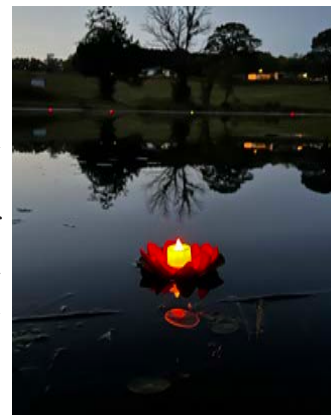
It was a beautiful experience watching the flowers float while the sun settled behind the trees and we heard stories about who and what each flower represented.

Many people memorialized and honored loved ones who passed, celebrated events like graduation, a birthday, a new job, or a marriage, and thanked people who have made a difference in their lives.

The lotus flowers, made of recycled plastic bottles, were collected from the pond after the event and guests were invited to take them home.

"I think it's very peaceful," said Ellen Jessee, a DRBA board member, volunteer, and donor at the event. "I loved it."

The Floating Lotus supported all that DRBA does in our region including designing, planning, and building outdoor assets like trails, parks, and river accesses; education programs for thousands of adults and youth; and the stewardship of our natural resources through protection and conservation programs and activities.



Friends of DRBA -- A New Tradition

In 2022, DRBA reached the amazing milestone of serving the Dan River region for two decades. It was the perfect time for the DRBA staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers to evaluate our programs, services, and administrative practices and policies to ensure we are doing our work in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

DRBA's Membership program was evaluated. Through research and analysis, four key themes were identified:

1. We asked dozens of successful environmental organizations across the country to share their membership/donor policies and most had changed from a membership-based organization to a donor-supported platform.
2. Research showed that people who wish to support an organization would prefer to make a one-time or monthly donation to provide programs and services.
3. The administration of our current membership program is not cost-effective and DRBA's

membership has decreased by more than 50% over the past decade while donations continue to increase.

4. With some exceptions, giving tiers can be an obstruction to achieving an inclusive and welcoming message to potential supporters.

Based on this research, DRBA proposed the following changes to its membership program:

- All DRBA members will be known as donors and collectively be known as the "Friends of DRBA."
- Levels of membership will be eliminated; all donations will be honored and appreciated.
- Individual donors will receive a DRBA decal as our thanks.
- DRBA's quarterly magazine "Currents" will be made available electronically to the public.
- A new publication, "Inside DRBA" will highlight insider news and activities and will be emailed periodically to the Friends of DRBA.

(continued page 9)



(From page 8)

- Friends of DRBA will receive periodic invitations to special hikes and events and will receive occasional discounts on DRBA merchandise.
- The River Legacy Circle, designated donors who generously provide \$1,000 or more annually, will continue to be recognized throughout the year.

In March and April 2023, DRBA held four live sharing sessions with its membership to discuss the proposed changes and receive feedback and launched an online survey that was provided to every current and one-year lapsed member.

Summary of Virtual Member Meetings – total registrations: 26 – attendance: 19

- Zero negative responses during any of the meetings to the proposed change.
- There was great interaction during most of the meetings. Questions focused on the timeline and all comments were related to this being a good and healthy change for DRBA.
- One interesting comment by a participant – “As a member aged under 30, I think my generation thinks of joining something or being a member as restrictive and exclusionary and we don’t want to be a part of that. I think this change will help bring in a lot of younger supporters to DRBA.”

Summary of Online Survey to Members - 76 responses (out of a total membership of 159)

- 100% positive response to proposed changes
- 60% responded “I like the change a lot and understand why this is being proposed”
- 40% responded “It doesn’t matter to me if I’m a member or a friend - I just want to support DRBA’s work”
- 100% - “I will continue to support DRBA”
- 32 (VA) and 43 (NC), 1 unanswered

Based on the membership’s feedback, the DRBA Board of Directors voted to continue to move forward with the proposed changes to the Membership Program.

The next step was to edit DRBA’s by-laws to reflect the change so that members could formally vote. DRBA’s Board Finance Committee suggested that a lawyer be contracted to review the proposed by-law changes regarding the change from membership to donor format to ensure we are meeting IRS and legal compliance re-

lated to our 501 (c) 3 status. Mr. Davis McDonald, Attorney at Law, of Carruthers & Roth in Greensboro, NC was obtained and assisted with reviewing and revising DRBA’s by-laws. His firm has provided legal representation, counsel, and planning services to individuals, nonprofits, and businesses for 85 years.

On June 2, 2023, DRBA’s membership voted both in-person at the Annual Celebration and online to accept the by-law revisions.

DRBA staff then began the changes to the website and exploration of a new donor platform for online donations. To launch the new Friends of DRBA, DRBA will begin a “\$23,000 in 23 days in 2023” campaign on Giving Tuesday, November 28.

**Become a
Friend of DRBA
Today!
Find out how
at
www.danriver.org**



Eden Seniors Create a Mural

A beautiful mural has been added to the Matrimony Creek Greenway in the City of Eden! The Garden of Eden Senior Center's art group created a mural that was inspired by the outdoors and what it means to them.



Colorful images of kayakers, hikers, animals, and plants were painted on the blue-themed sections of the mural that coordinated with the picnic tables that Purina volunteers worked on in the shelter last fall.

Cindy Adams noted that this mural was so 'sweet' and shares what Eden aspires people to think about when they visit the area, "Small Town, Big Outdoors" was painted across one of the sections.



Hikers on the greenway have enjoyed the beautiful addition to the amenities building at the trailhead noting that it continues to bring art into nature – an inspiration to many!

The Roanoke Logperch Makes its Appearance

On October 10th, an historic splash happened on the Mayo River in North Carolina. NC Wildlife Resource Commission, US Fish and Wildlife Services, Mayo River State Parks, Piedmont Land Conservancy, and DRBA assisted in reintroducing the Roanoke Logperch in the Mayo River!



A section that has not seen this fish in over 100 years has been repopulated with 100 of these fascinating and beautiful fish.

The Roanoke Logperch is endemic to our river basin and is federally listed as endangered. The main cause for its near extinction in our area is twofold -- habitat degradation from erosion causing poor water quality, and dams along the Dan and the Mayo Rivers that create aquatic barriers.

Over 50 miles of river were made available for Logperch recolonization on the Dan River when the Lindsey Bridge Dam mitigation project, aka Madison River Park, was completed. The Mayo River enters the Dan River downstream of Lindsey Bridge and this part of the historic range of the fish; however, natural repatriation is not possible on the Mayo due to the Avalon and Washington Mills Dams. The reintroduction project on the Mayo River allows for over 15 additional miles of potential recolonization while these fish explore the high-quality habitat that can be found above the two dams.

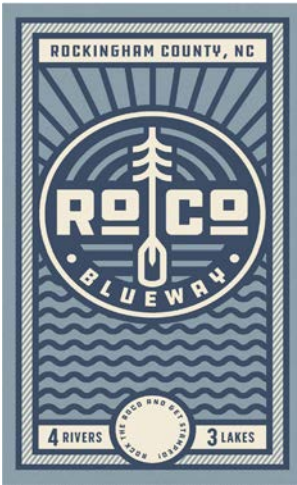
Repatriation studies have played an important role in delisting this small, but important fish. Our special Roanoke Logperch are some of the first being reintroduced to their habitats through a 50-year Safe Harbor Agreement with NCWRC and USFWS which includes 20 other imperiled species.

Anna Wheeler, DRBA's North Carolina Program Coordinator attended with other local groups to see this in action -- "tempering the fish by adding water from the Mayo River to prevent temperature and pH shock, and then finally releasing them was such a magical experience. You could tell when they were getting acclimated, as their patterns got darker, they started facing upstream, and they seemed calm in their surroundings."



DRBA continues to work closely with state and federal fish conservation projects in both North Carolina and Virginia.

We thank Piedmont Land Conservancy for allowing us access to the river, the Mayo River State Parks for protecting a large portion of the riverbanks and habitats these fish are calling home, and the USFWS, NCWRC, and VADWR for their dedication to protecting the unique environment we have in the Dan River Basin! We look forward to future stockings and research about the repatriation of the Roanoke Logperch!



The past few years have been full of redevelopment on the Dan River, specifically a new blueway guide for Rockingham County.

In 2021, Rockingham County Tourism released its newest version of its blueway guide. The guide includes specific branding for the blueway and other items such as slogans and colorways that would let you know, ‘you’re in a good place’! This blueway guide is very thorough and has each section of the river listed with GPS coordinates, addresses, miles, estimated time, rapids’ class information, and points of historical interest.

Lindsay Pegg, Tourism Manager for Rockingham County, recently spoke during a Lunch with DRBA event. She discussed the importance of the blueway guide and what an impact it has already made for folks visiting in the area. The guide provides tips such as Leave No Trace, and guidelines for river safety. The guide also links the reader to the DRBA page with real-time river flow information from the gauges along the four rivers in Rockingham County.

An added feature includes information about the three lakes found in the county and, at the end, a checklist for kids and adults alike to use for wildlife viewing and destination boating.

Along with having copies at the visitor centers throughout the state, folks can find the guide at river access kiosks that include a QR code to a digital file.

Lindsay Pegg did a great job at creating a safer place on the river and this blueway guide is something you don’t want to miss! If you couldn’t attend our Lunch with DRBA, the RoCo Blueway guide and the video can be found on our website at

www.danriver.org/our-watershed/trails-and-river-info/river-info/access-points

Eden River Fest Celebrates 20 Years

For 20 years, the City of Eden has created an entire festival about the rivers in their area and every year the Eden River Fest grows bigger and bigger. People from all over the region gather in Uptown Leaksville to enjoy a weekend celebrating the city’s culture and history and the impact the river has had on this area.

DRBA hosted an interactive booth in the pocket park with plenty of fun activities for kids and adults alike! The public painted a rain barrel to be auctioned off at the Forest School event. The rain barrel included handprints that spelled out “DRBA” on one side and a hand-stenciled mural of a fish on the other side.

Our photo booth banner ‘You OTTER be on the Dan River!’ made a comeback this year with the t-shirts that boasted, “You otter be here!” on the back.

It was fitting that this year, over 20 thousand people attended over the three-day event! DRBA appreciates the City of Eden for all they do and Cindy Adams, Events Coordinator, who works so hard to put this on for the public.





Communities, Rivers, and DRBA

DRBA partners with volunteers from local businesses, civic organizations, and individuals all year to help keep our rivers and trails clean and free from trash.



Some are old friends that have made this an annual event, and sometimes new folks come around and ask for guidance or supplies to get started on their first effort.

For a number of years, DRBA has partnered with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company of Danville (GTRC). This past June, GTRC contacted DRBA for supplies to host a cleanup of the Dan River near the Danville YMCA. While we were able to get the supplies to them, the weather was not as cooperative. After several rain delays, on July

18th the rain stopped just in time for folks to gather several bags of trash along that stretch of the Dan.

In August, DRBA was contacted for the first time by the ICF Day Services of Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services. They had organized several groups wanting to do cleanups in the Danville area and needed help with supplies as well. Once the supplies were received, the groups were able to do cleanups at six different parks during the month of August -- M.C. Martin



Park, Anglers Park, Dan Daniel Memorial Park, Riverwalk Trail, Ballou Park, and Crossing at the Dan.

To learn how you can help keep our local waterways and trails clean and healthy for future generations, please visit DRBA's website, www.danriver.org and sign up to host a cleanup crew.

The artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place: from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper, from a passing shape, from a spider's web.

Pablo Picasso

Lunch with DRBA -- Inspired by Nature

In October, DRBA staff member, Melissa Mericle, hosted the second part of her Lunch with DRBA series "Inspired by Nature." Artists find inspiration all around them, especially from the natural world. This episode



explored the art in and around Patrick County and Henry County. Mericle's journey included trail art, murals, sculptures and Barn Quilts along with a couple of local artists, photographer Rick Dawson and glasswork artist

Aleen Wilson. Dawson and Wilson generously shared some of their work and spoke on how nature inspires them to see the world from different angles.

The program included a virtual tour of Gallery 22 where Aleen does much of her fused glasswork and Rick's talk about his current exhibit at Piedmont Arts in Martinsville.



A special note: It has been a pleasure to serve in the design and production of *Currents* these past 8+ years. To work with the staff at the Dan River Basin Association -- learning from them, watching them grow as a team, and recording the incredible work they do in our communities has been an incredible experience. I am in awe of all that they accomplish.

As I submit my last issue, I thank T Butler for her amazing eagle-eye editing and Susie Stone at Collinsville Printing for taking the time to make the finishing touches and a beautiful magazine.

B. Kirkpatrick



(continued from page 3) **Albert Harris Elementary School Sensory Garden** DRBA completed the installation of a sensory garden at the elementary school so that all students (and faculty) have a place to relax and get in touch with nature.

Streamside Trees in the Classroom (STIC) -- DRBA brought our award-winning STIC program to hundreds of 4th-grade students attending Huntsville, Dillard, and Stoneville Elementary Schools in NC. The STIC program has been exceptionally popular in Virginia for many years.

Forest School -- DRBA, in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers at Philpott Lake, hosted Forest School, an event for children and their parents to learn more about nature and be more confident in spending time outdoors. The first 300 people received a free lunch helping to alleviate food insecurity for those families in need. The Eco Ambassador Council sponsored this event.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC), Basin-wide -- DRBA's very popular TIC program, started by Dr. David Jones of Martinsville, had 14 tanks in classrooms during the Spring of 2023, reaching over 500 students, and, there were 28 requests by teachers to have the TIC program in their classrooms this Fall. Unfortunately, there has not been enough funding to handle all of the requests.

Citizen Water Quality Training, Basin-wide -- DRBA staff has trained over a dozen new volunteers to monitor our waterways this year.

Environmental Education (EE) Survey, Basin-wide DRBA has sent out thousands of invitations to teachers, principals, and school administrators to participate in our latest EE Survey. The survey asks about EE curriculum and green initiatives that schools have – and want to have – for their students. The results of the survey will be published in 2024.

DRBA Outreach -- DRBA attended more than a dozen community festivals this year helping to engage, inspire and educate people about the protection and conservation of our natural resources.

Volunteer Environmental Educators program (VEE), Basin-wide -- DRBA hosted its first training for the new VEE program this Fall. DRBA receives hundreds of requests for our education programs every year, but it is impossible to provide them all with our small staff. The VEEs are now trained to provide DRBA programs in schools throughout the region. The first class trained six new volunteers and another training will be scheduled in 2024.

Stewardship Successes!

Banister River Flotsam Flotilla,

Halifax, VA -- Working in partnership with the Town of Halifax, DRBA helped to clean up miles of the Bannister River at this event

Regional Cleanups -- DRBA hosted three community cleanup events and so far in 2023, provided guidance and supplies to an additional 35 groups of volunteers to clean up almost 15 miles of river and several miles of trails removing more than a ton of garbage and debris.

Martinsville High School Monarch Waystation, Martinsville, VA --

Sponsored by Dr David Jones (Jones & DeShon Orthodontics) and his son, Dr. David L. Jones, Jr. (Roanoke Valley Orthodontics), a new nationally certified Monarch Butterfly Waystation was constructed and planted at the high school in Martinsville, VA. This is DRBA's 4th nationally certified waystation constructed in our watershed and we have plans to do at least one a year for the next five years.

Safety Signage, Rockingham County, NC -- DRBA is all about safety and partnered with the Tourism Development Authority of Rockingham County share safety tips on signage at every river access in the county.

Rain Barrel Workshops, Danville, Caswell, and Pittsylvania Counties, VA --

DRBA hosted two rain barrel workshops in 2023, generously funded by the Community Foundation of the Dan River Region. Both workshops sold out in less than 24 hours and now there are almost 100 new rain barrels in our region conserving water!

Batteau Exhibit Renovation, Museum Archives of Rockingham County, NC -- DRBA, in partnership with the MARC, completed the first Butler Legacy Fund project, a renovation of the Batteau exhibit at the museum.

Logperch Release, NC -- DRBA worked with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to release Roanoke Logperch into the upper Mayo River at the Mayo River State Park and Piedmont Land Conservancy lands as part of the NCWRC Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement for Roanoke Logperch.

Fish Survey, Stuart, VA -- DRBA worked with the Virginia Department of Water Resources to perform a fish survey at several sites on the South Mayo in Stuart, VA.

DRBA's Advocacy -- DRBA continues to work with both Virginia and North Carolina partners and the Southern Environmental Law Center to keep environmental threats out of our watershed.

July FSO at Townes Reservoir Dam in Patrick County, Virginia

For me there is no better way to enjoy a Saturday than out in the wild on refreshing water in my kayak. It's even better if I can go with old and new friends to paddle somewhere I've never been, especially when the weather is perfect, and the location is beautiful. For DRBA's July FSO, 35 boats with 37 boaters met in Meadows of Dan (Patrick County, Virginia) for a scenic paddle on Townes Dam Reservoir, a gorgeous mountain lake near the Blue Ridge Parkway. Located in the wild Dan River Gorge, the reservoir captures water from the Dan River, Round Meadow Creek, and Mayberry Creek and serves as the secondary catchment and storage area for water that drives the Pinnacles Power Plant at the head of Kibler Valley.

The day started with a convoy from our meeting spot to the put-in, which has restricted access by permit-only, so our group enjoyed the whole lake to ourselves! Once everyone was on the water, we headed out on our leisurely paddle, finding a beautiful waterfall, and spotting an Osprey, a Belted Kingfisher, and a Great Blue Heron along the way. Both ends of the reservoir featured rippling streams: the Dan River runs through from the south and Round Meadow Creek flows in from the north. Some of us were able to explore a little of these streams, finding examples of occasional mussels and many bear and raccoon tracks along the banks.

After everyone's kayak was loaded for home, those of us who wanted to check out the charming town of Meadows of Dan found inviting options for shopping, coffee, and eateries to visit within walking distance from our meeting spot.

Thanks to Betty Kirkpatrick for being our fearless leader for the day!

Mindy Mock

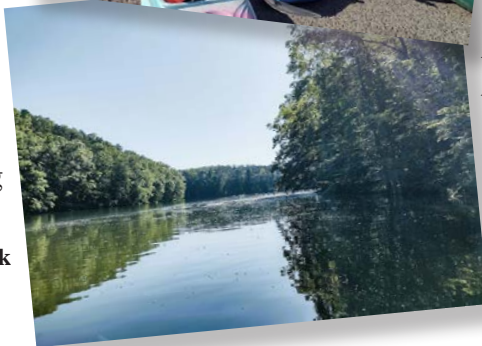
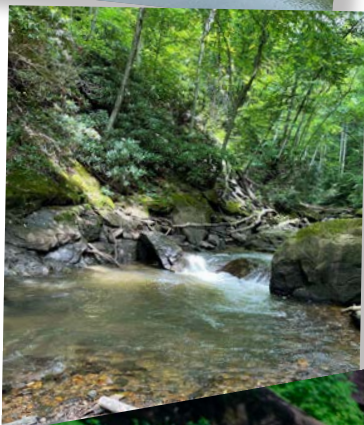
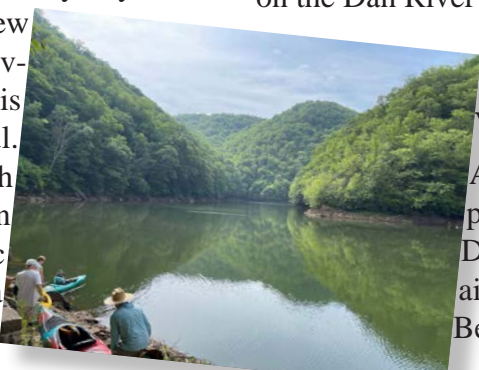
August FSO -- Paddle on the Dan River

The Dan River Basin Association is ever aware of water conditions and the safety of the public. Our outing on the Dan River was postponed due to high-water.

September 2, 2023 -- FSO on Beaver Creek Reservoir, Martinsville, VA

An early taste of fall greeted thirty-three paddlers for the Labor Day weekend DRBA FSO. A cool, low-humidity air created a wispy fog drifting across Beaver Creek Reservoir that warmed to make a comfortable morning on the water. The two-mile paddle to the confluence of the lake's namesake, Beaver Creek, was graced with lush woodlands and a still surface to create sharp reflections. Kingfishers dodged along the shoreline while the surface was occasionally breached by a fish splashing at a bug. As the lake narrowed at its headwaters, several paddlers ventured up Beaver Creek a short way until encountering a downed tree that blocked further progress. The return two-mile trip continued the leisurely pace as no one was in a rush for the outing to be over. One family group opted for a longer time on the water and enjoyed fishing with their children. Conversations and laughter carried across the water as good friends and great company made the beautiful day even better. DRBA has hosted nearly 250 First Saturday Outings across the basin with paddles and hikes. This tradition welcomes all to enjoy nature close-up, and to experience first-hand, the reason that DRBA works to preserve and promote our natural and cultural resources.

Wayne Kirkpatrick



Friends of the Dan River Basin Association July 1, 2023 -- September 30, 2023

River Legacy Circle

Steve Fisher
Mike and Jane Haines
Kathleen Anderson and Peter Jonas
Graham Park III

Friends Donations

Gregory L. Arens
Charlene Bowling
Jessica Driver
Barb Edlen
Edward Evans
Amy Farinelli
Jarod and Krista Hodges
Lawrence Hulett
Judy King
Kamara Nelson
Graham Park III
Ronald Rebman
Norma Reed
Lynn Regan
Ward Stone
Benjamin L. Williams

Sustainers

Chris Adcock
Kathryn Converse
Mark Estes
Steve Fisher
Tiffany Haworth
Matthew Huckfeldt

Judith Jones
Vince Joyce
Sharon M. Olson
Lee Templeton
Fletcher and Ginger Waynick

Municipal Memberships

City of Reidsville
County of Henry, Virginia
Town of Madison
Rockingham County
Town of Wentworth

Corporate and Organization Donations

Duke Energy
Harvest Foundation of the Piedmont
Kroger
PayPal Giving Fund
Reidsville Area Foundation
Rockingham County Naturalist
Club

Project Partnerships

Patrick Henry Community College

Chinqua Penn Trail Donations

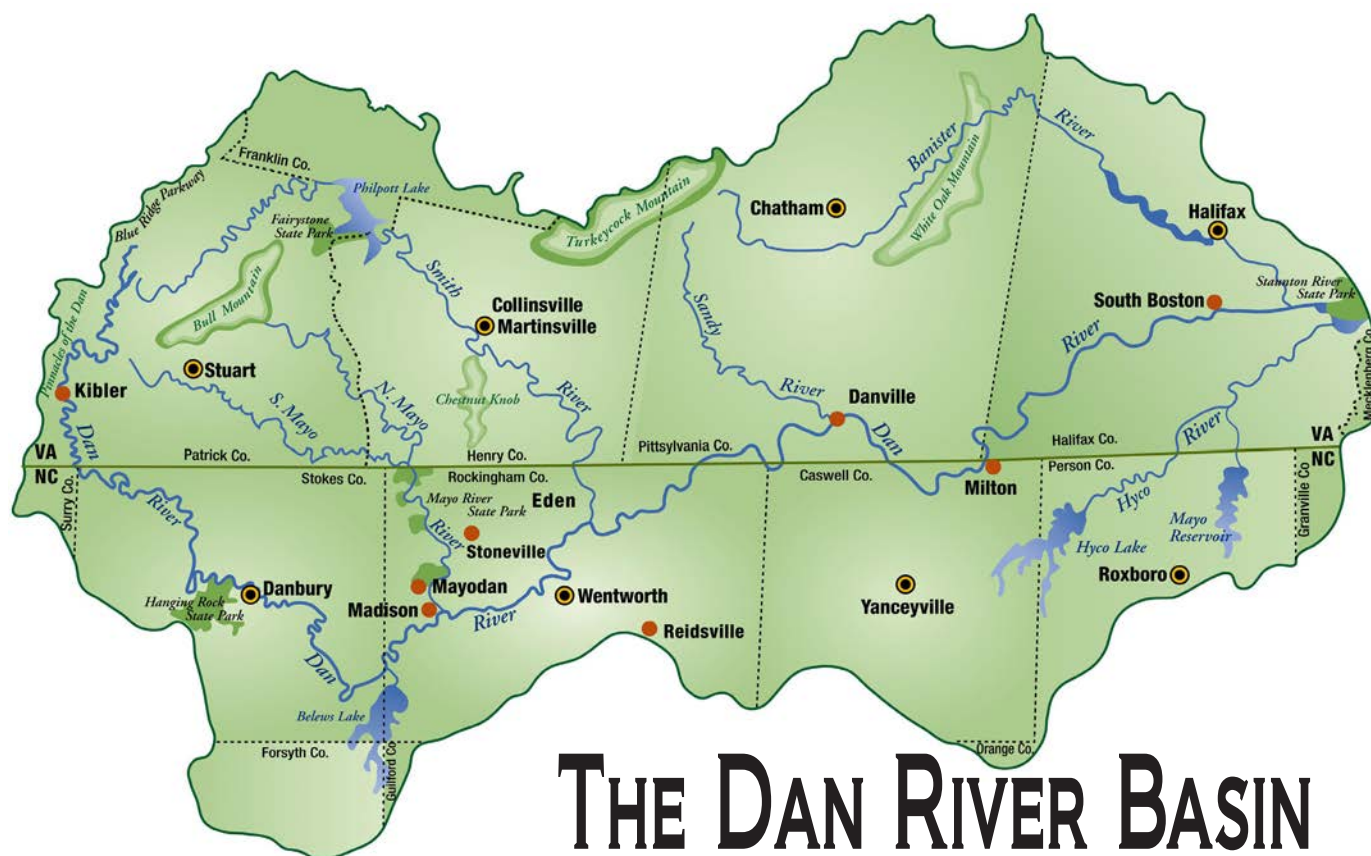
Pella Rolscreen Foundation
Reidsville Area Foundation

AD5K Donations/Sponsorships

Clark Gas & Oil Company, Inc.
Patrick County
Patrick County Eye Association

Floating Lotus Donations

Roger Adams
Janie Brazier
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Tracy McKoy
Paul and Patricia May
Jeff and Melissa Mericle
Theresa Tobin
Curtis Turner
Fletcher and Ginger Waynick
Brian and Patricia Williams
S Wolen
Sherri Wright



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EDEN, NC 27288 - 3242



Calendar of Events

What's coming up?

November 1 -- Hogan's Creek Park Opening

November 4 – First Saturday Outing - 4.5-mile hike on the Cook's Wall Trail in Hanging Rock State Park, NC

November 23 & 24 - DRBA offices closed for Thanksgiving

December 2 - First Saturday Outing - 4.0-mile hike at I. C. DeHart Park's Woolwine West Trail, VA.

December 25 & 26 - DRBA offices closed for Holidays

January 1, 2024 – DRBA offices closed for New Year Day