

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cowpasture River Preservation Association Sponsors Watershed Workshop Series

Do you know what a watershed is or why it is important? If you used water today, you should. A watershed is an area of land that drains into an underground water supply, local stream, lake, small holding pond or wetland. Everyone lives in a watershed and everyone impacts their watershed. A series of four evening workshops to learn about ways to improve area watersheds will be held in conjunction with Dabney S. Lancaster Community College's Adult Education/Special Interest Classes beginning in February.

On February 6th, Valley Conservation Council Executive Director John Eckman will be leading a discussion entitled "Land Conservation, What Are My Options?" This workshop will explain what land conservation is, why it is important, and the myriad of options landowners have to conserve their lands. Several local residents, who have placed conservation easements on their properties, will be invited to share their experiences. Workshop participants will have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with conservation specialists during the last hour of the workshop.

On March 5th a panel of local experts from the Virginia Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners, Boxerwood Gardens, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service will discuss "Landscaping for a Healthy Watershed." This workshop will explore topics such as watershed friendly lawn care, riparian buffers, rain gardens, native plants, and invasive species.

Cowpasture River Preservation Association Executive Director Caroline Bott will be giving a rain barrel making workshop on April 2nd. A rain barrel collects water from a roof and stores it for later use. Rain barrels help provide an ideal watering source for plants and gardens, conserve water, reduce harmful runoff, and can save you money. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, wear clothes that can get dirty and to bring a vehicle large enough to transport the barrel home (barrels are approximately 43" tall and 24" wide). All supplies and tools necessary to build the barrels will be provided.

The final workshop of the series will be held on May 7th. Representatives from Virginia Save Our Streams and the Cowpasture River Preservation Association will discuss "River and Stream Citizen Monitoring." Participants will learn what about water quality monitoring, why it is important and the ways in which citizens can become involved.

All workshop sessions will be from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in the DSLCC Convocation Center on the main campus in Clifton Forge. There is no charge for any of the workshops, but participants are asked to register a week in advance through the DSLCC non-credit program by contacting Judy Clark at (540) 863-2863 or jlark@dslcc.edu. A materials fee may be required for the rain barrel making workshop and will be announced at a later date. Participants may register for all four workshops or individual sessions. This workshop series is being hosted by the Cowpasture River Preservation Association and is made possible, in part, by funding from the Woodson A. and Lorraine M. Sadler, Jr. Fund and the Gabe and Mary Balazs Memorial Fund of the Rockbridge Area Community Foundation.

(The mission of the CRPA is to preserve the natural condition and beauty of the Cowpasture River and its tributaries for present and future generations. Watershed education and river monitoring are the primary focus of the organization. Membership is open to all who share the CRPA mission. For more information visit our website at www.cowpastureriver.org.)
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