

Brent Heath – Founder

How did you become one of the founders of FODR?

Through the Boy Scouts. Participating in Jimmy Morgan led work to clear trails and remove trees blocking the Dragon. After college furthering Jimmy's vision that we need to work to preserve, protect and assure wise use of the Dragon. Concerns were growing about some aspects of development and the need to further protect lands, waters, and our natural heritage. I got to make a lot of presentations about the Dragon to various groups in the community. Was truly hooked by the pursuit of the "Big Island" property. Also got to work with some great organizations and people such as those from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Jerry Stokes, and many others.

What was the greatest challenge in building the organization?

Getting the word out. Encouraging donations to protect land. Getting people in the community involved. I was not tremendously involved in some of this at the very beginning, but "willingly" got onboard to work with, help resource, and be a part of the amazing group Jimmy Morgan gathered.

Looking back what was your favorite memory of FODR?

Loved to talk about and show nature to people. Becky and I paddling folks on the Dragon and always loving every day on the Dragon and spreading the word about the Dragon and conservation. We had a canoe touring company called Heaths Trails. We got to take well over 100 people on tours of the Dragon Run. Loved to do the trips. To help get the word out about the Dragon Run we took reporters from most of the local and regional papers as well as members of conservation groups such as the Nature Conservancy. It was amazing to see people's reactions to meeting a Dragon! The Dragon did most of the talking - Becky and I paddled,

navigated, and reinforced what species and habitats from the majesty of nature they were witnessing.

A funny story from the past?

There were many! But they all kind of involved “clanging and banging” in canoes, cold water, falling in the water, beaver dams, church groups, and people urging us to turn around as there was “white water ahead.” The white water ahead was always the flow over the never-ending beaver dams. Great fun.

Any ideas you want to share to further protect the Dragon Run?

Three thoughts:

- The need to continue to champion the preservation and protection of the Dragon through conservation easements, FODR owning land, and working for environmental meaningful best practices for agriculture, forestry, and our economies.
- Help our communities become knowledgeable about the amazing biodiversity and benefits we get. I like FODRs initiatives on environmental literacy.
- Feed the biome!