

**Director's Baton Officially Handed Off** - The Cowpasture River Preservation Association (CRPA) has a new Executive Director as of September 1.

The Cowpasture River Preservation Association (CRPA) has a new Executive Director as of September 1. Polly Newlon of Hightown, Virginia, replaces Caroline Bott who has served in that capacity since October, 2006. Ms. Bott offered her resignation this spring in order to devote her time to starting up a renewable energy company with her husband and several colleagues from Virginia Tech. "I have enjoyed my position with CRPA tremendously, and I look forward to continuing my involvement with the association as an active member and water monitoring volunteer."

Jean Howell, board member, responded to Caroline's decision: "We are sorry to lose Caroline. She has made such an important contribution to the CRPA over the past 2 years. Her organizational skills, high energy, and solid planning and direction, have served us well. However, we are delighted for her that she has found such a challenging new direction for her professional life. And we are so pleased that Polly Newlon will join us, bringing her scientific and leadership background, to continue to develop programs and plans for the CRPA."

CRPA board members conducted a formal search over the summer months which led to the selection. Newlon was trained in physiology at VCU's Medical College of Virginia in Richmond and spent most of her career in biomedical research and administration at Eastern Virginia Medical School and more recently, Old Dominion University in Norfolk, where she lived for 16 years. She relocated to the Alleghany Highlands in 2005 to head the Highland Medical Center, Monterey's nonprofit community health center, as Executive Director and CEO. "My parents came to the highlands in the mid-70's and it has always been my dream to live in this region. The position at HMC allowed me to make that move, but now I want to do something a little nearer to my heart." Newlon and her husband, Keith Carson, will be moving into their newly constructed, off-the-grid house in Highland County soon. Carson presently works with The Nature Conservancy in their Warms Springs office. "I believe the CRPA position will be the perfect fit for the professional and personal life styles for which we are aiming," says Newlon. "Keith and I are both trained biologists, and have long held an interest in nature and in conservation of Virginia's greatest assets – her natural resources. We joined the CRPA because of an interest in learning about how to monitor and maintain our precious waters. As most people know, the highlands contain critical headwaters of both the James and Potomac rivers - it's literally all downstream from here. And, unlike Las Vegas, what happens here doesn't stay here, it has effects all the way to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond! I have found the CRPA to be a very impressive organization of highly dedicated members and I believe it can serve as a model for protection of many of Virginia's smaller, more remote freshwater systems."

The CRPA was founded in 1972. As a 501(c)3, one of the main goals of the organization today is public education about stream health and management and the role that individuals can play. Toward that end, the CRPA regularly partners with other nonprofits, state, and federal agencies in implementing preservation and education programs. "There is a wealth of activity, programs, and information available to anyone interested in learning more about how to protect and care for their waterways", says Newlon. "And it's important for people to realize that you don't need to live or play on the Cowpasture to be able to benefit from a relationship with this river and this organization. I would encourage anyone who loves our mountain waters to contact the CRPA at [directorcrpa@gmail.com](mailto:directorcrpa@gmail.com) or visit our website at [www.cowpastureriver.org](http://www.cowpastureriver.org). I'm really looking forward to working with the regional community in this effort!"