

Dragon's Tale

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

Friends of Dragon Run
PO Box 882
Gloucester, VA 23061

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FODR GENERAL MEETING — FEBRUARY 28

VERNAL POOL PRESENTATION

The next meeting of Friends of Dragon Run will be held on Thursday, February 28, 2013, in the Community Room of the Gloucester County Main Library, located in the Main Street Shopping Center on Business Rt. 17 (Main Street) at the southern edge of Gloucester Court House.

Please join us for a social gathering at 7:00 P.M., followed by a presentation on the ecology and natural history of vernal pools, one of our most threatened wetland types. These unusual wetlands, also known as ephemeral or seasonal ponds, appear and disappear during cycles of rainfall and drying. They play a crucial role in the complex life histories of many amphibian and invertebrate species. These pools are being damaged or destroyed at an alarming rate by human activities such as filling, logging, and development. As a result, there is a worldwide decline in amphibian populations and an urgent need to protect these temporary waters and the biological communities that depend on them.

Our guest speaker will be Anne Wright, Coordinator of Life Sciences Outreach Education and Assistant Professor of Biology at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). She develops outreach programs for VCU's Life Sciences and the Inger and Walter Rice Center in Charles City County. She has a BFA in Sculpture, a BS in Biology and an MS in Biology with a focus on aquatic ecology. She has an extensive research background in stream ecology, benthic macroinvertebrates, and water quality monitoring. As an outreach educator, she works with numerous local and regional schools and has run multi-year projects on vernal pools, sturgeon, and mesocosm and carbon processing dynamics. She has also co-developed course offerings throughout VA and in Baja, Mexico.

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Ever Save a Dragon?

ROADSIDE TRASH PICKUP IS SATURDAY, MARCH 2 AT 9AM

Meet in the parking lot of Rappahannock Community College in Glens. For more info contact Hugh Markham at markham@crosslink.net



8 GREAT REASONS TO ATTEND FODR GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The meeting room is easy to find - Gloucester Library
2. Excellent speakers
3. Interesting and timely nature and conservation topics
4. A chance to see old friends and meet new members
5. No long, boring business meetings. Just announcements and the program.
6. A great meeting room, spacious with plenty of seats, and a big screen for easy viewing.
7. Munchies and drinks before, during, and after the show.
8. NO MOSQUITOS!

In all seriousness, please consider attending our meetings regularly. A lot of work goes into to finding good speakers, making all the arrangements, and organizing the evening's activities. It can be rather disheartening to put a lot of time and effort into the event, only to have just a handful of people attend, not to mention the embarrassment of having a speaker face such a small turnout.

Looking Ahead . . . By Davis Rhodes

As we begin a new year, I would like to recognize the Directors who retired from their positions at the end of 2012 and thank them for their able and dedicated service to Friends of Dragon Run; Annick Ensley served for four years, Cindy Kane for six, Bob Hancock for five and Joe Nolte for three. Each of these folks brought unique skills and talents to our Board, and they will be missed. We wish them well in their pursuits and invite them to come back for a visit whenever the opportunity arises.

The calendar rolls on and so does our organization. We have been blessed with the addition of five new Directors to our Board and are excited at the new ideas and experiences which they offer. We extend a warm welcome to Beverly Macy, Darbie Maccubbin, Brent Slaughter, Bruce Pully and David Henderson. Each of them has career and life experiences which can benefit us as an organization. I know that I speak for our other Directors and Officers when I say that we are looking forward to working closely with them to advance the goals and objectives of Friends. These are exciting times and not ones for the faint of heart. I am confident that we have the skills and talents among our Officer and Director corps to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Our Business Meetings are open to all members. I think you would find some interesting conversations taking place if you decide to visit us at some of them.

As you read this issue of *The Dragon's Tale*, please take note of the Activity Schedule where you will find many activities which are available for the participation and enjoyment of our members. Tom Gregory, our Property Manager, always has a few outdoor opportunities for talented individuals and I invite you to take part in some of our workdays. We have wonderful fellowship, good fun, and actually accomplish a little constructive work on some of the most captivating land on the Dragon. The coming Spring will bring fresh foliage, new and returning critters and great opportunities for family fun, education and relaxation. Give us a try. We'd be pleased to hear from you if you'd like to know more. You will find our contact numbers elsewhere in this issue or on our website, www.dragonrun.org.

April 6th marks the start of our Paddle Season this year, and Teta Kain, our Paddlemaster, has been busy making plans and preparations for the program. Martha Graham, our Registrar, has already had quite a few calls from interested people. She would be pleased to try to find an opening on the schedule for you if you'd like to take advantage of this opportunity! Martha may be reached at mgr8040@verizon.net or (757) 898-8040. Bring a friend.

Also, don't overlook the possibilities of joining Hugh Markham, our Trash Czar, on a highway trash cleanup day this Spring. It is amazing what you can find along the side of the highway; and Hugh has the orange bags, and the trailer, to haul it away if it doesn't qualify as a trophy to keep. Hugh is always looking for help on these cleanups and the Dragon is less cluttered with debris as the result of the cleanups near the highway/stream crossings. You can meet Hugh at 9:00 A.M. at the Glenns Campus of Rappahannock Community College on Trash Pickup days if you are willing to pitch in. Both Hugh and The Dragon would appreciate your help.

Until next time, have a happy, healthy and safe Spring Season.

Davis



New FODR Web Site Coming

Our web site, www.dragonrun.org, was designed many moons ago. We can't remember exactly when, but it's been at least 12 years. The project was spear headed by Kathryn Gregory. She worked with Bedford Hill, a volunteer who had just designed a site for Northern Neck Audubon. Brian Gregory (son of Kathryn and Tom) served as technical person and has generously hosted the site on his own server space, as well as supported the registration costs. Kathryn does updates and revisions using Microsoft Front Page. The basic structure has remained the same.

Because of software and hardware issues, it became clear that change was necessary. Mitchell Bober agreed to work with transitioning the site to a new host and a complete redesign. This is in process while Kathryn struggles to do minimum updates in the interim. Apologies go to those who notice that some items are down-scaled or missing. The most current newsletter is posted so you can count on that until Kathryn gets a computer crash.

We are looking forward to a beautiful user-friendly site which will represent us well, have additional functions plus needed information readily available.

PADDLE TRIP REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Registration for the 2013 paddle season is now open. The first trip will be on Saturday, April 6. Trips will run every day after that through Sunday, May 5. For information about the trips or to make your reservation, e-mail Martha Graham at mgr8040@verizon.net or call (757) 898-8040 (e-mail much preferred). Participants must be 18 years or older. To ensure you get the date you prefer, it is wise to book early.

NOTE: As of mid-February, many weekend days are completely full but some still have limited space. There's still plenty of space on many weekdays, especially if you can be flexible about dates. It's wise to include a second choice.

CANOE DONATED TO FODR

We wish to extend a special THANK YOU to John and Bill Schwartz who donated a Kevlar Mohawk Canoe to Friends of Dragon Run. The boat needed some repairs, which Bob Hancock kindly performed, and now the craft will serve as a work boat and an extra means of ferrying folks to Big Island when the occasion arises. We are most appreciative of the Schwartzs' generosity.

Demolition Day on Dragon Farms Property



Nine FODR members spent several hours February 2 working to remove an old camper unit from our recently acquired property. We made significant progress but will have to return and complete the job another day. Thanks to Jed Dolan, Gary Driscoll, Tom Gregory, Adrienne Frank, John Jensen, Teta Kain, Lynn Kinard, Jim Pettyjohn and Davis Rhodes.

Several times, usually during the winter months, we meet on one of our preserves to perform stewardship tasks, clearing trails and roads, installing trail markers, removing undesirable items, installing gates, and enjoying a day in the woods along the Dragon with great folks. If you would like to be added to the announcement list for these outings, send your email address to Tom Gregory at rivahbiker@gmail.com.

Service Award to Hugh Markham



Congratulations to Hugh Markham as he was given a **Jimmy Morgan Service Award** for his generous donation of time and effort as FODR's "Trash Czar". He has led FODR's trash collection effort for over 10 years. Four times a year, Hugh leads trash collection at 3 intersections that cross the Dragon.

The next Trash Collection Day is Saturday, March 2 at 9 AM. Meet in the parking lot of Rappahannock Comm. College in Glens. For more info contact Hugh Markham at

hmarkham@crosslink.net

Land Campaign Update

In just a few short months and as a result of the generous support of our members, FODR has raised almost 75% of the funds needed to cover the costs of the property purchase. In November, a board committee mailed letters to FODR members requesting help with the purchase of the 5-acre parcel in Dragon Run Farms. By February, nearly 100 members had contributed. This wonderful support demonstrates the commitment and generosity of our members. Thank you to all!

If you have not contributed and would like to, please send a tax-deductible contribution to: Friends of Dragon Run (FODR), P.O Box 882, Gloucester, VA 23061

MEET THE NEW FODR BOARD MEMBERS

In November five new members were elected to the Board of Directors. We asked them to compose a paragraph or two about themselves. Here are their biographical sketches in their own words:

DAVID HENDERSON

I grew up outside of Boston, where it is very cold for very long - the main reason I now live south of the Mason-Dixon Line. After many years living in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, I landed in Washington, DC to go to grad school and ended up staying for 22 years before moving to Tappahannock in 2007.

My varied careers include foreign language teacher, international tax economist, and software designer for the managed care industry. I retired in 2009 and now spend my time cooking, gardening, and taking care of my historic property, "Little Egypt", where I had the privilege to reside.

I had heard about The Dragon from the time I first came to Essex County. I fell in love with The Dragon the very first time I paddled it. I am excited to have been accepted onto the Board and am looking forward to getting to learn more about FODR operations and becoming involved in its varied activities.

BEVERLY MACY

In my previous life I spent a little over 25 years as a police officer. I retired from the Virginia State Police as a Senior Trooper on June 1, 2012. The last 15 years my concentration and efforts were focused primarily on transportation related issues concerning hazardous materials, and enforcing laws and regulations mandated by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

I enjoy camping and outdoor activities. I am in my element when fresh air and water surrounds me! I am looking forward to pursuing personal interests which include humanitarian related volunteer work as I navigate this thing called retirement.

DARBIE MCCUBBIN

I moved from New Jersey to Mathews with my husband, Lex, two years ago. Lex and I met about 35 years ago as graduate students at VIMS. We have three grown sons who live in NJ, NY, and CA. I received my undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of Rhode Island, a masters in Biology from William and Mary and a PhD in Microbiology from University of Georgia.

I spent 17 years in Buffalo, NY doing cancer research and teaching, and 11 years in NJ doing clinical research for a pharmaceutical company. I currently work as an independent pharmaceutical consultant. I enjoy a variety of outdoor activities including running, biking, hiking, swimming, kayaking and gardening. I learned about Dragon Run while researching places to kayak locally and decided to get involved with FODR after participating in one of Teta's kayak trips on the Dragon.

BRUCE PULLY

I was born in Richmond, VA and raised in Fredericksburg. I attended W&M for 2.5 years and then entered the workforce. Worked for several years before finding a real job with Mercedes Benz of N. America. Then went to work for Anheuser-Busch from which I retired from in 2008.

I've been a runner for over thirty years and added triathlons five years ago. Backpacking is great fun and I've hiked the Appalachian Trail from Springer Mountain to Harpers Ferry including parts of NJ, New York, and Vermont. Hiking the Colorado Trail was a wonderful experience and a three week trip backpacking just below the Article Circle was the adventure of a lifetime.

I've always been an avid outdoors person and now that I'm retired would like to do something to preserve and promote the outdoors for our children. This spring I did the kayak trip led by Teta and found where I could do something positive for the environment locally by joining FODR.

BRENT SLAUGHTER

I grew up in Christiansburg, VA, lived near Farmville VA after graduating from Virginia Tech, and later moved to Gloucester. So I've had the opportunity to live in all three of Virginia's geographic zones. I graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Materials Engineering and currently work at Canon as product engineer. During my off hours, I enjoy reading, bird watching, and photography (especially wildlife and macro photography). While still in Farmville, I was introduced to Dragon Run by Teta's presentation to our bird club. Once my wife and I moved to Gloucester, we saw a notice about the Friends of Dragon Run in the newspaper and joined as another way to get involved in enjoying and protecting natural areas.

2012 Annual Meeting

The Friends of Dragon Run Annual Meeting was held on Wednesday, November 14 at the Gloucester Library. More than 30 members attended the meeting. FODR business and the election of new board members and officers was completed following refreshments and conversation. Then we moved on to a very enjoyable program with several founding members leading reminiscences about the early days of FODR.

Presenting members included (from left) Ed Haile, Grant Ballard, Lorna Wass, Ben Garrett, Jerry Stokes, Kearfott Stone and David Teagle. Each had interesting stories and warm memories of FODR's early days.



Jerry Stokes asked Jimmy Morgan if he could raise enough money to purchase the property. Jimmy answered "yes" and lined up the funds.

Next the land had to be surveyed. Ed Haile worked for a survey firm and arranged for the survey to be done at no cost. Every weekend, Ed, Jerry (most of the time) and Jimmy (when he could) worked on the survey. In the winter they had to break through the ice with paddles and in the summer they fought the heat and deer flies. After more than a year the Big Island Platt was complete.

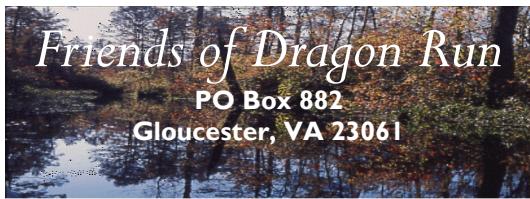
The next step was to get organized and the first meeting was held in the Bank of Gloucester Annex Building. Fourteen or fifteen people attended. Later, founding members met in the Presbyterian Church.

It was apparent by the memories shared and the comments of many others, that FODR has always been a very special organization with a strong commitment to preserving the Dragon.

Founding Members were: U. Grant Ballard, Jr.; Hal D. Borque; Raymond S. Brown, MD; Omer (Buddy) G. Brunette; Henry (Tex) A. Cathey, DDS; Robert T. Davis, MD; Charles (Chuck) S. Dawson; Hugh C. Dischinger; Harry E. Dunn; Ben C. Garrett III; Edward W. Haile; William S. Harwood; Brent C. Heath; John B. Kimberly III; William John Matheson; William E. Moore; William E. Moorman, Jr.; Harvey B. Morgan; James V. Morgan; David W. Muffleman, MD; A. James Phillips; Willard R. Rilee; Selden Davis Rhodes; Sam R. Stanford, Jr., MD; Kearfott M. Stone, MD; David H. Teagle; Marvin L. Wass; & George A. Zahn, Jr.

Important Contacts

S. Davis Rhodes	President	(757) 484-9522	s.d.rhodes@verizon.net
Adrienne Frank	Treasurer	(757) 566-4009	adrienne-gary@cox.net
Mark Chittenden	Immediate Past President	(804) 642-6060	markc@vims.edu
Tom Gregory	Property Manager	(804) 462-5608	Dragonswamp@kaballero.com
Teta Kain	Paddlemaster	(804) 693-5246	tkdragonrun7@gmail.com
Hugh Markham	Roadside Trash Pick Up		hmarkham@crosslink.net



www.dragonrun.org



Have a Change of Address? Just send to FODR, PO Box 882, Gloucester, VA 23061

FODR Activities for 2013



February

25 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC
28 General Meeting*, Gloucester Lib.

March

2 Highway Trash Pickup
16 Property Outing
25 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC

April

6 Paddle Season Begins
6 Daffodil Festival
22 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC
24 Newsletter Deadline

May

5 Paddle Season Ends
11 Kayak Cleanup
15 General Meeting*, Gloucester Lib.
18 Highway Trash Pickup
20 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC

August

26 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC
28 Newsletter Deadline

September

7 Market Days
18 General Meeting*, Gloucester Lib.
21 Highway Trash Pickup
23 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC
28 Fall Picnic

October

5 Crab Carnival
12 Dragon Run Day
23 Newsletter Deadline
28 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC

November

2 Oyster Festival
13 Annual Meeting, Gloucester Library**
16 Highway Trash Pickup
28 Thanksgiving

December

2 Annual Planning Meeting, Saluda MPPDC

* General Meetings begin at 7 PM for refreshments & conversation; followed by a program at 7:30PM.

** Annual Meeting begins at 7 PM for refreshments & conversation; followed by a business meeting & program at 7:30 PM.