



# The Dragon's Tale

Friends of Dragon Run  
P. O. Box 882  
Gloucester, VA 23061

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Friends of Dragon Run, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation dedicated to the preservation, protection, and encouragement of wise use of Dragon Run and its watershed.

## General Meeting February 24 at 7 p.m. Julia King Is Guest Speaker

FODR's first General Meeting of 2022 will be held at 7 p.m. on February 24 via zoom. (See page 2 for instructions on using zoom.) Julia A. King will be our guest speaker. The title of her presentation is "Searching for Traces of Bacon's Rebellion in the Dragon."

Dr. King is a professor of anthropology at St. Mary's College of Maryland where she researches, teaches, and writes about Chesapeake history in the Atlantic World.



She is a past president of the Society for Historical Archaeology. From 2003 until 2011, she served as an Expert Member on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a federal agency advising Congress and the President on matters of national historic preservation policy.

King has received support for her projects from the National Park Service and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She has had fellowships at the Virginia Historical Society, Dumbarton Oaks, Winterthur Museum, and the Omohundro Institute for Early American History and Culture. King's recent research focuses on the archaeology of the Indigenous Rappahannock, a collaborative project between St. Mary's College and the Rappahannock Tribe.

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## President's Message

### Jeff Wright

2022 is off to a good start. Snow on the Dragon and we posted the pictures on our webpage. Our magical bald cypress trees and forests are resting up for spring, and eagles have been nesting along the Dragon since December.



We began the new year with three workdays to keep our trails open and properties in shape. We also held our first facilitated hike for members at FODR's Big Island complex. The event was well attended and fun. Teta Kain and Kevin Howe, as hike leaders, shared their sense of humor and their knowledge of flora, fauna, and habitats along the Dragon.

Check out our ambitious calendar of activities for 2022 posted on our website (DragonRun.org). Our next member event, the First Day of Spring Nature Hike for members and family, will be held March 20 at the Revere and Williams tracts.

For our readers itching to see the Dragon from the water, spring paddle season reservations open March 1, at 9:00 a.m. In addition to our normal mid-April to mid-May spring paddle season, we are planning to offer paddle trips at the end of the season for school and youth groups. Scheduling paddle trips for schools and youth was disrupted in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19. We hope that by this spring, we will be able to resume these educational paddles.

If you have ideas for additional activities in 2022, please contact me at [presidentdragonrun@gmail.com](mailto:presidentdragonrun@gmail.com). We are also expanding many of our volunteer programs and looking for additional property monitors, logistics crew, and paddle crew members.

The motto on our brochure is "Ever Save a Dragon?" Volunteers are always welcome to help answer that question.

*Best of the seasons and the Dragon Run to all.*

### How to Zoom

Topic: FODR General Membership Meeting - 24 Feb 2022

Time: Feb 24, 2022 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88515699728?pwd=Ym5yNit1SkVxWTZPc21JNGJHUUY3UT09>

Meeting ID: 885 1569 9728

Passcode: 734630

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,88515699728#,,,,\*734630# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,88515699728#,,,,\*734630# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 885 1569 9728

Passcode: 734630

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdcePOgC23>

**Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#)**

## Two Bald Cypress Awards Made

The Bald Cypress award is FODR's highest level of recognition—right up there with the nation's highest civilian awards. In FODR's 36+ year history, only a few Bald Cypress awards have been awarded. The award recognizes a member's superior contributions to the Friends of Dragon Run in protecting and preserving the Dragon Run watershed. In 2021, FODR awarded two Bald Cypress awards—one to Teta Kain and the other to U. Grant Ballard.

Who hasn't at least heard of **Teta Kain!** This tiny but colossal woman has been the engine behind FODR and our paddle seasons for more than 25 years. She amassed the first fleet of kayaks and, with Gordon Page, began taking people down the Dragon. Back in the day, Teta did it all



—accepted the paddle trip registrations, collected payments, met paddlers at the Food Lion in Saluda and took them to Mascot where they parked their cars, and then shuttled them to the Big Island put-in. Plus, she was the paddle lead and narrator for the paddle trips.

Amazingly, she did all of this every day during the spring paddle season up until the last few of years when additional members volunteered to help. Teta is also widely known for her knowledge of birds, butterflies, and mushrooms. Most of all, she is known as the Empress of the Dragon for her unflagging love of and devotion to Dragon Run.

**U. Grant Ballard**, a FODR founding member, has worked behind the scenes for nearly four decades. Every year, he prepares FODR's form 990. The IRS requires all tax-exempt organizations to file this form annually. Preparing the 990 is rigorous and requires meticulous attention to FODR's financial and other records.

Ballard began preparing the Form 990 for FODR as soon as our non-profit application as a tax-exempt entity was approved in 1990 and has been there for us ever since!

Ballard is retiring from his volunteer position with FODR and we will miss his expert wisdom and guidance in financial areas as well as his devotion to Dragon Run.

## January Nature Walk a Success

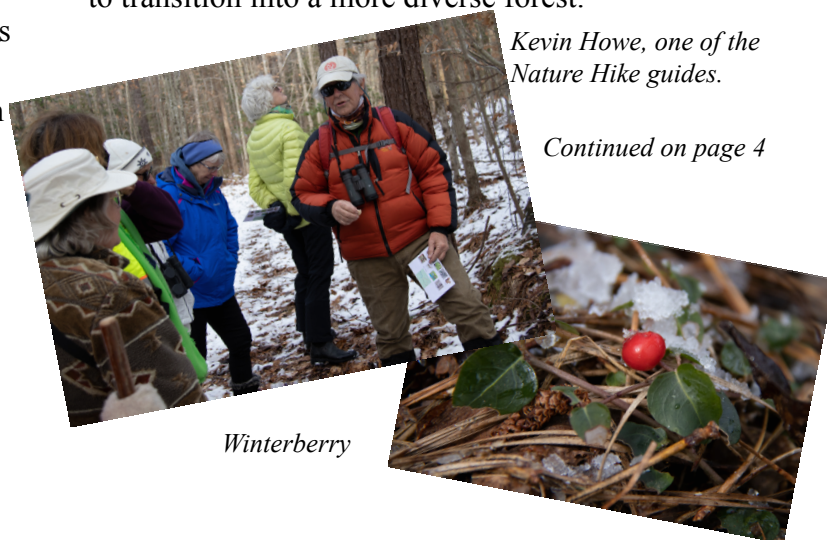
By Jack and Carol Kauffman

Friends of Dragon Run held its first member event of 2022 on Sunday, January 23. The Winter Hot Chocolate/Hot Cider Nature walk was held at FODR's Big Island complex. Twenty-six attendees hiked snow-covered trails in small groups led by Teta Kain, Kevin Howe, and Jeff Wright. Many of the attendees renewed their membership or joined in advance of the event. To prevent the spread of COVID, all attendees were required to be vaccinated and we split attendees into small groups of approximately eight.

Attendees followed trails meandering through woods. The areas include a variety of hardwood trees such as oaks, poplar, sweet gum, holly, cedar, bald cypress, hornbeam, ash, and pines. Despite the winter weather, partridge berries, club mosses, Christmas ferns, and striped wintergreen were easy to spot along with a variety of birds including woodpeckers, robins, cardinals, sparrows, nuthatches, and titmice. Some areas along the trail are 25-year-old pine plantations that we are allowing to transition into a more diverse forest.

Kevin Howe, one of the Nature Hike guides.

Continued on page 4



Winterberry

## January Nature Hike a Success

(Continued from page 2)

Following the nature walks, attendees warmed up with hot drinks and cookies. Guests and volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to talk with other members and see the land that FODR is protecting in order to preserve the ecology of Dragon Run.

FODR's next nature hike is scheduled for March 20, the first day of spring. There will be lots to see and hear as spring begins to unfold in the Dragon. Go to [DragonRun.org](http://DragonRun.org) to sign-up.

## 2022 Spring Paddle Season Reservations Open March 1 at 9 a.m.

By Jack and Carol Kauffman, Paddlemasters



Although it is still too cold to dip our feet into the Dragon, paddle crews will start scouting for the spring paddle route in February and early

March. Crews will be looking for a viable route as well as obstacles resulting from winter weather and beaver activity. The spring paddle route will be announced when reservations for the spring paddle season open on March 1 at 9 a.m.

Spring paddle season will begin April 15 and end May 16. Paddle trips will be held every day except Wednesday. Reservations are required and a donation of \$50 per individual is requested at the time of signup. We also will take special requests for group paddles and will offer trips to area schools and youth groups.

Because of COVID-19, we expect to follow protocols similar to those we used for our 2021 summer and fall paddle trips: We will take small groups of eight guests and all guests and crew must be fully vaccinated. Because COVID precautions keep us from transporting our guests from one site to another, our route will again be round trip.

Spring is a wonderful time to paddle the Dragon. Yes, it may be a bit cool, but we strive to keep our guests dry. The bald cypress will be getting their needles and we will see spring flowers such as spatter dock and others. We often see wood ducks with their young and bald eagles nesting. The highlight of these spring trips are the frequent sightings of the prothonotary warbler. It breeds along the Dragon in early Spring and migrates into Central and South America around July. You may even see a beaver. These sightings are rare; but we see signs of their activity everywhere.

Paddle trips fill-up fast. For the first time this year, we will keep a cancelation list for people who were unable to schedule a paddle trip on Sign-Up Genius.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

**Smile!**

**You're on Amazon**

By Carol Kauffman

If you're looking for a simple, automatic way to support Friends of Dragon Run, shop at [Smile.Amazon.com](http://Smile.Amazon.com). It's the same Amazon you've always known; however, AmazonSmile makes it easy to contribute to your favorite charity. No extra clicks, no extra cost, no extra set up. Just put your items in your shopping cart and checkout! Amazon takes care of the details.

Through AmazonSmile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. Almost one million 501(c)(3) public charitable organizations participate in AmazonSmile.

You can tell you're shopping from the correct page if you see the AmazonSmile logo in the corner of the page and "Supporting Friends of Dragon Run" below the search bar. When you hover over the name of the charity, you can see additional information about it and track the amount of donations you've made through your purchases.

Ready to shop and give? Follow these steps :

1. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)
2. Sign in with the same ID and password that you use for Amazon.com
3. Select Friends of Dragon Run
4. Start shopping!

## STREAMSIDE ATTRACTIONS

### *What's More Alive Than a Tree? A Dead Tree*

By Kevin Howe

Dead trees stand everywhere in the Dragon, which is not unusual in any kind of forest. All forests have standing dead trees which have become ecologically diverse habitats for insects, mammals, reptiles, and birds. According to a well-known forest ecologist, Jerry Franklin, "A dead tree is more alive than a live tree."

Biologists and loggers both call standing dead trees *snags*; a rather odd term for a dead tree. The term was coined by loggers in the late 1800s. When loggers began using steam engines (referred to as steam donkeys), they used steel cables and pulleys to drag cut timber off steep slopes. They routinely left dead trees standing; however, the cables would frequently *snag* on dead trees. Biologists picked up the term and the word came into our lingo and became a common term.

From an ecological perspective, snags are anything but dead; they house an incredibly diverse community providing food and shelter for many living things. Meanwhile the process of decomposition continues until everything is fully recycled. Now that's an ecosystem service!

Woodpeckers are probably the best-known species occupying snags. They peck snags for food and to call a mate, as well as to make a cavity to nest in. They are critical to the decomposition of snags. As the woodpecker chips away for insects or makes a cavity for the family, he or she is accelerating the decomposition process by opening a door to food and shelter for other birds, raccoons, snakes, squirrels, millipedes, centipedes, spiders, mites, termites, and a myriad of other insects literally from ants to Zorapterans. Snags provide food and shelter for an even larger variety of less known organisms such as bacteria, viruses, mosses, ferns, lichens and, a personal favorite of mine, fungi. All these organisms, whether consuming the wood or eating each other, are slowly but quite remarkably assisting in reducing the snag until nothing is left.

This process of decomposition continues until a snag is totally recycled—a process that takes years. Research indicates that tree decomposition varies depending on the species and environment. Some research-backed ballpark figures are 57 to 124 years for a conifer (e.g., pine) and 46 to 71 years for a hardwood (e.g., oak). Temperature and moisture affect the rate of decomposition resulting in slower decomposition in hot, dry regions and faster in higher cool moist regions. Decomposition also varies widely based on the tree species. For example, the bald cypress, for which the Dragon is known, is thought to decompose very slowly, taking hundreds of years because of the high resin content which repels nearly all living organisms. Bald cypress has long been valued for its decay-resistant wood which results from the high resin content.



*Snags standing everywhere*



*Golden Pholiota Mushrooms*



*Piliated Woodpecker*



*Scaly Shield Mushroom*

*Continued on page 6*

## What's More Alive Than a Tree? (Continued from page 5)

I would be remiss if I did not emphasize the immense importance of fungi. A future Streamside Attraction will cover fungi in more detail (or join us for one of the FODR nature walks this year). Fungi are critically important, arguably the most important, agent for the decomposition of all organisms.

Fungi were initially classified as plants, but they are more like animals. Instead of producing sugars and other substances, they consume the world around them. In 1969, fungi were moved from the plant kingdom to their own kingdom.

Most of us know fungi as mushrooms, but that's merely the tip of the fungal iceberg. Of the nearly 150,000 named fungi, only about 20,000 produce a mushroom which is a fruiting structure, something akin to a flower.

Fungi are composed of a kind of root called mycelium which is vital to nearly all plants. This mycelium spreads through the earth taking up water and converting earthen materials to nutrients for the plants. Researchers estimate that 90% of the biomass (the weight of all living things) in a forest is fungi. Or, think of it this way: for every step you take in the forest, you have 300 miles of fungal mycelium under foot!

So before you cut down a dead tree, think of the amazing life within. Leave it standing and enjoy the wildlife it houses. Perhaps we can't bring back a forest or diminish climate change, but by leaving a snag you are helping preserve a vibrant and vital ecosystem.



## 2022 Membership Renewals Due By Anne Ducey-Ortiz, Membership Chair

One way FODR protects and supports the Dragon Run watershed is to share it with others who want to join in protecting this remarkable ecosystem. As a member, you can actively support Dragon Run through your membership dues and by volunteering for programs, paddle trips, hikes, and much more. This past year, we added 58 new members thanks to the hard work and dedication of our current members.

Annual membership is \$25 for each individual and is valid for one year. We also offer lifetime memberships at \$1,000 per individual.

Membership benefits include voting rights to elect directors, participation in member-only paddle trips and events, five newsletters per year, and participation in volunteer activities such as land stewardship, paddle crew and logistics personnel, trail maintenance, and more. This year we are offering new member-only events such as a series of guided nature walks on our properties throughout the year.

Annual dues are used to cover operating expenses such as real estate taxes and insurance. The paddle trips provide additional income to help us perform our mission, but the annual dues provide a steady income to meet FODR's basic needs. All board, committee, paddle, and logistic crew members are volunteers and all the funds we receive are used to fulfill our goals to serve as good stewards and to share and educate others about Dragon Run.

You can renew your membership online at [www.dragonrun.org](http://www.dragonrun.org) or by mailing it to Friends of Dragon Run, P.O. Box 882, Gloucester VA 23061. If submitting by mail, be sure to include your email address and write legibly so we can enter the correct information in our database. Also include your phone number so we can contact you if we have questions about your renewal information. If you have questions about your membership status, please contact [MembershipDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:MembershipDragonRun@gmail.com). If you are submitting your membership as a couple, include both names and email addresses.

## Next Trash Pickup February 26

Throughout the year, FODR conducts trash pickups at the three bridges crossing Dragon Run: Route 17, Mascot, and Ware's Bridge. At the November 20 pickup, 13 volunteers collected 1,748 pieces of trash, weighing 144 pounds. This collection brought the total trash collected during 2021 to 5937 items, weighing 672 pounds. Clearly, FODR's trash collection efforts make a significant difference in the amount of trash swept into the Dragon. Plus, all the items collected are logged into the Ocean Conservancy app that records the trash collected and combines it with data from other organizations.

Our first trash pickup of 2022, organized by Trash Czar Mark Alling, will be held February 26. Volunteers will meet at the Rappahannock Community College, Glens campus parking lot at 9 a.m. All volunteers will be provided with VDOT-issued safety vests, pickup sticks, and orange trash bags.

The more volunteers we have, the more trash we can collect. And, every piece of trash we pick up is one less piece that might slip into the Dragon.

*See you on February 26!*

## FODR Board of Directors

Jeff Wright, President  
[PresidentDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PresidentDragonRun@gmail.com)

Carol Kauffman, Vice President  
[VicePresidentDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:VicePresidentDragonRun@gmail.com)

Kevin Howe, Treasurer  
 Adrienne Frank, Secretary

Anne Atkins

Molly Broderson

Marsha Carlton

Meo Curtis

Anne Ducey-Ortiz

Art Gilbert

Katy Hawks

Jack Kauffman

David Milby

Andrea Mitman

Harvey Morgan

Davis Rhodes

## BOOK REVIEW

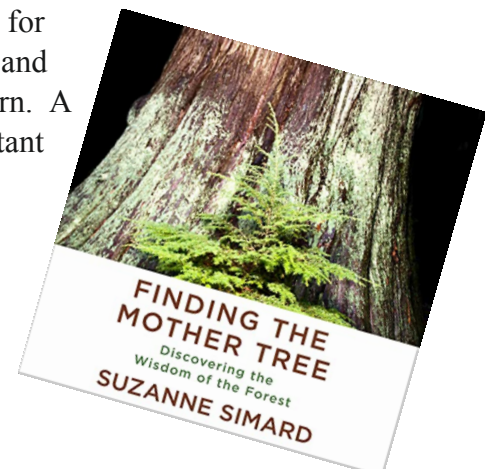
### *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest*

By Suzanne Simard

By Jeff Wright

In *Finding the Mother Tree*, Dr. Suzanne Simard recounts her discovery of networks of underground fungi. These fungal networks enable connected trees to share resources, such as nutrients, water, and carbon. *Finding the Mother Tree* was ranked as one of the top science books of 2021. Simard's findings presented in this book will have a major influence on science, government, and industry and could change the way we think about and care for our forests. It relates well to Dragon Run and the importance of old growth trees. Dr. Simard states, "This is not a book

about how we can save the trees. This is a book about how the trees might save us." She succeeds in making the case for what we can do and what we can learn. A good and important read.



## Being Part of the Logistics Crew

By Jack Kauffman

I took my first kayak trip on the Dragon in fall 2018. I was hooked. The Dragon is a magical place and the volunteers were great. I felt an instant desire to help preserve the Dragon and to be part of the FODR team. I wanted to learn more about the ecology of this watershed and I wanted to be involved.

When it came time for the 2019 spring paddle, I signed up for the paddle crew. I also talked with Dave Rhodes, one of FODR's founding members. He described the need for volunteers for the logistics team, which he heads up. I joined the logistics team and have found great pride in serving.

I love being part of the paddle crew and helping guests during the paddle; but that service comes with its own personal reward. As part of the paddle crew, I get to experience the beauty of the Dragon as I assist with the paddle. On the other hand, serving on the logistics crew is more altruistic. It gives me a good feeling to work for the safety and wellbeing of others.

Here is what we do: We transport all the equipment (kayaks, paddles, PFDs, signs, and supplies) to the launch site. Sometimes we launch from our own property which is easier because everything is already at the launch site. Other times it takes work to connect a loaded kayak trailer to our personal vehicle and pull it to the launch site. With the help of the paddle crew, who follow our lead, we prepare all the equipment so everything is clean and organized for guests when they arrive.

When the guests are ready to begin their paddle trip, we help them into their kayaks (trying to keep their feet dry) and launch them. Once they are all in the water, we have more than two hours to relax. This is our time to have breakfast, take a walk, or read a book. During this two-hour break, however, we are serving as the emergency response coordinators. If an emergency were to occur, we would meet and guide the EMTs to one of the emergency takeout

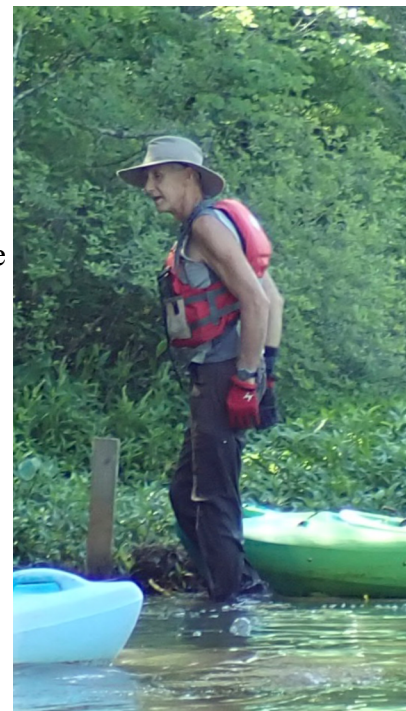
locations. (Fortunately, none of our crew has yet had an emergency to respond to – but we are ready).

When the guests are getting close to the takeout, we prepare to get them out of the water. This may be as easy as returning from our walk (if the paddle is round trip) or it might require pulling the empty kayak trailer to the takeout site. When paddlers return, we pull them to shore and help them out of their kayaks (again attempting to keep their feet dry). The paddle crew helps us carry the kayaks to the trailer and load them. We say goodbye to the guests and socialize amongst ourselves for a short while before we return the loaded kayak trailer to its overnight location.

Our volunteer time is about five hours (really just three hours with a two-hour break). In addition to feeling the pleasure of helping others, assisting FODR in educating people about the Dragon, and preserving the Dragon through the donations FODR receives from paddle guests, I enjoy talking with guests and crew. I've learned a lot from both over the last three years.

We are short on logistics crew members because many of our members do not have a vehicle with a tow hitch or experience in towing a trailer—both are requirements for logistic team members. I hope that if you do have the capability to help, you will join us.

*For the Dragon!*





## Volunteers Wanted

FODR has an ambitious year ahead and needs volunteers for 2022. Plus, we would love to have new faces on our team! We have a small crew of volunteers, some of whom have been with us for many years and a few who joined our team in 2021. Gaining another 10 or 20 volunteers would make our work load more manageable.

In addition to our three paddle seasons, we will be doing stewardship work on FODR properties and offering more events to our members. As recognition for our volunteers' contributions, we are planning volunteer-only social events, such as property walks, river scouting trips, and a night paddle on the Dragon. This is the year to get involved! Check out the volunteer opportunities listed below and contact the volunteer manager listed in the description.

**Logistics crew members.** The logistics team delivers the kayaks, paddles, and safety gear to the launch site prior to each paddle trip and returns everything to the overnight storage location after the paddle. They work with the paddle crew to set up everything for our guests and they help launch them into the Dragon. Training is provided for team members before the paddle season begins so they have plenty of time to become comfortable with the logistics duties.

If you enjoy working as part of team, you'll love being on the logistics team. Team members must have a vehicle



with a trailer hitch and be able to tow a light trailer. Want to learn more? Contact Davis Rhodes at [s.d.rhodes@verizon.net](mailto:s.d.rhodes@verizon.net) or Jack Kauffman at [PaddleMasterDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PaddleMasterDragonRun@gmail.com). Prospective volunteers for the spring paddle season will be contacted by late February.

**Paddle crew members** help guide our guests while on the Dragon. The crew helps the logistics team set up for the paddle and helps clean-up afterward. At

the dams, crew members get out of their kayaks, remove the gate, and pull or guide the guests' kayaks through the gate. They also advise paddlers about obstructions, and aid paddlers in case of emergencies.

All crew members must attend a paddle training session before EVERY paddle season. Some members wear waterproof or neoprene clothing to stay warm in the cold water. PFDs, paddles, and kayaks are provided. To get involved or for more information contact: Carol or Jack Kauffman at [PaddleMasterDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PaddleMasterDragonRun@gmail.com). Prospective volunteers for the spring paddle season will be contacted by late February.

**Merchandise sales** volunteers arrive at the paddle takeout approximately 45 minutes before the paddlers disembark from their kayaks. Merchandise is hung for display and inventory boxes are organized for easy access. An accurate inventory is kept with each day's sales. To get involved or for more information contact, Jack Kauffman at [PaddleMasterDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PaddleMasterDragonRun@gmail.com).

**Property monitors** monitor one of FODR's 10 parcels of land. Tasks include learning the boundaries of the property, becoming familiar with the Land Management plan for that parcel, walking the property at least quarterly and filing a report noting litter, vandalism, storm damage, and trail disruptions. For more information or to volunteer, contact David Milby at [PropertyManagerDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PropertyManagerDragonRun@gmail.com).



**Communication volunteers** help get FODR's message to the public. Volunteers write articles for our website and news releases for local media. They help send out newsletters and other messages. They also take photos at FODR events and post to FaceBook and Instagram. For more information or to volunteer, contact Anne Atkins at [CommunicationsDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:CommunicationsDragonRun@gmail.com).

(Continued on page 10)

## Volunteers Wanted

*(Continued from page 9)*

**The program committee chair** finds and schedules speakers for quarterly member meetings and special events. This volunteer position selects speakers and topics that will further enrich FODR's education for members and others. For more information or to volunteer, contact Jeff Wright at [PresidentDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PresidentDragonRun@gmail.com).

**Stewardship volunteers** help FODR with its land stewardship goals. Volunteers can assist with creating and/or maintaining trails, controlling erosion, or invasive plant removal. Volunteers also help with plant and tree surveys. For more information or to volunteer, contact Jeff Wright at [PresidentDragonRun@gmail.com](mailto:PresidentDragonRun@gmail.com).

## At a Glance

### *February*

17	Scouting trip for spring paddle season (FODR paddle crew)
19	Dragon Keeper (FODR paddle crew)
24	General Meeting, 7 p.m. via Zoom—see page 2. (Members and the public)
26	Trash pickup day—see page 7. (Members and the public)

### *March*

1	Spring paddle season registration opens at 9 a.m.
20	First Day of Spring Nature Hike. (Member and family) Registration required
24	Scouting Trip for Spring Paddle Seasons (FODR Paddle Crew)

*Be sure to check out the FODR calendar at [DragonRun.org](http://DragonRun.org) for more dates and activities.*

**Friends of Dragon Run, Inc.**  
**P. O. Box 882**  
**Gloucester, VA. 23061**