



The Dragon's Tale

Friends of Dragon Run

P. O. Box 882

Gloucester, VA. 23061

Volume XLII Issue 2 March/April 2023

President's Message



As you'll read in this newsletter, FODR accomplished several significant goals during the first quarter in the areas of stewardship, citizen science, nature hikes, and Dragon Keeper explorations. This spring and summer, we plan to keep the momentum going by focusing on four initiatives. [Read more . . .](#)

General Meeting April 19

Skip Stiles, Nationally Recognized Environmentalist, Will Present *Climate Change: Virginia's Impacts and Responses*



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William A. (Skip) Stiles, Jr. is Executive Director of Wetlands Watch, a statewide nonprofit environmental group based in Norfolk, VA. In this position he has been involved in sea level rise adaptation work at the community level for over 12 years. [Read more . . .](#)

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Topic: FODR General Membership Meeting

Time: Apr 19, 2023, 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85193240274?pwd=UWxqU0xidDRZZIBCemxieUh5bnV6U>

[Read more . . .](#)

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Spring reservations opened on March 1 and by March 15, only two seats out of 256 were left! Paddle trips will take place April 14 through May 23. [Read more . . .](#)

Paddle Guide Training—What We Learn

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By Mark Alling, Trash Wrangler

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Citizen Science: Watching Spring Unfurl

By Maeve Coker, Citizen Science Committee Chair

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Backyard Bird Count, and on February 17, 18, and 19, participants tallied more than 35 species on the Wares Bridge, Mascot, and the Big Island Complex. They also witnessed a unique phenomenon that occurs under the right conditions. Check DragonRun.org for upcoming events. [Read more . . .](#)



A Valentine's Day Sight You Never Want to See

By Jeff Wright

On Valentine's Day while on a scouting trip in advance of our spring paddle season we came across a sight you never want to see. It was a dead Bald Eagle. [Read more .](#)



FODR Volunteers Completed Several Stewardship Projects During the First Quarter of 2023

On Sunday, February 19, the FODR Stewardship Committee held a workday to improve the trails at the Big Island Complex. On March 7, 13 stewardship volunteers worked at the Wares Bridge property. The next stewardship event will be held June 11. Check

DragonRun.org for additional information. [Read more . . .](#)



Streamside Attractions

The Red-Spotted Newt

By Kevin Howe

I am a curious naturalist, so I often look under decaying logs (slowly, carefully, and lifting away from me) to see what's underneath. This is the season when you can often find springtime breeding salamanders heading for their *vernal* or temporary spring pools to find a mate. Not all salamanders breed in water nor in the spring, but it is a great time to look. [Read more . . .](#)



Dragon Keepers: North from Ware's Bridge

By Andrea Mitman and Art Gilbert

Art Gilbert and I left from Ware's Bridge on March 24 and headed north (upstream). We came across several areas of wild celery and patches of feather foil. The bald cypress trees were numerous. [Read more . . .](#)

Notes of Interest

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As you will read in this newsletter, FODR accomplished several significant goals during the first quarter in the areas of stewardship, citizen science, nature hikes, and Dragon Keeper explorations. This spring and summer, we plan to keep the momentum going by focusing on four initiatives.

On June 21, we will honor a woman who has devoted roughly 35 years to sharing Dragon Run and educating thousands of people about this exceptional habitat. We will rename the FODR property at Mascot the Teta Kain Nature Preserve in recognition of her exceptional work and dedication to Dragon Run. Check our

website at DragonRun.org for details as we get closer to the date.

Second, in 2023 FODR launched a Citizen Science Committee to “establish and foster year-round collection and reporting of species, habitat, and biodiversity data and analysis about the Dragon Run watershed.” The committee is off to a great start establishing a framework for the systematic collection, reporting, and retrieval of data across the four counties in the Dragon Run watershed using national and state-recognized systems such as iNaturalist and eBird. The Committee has already identified and documented species that have not previously been recorded in the county where we found them.

The citizen science thrust opens more opportunities for FODR members to work together on projects such as species counts and searches at various sites within the Dragon Run watershed. Check out our [Activities Calendar](#) to see everything we have planned, such as an April bioblitz, visits to FODR properties as part of Global Big Day in May and World Migratory Bird Day, future stewardship events, and many other activities.



Third, we are increasing our work with other communities by looking at issues such as climate change and other challenges to protecting, preserving, and encouraging wise use of the Dragon Run watershed. FODR is a member on the York River and Small Coastal Basin Roundtable along with federal, state, and local organizations. The key efforts of this group focus on coastal resilience, protecting wetlands, and fostering biodiversity on land and water.

Another example of our work with communities is our Dragon Run Environmental Academy Mentorship (DREAM) program which launches this summer. This innovative program will provide environmental education and experiences on the Dragon for science teachers, educators, and their students in the Dragon Run watershed.

Fourth, we have launched a fund-raising campaign to support teacher and student education about Dragon Run. And, like FODR's founders, we want to increase the amount of land in the Dragon Run watershed that is protected through ownership, conservation easements, and other protective resources. I hope you will join FODR in carrying out our mission to protect, preserve, and encourage the wise use of the Dragon Run watershed.

Jeff

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General Meeting April 19

Skip Stiles, Nationally Recognized Environmentalist, Will Present *Climate Change: Virginia's Impacts and Responses*



William A. (Skip) Stiles, Jr. is executive director of Wetlands Watch, a statewide nonprofit environmental group based in Norfolk, VA. In this position he has been involved in sea level rise adaptation work at the community level for over 12 years.

Prior to his current position, starting in 1998, Mr. Stiles was an independent consultant, providing editorial and public policy services to clients on issues related to science, the environment, and public policy. A partial list of his clients includes: the White House Office of Science Policy, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Pew Center on Agricultural Biotechnology, RAND Corporation, and the National Academy of Sciences.

I became an environmentalist in the wetlands of Back Bay in Virginia and the New River in North Carolina. As a child, hunting and fishing with my father, I saw many sunrises and sunsets over mid-Atlantic marshes. I had many quiet conversations with my dad learning about the habits and habitats of marsh wildlife and the wonders of our wetlands.

In my first career, I spent a couple of decades working in Congress on national-level environmental and science policy, thinking it made a difference. I now know that progress is measured on a different scale as communities rediscover their connections with nature.

Today I can't take a breath of the rich, salty air around a tidal wetland without being transported back to those wonderful days. That is what drives me to keep these lands protected and open, so my children and grandchildren can have the same experiences.

Skip Stiles
From Wetlandswatch.org



Before that, Mr. Stiles served in a variety of senior staff positions during 22 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was chief of staff for Congressman George E. Brown, Jr. of California, staff director of the House Agriculture Research and Environment Subcommittee, and Legislative Director for the House Science Committee.

He is the author of a number of publications on sea level rise and adaptation. He served on the Virginia Climate Change Commission in 2008. He is a recipient of the Erchul Environmental Leadership Award. He lives in Norfolk, VA, and is a graduate of the College of William and Mary.

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Meeting ID: 851 9324 0274

Passcode: 285139

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+1 386 347 5053 US

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+1 564 217 2000 US

+1 669 444 9171 US

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

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+1 253 205 0468 US

Meeting ID: 851 9324 0274

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kqZh0tWYq>

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Spring Paddle Reservations: Sold Out by Mid-March

Spring reservations opened on March 1 and by March 15, only two seats out of 256 were left!

FODR members have been getting ready for the spring paddle season since February. The route has been scouted to determine if any obstructions need to be cleared and the number of beaver gates needed. Volunteers (paddle approved) have placed gates in the beaver dams. Paddle guides have been trained, and on a final preparatory trip, volunteers will trim back vegetation and get the channel ready for the paddle season.

Training for paddle guides and logistics staff took place on April 2, 3, and 4. This year, more than 30 members have volunteered as paddle guides/and or logistics staff. Paddle trips will take place April 14 through May 23.

Paddle Guide Training—What We Learn

For each FODR paddle season all prospective crew members participate in an on-the-water training day. Training focuses on several key aspects: safety, standardized crew procedures, crew member roles on the water and during launch and take out, positioning, and coordination on the water, guest hospitality, and learning the details of the planned paddle route in various water conditions. Training also provides simulated water rescues, procedures for working with county emergency medical services, towing guests, beaver dam gate operations, and understanding key features, flora, and fauna, of the paddle route.

The training familiarizes prospective crew members with all equipment including kayaks, first aid kits, emergency drinking water, clothing packs, tow ropes, communication devices, and written standard operating procedures. An aspect of the training includes learning how to fit paddle tour guests with a kayak and a personal flotation device (PFD), adjusting seat backs and footrests, and kayaking 101 tips to use with novice paddlers. Annually, FODR kayaks, paddles, and PFDs are inspected by the US Coast Guard.

The training events foster team building which is the secret sauce for crew operations. Besides being a real treat to paddle the Dragon as part of the crew, it is also a lot of fun to be a FODR paddle crewmember.

Becoming paddle crew qualified is a criterion for other on-the-water activities during the year including route scouting, stewardship on the Dragon Run waters, night paddles, citizen science projects using kayaks, and our Dragon Keeper Program where we explore segments of the Dragon beyond the ones we use for paddle tours.

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Nature Hike to Celebrate Spring

By Robin Mathews, Hike Master

Twenty-two guests turned out for the March 19 *Welcome Spring Nature Hike*. Sixteen volunteers led four groups of members and their guests along various trails in the Big Island complex. Spring was in the air and hikers had a rare opportunity to observe numerous spring ephemerals such as spring beauties, violets, and round-lobed hepatica. Additionally, they also saw moss, wild ginger, downy rattlesnake plantain, ferns, lichens, fungus, bald cypress trees and the bald cypress knees, swamp chestnut oak, ironwood, and spicebush. Hikers also heard and saw various birds, saw an eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly, and the nest openings of cellophane bees in the Big Island parking lot. Afterward, they gathered for hot cider, cookies, and fellowship.



Thank you to Sue and Gary Grabb for manning the fire pit and to all the other volunteers who helped make this hike a success.

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Photos by Tom Crockett



Trash Pickup: Keeping the Dragon Clean

By Mark Alling, Trash Wrangler

On February 25, 13 volunteers performed the first FODR Adopt-A-Highway trash pickup of 2023. The team collected recyclables and trash from around the Rt. 17 bridges, the New Mascot bridge on Rt. 603, the Dragon downstream of Rt. 603, Wares bridge on Rt. 602, and for the first time, Byrds bridge on Rt. 604.



From left to right: Robin Mathews, Steve Mathews, Steve Skinner, Terry Skinner, Jeff Wright, Janice Moore, Mark Alling, Andrea Mitman, Jimmy Viars, and Sherry Rollins. Not pictured: Jack Kauffman, Carol Kauffman, and Maeve Coker.

The total haul weighed 202 pounds; 126 pounds of the haul was trash, and 76 pounds was recyclable metal cans, glass, and plastic bottles. Volunteers collected 6,092 total items, with an amazing 1,611 cigarette butts. Because these are highly toxic to the fauna of Dragon Run, this was an excellent effort to protect and preserve the health of the Dragon's fish, birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. Well done crew!

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Citizen Science: Watching Spring Unfurl

By Maeve Coker, Citizen Science Committee Chair

FODR's new Citizen Science Committee has kicked off this year with a great start and several events. We invited members to join the Great Backyard Bird Count, an annual global event sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. On February 17, 18, and 19, participants tallied more than 35 species on the Wares Bridge, Mascot, and the Big Island Complexs. They also witnessed a unique phenomenon that occurs under the right conditions.



Rainbow "oil sheen"

The rainbow "oil sheen" effect on the water is a result of vegetative decomposition underwater in a low oxygen environment. Natural methane is released along with the tannins in cypress needles, as they float to the surface of the calm water. When the light hits it at the right angle, we see a rainbow. This is a biological process and not contamination of the water with oil.



Devil's urn (closed) Photo by Maeve Coker

A second bioblitz event was held at the Big Island Complex on March 7 to gather more data for FODR's iNaturalist projects as well as our eBird account. Bioblitzes are events that document as many living species as possible at a certain location during a specified time.

Our iNaturalist projects now encompass approximately 77 (Williams), 77 (Revere), and 57 (Bulman) species for each of the

three properties within the Big Island Complex. Spring ephemeral flowers, first-of-season butterflies, and a fungus, devil's urn, seldom found in this area, were the highlights.

A sizeable and tedious task of integrating existing historical data into our Dragon Run Watershed iNaturalist Project has made monumental gains. More than 650 individual data observations tallying upwards of 400 individual species of plants, fungi, vertebrates, and insects now exist in our database. Members and guests who are iNaturalist users are encouraged to contribute their data to the Dragon Run Watershed Project while participating on our guided nature hikes and paddle trips. Their observations will help us gain a better understanding of the biodiversity across the Dragon Run watershed.



Devil's urn (open) Photo by Kevin Howe

We have two more upcoming events on Tuesday, April 11 and Saturday, May 13. The first will be another bioblitzing day. All levels of expertise in all fields are welcome.

On Saturday, May 13, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is sponsoring an event called Global Big Day. It coincides with World Migratory Bird Day, and last year more than 51,000 people from 201 countries helped scientists better understand migration patterns of avian species all over the world. Friends of Dragon Run is

hosting a registered event to recognize our participation. Birders of all skill levels are invited to join. Check our website, DragonRun.org, for registration details as we get closer to the event. We look forward to having you bird with us!



A Valentine's Day Sight You Never Want to See

By Jeff Wright

On Valentine's Day while on a scouting trip in advance of our spring paddle season we came across a sight you never want to see. It was a dead Bald Eagle.



Photo by Jeff Wright

This was a mature Bald Eagle of the type, size, and stature that is the symbol of our Nation, the majesty of nature, and a species that always inspires our paddle guests and our paddle crews. *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* is unquestionably a key cultural and ecological embodiment of conservation success and the imperative to protect the wild. It's a bird that has rebounded from near extinction in the 1960s and whose recovery is closely linked to Rachel Carson's influential book *Silent Spring*.

Anecdotal observations report that we are seeing a lot of mature Bald Eagles but not a lot of juvenile or immature Bald Eagles. Also, some nests sites we regularly see occupied in the late winter or early spring are empty. Are their fewer eaglets? Is everything well with our most recognizable bird?

No, all is not well. Eagle success in the nest has probably been negatively impacted by H5N1 influenza—also known as bird or avian flu. Plus, the Eagles' population success nationally has also been—and continues to be—impacted from lead poisoning.



As a result of these two phenomena, it appears that fewer eaglets are fledging. Recent university studies in the southeastern states, from South Carolina to Florida, reflect a nesting success of about 30% below average. In coastal Georgia the analysis shows that in 2022 less than half of Bald Eagle nests fledged one chick. H5N1 is killing off mating pairs. Early reports from the southeast in 2023 reflect that influenza is still impacting wild bird species including the Bald Eagle.

Eagles are skilled and efficient scavengers as well as an apex predator. It is likely that the Eagles studied became infected by eating infected birds that could include waterfowl, shore birds, raptors, and scavenging birds.

Bald and Golden Eagle populations, including those in Virginia, are also adversely impacted by lead poisoning. A major study published in 2022 in *Science*, reported that lead exposure was found in Eagles from 38 states. As a result their scavenging activities, they ingest lead from eating the carcasses of animals killed with lead ammunition.

The study reported that, “Our data show a continent-wide temporal correspondence between acute lead poisoning of Eagles and the use of lead ammunition.” Lead ammunition is still permitted in some states for certain hunting types and hunting seasons.

FODR is pursuing actions to support the protection of Bald Eagles:

- Through our Citizen Science Committee, we are focusing efforts to better identify the presence of Eagles; determine if the Eagle is an adult, immature, or juvenile, and geolocate and monitor nesting sites within the Dragon Run watershed. This citizen science initiative is open to all members.
- During the nesting season for Bald Eagles, we will honor the recommended buffers around nests from the Center for Conservation Biology at William and Mary as we plan our paddle trips, hikes, and other FODR activities,
- We will continue to require lead free ammunition as a condition for hunting leases on FODR lands.
- We will include science based as well as cultural and historic information about Eagles in talks, media, and hike and paddle narratives.

On March 26, a team of volunteers was out on the Dragon preparing for the spring paddle season. At the FODR Big Tree--the oldest and largest bald cypress tree on the paddle route--two mature Bald Eagles were perched in the tree. Both species—Eagles and humans—made eye contact. Both species made a contract together for our futures.



FODR Volunteers Completed Several Stewardship Projects During the First Quarter of 2023



(Above) Davis Rhodes shows off the new gate installed on the Bulman property.

(Right) Tom Crockett, Susan Crockett, Carol Kauffman, Jack Kauffman try out the new bridge on the swamp trail.



On Sunday, February 19, the FODR Stewardship Committee held a workday to improve the trails at the Big Island Complex. A bridge was installed over a stream crossing, a new trail was marked with signage, and a new gate was installed. A productive day from our dedicated volunteers!



At the Wares Bridge property:

*standing: Davis Rhodes, Andy Brown, Andrea Mitman, Gary Driscoll, Adrienne Frank, Jim Ewan, Gary Grabb, Sue Grabb, Sherry Rollins
Kneeling: Steve Skinner, Terry Skinner, and Tom Cramer*



Gary Driscoll tries out the new bench



Trash ready to be hauled from Wares Bridge property

On March 7, 13 stewardship volunteers worked at the Wares Bridge property. They spent most of the morning widening and leveling trails to make them wheelchair accessible. Work included installing a bench for easy viewing of Dragon Run, and volunteers began the long process of hauling off the trash pile that was there when the property was acquired.

Afterwards, the group visited the marsh dock on adjacent land owned by the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority for lunch and fellowship. Thanks to all the awesome folks who helped! The next stewardship event will be held June 11. Check DragonRun.org for additional information.



Streamside Attractions

The Red-Spotted Newt

By Kevin Howe



Eastern, red-spotted newt. Photo by Kevin Howe

I am a curious naturalist, so I often look under decaying logs (slowly, carefully, and lifting away from me) to see what's underneath. This is the season when you can often find springtime breeding salamanders heading for their *vernal* or temporary spring pools to find a mate. Not all salamanders breed in water nor in the spring, but it is a great time to look.

A few weeks ago, while exploring near the FODR kayak launch site in King and Queen County, I came across an unexpected and rarely seen amphibian—the red-spotted newt, also known as the eastern newt, *Notophthalmus viridescens*. A newt is a salamander (amphibian) but distinguished from other salamanders by having bumpy skin in contrast to the smooth skin of the others. These bumps on the newts are glands that secrete a toxin (*tetrodotoxin*) which, at the minimum, is distasteful and at the maximum, deadly.

There are other differences, but one of the easiest ones to spot is the coloration of the juvenile and adult. Once you see a newt, you won't forget it. Like all salamanders, the newt is a voracious carnivore that certainly keeps many of our insect populations in check.

Salamanders are rarely seen—they are forest animals, related to frogs, but they make no noise. They spend most of their life hidden from view—in the water, underground, in leaf litter, or under decaying logs. Virginia is a hotspot of diversity for salamanders and the State has 59 different species.



The eastern newt is the only newt we have in our region although there are eight species in North America. In addition to the skin glands, all newts differ from other salamanders in their



Juvenile elf eastern newt. Photo by Kevin Howe

fascinating and variable life history which *usually* covers four stages: egg, gill-bearing larvae, lung-bearing juvenile, and a fully aquatic adult with lungs, not gills! Three of those stages are aquatic but one, the juvenile, is terrestrial.

The life cycle begins with the female laying eggs in a water body (pool, pond, stream). The eggs hatch into a gill-bearing larvae which live in the water for several months before transforming into a terrestrial, lung bearing juvenile (*usually*). The juvenile is called an *elf* and you can see the bright color

of this elf—actually a warning to predators that it is toxic. The elf remains in this stage between two and seven years before maturing into an adult and heading back to a water where it will spend the rest of its life. This aquatic adult is reported to live up to 15 years, so its entire life span could reach 20 or more years.

Little in biology is clearcut and so goes with this newt as you may have noticed with my use of the word *usually* in the last two paragraphs. Populations of this newt have been found to totally bypass the juvenile stage and transform directly from the few-month-old larvae into the adult with the adult retaining some larval characteristics such as gills. While not reported from Virginia, it is reported in at least nine other states out of the 33 states where it is found. We don't understand why this occurs, but it is thought to relate to differing environmental conditions—bizarre to say the least.

Salamanders are among our most threatened species with about one third of them, both in the US and worldwide, vulnerable to potential extinction. Draining wetlands and deforestation are at the top of the list of threats. When a forest is clearcut, salamanders no longer exist in that habitat.



Red spotted newts mating under water. Photo by Kevin Howe

If you find or uncover a salamander, be a good naturalist and just observe its beauty and be amazed by its life history. Take a picture or two instead of picking it up or touching it. Remember, it secretes a toxic substance on its skin and some folks have reported skin and eye irritation when handling the eastern newt.

By the way, we do have a Virginia state salamander, the red

salamander, *Pseudotriton ruber*. Interestingly, it is widespread in Virginia including in King and Queen County. However, there is no record of it having been seen in Middlesex County. If you wish to learn more about Virginia's amphibians, look on the Virginia Wildlife Resources' wonderful website or purchase one of their [very informative booklets](#).

Ain't nature cool! But, bizarre, too!



Dragon Keepers: Upstream from Ware's Bridge

By Andrea Mitman and Art Gilbert



FODR's Dragon Keeper Committee was formed to plan and conduct observational trips to view as much of the Dragon as possible. Our goal is to view the entire length of Dragon every two years.

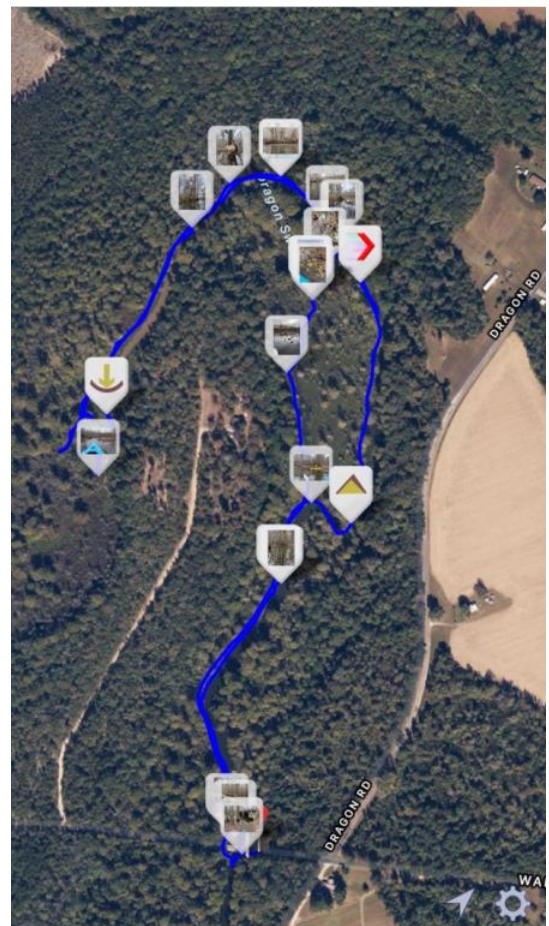
On March 24, Art Gilbert and I left from Ware's Bridge and headed north (upstream). The weather was partly sunny and the temperature during the two- hour trip was between 60 and 65 degrees.

Once north of and out of sight of the bridge, we came to a fork in the channel. We kept straight and ended up in a swampy, narrow channel that required effort to paddle through.

This swampy area contained plentiful briars, wild rose, subaquatic vegetation (SAV), feather foil, mosquito fern, and cypress trees with abundant knees.

Using the Merlin app, we recorded Mourning Dove, Red-Bellied Woodpecker, Northern Cardinal, Red-Winged Blackbird, Pine Warbler, Carolina Chickadee, and European Starling.

We angled to the right and picked up the main channel again where we came across several areas of wild celery and patches of feather foil. The bald cypress trees were abundant. Several were quite large and looked well-worn with broken-out tops.





The tiger swallowtails were fluttering atop what might have been a muskrat mound. Arrow arum was beginning to show. We saw a clump of what I think was iris.

We saw many beaver lodges and were surprised at the way the beavers had gnawed around the base of several large cypress trees. We crossed three or four beaver dams, but none required us to get out of the kayaks. Muskrat dens and mounds were also common.

We paddled approximately one mile upstream where we came to a fisherman standing on a beaver dam. He said the fishing was good: bowfin, perch, and other fish. Beyond his property, the area became swampy and un navigable unless you were willing to get out and hike.

He said once, a few years ago, during high water he had been able to go further upstream where he found another open water area similar to the one we had paddled through. He said he had seen otters, beavers, deer, and had heard owls. He said a neighbor had seen a bear in the area.



Coming back, we found a channel that allowed us to avoid the swampy slog and marked it with a couple of pieces of red survey tape. Close to the bridge we encountered large turtles sunning on a downed tree.

A beautiful day on the Dragon!

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Notes of Interest

You Don't Want to Miss . . .

You don't want to miss the ceremony to rename the FODR property at Mascot the Teta Kain Nature Preserve. This renaming of the property honors Teta for her accomplishments in sharing the Dragon with so many paddlers and other guests as well as her contributions to butterfly and bird counts. The ceremony will be held on June 22. Be sure to check DragonRun.org for additional details.

Nutria in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck

Reports of nutria are coming in, especially in the Tidewater area. It's just a matter of time before these animals begin spreading further north and west.

These semi aquatic rodents (14 pounds on average) are easily confused with beavers, muskrats, and otters. However, unlike these native animals, nutria can quickly destroy a wetland habitat. They eat both the tops of plants and the rhizomes, turning a once lush wetland to muck.



Be on the lookout for these destructive, invasive, and non-native animals. Report any sightings to ReportNutria@vt.edu. Be prepared to provide location and date of sighting.

For more information on nutria in Virginia, visit <https://cmi.vt.edu/ReportNutria/NutriaSpeciesInfo.html>



Beaver

Large brown nose

Orange teeth

36 to 60 pounds

Tail: broad, flat, scaly



Nutria

White muzzle, white whiskers

Orange teeth

12 to 20 pounds

Tail: small, long, hairless, skinny



Muskrat

White muzzle, black whiskers

Yellow teeth

2.5 pounds

Tail: flattened from side to side

Demolished Building on Morgan Property



A small cabin located on the Morgan Property in Gloucester County was demolished on March 13. Dave Rhodes oversaw the demolition and provided these pictures. Board members will visit the Morgan property later this year to identify potential uses for the property. A Dragon Keeper exploration is scheduled this year to put in at the Morgan property and go down the Dragon toward the Piankatank River. This could be an additional route for paddle trips if the channel is suitable for paddling.

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Students from Aylett Country Day School Visit Powcan

On March 22, twelve 7th grade students from the Aylett Country Day School and their science teacher, Richard Moncure, visited the Powcan property for a nature hike. The students had recently studied invasive species and local ecosystems in their life sciences classes.

As we hiked to the beaver pond for a picnic lunch, we discussed keystone species found in the Dragon Run watershed and the vital roles they play in this unique ecosystem. Students explored other trails in the on the Powcan property. They identified several common invasive plants and were introduced to important native species. Hikes and paddle trips for local students are part of FODR's push to introduce Dragon Run to students.



AYC students listen to Robin Mathews at Powcan

New Wood Duck Boxes



Jack Kauffman and Jeff Wright install a new Wood Duck box in the channel near Big Island. Davis Rhodes made the new boxes; he also made the previous Duck boxes, many of which lasted for 20 years.

Jack Kauffman on ladder and Jeff Wright at the base.



Jeff Wright and Betsy Washington having too much fun!

Don't Miss Out on the Fun!

Check DragonRun.org frequently to see what's going on in the Dragon. Coming events will be posted on the opening page and a full list of events can be found in the [Activities Calendar](#). We look forward to seeing you!

Visit us at DragonRun.org

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