

Environmental Education Report

2024-2025

DAN RIVER BASIN



ASSOCIATION

danriver.org/EE

PROGRAMS

FIELD TRIPS

EVENTS

PRESENTATIONS





Over 10,000 youth throughout the Dan River Basin

Programs

- Trout in the Classroom
- Streamside Trees in the Classroom
- Inspire Clean Water with Green Leaves
- Community Presentations
- Events & Festivals
- & More!

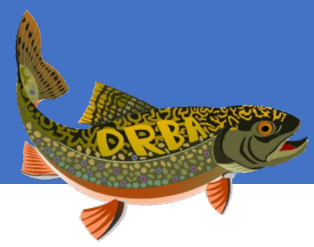
Counties

Patrick County, Martinsville,
Henry County, Franklin County,
Pittsylvania County, Danville,
Halifax County, Rockingham
County, Guilford County &
Randolph County

Visit our For Educators page for more information about education programs and resources:

<https://www.danriver.org/programs/environmental-education/for-educators>

Trout in the Classroom



This school year, 15 schools from VA and NC participated in Trout in the Classroom. More than one thousand students ranging from ages 7 – 18 witnessed the trout life cycle from eggs to fingerlings followed by a field trip to release their aquatic friends that they had cared for over the last six months into the beautiful Smith River.

At the riverside, students tested the water quality of the Smith River to ensure it was close to the quality of their classroom tanks, with hope that their young trout would survive in their new habitat. The trout releases are always a treat for those that take part in them, as students are bound with energy from being at the river, out in nature, and saying good-bye to their trout.

Students also learn about river ecology and aquatic ecosystems with macroinvertebrates and other wildlife that pass by. Over the years, Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagles, Belted Kingfishers, Mallards, Canada Geese and their goslings, and adult trout have been spotted at the river accesses.

Students and teachers frequently comment that this is their most favorite field trip they have ever been on.



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Streamside Trees in the Classroom

Over 500 students participated in the STIC program in 2024. Fourth grade students from Franklin County and Martinsville City rooted black willow cuttings in their classrooms starting in September followed by a field trip to plant them last October.

Planting days were held at Fairy Stone State Park in Patrick County, Philpott Lake's Salthouse Branch Park and Jamison Mill in Franklin County. Students enjoyed field trip planting days as they spent the entire school day in the parks learning about natural resources from local partners and planting their trees along waterways.

The US Army Corps of Engineers and other natural resource partners joined DRBA to assist with planting days by providing hands-on activities and demonstrations for students. Students learned about topics including water cycle, erosion, water quality, water safety, conservation, and invasive and native species identification.

The STIC program strongly correlates with Science Standards of Learning (SOL) guidelines related to plant parts and the role of stems, leaves and roots, along with watersheds and the health of our natural resources.

Purchases made at the Philpott Lake Gift Shop in the Visitor Center help support DRBA's environmental education programs.




Virginia Watershed Awareness at Meadowview Elementary



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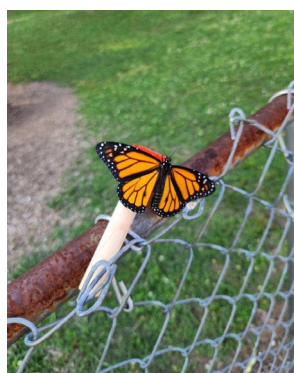


Students at Meadowview Elementary in Henry County participated in a Virginia Watershed Awareness project, learning about their local watershed and the concept of “we all live downstream.” The project reached over 100 fifth grade students.

The watershed awareness project included interactive classroom presentations on watersheds and the student favorite “Tub of Bugs.” DRBA also purchased an EnviroScape watershed model for teachers to use on a yearly basis to continue teaching watershed concepts for years to come.



Raising Monarchs and a Monarch Waystation at Patrick Henry Elementary



A nationally certified Monarch Waystation was planted at Patrick Henry Elementary by summer camp students. Nearly 25 students planted the waystation with DRBA staff to include pollinator plants such as common milkweed, coral honeysuckle, bee balm, coreopsis, fennel and black-eyed Susan. Interpretive signage was included that shares information about the importance of waystations to pollinators, especially the monarch butterfly. All second-grade students received monarch butterfly life cycle castles that allowed them to raise and release 16 monarch butterflies on school campus.

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Educating the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards



Thanks to a generous grant from the Roanoke Women's Foundation, DRBA partnered with Snow Creek Elementary in Franklin County to provide all students in grades K-5 with real world environmental science focused projects, presentations and activities over the last two years.

This unique learning opportunity for students encompassed award-winning programs such as a nationally certified Monarch Waystation, weather monitoring station, Trout in the Classroom, Streamside Trees in the Classroom, a rain barrel system and outdoor classroom, a girls' afterschool science program and interactive classroom presentations.

DRBA worked closely with staff and administration at Snow Creek Elementary to build lasting environmental education programs that align with Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) guidelines and provide authentic hands-on opportunities for students.

DRBA's education staff and Volunteer Environmental Educators (VEEs) provided programs and presentations to students focused on watershed education topics like erosion and ways to control it, such as planting trees, along with water conservation and introducing wildlife that depends on the waterways for survival. Students learned about their local watershed and how pollution can impact waterways through in classroom presentations and investigating aquatic insects.

DRBA worked with Snow Creek Elementary to build a space for upper elementary students to take learning outside in an outdoor classroom. The outdoor learning space includes four picnic tables on a gravel area next to the nationally certified Monarch Waystation where they can investigate and learn about monarch butterflies. The outdoor classroom also includes a rain-barrel water-collection system and a weather monitoring station.

This model is being implemented in Henry County and Martinsville starting in 2025.

A special thank you to Ms. Carrie McCrary, fifth grade teacher at Snow Creek Elementary, for being an amazing partner and leader in environmental education.



Generously funded by:



Piedmont Regional Governor's School Summer Camp – Stream Investigation



Students from Piedmont Regional Governor's School completed a stream investigation in Hurt, VA, of Sycamore Creek during their summer camp. Sycamore Creek is a tributary of the Roanoke River. During the investigation, a small group of gifted students utilized the VA Save Our Streams testing methods to collect macroinvertebrates from the stream.

Through hands-on, feet-wet education, the students found a variety of macroinvertebrates, or aquatic insects, hiding under rocks in the stream. The macroinvertebrates included crayfish, mayflies, stoneflies, encased caddisflies, and dragonflies. Students also found a common madtom – a small species of catfish that can be found in creeks. Based on their findings, students determined that Sycamore Creek is a healthy waterway.

After the stream investigation, students completed a small litter cleanup of litter that had been spotted in or along the waterway.

Stream investigations and many other hands-on education programs are supported through generous funding provided to DRBA's Environmental Education Fund. Give to the EE Fund today.



MHC After 3 Summer Camp – Smith River Exploration



DRBA partnered with MHC After 3 in Martinsville/Henry County to provide programming for their summer camp in July 2024. Middle school students from Fieldale-Collinsville Middle and Laurel Park Middle participated in a week-long Smith River Exploration.

The program consisted of students learning about our local watershed and how pollution from human impacts can negatively affect our waterways. Hands-on activities included mini watershed models focusing on how topography affects the flow of water and creating a water filtration device. Students investigated the Smith River to identify macroinvertebrates and other organisms that live beneath the reflective water surface.

Inspire Clean Water with Green Leaves



The Dan River Basin Association's Inspire Clean Water with Green Leaves project had a robust schedule this fall with fourth-grade students in Franklin County participating in the Streamside Trees in the Classroom (STIC) program. DRBA staff, DRBA Volunteer Environmental Educators, and Philpott Lake Army Corps of Engineers staff delivered the native black willow trees to students in mid-September.

A 30-minute presentation was provided to all fourth-grade students at each school explaining the program and providing an Every Kid Outdoors (EKO) free pass to all students. The EKO passes are provided by a federal program and allow fourth-grade students to enter federal parks at no cost with their families up to one year after receiving the pass.



The bare-root stakes were in the classrooms for four weeks while students monitored the growth of the trees and noted any changes that took place while awaiting their upcoming field trip to plant them along a waterway. Students investigated the parts of a tree and discussed why it is important to plant trees along waterways to help control erosion and flooding while also protecting the health of our rivers and streams.

Four planting days were held for the STIC program in October 2024. Of those four Planting Days, three were held for Franklin County Elementary schools. The three Planting Days were held at Philpott Lake's US Army Corps of Engineers parks. Specifically, two days were held at Salthouse Branch Park, in different locations, and the other was held at Jamison Mill Park.

DRBA partnered with eight partners on the STIC project, creating an in-depth learning opportunity for students on their Planting Days. Partners included US Army Corps of Engineers, VA Department of Forestry, VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences, Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District, Master Naturalists, Volunteer Environmental Educators, Fairy Stone State Park and Reynolds Homestead. Students participated in the erosion game and activities, the trout life cycle game, water safety, wildlife identification, tree identification, invasive species control and tree planting activities.

Over 380 students attended the Franklin County Planting Days – eight of the ten elementary schools participated in the Planting Days.

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Virginia
Environmental
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Events & Community Presentations



DRBA attended over a dozen educational events throughout the Dan River Basin in 2024.



Pittsylvania County Career Choice Expo



Danville STEAM+C Night



Envision Youth Expo in Rockingham County



Ballou Park Reforestation Event in Danville



What's in Your Watershed in Milton



Envirothon in Franklin County

DRBA presents on a variety of topics annually to community groups, including schools, businesses, churches, boy and girl scout troops, master gardeners, and master naturalists. Topics include watersheds, water quality, all about the Dan River basin, trails, macroinvertebrates, recreation, riparian buffers, and storm drain marking, to name a few.



Love the Dan River Anti-Litter Campaign



In partnership with Danville Parks and Recreation, DRBA completed an anti-litter campaign to raise awareness about protecting the Dan River. The campaign, called "Love the Dan River," focused on solutions to litter issues happening along the Dan River. DRBA addressed simple ways people can make a positive impact in their daily lives on the environment around them.

Generously funded by:



**Community
Foundation**
of the
Dan River Region

Thank You from Our Teacher Partners & Students



Thank you so much for the great work you all do. – Guilford County Educator

Something fun I did on my trip is that I learned about how to tell which tree it is. I learned about how to protect the trees. I connected with the trip – I knew acorns fall from oak trees. – Franklin County Student

We participated in Streamside Trees in the Classroom this year for the first year, and our 4th grade students loved it and learned SO much! We look forward to participating in that again in the future. – Franklin County Educator

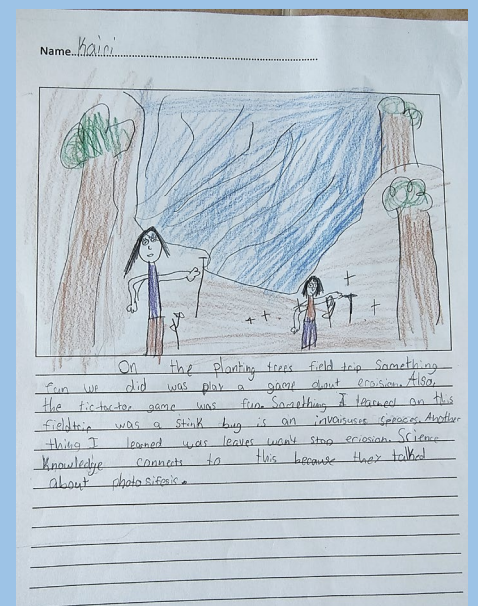
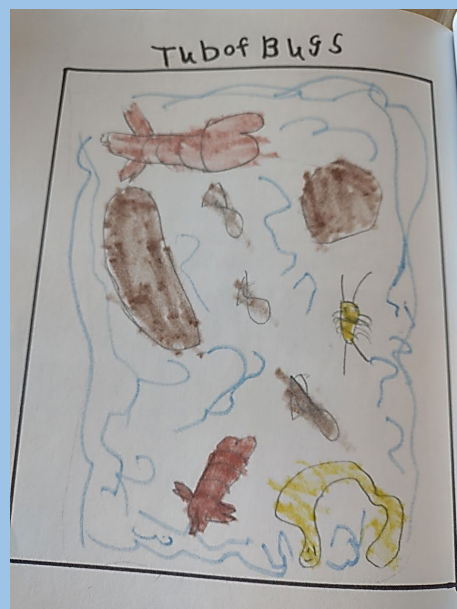
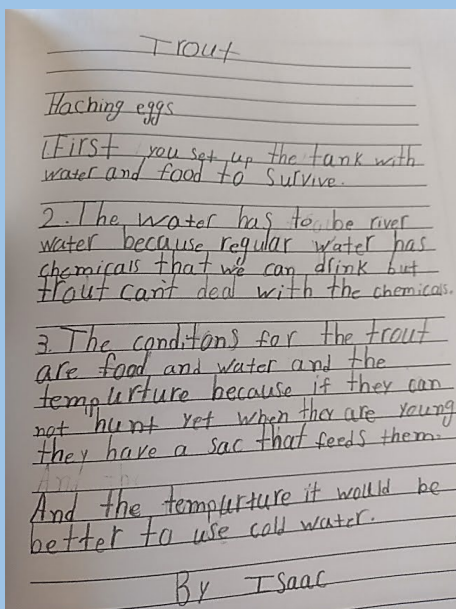
The DRBA has been an outstanding partner to help me overcome the lack of time and finances. – Pittsylvania County Educator

My favorite part of the field trip was planting the trees. That was my favorite part because I've never planted a tree and it's new to me. – Franklin County Student

Thank you and the organization for all the work you all do within the community and our schools! You are greatly appreciated. If there is anything else I can do to assist, please let me know. – Henry County Educator

My students were able to get first-hand experience in nature; they were able to see nature up close, and they have been able to sit back and realize the importance of preserving what they have learned to love. Having an outdoor classroom beside a weather station and a monarch waystation is a pretty cool opportunity for adults and students alike. We have truly enjoyed the opportunity that the grant has provided, thanks to DRBA and the Roanoke Women's Foundation. – Franklin County Educator

A sincere THANK YOU to all our dedicated teacher partners – we could not do this work without YOU.





DRBA EE Programs & Participation 2024-25

				Free / Reduced Lunch
Trout in the Classroom	County	Grade	# Students	
Lincoln Elementary	Rockingham	4th	45	100%
Greensboro Montessori	Guilford	6th-8th	20	0%
Patrick Henry Elementary	Martinsville	3rd	32	100%
Chatham High School	Pittsylvania	9th-12th	25	100%
Snow Creek Elementary	Franklin	5th	27	95%
Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy	Franklin	6th-8th	169	0%
Hope Academy	Guilford	6th	12	80%
Magna Vista High	Henry	9th-12th	120	100%
Bassett High School	Henry	9th-12th	120	100%
Ledford Middle (two)	Davidson	8th	200	70%
Virginia Museum of Natural History	Martinsville	All	1000	n/a
Franklin County High School	Franklin	9th	116	100%
Williamsburg Elementary	Rockingham	4th	90	100%
Asheboro High School Zoo School	Randolph	9th-12th	50	100%
Tunstall High School	Pittsylvania	9th-12th	135	100%

				Free / Reduced Lunch
Streamside Trees in the Classroom	County	Grade	# of Students	
Boones Mill Elementary	Franklin	4th	40	100%
Ferrum Elementary	Franklin	4th	51	100%
Sontag Elementary	Franklin	4th	36	100%
Rocky Mount Elementary	Franklin	4th	40	100%
Dudley Elementary	Franklin	4th	62	100%
Snow Creek Elementary	Franklin	4th	38	100%
Glade Hill Elementary	Franklin	4th	30	100%
Windy Gap Elementary	Franklin	4th	51	100%
Albert Harris Elementary	Martinsville	4th	60	100%
Patrick Henry Elementary	Martinsville	4th	60	100%
Christian Heritage Academy	Franklin	4th	30	100%

				Free / Reduced Lunch
COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS	County	Grade	# of Students	
Averett University - Community Partner	Danville	college	19	n/a
Averett University - CWQM	Danville	college	12	n/a
Averett University - VA SOS	Danville	college	12	n/a
Averett University - VA SOS	Danville	college	19	n/a
Smith River Trout Unlimited	Martinsville	Adults	15	n/a

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EVENTS - COMMUNITY OUTREACH	County	Grade	# of Students	Free / Reduced Lunch
Knight Brown Hikes	Rockingham	6th	200	100%
Career Choice Expo	Pittsylvania	7th & 10th	3,200	100%
Danville STEAM-C Night	Danville	All	1500	100%
Envision Rockingham County	Rockingham	7th & 10th	250	100%
Halifax Youth Conservation Camp	South Boston	6th	150	n/a
National Night Out	Danville	All	100	100%
Cougar Business Fest Averett University	Danville	Adults	100	n/a
Ballou Park Reforestation Events (2)	Danville	All	250	n/a
Watershed Awareness Event	Milton	All	40	n/a
Envirothon	Franklin County	10th-12th	100	n/a
Earth Day Fair	Franklin County	9th- 12th	200	n/a
Garden Club of VA Forum	Martinsville	Adult	100	n/a

OTHER PROGRAMS	County	Grade	# of Students	Free / Reduced Lunch
Danville Anti-litter Awareness Campaign	Danville/Pittsylvania County	Elementary	150	100%
Snow Creek - Next Generation	Franklin	Elementary	200	100%
MHC After 3	Henry & Martinsville	Middle & High	75	100%
Upward Bound Summer Camp	Henry & Martinsville	Middle	50	100%
NC Summer Reading Program	Rockingham	All grades	40	n/a
Franklin County - Green Leaves	Franklin	Elementary	380	100%
Growing Kids & Trees	Franklin	Elementary	100	100%
Girl Scout Trail Safety & Hike	Martinsville	Elementary	15	n/a
Storm Drain Education Event	Madison	Adults & Youth	25	n/a
Meadowview Elementary Watershed Program	Henry County	5th	100	100%
Patrick Henry Elementary Monarch Waystation	Martinsville	2nd	63	100%

ADULT LEARNING	County	Grade	# of Students	Free / Reduced Lunch
Rain Barrel Workshop	Basin wide	Adult	20	n/a
CWQM Trainings	Basin wide	Adult	40	n/a
VEE Trainings	Basin wide	Adult	16	n/a

Total Served	10,200
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Volunteer Environmental Educators



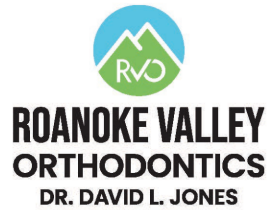
Two group trainings for new Volunteer Environmental Educators were held in 2024, along with individual one-on-one trainings for those unable to attend. At the end of 2024, DRBA had 24 active VEEs.

Volunteer Environmental Educators are volunteers that will assist with providing DRBA's education programs to youth throughout the basin. Volunteer educators will have the opportunity to educate youth through hands-on activities in the classroom and on field trips, guided hikes, help at special events and festivals, and recruit new volunteers.

Volunteer educators are trained in four focus areas: Watersheds/Enviroscape model, Water Quality Testing, Hands-On Discovery Activities and Tub of Bugs/Macroinvertebrates.

All volunteer educators must complete an application at www.danriver/VEE, attend a two-hour in-person training, and pass a background check before volunteering. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Join the VEE team today to make an impact that lasts a lifetime.



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***For more information or to request an environmental education program, email
Krista Hodges at khodges@danriver.org.***