

# Dragon's Tale

Friends of Dragon Run  
PO Box 882  
Gloucester, VA 23061

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.

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## General Meeting is September 22nd in Gloucester

### President's Message -- Taking Stock after 25

It is now 25+ years since 1985 when Jimmie Morgan formed a group of Middle Peninsula citizens that eventually incorporated in 1991 and formally became Friends of Dragon Run. Briefly described in the April 2011 Dragon's Tale (see article on "Accomplishments"), much has been accomplished since then: growing to some 450+ members, we have acquired 639 acres of land on Dragon Run -- 32 acres near Miller's Tavern, 60 acres at Ware Bridge, 529 acres near Big Island, and 18 acres near Mascot. These "Dragonlands" support many activities besides our core Annual Picnic, activities that have come to focus most intensively, it seems, on the crown jewel of our holdings -- the Dragon itself; except for the Picnic, our land holdings get much less use. On our water access, we have developed much-in-demand guided kayak/canoe trips, primarily in April when there is water, and we have installed wood duck and prothonotary warbler nesting boxes. On our land acreage, besides little-used camping areas, we have developed, mostly at Mascot and near Big Island, a set of walking and nature trails with 250+ posts/plates that identify trees, shrubs, and vines, and we have instituted guided plant/nature walks there. Our lands are well-maintained by monitors and work-parties, and we even conduct

local-highway trash pick-ups. Our well-attended General Meetings have come to feature presentations from expert speakers on "nature" topics such as, most recently, white tail deer, black bear, frogs and toads, butterflies, and bobwhite quail, with wild turkeys coming up. Not a bad record! There is much to be proud of.

But what about the future: what things can/should we do, and what directions might we follow with our now-considerable assets?

Our membership is not stable: we gain and lose new members each year. It is important that gains — *recruitments* — exceed losses so our membership continues to grow. New members increase our dues/contributions base and help support activities like land acquisition and they bring reinvigorating, fresh ideas. So, recruitment is important to our future. We now recruit folks through activities like picnics, paddle trips, nature walks, and general meetings etc., but we should try other ways also; for example, can we not resurrect our now-moribund festival events activities like Daffodil Festival and Dragon Run Days. Are there fresh, new ways to reach out to the public through these events? Do we have any members with new ideas willing to volunteer and try to make these events work? We should not just acquiesce

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**REMINDER:**  
**Roadside Trash Pick Up is Saturday, September 24**  
Meet at 9:00 AM in the parking lot at Rappahannock Community College in Glens. For more information, leader Hugh Markham can be reached at [hmarkham@crosslink.net](mailto:hmarkham@crosslink.net)

*Ever Save a Dragon?*

## President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

to the idea that events-activities are not useful, if only because they can inform the public about us and lead to other things.

Our outreach activities should also have an educational impact on society, not just a "what's in it for FODR" aspect. We have a remarkable base of camping areas, paddle trips, trails, plant posts etc. Could we not try to attract young kids to enjoy nature by using our lands through the Cub/Boy/Girl Scouts, high school and college biology classes etc. as we apparently once did? Doing so, we might stimulate them to enjoy nature thereafter; some might go into conservation careers and maybe become future leaders therein. Have we any members, like former scouts, willing to volunteer and lead efforts like these?

And finally, are there other outlets to make membership even more attractive, or increase participation. For example, we have no Friends-wide event in the Spring like our Picnic in the Fall. Could we not try a one-day Open House at the Revere Tract, for members only, to let them walk our trails and look at plants, birds etc.?

If you have ideas on things to do, email me or another Board Member. Consider volunteering to serve in some capacity, for example, on the Board of Directors or our Committees. We need volunteers! Some exciting activities, like paddle trips, attract many volunteers. But less-exciting "nuts and bolts" things are also very important, like our Picnic or General Meeting Refreshments Committees.

*Mark Chittenden*

## General Meeting Thursday September 22, Gloucester Library

A General Meeting of Friends of Dragon Run will be held on Thursday, 22 September 2011 in the Community Room of the Gloucester County Library, located in the Main Street Shopping Center on Business Rt. 17 (Main Street) at the southern edge of Gloucester Courthouse. A social will begin at 7 PM, followed by a short business meeting and the program.



Our guest speaker will be Mr. Todd Engelmeyer, a Wildlife Biologist with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) in Region I, basically the Tidewater area from North Carolina to the Rappahannock River. He will speak on "Ecology and Management of Wild Turkeys, Past and Present Issues". Todd received a BA in Biology in 1993 from

Christopher Newport University (CNU) and an MS in Biology in 2002, also from CNU. His MS Thesis was on the "Ecology of Wild Turkey".

Todd has some 20+ years of experience in Wildlife Biology and Wildlife Management, including work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Army, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and more than 12 years with VDGIF. His most recent work has primarily been on Whitetail Deer population control and Black Duck survival.

*Mark Chittenden*



*Henry Engelmeyer, son of Todd Engelmeyer*

## Tree/Woody Plant Walk on 17 September 2011

*Mark Chittenden*

A Tree/Woody Plant Walk will be held on Saturday, 17 September along the new FODR nature trails/roads at Mascot and/or the Revere Tract. Meet at 9:30 AM at the Food Lion parking lot on Route 17 about one mile north of the Hardee's at Saluda. Please email me at [markc@vims.edu](mailto:markc@vims.edu) or call at 804-642-6060 to let me know you plan to attend.

## Welcome New *Dragon's Tale* Editor, Annick Ensley!

Born and raised in Nice, France, Annick came to the USA in 1970. She was married in 1976 and moved to King and



Queen County in 1980. She and husband, Art, have lived in Mascot on the Dragon Run since. They joined Friends of Dragon Run in 2006 out of a sense of duty, "To do all we could to help preserve the pristine Dragon."

Annick was employed at the Paper Mill in West Point as Laboratory Supervisor until recently and is now seeking new job opportunities. She has served on the Board of Directors since

2009, monitors the Revere Track, and works on its trails. "I am looking forward to the new challenges of this role and appreciate the support and great help I have received from Kathryn Gregory, previous *Dragon's Tale* editor."

## Learn "Trees" at the Annual Picnic

*Mark Chittenden*



During our Annual Picnic, this year on October 15, you will have a unique opportunity to walk/hike and learn the plants along our trails. Posts/plates now identify more than 200 trees, shrubs, and vines on our five Nature Trails. Leave your car at the Revere Tract

entrance parking lot, take a shuttle to the Picnic Circle Area, and walk our trails from there. Or, a bit more effort, walk the Pre-Circle Trail all the way in from the parking lot. Our web site at [www.dragonrun.org](http://www.dragonrun.org) describes each Trail, including a brief narrative on each, then a sequential list of the plants at each of its Posts. For added enjoyment, bring a field guide (see Feb 2009 and Apr 2011 *Dragon's Tales*) and read about the plant as you stand in front of its Post. Many trees, like the gorgeous sourwoods on the Post-Circle Trail, and red maples, will be near their fall-color peak in mid-October. So, try to take a short break from the Picnic and visit a Trail.

## 2012 FRIENDS OF DRAGON RUN SPRING PADDLE SEASON

The 2012 Friends of Dragon Run paddle season is scheduled for Saturday, 7 April through Sunday, 7 May. Trips will be conducted every day during that period. You may sign up either as an individual or a group. All participants must be at least 18 years of age.

The maximum number of participants is 12 per trip. You may use your own paddle or life vest if you wish, but we strongly urge you use our kayaks which are ideally suited for the trips and best accommodate our shuttling system. Generally the trips last from 9 a.m. to 1:30 or 2 p.m., depending on water/weather conditions. Because we are running trips every day, we cannot schedule rain dates.

To make a reservation or receive more information, contact Martha Graham by e-mail (preferred) [mgr8040@verizon.net](mailto:mgr8040@verizon.net) or phone (757-898-8040, after October 1). When you sign up, we will send you an information sheet which tells you what to expect and how to prepare for the trip. You will also receive a release form which must be signed by each participant.

# Picnic is October 15

Don't miss our annual picnic on Saturday, October 15 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the "Big Island put in" on the banks of beautiful Dragon Run. Members and friends are welcome to this fun event.

The food is always wonderful, and this year Jo Ann Nolte is making the BBQ and coleslaw, as well as organizing, so count on an extra great feast. Contact her at (804) 758-0561, or nolte9198@verizon.net, to volunteer your special side dish, salad, dessert or whatever you wish. Please register by using the form below. Include your phone number in case we need to postpone or cancel due to inclement weather.



Because there is no space for parking vehicles at Big Island landing, a shuttle will be run back and forth to the picnic area. However, no service will be available between 12 noon and 1:00 p.m., so do plan to arrive early!

If you would like to help, or have questions, please contact Tom Gregory at (804)462-5608, or Dragon-swamp@kaballero.com. Volunteers are needed for set up, car shuttles, and clean up.



## *Friends of Dragon Run*

ANNUAL PICNIC at Big Island  
SATURDAY October 15, 2011

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of adults @ \$5.00 ea. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children under 16, no charge \_\_\_\_\_  
Total amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this reservation form and your check, payable to Friends of Dragon Run, to:

FODR, P.O. Box 882, Gloucester, VA, 23061

NOTE: Please make sure this form arrives no later than October 11.

### ODE TO A DRAGON

Fierce and dark she lay supine  
 Amidst knees and vines sublime.  
 Wait she did for the paddlers-  
 Twelve they depart, saddlers  
 In the midst of their flotilla,  
 Angling down with agility  
 'Til passages are cleared from beaver  
 Blocking overnight, in their fever  
 Of work revealed, with obstacles  
 Armored, not mere particles.  
 Guides lead on who know the route  
 Mindful of the Dragon's false moats.

All around the waters flow, pushing  
 Middle Peninsula directors 'til sluicing  
 They enter a quiet flow where Dragon's  
 Teeth of plants abound like overflowing flagons.  
 Time enough for lunch, time to float,  
 Open the beer and savor with hope  
 Another creation of one's mate,  
 Someone willed to impart the Dragon's fate.  
 So we pause in the sunny shade  
 To become at last a part of that maid  
 Simmering quietly within the Dragon's fiery nature,  
 Departing, all twelve denatured!

*Walter S. Rowland*

### Spring 2011 Wildflower Walk

Saturday, 23 April, was warm and sunny with blue skies, a beautiful day for a Spring Wildflower walk and a welcome change from the generally-cold winter and early Spring we had. Some eight folks, including FODR members Mary Berg, Gus Hall, and me, along with some five Native Plant Society members, met at 9:30 AM in the Food Lion parking lot near Saluda and drove to the Dragon to walk the Pre-Circle and To-Williams Trails on our Revere Tract properties till about 1PM.

Given the mid-April date, we were still able to find many Spring wildflowers, in addition to Summer species that begin to bloom/come-up in May. Spring wildflowers included the beautiful showy orchids, crane fly orchid, pink lady-slipper, bloodroot, Virginia spring-beauty, Azur bluets, common wintercress, mayapple, balsam ragwort, many violet species, and bittercress. A few of the many Summer wildflowers and miscellany included dwarf dandelion, bulbous buttercup, cleavers bedstraw, partridgeberry, striped wintergreen, trumpet creeper, Japanese honeysuckle, two "Lycopodiums", and fox and muscadine grapes. Wildflower species compositions, however, change greatly and rapidly in the Dragonlands as the weeks progress from spring into summer and then fall. *Mark Chittenden*

### A Warm Welcome to Our New Members

Kathy & Randy Wood  
 Bernard & Deborah Robins  
 Allen & Rebecca Ayers  
 Gus Hall  
 Pamela & Scott Witthaus  
 Rod & Julie Leffler  
 John & Joan Lawler  
 Lois Spencer  
 Andrew & Andrea Stiles  
 Victoria Boardley  
 Jeanette Sue Dudley  
 Jill Harrington  
 Ellen Stefaniak  
 Suzanne Stryk  
 Katherine Davis

### RECAP OF 2011 KAYAK TRIPS

*Teta Kain*

The 2011 paddle season was even more successful than the 2010 season. In the 30 day period from 9 April to 10 May, we conducted 26 trips, escorting 243 participants down the river from Big Island to Mascot. The weather and water levels were with us all the way this year and we had to cancel out only 4 days. Nineteen members rounded out our crew, three more than last year and we already have several more raring to join us next year. With so many helping we were able to provide a lot of help and many extra "perks" for paddlers, making the trips enjoyable for everyone.

We are expecting to conduct another 30 days of trips in 2012. The plan is to run them from 7 April through 6 May. The only change will be that reservations and information about the trips will be handled by Martha Graham. Her e-mail address is: [mgr8040@verizon.net](mailto:mgr8040@verizon.net).



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

## *FODR Activities for 2011*

### **September**

12 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC  
17 Tree Identification Walk  
22 General Meeting, Gloucester Library\*  
24 Highway Trash Pickup

### **October**

3 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC  
8 Dragon Run Day  
15 Annual Picnic  
24 Newsletter Deadline

### **November**

7 Business Meeting, Saluda MPPDC  
16 Annual Meeting, Gloucester Library\*  
19 Highway Trash Pickup

### **December**

5 Annual Planning Meeting

\* General and Annual Meetings begin at 7 PM for refreshments and conversation; short business meeting at 7:30 PM followed by program.