



The *Dragon's Tale*

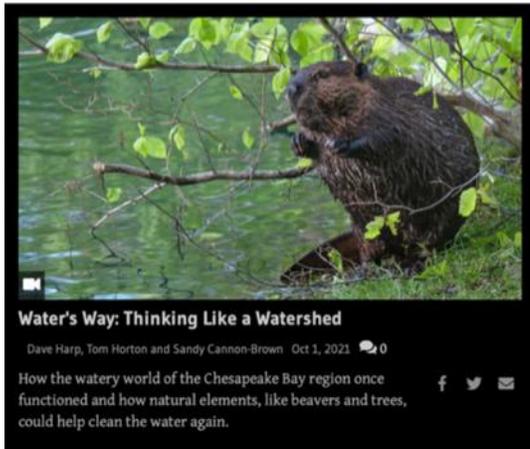
Friends of Dragon Run
P. O. Box 882
Gloucester, VA 23061

Volume XL
Number V
November 2021

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.

New Film *Water's Way: Thinking like a Watershed* Will Be Shown at November 17 General Meeting

Don't miss the showing of *Water's Way: Thinking Like a Watershed* at the FODR Annual Meeting on November 17. This just-released video by Bay Journal Films about our beloved Chesapeake Bay and its watershed will be followed by a Q&A session with one of the creators of the film – **Tom Horton**.



Pictured is one of the stars of the film and one of the key species in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Tom Horton, nationally prominent author and journalist will be our guest for the screening and will take your questions. The film discusses the beaver's potential role

in reshaping the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This is an exceptional film about the state of our land and water and some measures that may help protect all that we love.

Tom Horton is a champion of the Chesapeake Bay and a chronicler of the environmental issues we face. Journalist and author Rafael Alvarez noted in a 2020 *Chesapeake Bay Magazine* article entitled, "Natural Resource,"

In a journalism career nearing 50 years, Tom Horton has published eight books of non-fiction, covering subjects from Smith Island to tundra swans; made a handful of short films about the great outdoors; and

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General Meeting November 17 Election of Board of Directors to Be Held

FODR's annual General Meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on November 17 via zoom. (See page 2 for instructions on using zoom.) This annual meeting is one of the most important of the year. FODR members will vote on directors and officers for FODR's Board of Directors. Officers serve a one-year term and directors serve for two years. Both officers and directors can serve multiple terms.

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President's Message

Jeff Wright



FODR is in the early stages of planning for 2022. Big picture concepts are for three paddle seasons again, opportunities for paddle trips for students in some of the area schools,

continuing to strengthen the success of our property monitor program, building on our work to protect the Dragon and the amazing species diversity it supports, additional conservation and citizen science initiatives, and to offer more recreational and educational activities for FODR members. Being outside is great. Being outside with colleagues and friends is even better. The FODR board is developing ideas to put more smiles on more member and guest faces in 2022. If you have ideas for additional activities in 2022, please contact me at presidentdragonrun@gmail.com.

On my personal bucket list for 2022, is gathering a group of members and paddling/wading out to the Big Bald Cypress—the tree pictured on FODR t-shirts—and re-measuring it. We last measured this tree in 2019 and determined that it was 110 feet high with a circumference of 23 feet. My bet is that this ancient tree may have added a few inches to its waistline. Sound familiar? Though we do not know the tree's age we estimate that it is older than the combined ages of the FODR Board members. It certainly has seen a lot and has so many stories to tell—if only we could hear them.

The fall paddle season got off to a great start on October 21 and ran until November 7. Great guests, full paddle trips, and truly outstanding things to see on the Dragon Run. We added a new segment to the fall paddle route creating a trip approximately three miles long. We initially paddled upstream from Big Island, then headed down stream for more than a mile before turning around and paddling back upstream to Big Island. The beavers even provided six dams to help compensate for below average rainfall in early October. Winterberry, bald eagles, bald cypress, and a few balding crew members were frequently seen! A big thank you to the many FODR members who helped

plan and operate the fall paddle season. And thank you to our fall paddle guests who joined us on these trips.

Best of the season and Dragon Run to all!

How to Zoom

Our November General meeting will be held virtually using Zoom. To join using your computer, just click the link below and it will take you into the meeting. If you prefer to join by telephone, dial one of the numbers listed below. You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID and password listed below.

Topic: FODR General Meeting

Time: November 17, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82977672089?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82977672089?pwd=REdZTkplV2RDVpY0pXbCthMnpsUT09)

[pwd=REdZTkplV2RDVpY0pXbCthMnpsUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82977672089?pwd=REdZTkplV2RDVpY0pXbCthMnpsUT09)

Meeting ID: 829 7767 2089

Passcode: 893226

One tap mobile

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+16465588656,,82977672089#,,,,*893226# 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: 829 7767 2089

Passcode: 893226

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82977672089?pwd=REdZTkplV2RDVpY0pXbCthMnpsUT09>

Election of Board of Directors to Be Held November 17

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A nominating committee was named this summer. The five committee members are Kevin Howe, Chairperson, Meo Curtis, Jack Kauffman, Molly Broderson, and Debbie Rollins.

The following officers and directors are up for election.

Jeff Wright, President. Jeff, formerly the Vice President, assumed the President position in August when Janice Moore resigned as President. Jeff, a FODR Life Member, has also been the Paddle Master for several years, a paddle tour guide, crew trainer and a property monitor. As President he will oversee FODR operating, planning, financial activities, and actions to preserve and protect the Dragon and FODR lands, provide educational and recreational activities for our members, and chair the FODR Board of Directors.



Carol Kauffman, was enthralled by the beauty of the flora and fauna when she first experienced Dragon Run in fall 2018. She joined FODR shortly after and has been a member of the paddle crew ever since. In January 2020, Carol became a FODR Board member and coordinated the Youth Paddle Program.

She is a Middle Peninsula Master Naturalist, serves on the FODR Business Process Improvement Committee, and in September she took on the role of FODR Vice President. Carol is also serving as co-Paddle Master for the 2021 fall paddle season.

Adrienne Frank, currently serves as Secretary. In the past, she served as Treasurer, Secretary, and Fundraising Chair. Other contributions included developing the “Flora and Fauna” brochure. She has been on the Board since 2001 and participates on the paddle crew. She is a Life Member of FODR and in the Williamsburg area she serves on the Master Naturalist’s and Virginia Native Plant Society’s boards of directors.

Kevin Howe has served on the Board for three years and currently is Treasurer. He is a retired Aquatic Ecologist and is active in training FODR paddle crew members and serves as a paddle tour guide for our paddle trips. He lives in the Northern Neck where he kayaks, bikes, hikes, and photographs the natural world. He is active with Audubon, Virginia Native Plant Society, Virginia Master Naturalists, Northern



Neck Land Conservancy and, of course, Friends of Dragon Run.

New Board members pictured above clockwise from top left: Andrea Mitman, Jack Kauffman, Carol Kauffman, Molly Broderson, Art Gilbert

Anne Atkins, a Life Member, went on her first paddle trip on a cold, rainy day in spring 2015. She realized that she would get to paddle more often if she volunteered as a paddle guide and could spend even more time in the Dragon if she volunteered for logistics. She joined the Board in 2018. She served on the Membership Committee and for a short stint as Treasurer. She recently has taken over FODR communications, serves as a member of the Stewardship Committee, chairs the Business Process Improvement Committee, and is property monitor for the Bulman property. She is also a certified Northern Neck Master Naturalist.

Molly Broderson, FODR Board member from 2015 to 2017, left the Board due to family health issues. She's looking forward to becoming an active member again. "My love for the Dragon Run paddling experience occurred somewhere around the time the Internet became a go-to-source for information. The date is not as important to me as the magical experience of 'paddlin' the Dragon with Teta Kain serving as paddle leader. I still feel those same chill bumps each time I am lucky enough to paddle it."

Anne Ducey-Ortiz has been a member of FODR since moving to Virginia in 2000. She joined the Board in 2004. She served as Secretary from 2005 to 2009 and represented FODR on the Middle Peninsula Land Trust during most of that time. Anne took a few years off when she became the Planning Director for Gloucester County but continued to help with the paddle trips and to attend the annual meetings and picnics. She missed being more involved and went back on the Board in 2014 serving as Vice President for one year and then as Secretary again until 2017. She currently serves as Membership Chair and is a property monitor for the Kostyal property.

Professionally, Anne served on the Dragon Run Steering Committee and on the steering committee for the Dragon Run Special Area Management Plan and continues to ensure that the Dragon Run watershed is recognized in Gloucester County's Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents.

Art Gilbert is new to the FODR board this year and is in his third year as a paddle crew member. He is a Certified Master Naturalist and board member of River Counties Community Foundation. Art lives in Burgess, Virginia.

Jack Kauffman fell in love with the Dragon after a paddle trip led by Teta Kain in fall 2018. He joined FODR after the trip and has volunteered as part of the crew and logistic teams for all the subsequent paddle seasons. Jack is a member of the Stewardship Committee and is sharing the paddle master duties for the fall 2021 paddle season. He joined the Board in September. He is also a certified Master Naturalist with the Middle Peninsula chapter.

Andrea Mitman is a current board member of Friends of Dragon Run. She grew up in Indiana where she received her B.S. from Indiana University Bloomington. After a two-year stint in the Peace Corps in the Philippines she graduated from the Medical College of Virginia School of Dentistry and had a private practice in Aylett, Virginia for 31 years. Her first paddle down the Dragon was in spring 2017. She became a Life Member in 2018 and currently volunteers as a crew member.

Harvey Morgan, pharmacist, former legislator, and FODR founding member, joined FODR's Board of Directors in spring 2021 when he agreed to serve for the remainder of Teta Kain's term. He is a native of Gloucester and explored Dragon Run with friends long before FODR was founded.

Davis Rhodes, a Founding Member of FODR, has been active in its activities since its formation. He has served as Chairman of the Board, as Treasurer for ten years, and as President for several terms. He served on paddle crews for many years, and has served as the Emergency Services Coordinator and Logistics Manager since 2015. He was responsible for the acquisition of the container used for kayak storage, and outfitted it with kayak and paddle racks for efficient storage of FODR equipment. He currently serves as a property monitor for the Morgan Tract.

Fall Paddle Season

This year's fall paddle season got off to a running start. Reservations opened on September 1 and all 144 seats sold out in just two days. Additional days were added and they also sold out quickly.

About a month before paddle season began, a small work group went into the Dragon to prepare for paddle season. On the first trip, the work group scouted the Dragon for possible new routes, obstructions in the channel, and beaver dams that needed gates. We hoped to find a route further



Jack Kauffman gets ready to install a beaver gate.

upstream from Big Island, but two massive trees blocked the channel. A few days later, Jack Kauffman and John Jensen removed the trees using a chain saw. One of the trees was

submerged and took five hours to cut and push out of the way. The second tree was larger than the first, but because it was not submerged, John and Jack were able to cut and remove it in just 30 minutes.

With the channel now clear of fallen trees, the work group once again tried to paddle further upstream from Big Island. However, the vegetation, primarily Smartweed or *Polygonum*, was so thick that the channel was impenetrable. Removing the trees did lengthen the upstream route slightly and gives paddlers a view of an open meadow-like area. The work group also placed gates in six beaver dams and trimmed Smartweed and Arrow Arum clogging part of the channel downstream from Big Island.

On October 16 and 17, this year's 24 paddle and logistics crew members went through a three-hour mandatory training program. The training was provided by Jeff Wright and Kevin Howe, both experienced paddle guides. Kevin Howe is an American Canoe Association certified kayak instructor/trainer. The training focused on safety and learning the route.

Crew members paddled the route, learned characteristics of the channel, such as submerged logs or thick vegetation, and practiced opening and closing the beaver gates. The crew members also went over actions to take in an emergency, practiced making 911 calls while guiding EMS personnel to one of two emergency take-out points, and practiced water rescues including getting a disabled guest onto land.



Jeff Deschamps and Andy Brown practice a water rescue with Jeff Wright as an unconscious victim.

Throughout the paddle season we received occasional rain and the water level in the Dragon remained high enough to avoid difficulties. Flow rates remained low making for easy paddling upstream.

The guests have been great and the crew and logistics teams have done an outstanding job. Our paddle tour guides (Jeff Wright and Kevin Howe) have been inspirational. We cancelled just two paddle trips due to heavy rain on October 29.



A creepy swamp visitor showed up unexpectedly on October 31. We see these only at this time of year.

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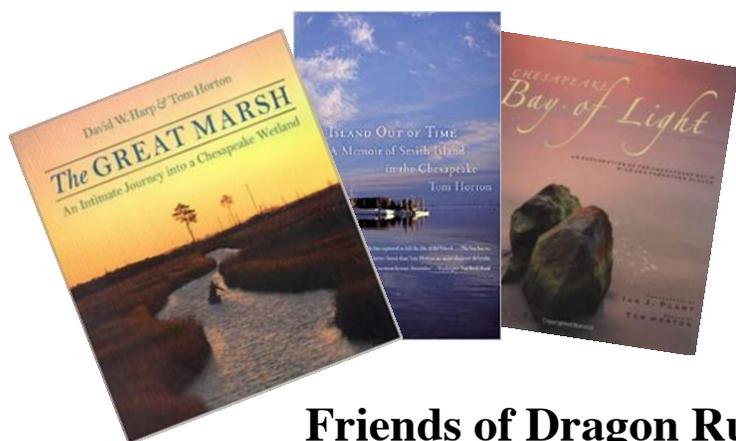
New Film: Water's Way: Thinking Like a Watershed

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reported from the Amazon rainforests, the coral reefs of Australia, and drought-ravaged Sudan.

Horton's many accolades include the somewhat amusing title "Admiral of the Chesapeake" awarded by former governor Martin O'Malley in 2015 for "extraordinary commitment to the conservation and restoration" of the Bay. (<https://chesapeakebaymagazine.com/natural-resource/>)

Tom Horton covered environmental issues for the *Baltimore Sun* from 1974 until 2006. In addition to books about the Chesapeake Bay, he has written for magazines including *National Geographic*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times*, and the *Boston Globe*. Horton also worked for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation for five years as an educator. He teaches writing and environmental studies at Salisbury University in Maryland, and contributes to *Chesapeake Bay Magazine* and the *Bay Journal*



News Service. Tom covers much of his beat in a kayak.

Most importantly he continues to observe, inform, and educate about the natural world and the Chesapeake Bay watershed in particular. He paddles upstream against the current for all of us.

Fall Paddle Season

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Our guests have been supportive of our mission and in just six paddle trips they purchased more than \$1000 of FODR merchandise. Many guests have commented that they wish to help FODR in the future. This indicates that the paddle tour guides' messages and the spirit of our crew and logistics teams are *infectious*, even

though all crew and guests are vaccinated and wearing masks on land. We look forward to Janice Moore, Anne Atkins, and Carol Kauffman stepping in to help Jeff and Kevin as paddle tour guides later in the season. We thank everyone on the crew and logistics teams for all the volunteer hours they contributed to making the fall 2021 paddle season a success! And we thank all the guests for their participation and donations!



"I think I need an extra small PFD."

Friends of Dragon Run Activities Calendar

Month	Day	Time	Event	Location
November	15	7 p.m.	Board meeting	Zoom
	17	7 p.m.	Annual meeting	Zoom
	20	9 a.m.	Trash pickup	RCC Glenss
December	6	7 p.m.	Planning meeting	Zoom

September Trash Pickup Nets 11 Bags of Trash

On September 25, Mark Alling, Trash Czar, and four FODR volunteers Davis Rhodes, Tara Hart, Jack and Carol Kauffman collected trash at the three bridges crossing Dragon Run—Route 17, Mascot, and Ware’s Bridge. They gathered 11 bags of trash weighing nearly 32 pounds. Additionally, the team collected a leaky plastic trash can and lid, a metal barrel top, a huge cardboard box, and three shotgun shells. They also found a bed frame and a child’s sliding board.

The following chart itemizes their finds.

Item Type	#	Item Type	#
Toys	1	Cups, plates	1
Bottle caps— plastic & metal	3	Plastic/foam pieces	70
Bottles— plastic & glass	52	Fishing gear	4
Beverage cans	15	Other packaging/ trash	16
Other tobacco (packaging, lighters)	1	Plastic bags	1
Construction materials	1		
		Total items	165
		Total weight	32 lbs

Mark your calendar now! The next trash pickup will take place **November 20**. We need as many volunteers as possible. We will meet in the parking lot of the Rappahannock Community College—Glenns Campus at 9 a.m.

Remember, every piece of trash we pick up is one less piece that could end up in the Dragon.

Time to Renew

FODR membership runs on a calendar year, beginning January 1 and expiring December 31. Annual membership starts at just \$25. New members who joined FODR this year after June 30, 2021 have a valid membership until December 31, 2022.

Paddle trips and donations provide income that supports our mission to preserve the Dragon Run watershed; the annual membership dues provide a steady income from members to provide for the basic needs of our organization. All Board, committee, paddle, and logistic crew members are volunteers and all the money we receive goes to our mission to be good stewards of our properties, to educate others about Dragon Run, and to continue to preserve this pristine resource.

You can renew your membership online at www.dragonrun.org or by sending your dues to Friends of Dragon Run, P.O. Box 882, Gloucester, VA 23061. Be sure to include your email address and to write legibly so we can ensure we have the correct information in our database. Please include your phone number so we can contact you if we have questions about the information on your renewal form.

Thank you for making a commitment to protect and preserve Dragon Run.

Streamside Attractions

Why Trees Change Color and Birds Migrate

By Kevin Howe

In the last newsletter, I wrote about birds and berries and touched on bird migration. To me, as a naturalist, fall is about looking up—looking up for migrating birds, looking up for the tree colors.

A fall trip down the Dragon is a wonder of nature and a feast for the eyes. The air is cool, the sun is warm and



Heading downstream from Big Island. Notice the yellow-gold of the pawpaw leaves in the foreground.

is in just the right place to make the water sparkle, to make the berries glow, and to make the trees show off their fall colors. Oh, so grand.

Fall tree colors make the fall astonishing. It is a marvel both in sight and science. Most, but not all trees, prepare for the winter cold by shedding their leaves. Winter is harsh and water, if available, is often in the form of ice and can't be used. So as the days get shorter and light diminishes, deciduous trees get ready—they stop making chlorophyll, the green pigment that captures light and converts it into sugar (energy) with a little added chemistry. The green color we see is actually light reflected away from the leaves while blue and red light is absorbed

As the chlorophyll disappears, the other color pigments in the leaves *shine* through and our eyes benefit. Wow that wash of fall colors—scarlet-purple in Dogwoods,

russet-red-brown in oaks, bronze-gold in hickories, bright scarlet in red maples, and orange-tan-cinnamon in bald cypress. The Bald Cypress is one of the few conifers that loses its needles in the fall.

The science is a marvel too. The leaves don't just fall off. The tree prepares for shedding them by having a layer of protective cells grow between the branch and the leaf stem. This stops all flow of water and nutrients to the leaf so the leaves can drop and the scar left by the leaf is protected from the winter cold and ice. That layer of protective cells is called the abscission layer—not a phrase you hear every day, but a great one to pop out at the dinner table.

Many tree stories mention that in fall, the fluid (sap) in deciduous trees drains into the roots—not so! The sap remains in the tree system under nearly the same pressure year-round; it just doesn't flow in the winter. Rarely will it freeze as it contains a natural antifreeze. Isn't that amazing!

While we are looking up at the fall color in the trees, look for the millions of birds that migrate south for the winter. In autumn, birders can see large numbers of birds rarely seen—birds of prey and warblers galore among others. Swallows, hawks, and hummingbirds migrate during the day so they can see their prey on the fly or, in the case of hummers, see their nectar plants.



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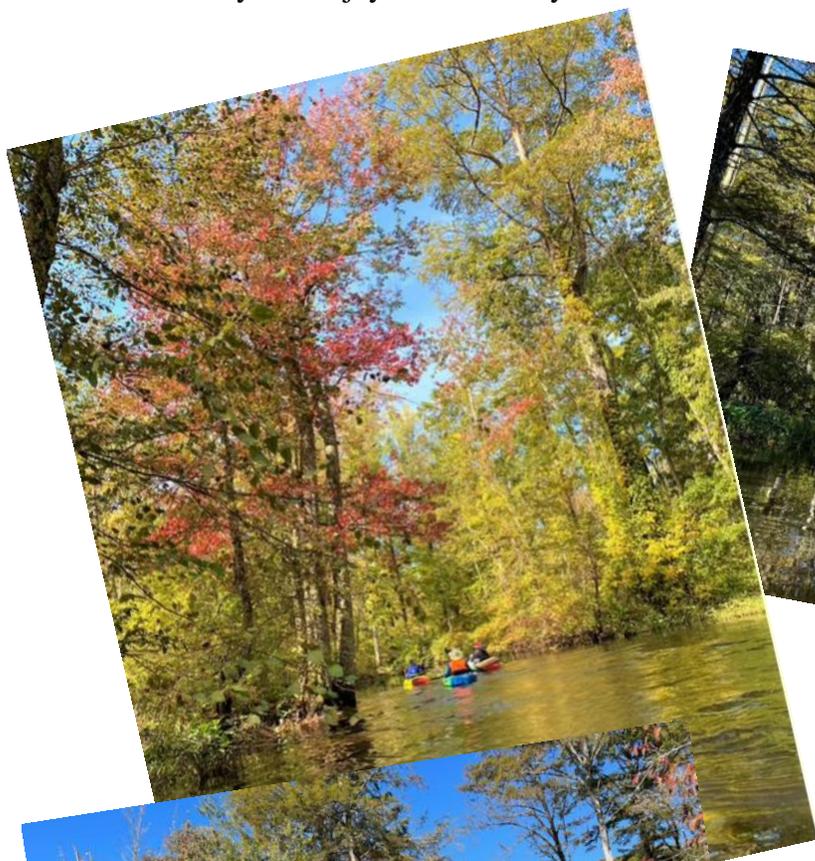
Why Trees Change Color and Birds Migrate

(Continued from page 8)

One question that sometimes comes up is why do birds migrate? Research suggests a simple explanation – energy efficiency. They save energy by flying thousands of miles to a location that is filled with warm-weather food and, in the spring, they migrate back through locations with fresh spring food. Stuck in the north in the winter is a hard life whether you eat seeds or insects. Plus you have lots of competition for the scant resources. But, fly south and have a buffet of tasty regional treats on the way and enjoy a whole array of

abundant foods in the warmer, more tropical climate. Fly back north as the southern heat starts to bake and again get fresh tasty treats on your journey, nice weather, and arrive at a location bursting with bugs and grubs for your young. It is energy efficiency that's responsible for migration.

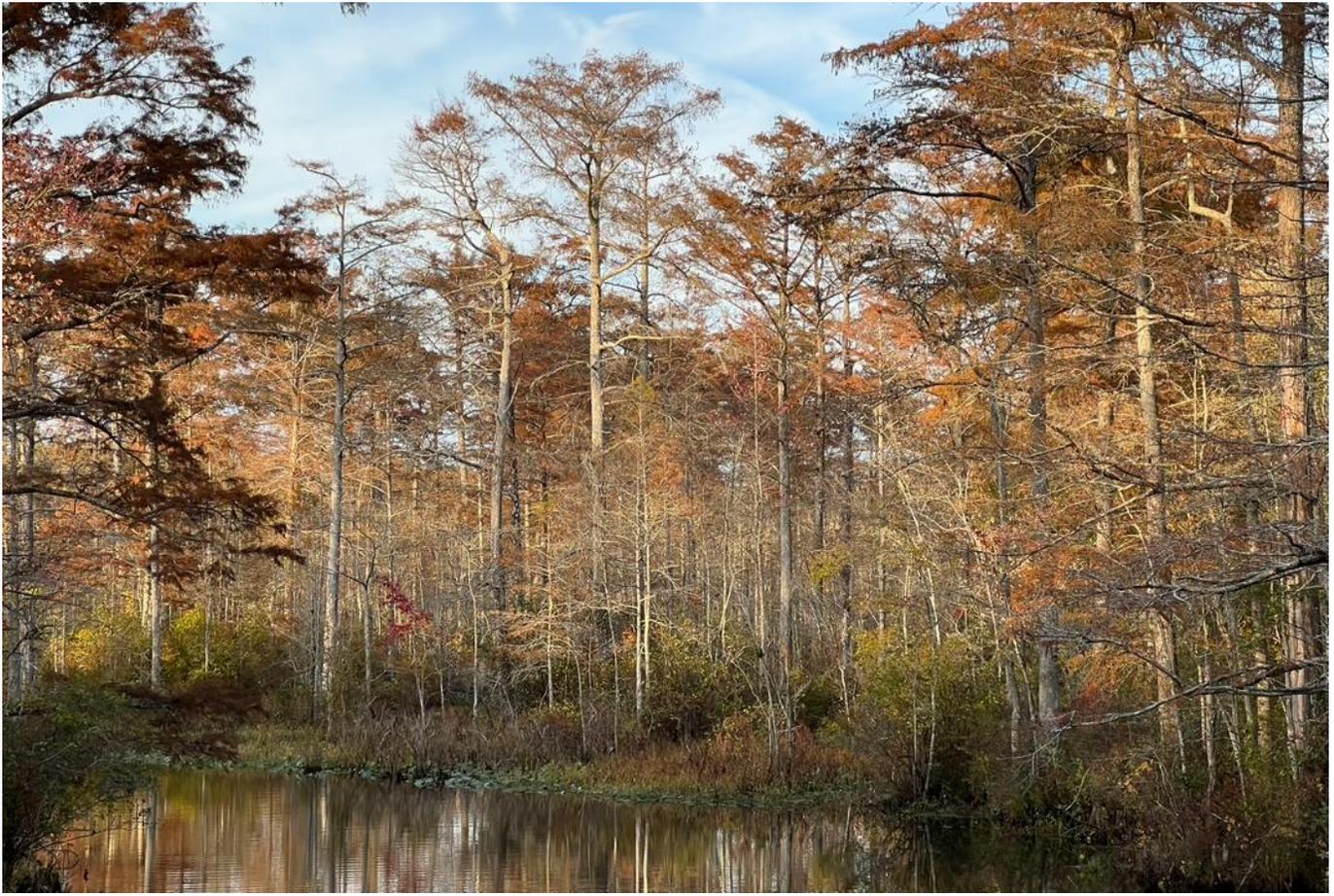
One last note about fall – it is one of the best times of year to look for mushrooms—the fruiting body of fungi—the decomposers of the earth.



Note:

**How We Awoke to the Ecological Significance of
Dragon Run
By Kevin Howe**

Part 2 of this article has been delayed and will be published in the next issue of the *Dragon's Tale*.



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