

Environmental Education Report

2023-2024

DAN RIVER BASIN



danriver.org/EE

PROGRAMS

FIELD TRIPS

EVENTS

PRESENTATIONS





Over 9,000 youth throughout the Dan River basin

Programs

- Trout in the Classroom
- Streamside Trees in the Classroom
- Community Presentations
- Events & Festivals
- & More!

Counties

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



DRBA EE Programs & Participation 2023-2024

| Program | County | Grade | # students | Free / Reduced Lunch |
|--|---|-----------|------------|----------------------------|
| Trout in the Classroom | | | | |
| Lincoln Elementary | Rockingham | 4th | 55 | 100% |
| Greensboro Montessori | Guilford | 6th-8th | 25 | 0% |
| Patrick Henry Elementary | Martinsville | 3rd | 35 | 100% |
| Sontag Elementary | Franklin | 3rd | 250 | 100% |
| Chatham High School | Pittsylvania | 9th-12th | 20 | 100% |
| Snow Creek Elementary | Franklin | 5th | 34 | 95% |
| Smith Mountain Lake | | | | |
| Christian Academy | Franklin | 6th-8th | 65 | 0% |
| Hope Academy | Guilford | 6th | 30 | 80% |
| Magna Vista High | Henry | 9th-12th | 100 | 100% |
| Bassett High School | Henry | 9th-12th | 120 | 100% |
| Ledford Middle (two) | Davidson | 8th | 180 | 70% |
| Virginia Museum of Natural History | Martinsville | all | 1000 | n/a |
| Franklin County High School | Franklin | 9th | 150 | 100% |
| Williamsburg Elementary | Rockingham | 4th | 20 | 100% |
| Asheboro High School Zoo School | Randolph | 9th-12th | 90 | 100% |
| Tunstall Middle | Pittsylvania | 6th-8th | 300 | 100% |
| Streamside Trees in the Classroom | | | | |
| Boones Mill Elementary | Franklin | 4th | 45 | 100% |
| Campbell Court Elementary | Henry | 4th | 40 | 100% |
| Ferrum Elementary | Franklin | 4th | 25 | 100% |
| Sontag Elementary | Franklin | 4th | 36 | 100% |
| Rocky Mount Elementary | Franklin | 4th | 45 | 100% |
| Albert Harris Elementary | Martinsville | 4th | 60 | 100% |
| Martinsville High School | Martinsville | 12th | 18 | 100% |
| Dudley Elementary | Franklin | 4th | 36 | 100% |
| Snow Creek Elementary | Franklin | 4th | 36 | 100% |
| Bassett High School | Henry | 12th | 20 | 100% |
| Christian Heritage Academy | Franklin | 4th | 30 | 100% |
| Patrick Henry Elementary | Martinsville | 4th | 60 | 100% |
| Reynolds Homestead Homeschool | Patrick | K-4th | 25 | n/a |
| PRESENTATIONS | | | | |
| | (Tub of Bugs, Watersheds, Community Partner, Environmental) | | | |
| Park Avenue | Danville | | | 100% |
| Gibson Elementary | Danville | | 60 | 100% |
| Bassett High School | Henry | Fisheries | 60 | 100% |



| | | | | |
|--|--------------|---------|----|-----|
| Averett University - Community Partner | Danville | college | 6 | n/a |
| Averett University - CWQM | Danville | college | 4 | n/a |
| Averett University - VA SOS | Danville | college | 4 | n/a |
| Pittsylvania County Public Library | Pittsylvania | K-3 | 20 | n/a |
| Master Gardeners - Danville | Pittsylvania | Adult | 3 | n/a |
| Madison United Methodist Church | Rockingham | Pre-8 | 50 | n/a |
| Spencer Penn Centre | Henry | K-3 | 11 | n/a |

EVENTS

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------|------|
| Knight Brown Hikes | Rockingham | 6th | 200 | 100% |
| Career Choice Expo | Pittsylvania | 7th & 10th | 3,200 | 100% |
| Danville STEAM-C Night | Danville | all | 1500 | 100% |
| Bonner Middle STEM Night | Danville | 6-8th | 100 | 100% |
| Envision Rockingham County | Rockingham | 7th & 10th | 250 | 100% |
| United Way Hot Cocoa Social | Martinsville | Adult | 10 | n/a |
| Halifax Youth Conservation Camp | South Boston | 6th | 150 | n/a |

OTHER PROGRAMS

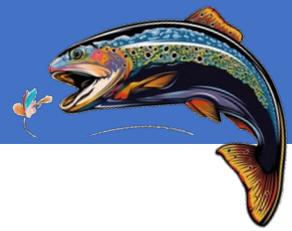
| | | | | |
|---|----------------------|------------|-----|------|
| Danville Anti-litter Awareness Campaign | Danville | Elementary | 150 | 100% |
| Snow Creek - Next Generation | Franklin | | 200 | 100% |
| Albert Harris - Sensory Garden | Martinsville | | 250 | 100% |
| MHC After 3 | Henry & Martinsville | | 75 | 100% |
| Upward Bound Summer Camp | Henry & Martinsville | | 35 | 100% |

Total Served

9,288



Trout in the Classroom



This school year, 16 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, and took the field trip to release their new friends that they had cared for over the last six months into the Smith River.

At the riverside, students tested the water quality of the Smith River to ensure it was similar to their classroom tanks, and hoped 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 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 ecosystems with macroinvertebrates and other wildlife that pass by. Over the years, Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagles, Canada Geese and their goslings, and adult trout have been spotted at the river accesses.

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



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Streamside Trees in the Classroom

Over 600 students participated in the STIC program in 2023. Fourth grade students from Franklin County, Martinsville City, Henry County and Patrick County rooted black willow cuttings in their classrooms starting in September and planted them last October. STIC was piloted in Rockingham County, NC in spring 2023 with dozens of willows successfully rooting in Stoneville Park.

Planting days were held at Fairy Stone State Park in Patrick County, Philpott Lake's Goosepoint Park and Salthouse Branch Park, Stoneville Park in Rockingham and Reynolds Homestead in Patrick 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.

Natural resource partners in VA and NC joined DRBA to assist with the planting days by providing hands-on activities and demonstrations for the students. Students learned about topics including leaf and tree identification, erosion, water quality, water safety 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.



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Sensory Garden at Albert Harris Elementary



DRBA partnered with Albert Harris Elementary to install a Sensory Garden in the Green Schoolyard in 2023. The Sensory Garden appeals to all five senses featuring an herb garden, sand pit, butterfly bench, outdoor classroom space, windmill, rock garden, windchime and a mini water feature.

The Green Schoolyard has been an on-going project between DRBA and Albert Harris for the last five years. The Green Schoolyard now features a compost bin station, Monarch Waystation, Sensory Garden, rain barrel water collection system, weather monitoring station and an urban vegetable garden.

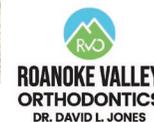
DRBA serves as an on-going community partner that assists in Albert Harris Elementary becoming a Virginia Naturally certified school by the VA Department of Wildlife Resources.



Monarch Waystation at Martinsville High School



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A nationally certified Monarch Waystation was planted at Martinsville High School in 2023 by MHC After 3 summer camp students as a part of their community service. Nearly 30 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 also included that shares information about the importance of waystations to pollinators, especially the monarch butterfly. MHC After 3 high school students were also present at the ribbon-cutting event.

Educating the Next Generation at Snow Creek Elementary



DRBA is educating the next generation of environmental stewards at Snow Creek Elementary in Franklin County. Students from kindergarten to fifth are learning about the environment through hands-on programs including Trout in the Classroom, Streamside Trees in the Classroom and a Green Schoolyard.



We believe in starting environmental literacy as early as possible because it is never too early for our next generation to start protecting the planet. Last year, Snow Creek's kindergarten students were introduced to macroinvertebrates through the Tub of Bugs presentation. Students were able to touch crayfish and learn about the importance of the presence of aquatic insects in our waterways.



A new fifth grade girls' after school group called the Science Rockettes was formed in 2023. The Science Rockettes meet monthly and a woman leader in the science field in the Dan River basin is invited to present on a topic of their choice and conduct an activity with the girls. The girls have already learned about invasive insects, hiking in VA, water quality and water conservation.

This year, the girls will learn about Virginia watersheds, soil layers, dissect an owl pellet, and paint and install rain barrels on the school campus.

Thanks to funding from the Eco-Ambassador Council and the Roanoke Women's Foundation, DRBA installed an outdoor learning space on the upper elementary wing at Snow Creek Elementary. The outdoor classroom provides a shaded outdoor learning space nestled at the side of the forest which will allow students to spend time in nature while conducting investigations on their school campus.

The Science Rockettes planted native Virginia sweet spire bushes along the sides of the outdoor classroom last fall. As the native bushes grow, they will provide an enclosed environment for the classroom, but also provide a native plant source for pollinators.

Two raised gardening beds were also installed on the school campus near the greenhouse. Students in first and second grade will use the raised beds as a learning garden. In 2024, DRBA plans to install a Monarch Waystation and a weather monitoring station on the school campus.



Forest School at Philpott Lake



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Wilmington District

National Public Lands Day was celebrated in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers to provide Forest School at Philpott Lake. The event was held in October 2023. Eight community partners set up at the Philpott Lake Visitor Center with nearly 100 visitors attending the event.

Partners including Smith River Trout Unlimited, Virginia Museum of Natural History, Piedmont Community Services, Leave No Trace, South Western Piedmont Master Naturalists, Master Naturalists of Blue Ridge Foothills and Lakes, DRBA and Philpott Rangers provided hands-on forest related activities for visitors to participate in.

Every youth received a free personal life jacket provided by the Army Corps of Engineers, a free meal for youth and adults and take home items from every exhibitor. A rain barrel and conversion kit was raffled and all funds raised supported DRBA's EE programs.

Coming soon! Stayed tuned for later in 2024 at Philpott Lake – a gift shop will soon make it's appearance in the Visitor Center!



Eco
Ambassador
Council



Events and Presentations



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.

In addition, DRBA attends dozens of events annually to promote the beautiful natural resources and cultural assets found in the basin. To learn more about the Dan River basin, visit www.danriver.org.



Notes from Teachers



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

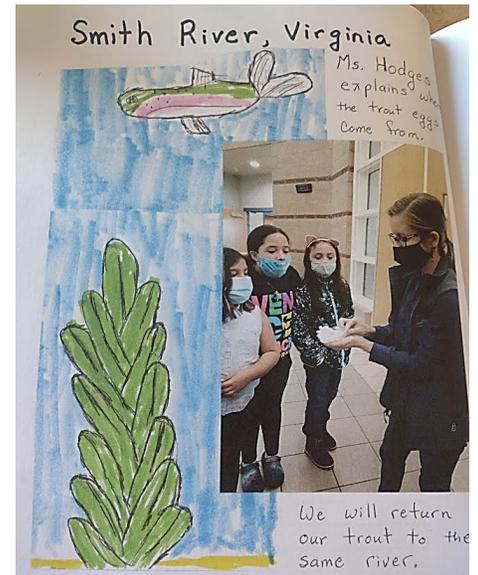
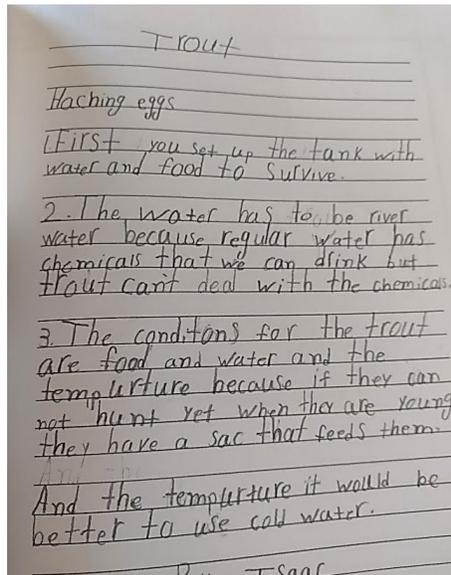
Thanks for your on-going focus and prioritization on the environment! It's much needed Work!!
– *Henry County Educator*

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*

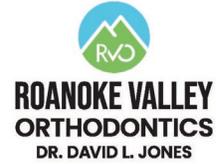
Thank you and the Organization for all the work you all do within the community and our schools! You are greatly appreciated. If there is anything else I can do to assist, please let me know. – *Henry County Educator*

I am always open to partner with you guys to provide programs for our school and my students in my classroom. Thank you. - *Franklin County Educator*





Volunteer Environmental Educators



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Two trainings for Volunteer Environmental Educators were held with sixteen volunteers joining the DRBA education team. Trainings were held last fall and late winter in Martinsville, VA.

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, guide 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 training and pass a background check before volunteering. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Another training will be held in late 2024.



Krista Hodges
Education Outreach Manager
khodges@danriver.org



Regina Flora
Assistant Educator
rflora2023@gmail.com



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