

THE RIVER RUNS

News from the Cowpasture River Preservation Association

GW National Forest Plan Revision: Up for Discussion Once Again



A popular and picturesque recreation spot, the Walton Tract, lies within the George Washington National Forest. Riparian zones have specific goals and management strategies defined within the Plan. Photo: Caroline Bott

If you're one who follows what's going on with the George Washington National Forest (GWNF), you probably know that a revised plan is in the works and will replace the one that's been in effect since 1993. The plan, formally known as the The George Washington National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, essentially dictates what can and cannot be done on forest lands and how those lands will be managed by the Forest Service for ecological, economic, and recreational purposes. It covers everything from where to put paths and roads (or not), to fire control and natural gas drilling rights. Given the size and reach of the GWNF, about a million acres over thirteen Virginia and four West Virginia counties, it's no surprise that the plan is a huge and complex enterprise. Indeed, the existing plan document is over 400 pages in length. It's also easy to see that there are a great many individuals and groups making up the stakeholders in this enterprise.

The revision process began back in 2006 and public hearings were held in 2007. But, the process was delayed for a while due to litigation against the 2008 "Planning Rule" - the formal federal guideline that lays out exactly how planning should take place. There were concerns that the 2005 and 2008 versions would allow planning to take place without such safeguards as

environmental impact statements, and without the public involvement that earlier rules had required. In 2009, the 2008 Planning Rule was overturned in court, and is presently being reconfigured. The planning process for GWNF formally resurfaced with a notice of intent to develop an environmental impact statement, issued in the Federal Register on March 10, 2010. This was followed by a "scoping process" from March until May in which Forest Service staff held public meetings to gain input on the revisions as they presently stand. Workshops were held in localities around the region throughout April. Also, based on discussions with the public that had taken place in 2007, the Forest Service issued a statement in February entitled "Summary of Needs for Change" pointing to areas of the revised plan that need more work and/or to address additional needs expressed by the public in previous meetings. Primary areas include things such as vegetation management (timber harvests and controlled fire), access management (roads and trails) and management of roadless, remote, and wilderness areas.

Another important feature of the GWNF plan revision is that the agency proposes to use the existing plan for the Jefferson National Forest as a model, or template. Administration of the two forests was merged back in the mid-90's but, to date, there have been two separate forest plans. The Service feels that, although there are differences in these forest ecosystems, those differences are known and can be dealt with, and that more consistency across plans will benefit the management of both. Another goal is to manage by identifying specific ecosystems and forming objectives related to their specific needs. Examples in our area would include prescriptive areas such as Appalachian Northern Hardwood Forests, Talus and Shale Barrens, and Caves and Karstlands. In addition, the agency hopes to add new and to expand existing "Special Biological Areas", those that harbor unique habitat for flora and

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**August Riverside Picnic
REGISTER NOW!**

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2010-2011

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From the President

Greetings,

The only relief from the oven-like temperatures these days seems to be the river. Despite near record highs and little rain the last couple of weeks, the water level hasn't dipped too much.



I've seen lots of people enjoying the river. Many are doing so respectfully while others are not so considerate - often trespassing, fishing where not permitted, and littering. Other than catching these people in the act, all we can do is pick up after them - not pleasant, but important in maintaining a clean Cowpasture.

It was great to see such a good turnout at the annual meeting. It shows the level of commitment of our members. In addition to a great meal and fascinating presentation by Bill Jones, we elected 3 new directors and reelected 2 others to the board. Lizzie Biggs and Dave Peters have been elected to second terms. Robert Wood, Bill Jones, and John Fowler are newly elected. Congratulations! We look forward to your input these next 3 years! We would also like to thank our outgoing board members, Lucius Bracey, Christie Hardbarger, and Michael Jamison for their invaluable contributions over the last six years.

We just finished our rain barrel workshop series and successfully trained 64 participants and distributed 100 rain barrels that participants constructed. The barrels help control storm water runoff. In addition, the workshops also raised awareness among participants of other methods of protecting our watersheds.

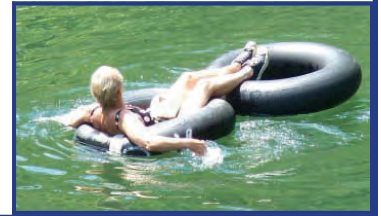
The CRPA also distributed scholarships to three graduating seniors in Alleghany, Bath, and Highland counties. The scholarships are awarded to students who will be majoring in the sciences and have demonstrated an appreciation for nature and, in particular, the river. We hope these scholarships not only help these students but also further raise the CRPA's profile in the community.

Our next get together is our riverside picnic on August 7th at Mike and Marla Whiteside's cabin on the river in Alleghany county. I look forward to seeing you there!

Eddie

Executive Director Update

With this edition, it's time to hit the river for some relaxation, peace and, for many of us, well deserved solitude. I've had a busy spring beginning with a series of 3 rain barrel workshops that were enjoyed by all, as well as the annual meeting, Mussel Festival, and other activities. We've gained more new members thanks to your recruitment efforts and, with all of the recent events, I've had an opportunity to meet more of the membership and now have more faces to fit with the names. Our snowy winter became a dry spring way too soon for most of us and we're hoping some thunderstorms will do their part to keep the river level up and the water cool and well oxygenated. For the rest of the summer I intend to concentrate on conducting more macroinvertebrate monitoring and training of anyone interested in learning the techniques for identification and analysis. Just give me a call or send me an email if you'd like to join in the fun. My hope is to do several sessions around the watershed before the fall winds start blowing the leaves around. I really hope that everyone will join us for the picnic in August. The river will likely be too low for a float but we can still enjoy the cool, precious waters. Be there or be square! And bring your friends. All are welcome! As always, I hope you enjoy this edition and I welcome your comments. Best to all, Polly



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **CRPA Picnic on the River: August 7th at the Whiteside's cabin, REGISTER NOW! (see p. 15)**
- **Virginia Citizens for Water Quality Summit: August 14th** at the Holiday Lake State Park 4H Center, Appomattox, VA. Hosted by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. The theme this year is "Volunteer Monitoring: The Next Generation". Agenda and registration details will be available soon. Contact David Jennings, djennings@acb-online.org with questions.
- **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Forum**, Shepherdstown, WV, November 11-14. Details will be posted on www.acb-online.org and www.chesapeakenetwork.org as the program is developed.



Attendees relax and share fishing stories along the CpR at Mussel Festival, one of the many events in which CRPA staff and members participated this spring

Love the River? Get Involved!
Watch the website for more announcements
and events at www.cowpastureriver.org.

Coming up:

Fall Litter Cleanup at Walton:

Date TBA (Sept./Oct.)

Freshwater Folk Festival: Early October

River Monitoring: Most anytime!

“The Land of Many Uses”: Can Everyone’s Needs Really Be Met?

fauna that rightly deserve special protection such as old growth forests or areas containing threatened species.

The April workshops were attended by CRPA members and Director Newlon attended the Verona workshop. That evening, after a “State of the Plan” overview, break-out sessions were used to funnel the large numbers of attendees into more manageable groups. Everyone had their chance to comment on the plan and express their concerns and interests. The attendance clearly depicted the wide variety of interests that our communities have in the Forest. There were the bicyclists, the motorcyclists, the ATVer’s the off-road truck folks, the turkey and other hunters, fisherfolk, the native plant promoters, the old growth supporters, many private citizens who just love to hike, camp, hunt, and fish in the forests, and a number of conservation groups such as *Wild Virginia*, a non-profit group whose mission is to promote and protect the National Forests and the *Friends of Shenandoah Mountain*, a regional citizens group.

At the Verona meeting, several people stated that they wanted the creation of more “successional” habitat within the forest. These areas, comprised primarily of grasses, bushes, and young trees, attract a variety of wildlife, in particular birds, deer, and other mammals who feed on the plants, find shelter, and nest in such areas. Because it promotes density of wildlife, such habitat is popular with both hunters and naturalists, and most ecosystem managers would agree that some amount of successional habitat is critical to a healthy forest if it is to support diversity of plants and animals. In the highlands, old pastures quickly become successional if left on their own. In nature, forest fires and flood are main sources creating successional habitat, but controlled fire and timbering can produce the same result, if carefully managed. There did seem to be consensus that fire, whether controlled or natural, should no longer be viewed as the enemy of the forest in any long term management planning process.

Other concerns voiced included more need for the Service to control invasive plant and animal species, desires for specific allocations and management of some acreage for use by a variety of recreational vehicles and, in some apparent conflict, compliance in principle with the National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Act, now before a Congressional subcommittee. If passed, this act would limit the creation of new roads in National Forests in areas where they don’t exist as yet.

So, what about riparian zones? According to the Forest Service documents, the Jefferson National Forest riparian management scheme will replace the existing GW plan

because it reportedly affords greater protection. Also, five reference watersheds of known high water quality will be selected for monitoring over time as representatives of the forest systems, although they have not yet been named. Beyond this, not much is mentioned about the water systems of the Forest other than statements that existing management seems to be working well and an acknowledgement that Forest watersheds provide drinking water for many people.

Some conservation groups such as *Wild Virginia* and *Heartwood* feel that insufficient attention has been given to water. In a letter of comment submitted to the Forest Service, these groups note the importance of the GWNF as a source of drinking water downstream for 22 localities and over 250,000 people. They go on to state that 44.5% of GWNF land in Virginia is in watersheds providing drinking water for these localities. Lastly, they remark that as of 2006, DEQ had judged fifty streams and six reservoirs located within GWNF as “impaired” (although admitted, not as drinking water).

As far as the riparian zone management, these groups have made several recommendations including a hands-off approach to vegetation management (timbering or clearing) in riparian areas. They also recommend identification and protection of wider riparian areas in order to enhance wildlife and water quality, particularly along impaired streams and historical trout streams. They also point to a benefit to brook trout of stronger protection of riparian areas, citing the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture’s documentation of the decline of this species due to increased water temperature, deficient land management practices, and overall degrading of the habitat.

The Forest Service has encouraged the public to get informed and get involved in the planning process. There is a public involvement link on their website, noted below. Following the scoping period for significant issues, which was completed in May, the schedule for next steps in development of the environmental impact statement is to have a draft statement by December of 2010. There will then be a formal 90 day public comment period from this December through February, 2011. The final EIS and Plan are scheduled to be completed by September of 2011.

Links for Additional Information:

The GWNF Forest Plan Revision Website:
www.fs.fed.us/r8/gwj/forestplan/revision/index.shtml
(click on Quick links in the upper right of the page)

Wild Virginia:
www.wildvirginia.org

Fish "Kill" Evolves into Fish "_ill"

The latest news from the agencies on the fish loss and disease that has plagued several of west-central VA's rivers, including the Cowpasture, is that they're sick, but not dying nearly as much. A report out from the DGIF/DEQ dated June 1 states the following regarding our area. "Things have been fairly quiet this spring on the Cowpasture, Jackson, and upper James Rivers. Angler reports of dead or diseased fish in these rivers were almost non-existent this spring. DGIF sampled fish from various locations in the upper James River, and at locations on the lower Jackson and Cowpasture River. A few dead fish have been observed in the upper James and Cowpasture by DEQ while taking water samples, and DGIF observed a high percentage of the rock bass and a few smallmouth bass with lesions or other signs of disease while collecting fish in late April. The number of dead and diseased fish appears to be lower than previous years. DGIF will continue to watch these rivers." As noted, fish are still appearing to have lesions, but perhaps immunities are beginning to build toward the pathogen resulting in fewer deaths. It is also possible that this year there were fewer contributing factors stressing the fish than could have occurred in previous years. The agency staff remain vigilant but, as science requires, are still waiting for the entire season's data to come in before drawing too many conclusions. Their report concludes with that caveat, "Impacts from this year's mortality/disease events are expected to be light. However, DGIF biologists will not obtain a full assessment of the fishery in the Cowpasture, James, and Shenandoah Rivers until later this fall. In the meantime, DGIF will continue to monitor the fish population in these rivers." Cowpasture lovers have been praised over the years for their willingness to report findings while fishing or enjoying the river. Please remember to contact DEQ with observations and provide information on the location, number and type of fish found dead or sick. You can call the DEQ regional office in Harrisonburg at (540) 574-7800, or toll-free in Virginia at 1-800-592-5482. You can also send an email to fishreports@deq.virginia.gov.

***The referenced agency update can be found in full at:
www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/fishkill/***

Annual Meeting 2010

The attendance at the Annual Meeting mirrored last year and of those eighty people, several new faces joined the membership to learn a little more about the organization and water flow in the CpR watershed. Bill Jones enlightened the group about what you can and cannot figure out about what lies beneath the surface in Karst regions using standard hydrology methods. He also stressed that many mysteries remain as to what lies beneath and how the water behaves within the unknown landscape of Karst topography. It reminds us all to tread carefully when developing in this region because who knows where the water goes? The water we impact may travel many miles away, only to surface in someone else's back yard! In addition to the science of the evening, everyone enjoyed a little socializing and, as always, a delicious meal. The Slough family, Elsie, son Jim, and daughter Deb Voldrich received Walla-tees for coming the farthest, from Parma Heights, Ohio! Following the meeting, the Board of Directors met to seat new directors and elect officers for next year (see page 8). Many thanks to Jean Howell and Mike and Marla Whiteside for their assistance at the meeting and to Kent Ford for bringing along a copy of the watershed banner (see p. 12) for all to enjoy.

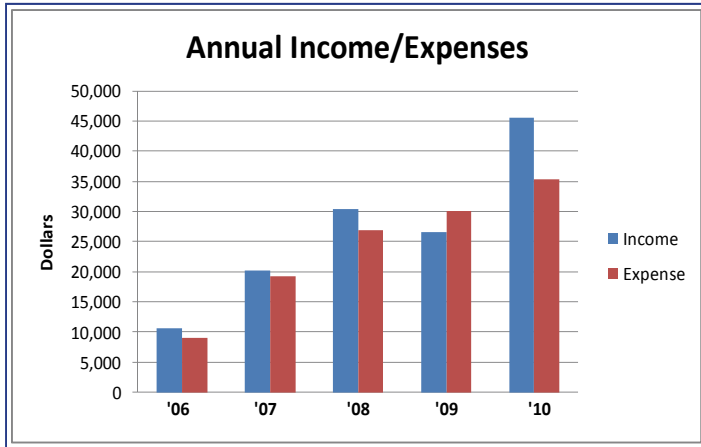


Jovial conversation dominated the evening with many attendees having a chance to see friends they haven't seen since last year's meeting, as well as making new ones.

Another Year Supporting the Cause

CRPA Finances Remain Rock Steady

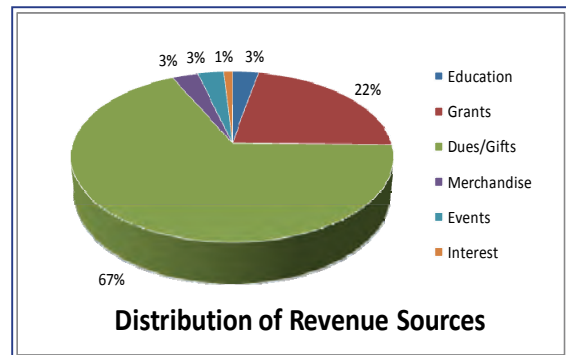
As the new fiscal year unfolds, the end-of-year financial report given at the annual meeting by Treasurer Lizzie Biggs had a happy ending. Over the last five years CRPA budget has continued to show manageable growth thanks to the generosity of members and grant awards in support of programs. The graph below documents the income and expenses over that period of time, during which total assets rose from \$45,495 to \$56,645. The FY09 revenue drop likely reflects both recession and transition of leadership with ED turnover in fall of 2008.



The figures for 2010 are summarized in the lower left table. While it appears that a net income of about \$10,000 was achieved, this is somewhat misleading as much of that (shown as restricted) is grant funding that has not been expended. The grant period won't end until October 30 and those funds will be expended in their entirety eventually. The plan for the unrestricted overage is replenish merchandise inventories (for which no funds were budgeted last year), and to begin work on upgrading the website to a more dynamic and user friendly resource.

The pie-chart below shows that revenues continue to come primarily from member dues and gifts (67%). However, grants provided 22% of the revenues this year, compared with 7% in 2008.

Income:	<u>Actual</u>
Temporarily Restricted Income (Grants and Educational Programs)	11,880
Unrestricted Income (Dues, Gifts, Merchandise, Events)	33,015
Interest Income	<u>617</u>
Total Income	\$45,512
Expenses	
Educational Programs	3,668
Advertising	924
Merchandise Expense	678
Administrative Support (Postage, Ofc. Supplies, etc)	1,199
Website	385
Payroll Expense	21,397
Newsletter - printing & mailing	2,369
Events	1,807
River Monitoring (Supplies and Training Programs)	926
Reimbursed Travel & Meetings	649
Other expense (Equipment, etc)	<u>1,303</u>
Total Expense	\$35,304
Change in Net Assets Unrestricted	4,039
Change in Net Assets Temporarily Restricted	<u>6,168</u>
Total Change in Net Assets	\$10,208



Payroll is the largest category of expense. The ED's efforts from 9/08-9/09 show an even spread across goal areas identified in the strategic plan. Recent emphasis has been on education and outreach.

Activity/Area	Percent Effort
General Administrative	18
Fundraising	17
Special Events	14
Education	12
Outreach, General	12
Outreach, Newsletter	15
Collaborations	7
Monitoring	2
Advocacy	3
Total	100

People Matter: Welcome and Thank you!

*Welcome to our family and THANKS from all of us to all of you!
New memberships and donations received since March, 2010.*

Wallawhatoola Society

Amanda McGuire and Billy Reagan
Ross Waller and Anne Huebner

Watershed Stewards

Lee Elliott and Bill Jones
Charles and Fleming Lunsford

Headwaters Circle

David Brooks
Brooks Family Partnership
Angel Candelaria
Tom and Anna Lawson
Chris and Forrest Moore
Martha Rule
Robin and Mina Wood
Howard and Barbara Newlon

Note: List represents recent contributions made. Every effort has been made to be accurate. We apologize for any errors or omissions and will do our best to correct them if you call us at (540) 474-2858 or

River Guardians

Shirley Anderson
Pete and Alice Buck
Wayne M. Cross
Tom and Lynda Davies
John DeVenny
Missy Douglas and Jimmy Landrum
John Fowler and Mary Sanders
Remi Gratton
Terry and Mary Margaret King
Bill and Nan Mahone Wellborn

Members

Ellen Bondurant
Charles and Caroline Bott
John Dynes
Mike Goode
Ellwood (Ell) Gordon
Dewey Holdaway
Everette Mays, Jr.
John and Jan Redick
Hallie Shires
Ann L. Speth

Welcome New Members!

Bob and Betsy Brickhouse
Charlottesville, VA
Angel and Louise Candelaria
Williamsville, VA
Wayne M. Cross
Statesville, NC
John Dynes
Eagle Rock, VA
Missy Douglas and Jimmy Landrum
Williamsville, VA
Mike Goode
Clifton Forge, VA
Remi Gratton
Montgomery, VT
Will and Bonnie Mahone
Roanoke Rapids, NC
Bill and Nan Mahone Wellborn
Roanoke, VA
Ann L. Speth
Louisa, VA

Thank You Helpers!!!! Spring Cleaning Prepared Walton for the Season.

A small but efficient group, along with a canine support team, showed up at the Walton Tract for the Spring Cleanup. Weather threatened the original April 24th date and it was bumped up a week to May 2nd, so the turnout and help was greatly appreciated. There are very real benefits to participation in these cleanups in addition to good stewardship and the feel good factor - the spring wildflowers at Walton were simply spectacular and some, quite rare. What? You missed it? Well, maybe next year.



Everyone was pleased with the general lack of trash, especially after last fall's gargantuan volume. Apparently the rough winter did have a few benefits, keeping litterers at bay.

Volunteers enjoyed snacks at the take-out area after an afternoon of teamwork. Pictured in the back, from left to right are Eddie Walters, Ellen Ford, Mike Jamison, Narina Walters, and Dee Lobe (acting up a bit). In front are Tom Lobe and Mike Whiteside, along with the Lobe puppies and new addition, "Hank" Whiteside.

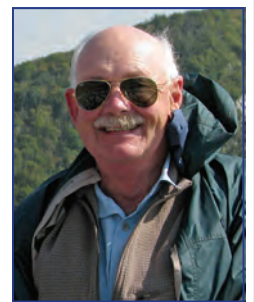
People Matter: Board Prepares for Another Exciting Year

At the Annual Meeting, May 8th, the membership elected three new members to the Board, John Fowler, Robin Woods, and Bill Jones. John and Robin have both served on the Board before and apparently enjoyed helping to guide the organization as they were each willing to sign up again! In addition, Lizzie Biggs and Dave Peters were approved for a second term of three years. Lizzie serves as Co-Treasurer of the Board and serves on the finance and ad hoc website committees. Dave serves on the Education Committee. Any member can be nominated to serve on the Board. Remember, these leaders work for you, the membership, to make the right decisions and move the organization forward. You are encouraged to call or email the directors with your thoughts on all things related to the river. The Board can only serve the membership if they know the members and their wishes.



John R. (John) Fowler was born in Elkins, WV and went to Camp Wallawhatoola as a youngster. He attended West Virginia University where he obtained A.B. and J.D. degrees. He was a captain in the US Army infantry and served in Vietnam. He has practiced law for 40 years with an emphasis on defense, product liability, construction, timber, and mining litigation. He has served twice on the Board of CRPA, and served as vice president. He has long been an advocate for the river, offering his legal expertise to the CRPA, and hopes to retire to the river. He and his wife, Mary Sanders, presently reside full time in Charleston, WV and have a vacation spot on the CpR.

William K. (Bill) Jones has a BSF in forest management from West Virginia University and an MS in Environmental Science from the University of Virginia. He has worked for the USGS and the WV Dept. of Natural Resources in hydrology, and served on the faculty of Greenbrier Community College. He also served as adjunct professor of hydrology at the American University in Washington, DC. At present, he is a director of the Karst Waters Institute and is a consulting hydrologist with Environmental Data in Warm Springs, VA. His research interests and publications have focused on hydrology in Karst topography. He and his wife, Lee Elliott, live on Chimney Run Farm in Bath County.



Robert C. (Robin) Wood, III is a lawyer and lives in Lynchburg. He attended Washington and Lee University and the University of Virginia School of Law. Presently, he practices law with the firm of Edmunds & Williams. Robin has served on the CRPA Board in earlier years. He has been a member of the Lynchburg Camp since 1976 when his wife Mina's father passed on the legacy of membership. Robin states that his family has "... feasted upon all the delights of the river: fishing, canoeing, swimming and just being near the natural beauty that surrounds the river."

Officers for 2010-11 (May 1, 2010—April 30, 2011)

President: Eddie Walters
Vice President: Jimmie Houff
Co-Secretaries:
Ellen Ford and Anne McCaig
Co-Treasurers:
Lizzie Biggs and Jean Howell

Farewell and Thank You!

Lucius Bracey -- Christie Hardbarger -- Mike Jamison

On behalf of the Board and the entire membership, I would like to thank our three departing board members, each having served two, three-year terms. These individuals has shown great commitment and have made substantial contributions, each in their own way, to the operations, policy, strategic planning, and stability of the organization during a time of great change and challenge. You've made my job a real pleasure! With many thanks, Polly Newlon, Executive Director

Education Matters: Scholarships Awarded to Three Area Graduates

CRPA recently awarded three, \$350 scholarships to high school graduates from Highland, Bath, and Alleghany High Schools. CRPA works in conjunction with scholarship programs of the three public schools. Applications are forwarded to CRPA by the schools and reviewed by CRPA's Education Committee. The committee consists of Chair, Christie Hardbarger, Eddie Walters, Dave Peters, and Ellen Reynolds. The academic and civic accomplishments of this year's winners were remarkable. Below, we are proud to present this year's winners from the north to south:



Highland HS—Molly Mobley

Photo by Kathy Cobb



Molly is the daughter of Chris and Tammy Swecker of Blue Grass. She was Highland High School's Valedictorian and hopes to attend James Madison University in nursing. She has been a member of the National Honor Society and the Latin Honor Society as well as the Student Council Association and "Out of Time", the environmental club. She was class president two of her three years at HHS and received the Staunton Rotary Club's Code of Ethics Award. "I believe education is the most important foundation in life, especially now more than ever."



Bath County HS - Elizabeth Gentry

Photo by Kathy Cobb



Elizabeth is the daughter Bruce and Sandra Gentry of Millboro. She ranked 9th in her class and will attend Emory and Henry College to study psychology. In addition to involvement in team sports, she has worked part time at Lickety Splits. She was a volunteer camp counselor at Camp Accovac for three summers and volunteered at the Springs Nursing Center. She has also traveled to the Dominican Republic on a service project. "Growing up in a small town like Millboro gave me the idea that I would be here forever. Going to a city will be an adjustment. Some of my favorite memories will remain as the ones I spent with my large family by the river on Saturday nights. You won't find memories like that in a city or even suburban area."



Alleghany HS - Mariana Keener



Mariana is the daughter of Gary and Leigh Ann Keener. During high school, she served as the yearbook editor-in-chief and was president of the Nat'l Honor Society and vice president of the Junior Class. She was an active member of many clubs, and attended the Jackson River Governor School all three years. She was active in sports and played basketball all three years, being Varsity Captain. In her spare time, Mariana volunteered at the YMCA pre-school and at Scott Hill. She will attend Christopher Newport University in Biology/Premedicine. "Growing up in the Cowpasture River watershed I have realized the need for physicians in small and rural areas."

Note to Members: Scholarship applications were down this year for some reason. Please make sure that students in your area are aware of these scholarships. Application takes place each spring through the individual schools' scholarship programs. Know a rising senior that loves nature and/or the river? Remember this program next spring! Contact Polly Newlon or your local high school's guidance department for more information.

Education Matters: A Barrel of Fun for All

CRPA staff and volunteers worked hard this spring! Another one hundred rain barrels have been brought into the world through workshops held across the CpR watershed in Bath, Alleghany, and Highland Counties between April and June. Funded by a grant from the Richard and Caroline T. Gwathmey Trust, the workshops were a great success and over 60 people took advantage of the opportunity to learn about watersheds and their protection, not to mention saving a bundle on rain barrels.

The barrels come from the Mount Olive pickle factory in North Carolina. They come to Mt. Olive filled with pickles and such from around the world. They're not reused after they arrive and it's not worth the cost of shipping them back empty. Enter, Clean Virginia Waterways, a nonprofit water quality group based at Longwood University in Farmville. They've developed a relationship with the company that allows them to purchase large numbers of barrels and they, in turn, make them available to watershed groups around Virginia who hold workshops and recycle them into rain barrels. Being food quality barrels, they're very stable plastic. They are cleaned and stored in Farmville where groups like CRPA can pick them up. A little aroma of vinegar remains, but not to worry. Vinegar is, after all, a popular "green" cleanser.



CRPA members Terry and Mary Margaret King quickly figure out the best way to stabilize the barrel - by sitting on it!



Mary Hodges and Gary Johnson hold a barrel steady while Nette Johnson braves the vinegar residue to attach the faucet. The cafeteria at Millboro Elementary was a perfect venue.



The workshops begin with a presentation by director Polly Newlon. Before the how-to's of making a rain barrel, she talks about the importance of watersheds and how each of us can help to promote healthy waterways. Many people don't realize how large the CpR watershed is or its importance for the James River and the Chesapeake Bay.

Thanks go out to CRPA members and folks at Millboro Elementary and DSLCC who helped with workshops. We couldn't have done it without YOU!

Clarence Carson
Keith Carson
Judy Clark
Kim Manion

Ellen Reynolds
Everette Rosen
Martha Rule
David Watkins

Education Matters: Hard Winter for “School Trout” Too

Monterey/Millboro. In the fall of 2009, Highland and Millboro Elementary School science teachers, Ginny Neil and Kim Manion, signed their classes up to participate in “Trout in the Classroom” (TIC), a program sponsored in Virginia by Trout Unlimited and supported by the VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and by donations.



Students fan out along the river, each looking for that perfect spot for their friend.

Although the program has been around for over ten years, this was the first year for these schools to participate and CRPA was there to help with their financial needs for equipment and supplies. The schools joined over a hundred others across Virginia participating in this hands-on educational program that teaches youth about local water resources as well as returning native brook trout to Virginia’s waters.

All are to be commended for investing such time, effort, and money in their students and the area’s ecosystems. In the fall, each class received about one hundred brook trout eggs, donated by the DGIF, and their task was to nurture them over the winter in an aquarium. They hatched them, fed them, kept their home clean and the water healthy. The goal was a spring release of fingerling trout into a local waterway.

But, alas, this winter was a challenge on so many levels! For Millboro, the entire group of hatchlings was ultimately lost and of Highland’s 100 eggs, only 33 survived. But agency reports told of a pattern of problems with this year’s eggs that plagued other schools as well. Highland had to pull off an emergency rescue when the tank temperature rose due to equipment failure and, luckily, the Virginia Trout Company stepped up and cared for them temporarily in their facility. Biology isn’t always easy!

Even so, one cool, foggy morning in May, the Highland 6th grade class took healthy survivors to the Bullpasture for release. CRPA joined in and a little critter pickin’ was part of the fun. Despite this year’s challenges, both schools are



A toast for the final fish released, “Swimmie”, the class favorite. Teacher Ginny Neil provided a suitable tribute.

committed to continuing the program next year. Ms. Manion commented, “Watching the trout hatch and grow is an amazing way to watch a life cycle in our classroom. The students were so excited when they could see their eyes - their mouths - and their fins. Each new discovery was announced loudly and others dragged into the room to see the latest development on the trout.” These students also learned how tenuous life can be and the importance of stewardship.



For CRPA director Newlon (left), the event was one more opportunity to get the kids up close and personal with the macroinvertebrates that populate the rivers. And sixth grade is a good time to recruit young scientists.



Each student got to release fish and bid them farewell. For some, there seemed to be a mix of sorrow and glee.

Help Wanted - Trout and Aquarium Experts - Here’s your chance to volunteer!

Kim Manion, science teacher at Millboro Elementary and director of the Millboro TIC program, is looking for volunteers that are knowledgeable about raising trout and/or managing fish in an aquarium setting. If you are willing and able to help by providing consultation, please contact Kim at 540.997.5452. She wants to make sure that next year’s batch has every opportunity to thrive and be ready for release in spring of 2011.

Outreach Matters: Mussel Festival & Debut of CpR Watershed Banner

Millboro. For a fourth year, federal, state, and local agency staff members have come together in our region in an effort to “reinfest” the local rivers with fresh water mussels. John and Caryl Cowden agreed to host once again, offering their lovely CpR riverside setting at Ft. Lewis Lodge. The mussel “stars” this year were the notched rainbow (Villosa constricta) and the triangle floater (Alasmidonta undulata.) The notched rainbows have been identified as a species of high conservation need in the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan and agency staff propagated these mussels last year at the cooperative Virginia Fisheries and Aquatic Wildlife Center, located at Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery in Charles City. This is a joint effort of VA’s Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) and the federal Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).



Don't mistake them for pebbles. These notched rainbow mussels are a critical part of the ecosystem of Virginia's rivers. Adding more of them back, "reinfesting", helps to bolster their populations.



As part of the process, Larval triangle floaters spend a brief, bubbly bonding session in an aquarium with 11 different local fish species. After being given time to attach to the fishes' gills, all are returned to the river where the mussels will eventually settle to the bottom, grow to adulthood and, hopefully, thrive.

This year's event had an added attraction. A beautiful, full color, vertical display banner depicting the entire Cowpasture River Watershed. Over a year ago CRPA member Cindy Kane, biologist with the USFWS in Gloucester, VA suggested making a banner for the Cowpasture River watershed that could be used at meetings and outreach events. She brought a large printout of the concept to last year's Festival and invited suggestions from those attending.

Many CRPA members and agency personnel contributed during the year to the final design. Marek Smith from the Nature Conservancy used his GIS skills to produce the map. Kent Ford, and Cindy Kane collected photographs from Caroline Bott, Polly Newlon, Roger Baroody, Phil Lucas, Fred Huber, and others. Kathy Whittemore, a graphics-art specialist with the USFWS in Hadley, MA, designed the final display. The banner was produced by a company in Richmond and paid for by the Virginia Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. In addition to the detailed map, the banner includes photos of flora and fauna that one might expect to find within the watershed, along with several points of interest located there. The display is easily portable and can be used to greet visitors at events in the Cowpasture River Watershed. It has already been used at three separate events and is expected to be a very useful outreach tool. Those living along the river or just wanting to learn more about it can gather a great deal of useful information and also gain the “big picture” on the size and importance of this single watershed for water quality across Virginia.

With thanks to contributor Kent Ford.



Come Together: Cowpasture Merits Inclusion in Photo Exhibition

By Polly Newlon

While tending to the CRPA display table at Highland's Maple Festival in March, I met a man by the name of Scott Jost, associate professor of art at Bridgewater College. His medium, photography. His passion, nature. Scott mentioned that he was preparing a photo exhibition and, hopefully, a book documenting many of the river confluences of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. He produces panoramic views grabbing more than one can see in a single shot. He had already traveled around Virginia and Maryland taking pictures and said he would love to visit the Cowpasture. Well, for me, who tends to end up behind the computer way too much, it was a great opportunity to get out on the river and witness viewsheds that I hadn't seen before, so I offered to escort him on a Cpr "tour of confluences". On April 20th, we met in Headwaters, VA on a gorgeous highlands morning and headed south on 614. I had gained permission from landowners wherever it was needed and many thanks go out for everyone's generosity (you know who you are).



In Highland, the Cowpasture (left) and Shaw's Fork (right) come together like two dancers gliding gracefully into each other's stride.



Scott and Daisy pause for a shot looking south at the "Sweet Baby James" where the Cpr and Jackson come together. The James River watershed, VA's largest, drains 10,000 square miles of land.

We visited four confluences that day and he spent a fair amount of time at each, giving me a chance to wander around, look under rocks, check out the birds, idle away amidst the wildflowers, and capture a few non-professional shots myself. Starting in Highland where Shaw's Fork joins the Cpr we then moved down to Williamsville for the impressive conjoining of the Bull and Cow. From there we visited the Stuart's Run/Cpr confluence and lastly - the magnificent creation of the James down near the Alleghany/Botetourt line. WOW. At that site we were joined by CRPA member Daisy Boyd, who just wanted to come down and poke around with us. It was a glorious day of celebrating the waters.

The title of the photo exhibition is *Source and Confluence: Exploring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*. It was on exhibit at the Darrin McHone Gallery in Harrisonburg in June and will be displayed again from October 4th thru November 3rd at the Miller Gallery in the Alexander Mack Memorial Library of Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia. A reception will be held from 5-7 p.m. on October 4th and all are welcome.



The view from the hanging bridge at the Bullpasture(L)/Cowpasture(R) confluence is familiar to many as a popular spot to fish or picnic along the state's right-of-way.



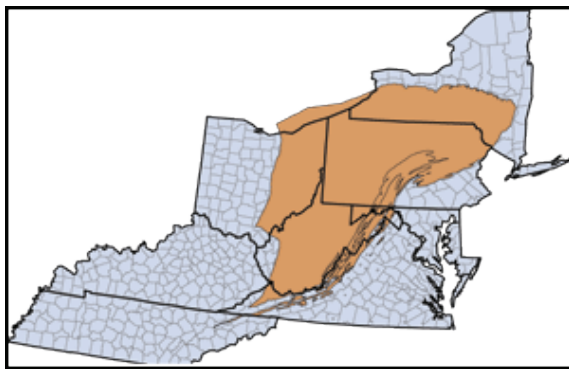
Birth of the James. The Cowpasture (left) and Jackson (right) join to form the mighty James (Center). Panorama by Scott Jost.

To see more of Scott's work visit:
<http://www.scottjost.net> or
<http://riverconfluences.wordpress.com>

Shale “Frack”ing: Our Next Fossil Fuel Worry?

Perhaps you’ve been watching the story unfold in Pennsylvania and New York. A particular land formation, prominent along the east coast is “Marcellus Shale”. This sedimentary deposit harbors large reserves of natural gas that have enticed gas drilling companies to expand the use of techniques to extract the gas from the rock. Called “fracking” or “fracing”, the procedure involves forcing water, chemicals and sand into the shale under high pressure to break up and release the gas from cracks in the rock. The concern? Well, there are apparently several, many of which are related to water: Water consumption, wastewater creation, storage and toxicity, and runoff from industrial facilities. This is above and beyond the usual concerns about industrial development, truck traffic and noise, among other things.

According to an information sheet that was produced by the Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (AFS), estimates of up to 3 million gallons of water may be required for each fracking event for each well. And where does that water come from? Usually the nearest stream or river. Fishery supporters such as AFS, as well as Trout Unlimited, are very concerned about these procedures, already widespread in Pennsylvania and being challenged in New York. Because the Marcellus Shale formation extends into portions of West Virginia and Virginia (primarily in the valley and ridges region that we all know and love), an alarm has been sounded by many organizations for residents of these areas (including Highland, Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, Rockbridge, and Alleghany Counties) to be aware that it is not a matter of “if”, but “when” such endeavors will come to our neighborhoods. Even though we are on the edge of the



The Marcellus Shale Formation is shown in brown. The Virginia “sliver” encompasses largely the highlands counties and clearly, the CpR watershed. Image copyright: propublica.org

formation, these are parts of the state that are often in greatest need of tax and industry-related revenues and therefore vulnerable to corporate propositions that sound like they might save the economy.

In addition to consuming huge amounts of water from mountainous (and hence headwaters) regions, the water that comes back out often contains chemicals, biocides that are used to help keep things from growing in the machinery, sediments, salts and even radioactivity (radium) depending on the drill site. With regard to the biocides, it is interesting to note that because some of the biocidal “cocktails” used are considered proprietary by the companies, they aren’t required to disclose what is actually in them. And regulation of the industry often falls under mining agencies, not those concerned with environmental quality, conservation, or fisheries management.

As is the case with most new technologies and/or any industry that desires to take hold in an environmentally sensitive region such as ours, one can find proponents of either side of the issue. Is it great that we have found new and plentiful reserves of natural gas in the U.S.? Of course! Is the benefit to be gained worth the potential risk to the environment? Alas, the age-old question arises once again. And the appropriate answer may well be, the data aren’t in yet. But many environmental and conservation groups have already taken a stand against it.

At the very least, individuals who live in areas containing Marcellus Shale should try to make themselves as aware as possible of the issues surrounding this industry. Being well informed will allow those of us potentially impacted by this industry to make wise personal and organizational decisions about where we stand and what actions we should or should not take.

Some Links to Information on the Topic

www.paoutdoornews.com
www.dec.ny.gov/energy/58440.html
www.PennEnvironment.org
www.earthworksaction.org
<http://md.water.usgs.gov>
<http://mixplex.com/frack.html>
www.forbes.com/feeds/businesswire/2010/05/06/businesswire139283121.html

It's Time for the Annual Riverside Picnic

When: Saturday, August 7, 2010

2:00 pm* — Swim, Fish, Socialize

4:30 pm — Dinner Served



Where: The Whiteside's Cabin

**114 Morgan Drive, Alleghany County
Off Rte 42, 1.5 miles N of Interstate 64**

Eats: Hot dogs, hamburgers, & drinks will be provided

Bring: A side dish or dessert to share, chairs or other seating, family and friends, fishing gear, swimming gear. Dogs allowed if leashed.

Cost: Adults \$10, Children 12 and under \$5**

Questions? Contact Polly Newlon

Directions? 540.474.2858 or directorcrpa@gmail.com

**Register
NOW!****

**** You can pay on site, but please let us know you're coming asap.**

Riverside Picnic Reservation Form

Send this form with your check to CRPA, P.O. Box 215, Millboro, VA 24460 by August 2

Adults _____ @ \$10 #Children _____ @ \$5 Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Been meaning to sign up? Maybe it's finally time to JOIN CRPA!

- \$20 Member (minimum annual membership donation)
- \$50 River Guardian
- \$100 Headwaters Circle
- \$250 Watershed Steward Other _____
- \$500 Wallawhatoola Society
- Junior Membership(s): 15 years and under; Cost—4 hrs./year volunteer service

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

CITY — STATE — ZIP

PHONE

E-MAIL

- I prefer not to have my name published as a contributor.
- I'd like more information on the monitoring and educational programs.
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer river monitor
- I want to help save valuable resources, please send my newsletter by email

CRPA
Cowpasture River
Preservation Assn.
P.O. Box 215
Millboro, VA 24460

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