



The Dragon's Tale

Friends of Dragon Run
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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 the Dragon Run and its watershed.

Summer Paddle Season

Registration opens July 1 at DragonRun.org

Based on the positive responses to the survey and our request for volunteers, the FODR Board of Directors has approved a short summer paddle season during mid-July 2020. Based on CDC and Virginia government guidelines, we will implement special precautions in response to COVID-19. So, many things about this paddle will be quite different from past paddles.

Dates: July 10-13, 17-20, 24-27. If there is sufficient demand, we will consider adding two Thursdays, July 16 and 23.

Masks required: Face coverings and social distancing for all crew and guests will be required at all times while on land and during launch and take-out. If you are not willing or able to wear a mask, please do not make a reservation.

Limited group size: 6 guests maximum

Different route: We will use a round trip paddle course so we will not have to carpool guests and crew to where they left their cars. Guests will drive to and we will launch from private property on the Dragon. We will paddle downstream for about 1.5 hours just past the new eagles nest, then turn around and paddle upstream for about 1.5 hours. We will take out at the same place we launched from. This paddle will be a bit more strenuous than previous routes.

Different start time: Guests will arrive at the launch/takeout by 8:15 a.m. and we will be on the water by 9:00 a.m. This will help us avoid the hottest part of the day.

Sanitizing Equipment: Prior to each paddle, the kayaks, paddles and life vests will be sanitized. The porta-potties will be sprayed with a sanitizing solution.

Continued on page 6

Inside this issue:

<i>President's Note</i>	2
<i>Spring Trail Maintenance</i>	3
<i>FODR's Newest Board Member: Meo Curtis</i>	3
<i>John Jensen resigns from FODR Board</i>	3
<i>Virtual Tours of the Dragon</i>	4
<i>Springtime in the Dragon</i>	4
<i>Dragon Run in the Media</i>	5

Update your summer wardrobe!

Pick up a cool hat and some cotton tees for the hot weather. And, don't forget our long-sleeve, SPF shirts to keep you safe when you're on the water. All summer essentials proudly display the Dragon Run logo on the front and the iconic bald cypress tree on the back!

Visit DragonRun.org/shop.



President's Note



A Hopeful Year for FODR

In March, FODR cancelled all activities through the end of June, including the 2020 Spring Paddle Season, because of COVID-19. We had an unexpected outpouring of sympathy and disappointment from those who had made reservations and donations. So, we went to work on how we could offer some paddle trips this summer. The responses to our survey and our Facebook posts asking members and others about their interest in paddling the Dragon in July were overwhelmingly positive. So, we are happy to announce that we will hold a short paddle season beginning in mid-July. Look for details on page 1. Details are posted on our website; click "Paddle Trip Info."

NOTE: Please help us comply with Governor Northam's COVID 19 rules. Paddlers must wear a mask at all times on land and during launch and take out. If you are not willing to wear a mask, please don't make a reservation. Anyone who refuses to wear a mask on the day of the paddle will not be allowed to paddle and your donation will be refunded.

Thank you to our generous donors

Our disappointed paddlers with spring season reservations responded with generosity. Many of them opted to let FODR keep their donations and became FODR members (or renewed their membership). Many decided to help us attract a matching gift offer from a few generous donors and added their donations to an endowment fund that the FODR Board is designating to support land management. We are grateful for these gifts, which total \$6,000, including \$1,450 for the endowment fund. You will hear more as we launch a fundraising campaign for the endowment fund, hoping to reach the \$10,000 threshold required to release another \$6,000 in the challenge grant.

September Members Meeting

We are working on ways to further engage our members and others while the size of our gatherings is limited. We plan to host a virtual gathering for our September member meeting and we will send you an update as soon as we know more.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all cope with changes brought on by Covid-19. And, thank you for supporting Friends of Dragon Run. Stay safe; we look forward to seeing you on a small-group paddle or in our virtual September members meeting.

Spring Trail Maintenance



During the 2020 spring, several teams went out and cleaned and repaired trails at Dragon Run properties. Tom and Christine Cramer, Adrienne Frank and Gary Driscoll, Teta Kaine, John Jensen, Kevin Howe, Davis Rhodes, Jack and Carol Kauffman, and Anne Atkins all participated in one or more of the trail cleaning

days at Big Island, Ware's Bridge, and Mascot.

Above: Gary Driscoll checks a prothonotary warbler nest box

FODR's Newest Board Member Meo Curtis

Meo Curtis grew up in Williamsburg, VA, attended the College of William and Mary, and then moved north to Delaware and Maryland. She spent more than 30 years working on water quality issues and environmental outreach, beginning as a member of Maryland's first monitoring team for the Chesapeake Bay agreement.

Meo tends to think in terms of watersheds; so this summer, she is living in the Rappahannock watershed in Dunnsville, VA. Meo has been a member of FODR for several years and recently became a lifetime member. She has served on the paddle crew and also as a property monitor. Meo is excited about the opportunity to help protect Dragon Run, although sorry that her property monitor mentor, John Jensen, is leaving the Board.

Meo was appointed to serve the remainder of John's term until December 31, 2020.

John Jensen Resigns from FODR Board

It is with regret that we acknowledge John Jensen's departure from the Board of Directors of Friends of Dragon Run, effective in June, 2020. He also departs from his role as FODR's Property Manager.

John has been active in FODR for more than 20 years, serving on many paddle crews, leading our property monitors, interfacing with the Department of Forestry on all matters relating to land management, scheduling and leading workdays on trails -- on our lands and on the Dragon, and working with Robert Gibson's estate so that FODR can continue to access Robert's farm as the takeout for our fall paddle seasons.

Most of us have had many opportunities to observe John wield his "magic chainsaw" in complete amazement. When clearing a path for our kayaks, John often appears to walk on water as he cuts very large tree trunks and limbs that have fallen across the Dragon, making a great plume of water and sawdust as the blade of his chainsaw goes underwater and slices the tree like a knife through butter. For these and many other reasons, John will be sorely missed.

We wish him well as he pursues more travel opportunities with his wife, Betty.

Virtual Tours of the Dragon

Although Friends of Dragon Run had to cancel the Spring 2020 paddle season because of the COVID-19 pandemic, members and paddlers could visit the Dragon virtually. We posted videos (edited by Jeff Wright) of feather foil in bloom, bald cypress trees as they leafed out, spatterdock in bloom, the bald eagle's nest and this year's chick. We even included footage of Teta Kain as she wracked her brain to identify a bird call. We plan to continue posting videos so everyone can visit the Dragon and to show the Dragon at various times of year. Look for the videos on our website (Dragonrun.org) or our Facebook page.



Springtime in the Dragon



The flowers of the wild azalea exude a delicate fragrance and usually appear before the leaves.
Photo by Adrienne Frank



The may apple has only two leaves and a single apple-like flower beneath the leaves. Leaves, roots, and seeds are toxic; however, Native Americans used the roots as a cathartic.
Photo by Adrienne Frank



Blood root is named for the acrid red-orange juice in the roots and stalk. The juice was used by Native Americans as a dye for baskets, clothing, war paint, and as an insect repellent.
Photo by Adrienne Frank



Some of the bald cypress in the Dragon are probably hundreds of years old, and the biggest of them all, located near Big Island, is approximately 1,300 years old.
Photo by Anne Atkins



Much of featherfoil's habitat has been lost due to development, draining of wetlands, and the historical harvest of beavers. With the re-establishment of beavers, there is hope for its re-establishment. However, Virginia classifies it as vulnerable while other states classify it as imperiled, critically imperiled, or presumed extirpated.
Photo by Janice Moore



Native Americans and early settlers used spatterdock for food and medicine. Seeds were eaten; they can be popped like popcorn, or dried and stored, or ground into flour which was used to make gruel and thicken soup. Young leaves could be added to soups and the flowers used to make tea.
Photo by Anne Atkins

Dragon Run in the Media

Dragon Run was featured in a story in the May 2020 issue of *Chesapeake Bay Magazine*. The article, written by Danny White, Nature Conservancy (TNC) Senior Conservation Writer, traces Teta Kain's legacy from her first forays into the Dragon for birding to her decades long role as paddle organizer and premier guide to the Dragon. Andy Lacatell, TNC Chesapeake Bay Director, also featured in the story, has been instrumental in the TNC's acquisition of property in the Dragon and as a partner with Friends of Dragon Run. The story reached 40,000 readers living throughout the mid-Atlantic. You can read it at <http://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/paddling-the-dragon/?src=e.gpn.eg.x.loc.May2020.Virginia>

Dragon Run was also the topic of a story written by Anita Angelone, Communications Specialist for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), and posted on their website in early May. Angelone's story recounts how Jimmy Morgan raised the funds to purchase the Big Island parcel which led to creation of Friends of Dragon Run, Inc. The article notes that approximately 23% of the 90,000-acre Dragon Run watershed is protected by conservation easements held by VOF, TNC or both. The Virginia Department of Forestry owns and manages the 10,000-acre Dragon Run State Forest and FODR owns and manages 617 acres. You can read this article at <https://www.vof.org/?s=dragon+run>

Dragon Run Officers and Directors

Janice Moore	President	PO Box 247, Deltaville, VA 23043	703-217-0610	jrmooore27@gmail.com
Jeff Wright	Vice President	PO Box 564, Ophelia, VA 22530	703-801-0239	pec11908@mac.com
Adrienne Frank	Secretary	114 Crescent Dr. Williamsburg, VA 23188-1044	757-566-4009	adrienne-gary@cox.net
Kevin Howe	Treasurer	379 Waterbury Rd., Kilmarnock, VA 22482	571-232-4592	
Anne Atkins	2020	P. O. Box 26, Millers Tavern, VA 23115	H 804-502-8262	annecatkins@yahoo.com
Marsha Carlton	2020		832-661-5783	carltonhouse80@gmail.com
Meo Curtis	2020	P. O. Box 1068, Dunnsville, VA 22454	301-891-9174	Meosotis58@verizon.net
Anne Ducey-Ortiz	2021	389 Wading Creek Rd., Dutton, VA 23050	804-725-1259	aduceyortiz@earthlink.net
Katie Hawks	2020	P. O. Box 1615, Warsaw, VA 22572	804-313-7501	khawks@lanklegal.com
Teta Kain	2020	7083 Caffee Creek Rd., Gloucester, VA 23061	804-693-5246	tkadragonrun7@gmail.com
Carol Kauffman	2021	7089 Caffee Creek Rd., Gloucester, VA 23061	267-733-3667	Vegan4peace3@comcast.net
David Milby	2020	P.O. Box 362, Saluda, VA 23149	C 804-370-7559 W 804-966-5092	david.milby@dof.virginia.gov
S. Davis Rhodes	2020	3004 Luxford Court, Chesapeake, VA 23321-5760	757-484-9522	s.d.rhodes@verizon.net

Summer Paddle Season *(Continued from page 1)*

Social distancing: To comply with social distancing requirements, guests will be asked to move between marked stations in staggered fashion to get fitted with vests, kayaks, and other equipment. On the water, the smaller group size and different route will allow us to avoid tight clusters, and we will pass through only a few gated beaver dams.

No Radios: We will not use individual radios, headsets, or earpieces.

No lunch break: We won't stop for an extended lunch break, but we will take several short breaks to hydrate. Be sure to bring plenty of water and snacks.

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