

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Polly Newlon  
Cowpasture River Preservation Association  
(540) 474-2858  
directorcrpa@gmail.com

### ***May is an Important Month for Virginia Watershed Activities***

As May approaches the Alleghany Highlands and Earth Day activities continue in full swing, we find the area's rivers brimming with much needed spring rainfall and the fisherfolk can be spotted along their favorite streams. Across Virginia, and beyond, watershed organizations large and small are gearing up for spring programs in conservation and education and the Cowpasture River Preservation Association (CRPA) is among them. May will bring several opportunities to our area for participation in good works on behalf of watersheds and water conservation. At the state level, Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation is midstream in its semiannual "Stewardship Virginia" program, a statewide initiative aimed at helping citizens "enhance and conserve Virginia's natural and cultural resources." More information on this program is available at: [www.dcr.virginia.gov/stewardship](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/stewardship). The spring stewardship program runs from April 1 through May 31 and focuses on projects such as those that enhance water quality and improve recreational resources as well as educate people about recreational, historical, cultural, wildlife, forest and water resources, among others.

The CRPA has three major events coming up in May that are open to the public. First, in the historical and cultural realm, on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, the group will hold their annual meeting at the Fairview Community Center in the Millboro Springs area. This year, the annual guest lecture will be provided by Dr. Jeffrey Hantman, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Program in Archaeology at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. His topic will be "Archaeology and Indian History in the Cowpasture River Region." He will speak about the Native American people of the interior regions of Virginia, the Monacan Nation, who have played and continue to play an important role in Virginia's history. He will also talk generally about the 12,000 year old history of Native Americans in Virginia and cover the history of the Monacan Indians and their distinctive practice of building burial mounds. He'll address their possible role, albeit from a distance, in the events of the Jamestown colony. Dr. Hantman has had a rich academic career and, in 1998, received the Award for Contributions to Monacan History from the Monacan Indian Nation. The CRPA annual meeting begins with a gathering and registration at 5 p.m. with dinner served at 6:30 p.m. following the business meeting. Anyone interested in attending the dinner should contact the CRPA right away to register. The lecture will begin at 7:15 p.m. and the public is welcome to attend at that time.

Also, in the area of improving recreational resources, on May 16<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. – Noon, (raindate May 17<sup>th</sup>) the CRPA will undertake an ambitious litter cleanup of all three of the U.S. Forest Service Tracts along the Cowpasture River including the Wallace and Walton tracts in Bath County, and the Evans Tract in Alleghany County. These cleanups are provided by CRPA twice a year and the public is welcome to join CRPA members

and learn more about the river at the same time. This program is conducted in collaboration with Virginia's *Adopt-A-Stream* program. Litter left along and in the river has detrimental effects everywhere downstream including the James River and the Chesapeake Bay. Executive Director Polly Newlon notes, "Our area citizens can change this outcome by simply giving a few hours of their time that day. As one who has participated, I can tell you it's a great feeling to see those areas looking clean again after a morning's work."

On the education front, CRPA will host an educational program in conservation on May 20<sup>th</sup>, a hands-on workshop in making your own rain barrel. This program is conducted in collaboration with *Clean Virginia Waterways* ([www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA](http://www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA)) and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC; [www.dslcc.edu](http://www.dslcc.edu)) through their special interest, non-credit course program. Rain barrels are an increasingly popular method of conserving water. They can be attached to the gutter system of a house or barn roof and act as a cistern to collect and save rain water to be used when needed. A 20 x 40 foot roof can produce 500 gallons of water with one inch of rain. Over a year (assuming an average of 42 inches of rainfall), this translates into almost 18,000 gallons of water to be used for gardening and other horticultural needs around the house and/or farm. Rain water has no chemicals or minerals that are often found in city water, wells, or even some spring water systems. In addition, collecting rain water rather than letting it run off into rivers and streams during a downpour helps to preserve the local watershed by reducing both runoff of nutrients and erosion.

The rain barrel workshop will be held from 6 – 9 p.m. at DSLCC's Clifton Forge Campus in the Moomaw Center. The public is welcome to participate. Attendees will learn how rain barrels can help conserve water and preserve the watershed. Each will make their own rain barrel and take it home after the workshop. There is no tuition, but space is limited and a \$40 materials fee is required for each barrel constructed. All construction materials will be provided except for work gloves which attendees should bring. If interested, contact Judy Clark, DSLCC Non-Credit Coordinator at 540.863.2863, or email her at [jclark@dslcc.edu](mailto:jclark@dslcc.edu). One can also register online at <https://arapply.vccs.edu/oa/home.action> (course reference: ENVR 1100-M1N, #74699).

For more information about any of these events, the CRPA or how to volunteer on behalf of the watershed, contact Polly Newlon at 540.474.2858 or [directorcrpa@gmail.com](mailto:directorcrpa@gmail.com). For more information on environmental events and activities coming up around the Commonwealth, visit the Department of Environmental Quality's *Virginia Naturally* website at [www.vanaturally.com](http://www.vanaturally.com).