



The Dragon's Tale

PO Box 882
Gloucester, VA 23061

Volume XXXII
Number III
September 2016

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.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2016 GENERAL MEETING

I'd Rather Be Kayaking!

Every year FODR's month long paddle season provides paddlers from all over to experience a special trip down the Dragon Run to discover the awesome natural beauty and wildlife the unique ecosystem has to offer. The significance of this ecosystem, recognized by the Smithsonian Institution, and its wilderness exist primarily because it is remote. Most access points are only reached by way of nearly a mile long trek over rugged back country. Numerous channels, dense vegetation, and downed trees make for troublesome navigation and we do not recommend paddling this river on your own.

However, keep calm till next paddle season and carry your kayak to Gloucester and Mathews Blueways Trails, a system of water trails particularly suited for canoes and kayaks. Paddle in the path where Captain John Smith explored and enjoy all of the scenic beauty, history, wildlife and ecology, and fun that Gloucester and Mathews have to offer on these natural waterways.

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Roadside Trash Pickup September 24 Saturday 9AM

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

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Janice Moore



Still lots to do in 2016

Thanks to all the crew and paddlers, and of course, our Paddlemaster, Teta Kain, we had another great paddle season! Read Teta's report for more details about our successful paddle season.

Our next MAJOR EVENT FOR MEMBERS is the annual picnic. There are more details in the newsletter, but please plan to come join us at Big Island on Saturday September 17 for a great lunch and loads of fun. If we have to cancel for rain, we'll try again the following Saturday, September 24.

I hope that you'll also join us on September 21, at our next General Meeting, so that you can hear all about how to explore the backcountry waterways in Gloucester and Mathews from Hilton Snowden.

So far, our 2016 workdays have been quite successful – and tons of fun. Thanks so much to those of you who have joined us to help maintain our property and the roads to access it. If you haven't come out for a workday yet, I hope that you'll decide to come next time, Saturday, September 24.

I encourage everyone to keep track of what's going on by checking our website <http://www.dragonrun.org/> frequently. Very soon, you'll be able to order and pay for our new Dragon Run tee shirts and hats using our website. And follow us on Facebook!! Don't forget to send me an email (jrmoore27@gmail.com), call me (703-217-0610), write me a letter (P.O. Box 247, Deltaville, VA 23043), or post a comment on our Facebook page and let me know what you are thinking. I hope to see or hear from you very soon!!

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Join us at the next Friends of Dragon Run General meeting to learn about the Blueways Water Trail system in Gloucester and Mathews and discover how you can explore the back country of waterways a lot less traveled. Hilton Snowden, Tourism Coordinator for Gloucester County, will discuss the system of water trails (and the plans to expand), where they are located, how to access, where to park, and the different environmental and historic highlights unique to each of the different trails. Bluewater Trail Maps will be available at the meeting. Randy Drake, Outdoor Adventure Activities Instructor at William and Mary will also be giving a presentation on kayak safety and tips for anyone going out kayaking.

The meeting is to be held **Wednesday September 21, 2016 at 7pm at the Gloucester Public Library, Main Branch located at Main Street Center in Gloucester Courthouse**. The program is free and the public is welcome and encouraged to attend! For information on the meeting or on Friends of Dragon Run, please contact Christine Tombleson at 804-815-0172.

A RECAP OF THE 2016 PADDLE SEASON

Teta Kain

Because early days in April for the past few years have been unusually cold and rainy, we decided to delay the start of the 2016 paddle season until Saturday, April 9th. Not only did we avoid some stormy days, but we were better able to conduct two work/orientation days to get the river and the crew ready for the month-long schedule. Because of that extra time, we did an especially good job clearing the waterway, removing quite a few underwater obstructions that had been troubling us for several years. It wasn't an easy job. The water was high and running hard. We lost some equipment *and* a couple of crew members overboard. We recovered the crew members, but not the equipment.



We were fortunate that frequent rainstorms, all during the month, occurred mostly at night, keeping the water levels quite high during most of the 30 days the trips were scheduled. In fact, we lost only four days to inclement weather, allowing us to escort more than 270 people down the river.

This year, much of the vegetation along the waterway was already sprouting as we started the trips. Bald cypress trees had already put on needles, spatterdock was flowering, and wild azaleas were blooming. On the other end of the scale, we saw very little fetterbush in bloom, and pickerel weed leaves emerged but did not put on any flowers until late in the month. Arrowwood and elderberry bushes were much more abundant than last year, while swamp rose and wild iris were scarce indeed. As always, nothing stops the advancement of the ever-present smartweed that chokes the waterway more heavily each year. There are several places where this plant has spread into the channel to the extent that it is becoming increasingly difficult to push our way through it. Somewhere down the line we are going to have to come up with a solution to this problem for our trips to continue.

Sadly the Bald Eagles were apparently unsuccessful in their nesting attempt this year. Although we saw the adults around almost every day, the nest remained empty all season. Prothonotary Warblers took full advantage of the nest boxes provided by Gary Driscoll, but successful production rate of the young was very low. Just why that was remains a mystery. We also noticed that Red-headed Woodpeckers were back in good numbers; there seemed to be more Hooded Warblers in evidence; and the American Redstart population was evident all the way down the river. Because water levels remained quite high, it was not necessary to install the "gates" on the beaver dams until the very end of the season. Only four were needed. In years past, when the river was very low, as many as 14 gates were needed to facilitate passage to Mascot. Without those gates, when dams are high, new paddlers especially would have a very difficult time getting through.

As in the recent past, five crew members attended each trip, performing the many duties that help make our excursions fun, safe, and memorable. New crew members this year were Molly Brod-

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erson, Janice Moore, Debbie Rollins, Lois Spencer, Bambi Thompson, and Jeff Wright. After a year's absence to recover from a seriously injured elbow, Becky Day was able to return to the line-up, along with her partner, Reyn Kinzey. Crew members from last year's roster who were unable to volunteer this year were Mark Boland, David Henderson, Lex Maccubbin, and Gordon Page. It is hoped they will be able to join us again in the future.

Special thanks is extended to each and every crew member who participated on the trips this year. These volunteers are not just along for the ride. Each and every one of them performs myriad tasks to ensure the safety and comfort of our paddlers. Without their help each year, these trips simply would not be possible. The 2016 crew members this year were: Bob Anderson, Emily Anderson, Molly Broderson, Becky Day, Jed Dolan, Anne Ducey-Ortiz, Gary Driscole, Adrienne Frank, Don Gallagher, Tim Gilbert, John Jensen, Reyn, Kinzey, Ann Lankey, Jon Lucy, Darbie Maccubbin, Janice Moore, Danny Ortiz, Gordon Page, Jim Pettyjohn, Bruce Pully, Davis Rhodes, Bernard Robins, Debbie Rollins, Dotty Rilee, Lois, Spencer, Kearfott Stone, Bambi Thompson, Wayne Turner, Jerry Varner, and Jeff Wright.



We also thank the following individuals for allowing the use of their kayaks and other equipment before, during, and after the season: Bob Hancock, Jon Lucy, Janice Moore, Gordon Page, Bruce Pully, Davis Rhodes, and John Jensen.

If you have any suggestions or comments about the trips, we'd love to hear from you. We are always open to new ideas.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!

Our first time participating in GiveLocal757 was a great success, thanks to many folks who persevered and made contributions on the campaign website. We are very grateful for all of your efforts on our behalf. We raised almost \$1700, and 24 people made gifts to Friends of Dragon Run. This is the most money and largest number of donors that we've ever had during a fund-raising campaign. This campaign was very important to us, because the Richmond-based Amazing Raise will not occur this year.

If you experienced difficulty while you were online trying to make a gift, you were not alone. As a result of the crashing website, the campaign was extended for one more day, and the administrator waived the fees. Although we saved the cost of the fees, we wonder if more people would have given us more if they hadn't had so much trouble with the website. At this point, we are inclined to participate next year, and we look forward to your support again if you are able to do that. Watch our website and Facebook page for more news.

**MARY HYDE CHISM
BERG**

11-23-1938 - 6-2-2016

Davis Rhodes

Mary Hyde Berg passed away on June 2, 2016. She was a Life Member of FODR, and had been active with us for many years until recently.

Mary Hyde, as most of her friends knew her, was born in Gloucester and lived much of her life there at her childhood home near Clay Bank. She was an active outdoorswoman, spending much of her time raising her herd of dairy goats and caring for the wildflowers and native plants that she so dearly loved.

Mary Hyde served as a Director of FODR for several years. This organization benefitted from her wide knowledge of botany, as she encouraged erosion abatement wherever it occurred, and her good stewardship of its properties along the Dragon Run. An outspoken advocate of natural area preservation, she also worked to make our "Special Area" accessible as an example for others to emulate, and often visited our properties to enjoy their natural settings. We will miss her insightful counsel and the example she set for others in preservation and conservation of natural areas. Most of all we will miss her friendship!

DRAGON RUN

Joe Sties

Based on observations made by the author's wife on a kayaking adventure sponsored by The Friends of Dragon Run in April, 2016 in the Dragon Run wilderness preserve

Preserve the wild places
Before they are gone,

Humanity's havens
Where peace lingers on.
Their beauty is worth
All the effort it takes.

Protect them from litter
And man's toxic waste.
Take care of these treasures

Before they're erased,
Those soul-lifting venues
The universe makes.

Close by stands a forest
Pristine and unique,
The access for passage
A slow moving creek.
It flows through a swamp
Where stout ancient trees
stand.

The stately Bald Cyprus
Hold fast to scarce land.
And dry Resurrection moss
Waits for the rain
To bring back its life
And its blossoms again.

Entranced as we paddled
Meandering lanes
Of clear shallow water
Tranquility reigned.
Deciduous trees
Clung to Cypresses' might,
Their branches entwined
Keep them standing upright.

Our paddles were short,
Little water to ply,
And dense tangled Lilly
pads
Mirrored the sky.

The sounds of the wilderness,
Flowed on the air
Weaving sweet, gentle
melodies
Soft like a prayer.
All manner of wildlife
Roamed sheltered and
free.
And shared sanctuary
In sweet harmony.
All manner of birds
Lifted voices in song,

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Shop Now!

Avoid the last minute holiday shopping rush.....



FODR T-shirts for

You, your teens, grandkids, great grandkids,
nieces, nephews, friends, etc., etc., and so forth!
Our new FODR T-shirts will be available for sale at the
FODR Picnic:
Saturday, September 17th!



Your teen's face here!

Many colors available and
you will save on postage
costs!

Sizes Adult Small—X Large
Thank you for supporting
FODR!

ANNUAL PICNIC – SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH

(rain date Saturday, September 24th)

Don't miss our annual picnic on Saturday, September 17, from 11 to 3 pm! Please plan to join your fellow members, friends, and family members at Big Island (kids of all ages are welcome). FODR provides the BBQ, buns, beans, slaw, and beverages for just \$5 per person and we encourage people to bring a dish to share to fill in the rest of the feast. A folding chair is nice to relax in after lunch, and insect repellent is also a good idea if warm weather continues!! The food and the company are always wonderful and for the past few years we've been treated to a concert in the woods (no guarantees for this year but we can always hope!). As most members know, the Dragon is a special place and the put-in at Big Island provides the perfect venue to share a meal during an early autumn afternoon with like-minded outdoor enthusiasts and lovers of the Dragon. The food is always fantastic! When you are not eating or enjoying the fellowship of other members and guests, you can hike the trails or take a kayak up the river or over to Big Island. **Please note** that, if we have to cancel on September 17th because of weather, we will have the picnic on the following Saturday, September 24th.

Parking is available up the hill from the landing and you can either enjoy a nice nature walk down to the picnic site or take a shuttle. The shuttle will be available from 11-3 with no service during lunch between 12 and 1 pm.

We always need volunteers for set-up (9 am), clean-up and any other tasks – please contact Board Members Molly Broderson (mollybrodersoneds@gmail.com), Bambi Thompson (thompsonbambil@gmail.com) and/or Janice Moore (jrmoore27@gmail.com) for more information if you would like to help.

So plan to join us on September 17th for a super lunch in the woods along our favorite river. Just fill out the ticket information below and send it in as soon as possible (**by September 9th**) so we know how much BBQ to buy. Include your \$5 per adult and mail it to FODR. PLEASE include your phone number in case we need to postpone due to inclement weather. We'll also put a message on Facebook about postponing. Looking forward to seeing you at a great picnic this year!

Friends of Dragon Run
 ANNUAL PICNIC at Big Island
 SATURDAY September 17, 2016

Name: _____
 Phone: () _____ - _____
 Number of adults @ \$5.00 each _____
 Number of children under 16 (no charge) _____
 Total amount enclosed: _____

Mail this reservation form by September 9, along with your check, payable to Friends of Dragon Run, to: FODR, PO Box 882, Gloucester, VA, 23061



Top left: Resurrection fern (*Pleopeltis polypodioides*); top right: Jim Pettyjohn opening a “gate” for the group; Bottom left: Davis Rhodes at right watching paddlers cross a beaver dam safely; Bottom right: April 9 was the first day of this Paddle season and the temperature was as low as 50 degrees. The group experienced all four seasons in a day. They all survived.

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And beaver dams blocked us
As we moved along.

We traveled in quiet,
Safe lost in our dreams
Of green vernal forests
That breathe the sun's beams.
We long for a time
All the world blooms again,
When Nature reclaims
All the beauty that's been.
We honor this place
And the work that's been done
By Friends of this magic
We call Dragon Run.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Are your kids, grandkids bugging you?

Bring them to the FODR picnic on Saturday, September 17th where Bambi Thompson and Molly Broderson, will bug them!

Activities and games for children of *all* ages!

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE

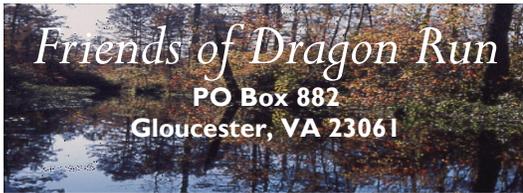
Janice Moore	President	703-217-0610	jrmoore27@gmail.com
Anne Ducey-Ortiz	Vice President	804-725-1259	aduceyortiz@earthlink.net
Cynthia Honablue	Secretary, Hospitality	718-496-6149	chonablue5000@aol.com
Adrienne Frank	Treasurer	757-566-4009	adrienne-gary@cox.net
Bruce Pully	Imm.Past President	804-642-5243	bjpully@verizon.net
Davis Rhodes	Fundraising, Safety Program, Community Service Coordinator	757-651-2260	s.d.rhodes@verizon.net
Teta Kain	Paddle Trip Program, Nominating Committee	804-693-5246	tkdragonrun7@gmail.com
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www.dragonrun.org



Contact Deb at
debcrollins@gmail.com to receive
your copy via email today!

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

FODR Activities for 2016

August

22 Business Meeting
24 Newsletter Deadline
27 Deltaville Farmers Mkt

September

9-10 Mathews Market Days
17 Fall Picnic
21 General Meeting
24 Highway Trash Pickup
24 Fall Picnic rain date
24 Deltaville Farmers Mkt.
26 Business Meeting

October

1 West Point Crab Carnival
19 Newsletter Deadline
24 Business Meeting

November

4-5 Urbanna Oyster Festival
16 Annual Meeting
19 Highway Trash Pickup
28 Business Meeting

December

5 Planning Meeting