

## Grant to support Dragon Run educational program

Friends of **Dragon** Run (FODR) recently received a \$16,264 grant from Dominion Energy to help establish the **Dragon** Run Environmental Academy Mentorship (DREAM).

FODR was among 35 environmental organizations across Virginia that received a total of \$400,000 in grants from Dominion Energy for projects aimed at helping provide “a more sustainable future in the communities that we serve,” according to a press release from Dominion Energy.

A FODR goal has been to increase middle and high school students’ awareness of and knowledge about **Dragon** Run. The **Dragon** Run watershed offers a rich learning lab for environmental science.

A team of FODR members designed DREAM to train and mentor leaders and educators who serve life science students. Experienced educators and naturalists will train invited middle school teachers from Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, Mathews and Middlesex counties about the importance of the **Dragon** Run watershed.

The program also will incorporate the historical use of the watershed by indigenous peoples and early European colonists. The program will use An Educator’s Guide to the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) as the primary planning tool.

Once these educators are trained, educational field trips to the **Dragon** Run watershed will be established for their students during the 2023-24 school year. As the MWEE guide states, “MWEEs represent sustained activity that engages students from beginning to end. Though a field experience may occur on one day, the total duration leading up to and following the experience involves a variety of rich learning opportunities spread over a course of a unit or multiple units.”

The students’ experience on the **Dragon** will mirror the educator’s experiences in DREAM including think, plan and evaluate/reflect. Students will be able to answer the question, “How will you save the **Dragon**?”

We are excited about providing this opportunity to local educators and students,” said FODR vice president Carol Kauffman. “The **Dragon** Run watershed is truly a unique gift we have here on the Middle Peninsula, and we want to ensure that our youth have the knowledge and tools to continue protecting and preserving it.”



From left are Dream Team members Susan Walton, Dr. Bambi Thompson, Molly Broderson, Carol Kauffman, Terry Skinner and Crystal Bright of Dominion Energy.