



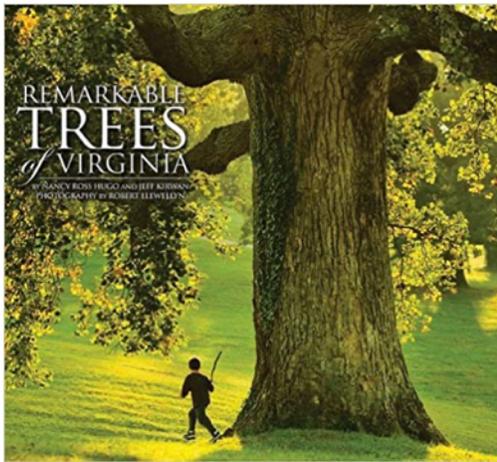
The Dragon's Tale

Friends of Dragon Run
P. O. Box 882
Gloucester, 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 Dragon Run and its watershed.

Author of *Remarkable Trees of Virginia* to Speak at September 22 General Meeting



Jeff Kirwan, co-author of the book *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*, will be the speaker at the September 22 FODR General Meeting. The meeting is open to the public and will be conducted online using Zoom. Refer to the Zoom article on page 2 for details.

Jeff Kirwan is Emeritus Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Forestry at Virginia Tech. During his career at Tech, he led the statewide 4-H Youth and Natural Resources programs, the Virginia Big Tree Program, and he brought the Master Naturalist Program to Virginia. He is an enrolled member of the Nause Waiwash Indians on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

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Change in FODR Leadership

Jeff Wright is the new FODR President following the resignation of Janice Moore on August 16. Jeff had been the FODR Vice President and Paddle Master.

Janice Moore, citing family obligations, stepped down after more than four years of service as the FODR president. She will be missed on the Board and on the waters of Dragon Run, but plans to support FODR events.

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How to Zoom

Our September 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 Membership Meeting
Time: Sep 22, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time
(US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86133738158?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86133738158?pwd=N25OcnRKTDBWeGVqQi9kcXZlWnYwQT09)

[pwd=N25OcnRKTDBWeGVqQi9kcXZlWnYwQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86133738158?pwd=N25OcnRKTDBWeGVqQi9kcXZlWnYwQT09)

Meeting ID: 861 3373 8158
Passcode: 994155

One tap mobile

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(Chicago)

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(New York)

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[+1 646 558 8656](tel:+16465588656) US (New York)

[+1 301 715 8592](tel:+13017158592) US (Washington DC)

[+1 346 248 7799](tel:+13462487799) US (Houston)

[+1 669 900 9128](tel:+16699009128) US (San Jose)

[+1 253 215 8782](tel:+12532158782) US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 861 3373 8158
Passcode: 994155

Find your local number:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86133738158?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86133738158?pwd=N25OcnRKTDBWeGVqQi9kcXZlWnYwQT09)

President's Message Jeff Wright

In my new role as President—on behalf of all of us—I want to thank my colleague Janice Moore for her highly successful and lengthy time at the helm of the Friends of Dragon Run. She did a lot. She means a lot. I anticipate we will continue to have her as a participant in FODR endeavors and paddle seasons. Hey, she is a life member. The Dragon calls all of us to return.

I look forward to working closely with the FODR Board on the priorities and areas of emphasis listed below. Many of these priorities were listed as goals in the 2019-2020 annual report. We have made measurable gains in our goals and, as President, I hope to further our progress.

- Increase FODR membership
- Increase percentage of paddle guests who become members
- Increase active participants in FODR activities such as logistics crew, paddle crew, environmental education, and property monitoring
- Strengthen Board of Directors operations, portfolios, committees, and meetings
- Draft job descriptions for elected, appointed, and key volunteer positions
- Measure the progress of FODR goals as listed in the 2019-2020 annual report
- Manage the FODR budget for the second half of 2021
- Update the FODR policy and procedures manual
- Add at least one FODR trail to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources Birding and Wildlife Trail
- Increase FODR's monitoring of Dragon Run as part of the Dragon Keeper Program
- Strengthen and enlarge the FODR Endowment Fund
- Modernize and automate some FODR

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Changes in FODR Leadership

Continued from page 1

During her years leading FODR, she made key and measurable contributions in numerous areas, including business operations, financial processes, establishment of an endowment fund, acquisition of new properties, and increased opportunities for paddling with FODR and access to FODR lands. She also made her mark as a leader on paddle crews, maintenance crews, merchandise sales, and efforts to increase FODR membership.

To fill the vacancies resulting from Moore's resignation, Carol Kauffman was appointed Vice Presiden, and Andrea Mitman and Jack Kauffman were appointed as Directors. Carol and Jack were also appointed as the FODR paddle masters.

A profound thank you to Janice Moore and an enthusiastic welcome to Carol Kauffman, Andrea Mitman, Jack Kauffman, and Jeff Wright. And yes, they hit the ground running and are paddling fast - upstream and downstream - in their new assignments.

Paddle News

By Jeff Wright

A Sunny and Successful Summer Paddle Season

This year's sunny summer paddle season was a success. We used a scenic new route with more to see, plenty of shade, cooperative water levels, amazing feats of engineering by the beavers, great flora and fauna, and noticeable but bearable heat and humidity. Based on the apparent birth dates of the crew—but not the guests—the daily round trip paddles could have been called “sweating



with the oldies.” Instead, it was clearly what we had hoped for—great guests enjoying nature on summer mornings while transiting beaver dams and viewing the lush flora and fauna of the Dragon. It was also a pleasure to operate once again from FODR's BIG Island complex.

New Paddle Trail

We continue to develop new paddle routes to highlight the amazing beauty and abundant flora and fauna throughout Dragon Run. Since our 2020 summer paddle season, we have developed four round-trip paddle routes, including one from Big Island. During the summer 2021 paddle season, we took guests upstream from Big Island, turned around and floated downstream to a turn-around point and then paddled upstream to return to Big Island. For the fall paddle season, we plan to expand the upstream part of this route, taking guests deeper into the bald cypress/tupelo swamp.

We love this new route because it offers plenty of shade and the trees arching over the water create a cathedral effect, increasing the majesty of Dragon Run. The route also offers numerous places to stop and learn about the Dragon as well as have a snack and hydrate.

Fall Paddle Season

For our fall paddle season, we will use a round trip route from Big Island. We will meet guests at 8:30 a.m. at Big Island and we will be on the water by 9 a.m. The paddle trip will conclude between noon and 12:30 p.m. This is an exceptional time of year to paddle Dragon Run because of the warm days and fall foliage. You may also see migrating birds and the last of summer's butterflies, bees, and dragon flies.

Paddlers must be vaccinated for Covid-19 in order to paddle. Paddle trips will run from October 21 to Nov 7. The trips will be held on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and each trip will accommodate eight guests. Visit Dragonrun.org for details. Be sure to follow Friends of Dragon Run on FaceBook.

See you soon!

Dragon Run Adopt-a-Highway Signs Posted This Summer

During this past year, Mark Alling, FODR's Trash Czar, worked with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to obtain Adopt-a-Highway signs for FODR. The signs are free to volunteer groups who agree to perform at least two trash pickups per year for three years. VDOT places the signs after two cleanups are reported to the local VDOT residency.

Alling started the process by submitting an Adopt-a-Highway application which was approved February 26, 2021. Dragon Run performed trash collections surrounding the areas around the Route 603 and 602 bridges on March 6 and April 24, 2021. After each cleanup, Alling summarized the type and amount of trash collected, the number of volunteers participating, and the total volunteer hours spent on the cleanup. This data was reported to the VDOT Saluda Residency.

In August, VDOT erected signs at the James V. Morgan bridge on Route 17, at the Mascot Bridge on Route 603, and at the Wares Bridge on Route 602. Be sure to look for the signs the next time you cross these bridges.



Route 17



Route 603



Route 602

President's Message

(Continued from page 2)

- business practices
- Establish fund raising goals for new land acquisition
- Update stewardship management practices
- Build property monitoring teams
- Continue and enlarge the paddle programs for secondary schools located within the Dragon Run watershed
- Updates and enhancements to the FODR website
- Recruit recognized and engaging speakers for FODR general meetings

I hope many of our members will join me and the Board in continuing to fulfill these goals. Feel free to let me (President@dragonrun.org) or any of the Board members know if you would like to volunteer or to make suggestions for further improvements and new programs.

Annual Election of Officers and Directors

With the annual FODR elections of all officers and most directors just around the corner on November 17, a nominating committee has been named. The five committee members are Kevin Howe, Chairperson, Meo Curtis, Jack Kauffman, Molly Broderson, and Debbie Rollins. Please contact any of them if you have ideas for nominees for the upcoming elections.

Read All About It Dragon Run in the August 27 Issue of the *Rivah's Visitor's Guide*

Get a first-hand account of how it feels when your kayak slips into the Dragon's silky water and you leave your worries behind at the launch point. Tom Chillemi gives an enticing description of the "enchantment" you'll experience as you float down the Dragon, surrounded only by birds, insects, and the abundant foliage. His article appears in the August 26 issue of the *Rivah's Visitor's Guide*, available at numerous locations throughout the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula as well as online at rivahguide.com

How We Awoke to the Ecological Significance of Dragon Run

By Kevin Howe

Dragon Run has been recognized as a special place by at least two different groups: first, by local residents, led by the late Jimmy Morgan, his brother Harvey, and others, and second, by The Nature Conservancy and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. This tale is a two-part history of how the Dragon came to be protected over the past 50 years. The first part is about The Nature Conservancy and its partners' role in recognizing the ecological significance of Dragon Run while the story in the next issue will tell about the efforts of local residents to protect the Dragon.

Dragon Run was recognized as a unique natural ecological system in 1974 based on a research report by ecologists at the Smithsonian Institution. This project was supported by The Nature Conservancy, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and the Irving Kinsley Foundation. The researchers looked at 232 different regions in the Chesapeake Bay drainage and used between 9 and 11 features to score the quality and ecological significance based on criteria such as rare flora and fauna and amount of development. Dragon Run was scored the most significant ecological area in Virginia and the second most significant in the Chesapeake Bay drainage.

The Smithsonian survey was part of a much larger project conceived and underwritten by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), an environmental organization that has protected approximately 120 million acres of land worldwide and thousands of miles of rivers since its founding in 1951; a significant amount of Dragon Run has been protected by TNC through ownership and conservation easements.



This study of the Chesapeake Bay drainage was not an isolated research study but was actually a much broader survey of significant natural lands in the U.S. It was eventually expanded worldwide. It's a story not many know about, but certainly qualifies as one of the most significant events in environmental protection for future generations.

From its founding by ecologists until about 1970, TNC focused on obtaining land—some ecologically significant, some not. For many years, TNC had no real scientific basis for acquiring land, but in August 1970, a newly

minted Ph.D. biologist, Robert Jenkins, was hired as the first TNC scientist with a mandate to improve the scientific significance of TNC land-preservation projects.

With his encyclopedic knowledge of biology, ecology, and natural history, Jenkins envisioned a plan to “accumulate a knowledge base of constantly updated information about the

biota and ecosystems as a basis for conservation action,” as he stated when he received a NatureServe award in 2010. During his first months at TNC, Jenkins focused on the preservation of the full array of biological and ecological entities, which he called natural diversity. He believed TNC (and indeed everyone) should “seek to provide ecological lifeboats to save biological species and communities from extinction” rather than just preserving beauty and open space.

With Jenkin's ideas, TNC established the Natural Heritage Network in 1974 to focus on biological

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**Jeff Kirwan to Speak at
September 22 Meeting**
(Continued from page 1)

A Virginia Tech news release, published when Kirwan received the Department of Forestry’s highest civilian honor—the Crown Award, lists more of Kirwan’s accomplishments. “Kirwan has spoken to thousands of children about the trees in the book, and his tree conservation efforts have garnered much publicity for trees, forests, the environment, and the broader efforts of our entire college,” said Paul Winistorfer, Dean of the College.

Since joining the Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Education in 1978, Kirwan has led a natural resources and environmental education program that reached

more than 360,000 youth during a 12-year period, and incorporated service learning into classes taught in both the College of Natural Resources and Environment and in the American Indian Studies Program long before the practice became common place.”

Remarkable Trees of Virginia celebrates the beauty and magnificence of trees across Virginia; but, the authors confront the hard issues facing urban foresters. A section of the book addresses issues and describes strategies being used to protect and nurture urban trees.

Friends of Dragon Run Activities Calendar

Month	Day	Time	Event	Location
September	20	7 p.m.	Board meeting	Zoom
	22	7 p.m.	General meeting	Zoom
	25	9 a.m.	Trash pickup	RCC Glenns
October	7-14		Fall paddle season workdays	Big Island
	18	7 p.m.	Board meeting	Zoom
	21		Fall paddle season begins	Big Island
November	7		Fall paddle season ends	
	15	7 p.m.	Board meeting	Zoom
	17	7 p.m.	Annual meeting	Zoom
	20	9 a.m.	Trash pickup	RCC Glenns
December	6	7 p.m.	Planning meeting	Zoom

Dave Milby FODR'S Property Manager



David Milby assumed the role of FODR Property Manager in January 2021. Milby graduated from Rutgers University with a B.S. in Natural Resource Management. He has nearly 40 years experience in the field of forestry.

Milby is currently employed by the Virginia Department of Forestry where he serves as the Northern Neck Area Forester. He is a Certified Forester as well as a Certified Arborist. He has been an active member of the FODR Board of Directors since 2006.

Since taking on the Property Manager position, Milby has been working with the Board to develop a job description for property monitors—FODR volunteers who visit FODR properties throughout the year monitoring for storm damage, vandalism, evidence of disease, and invasive flora and fauna. In his spare time David enjoys hunting, fishing and all outdoor activities. David lives in Hartfield with his wife, Nancy, and his Golden Retriever, Tucker.

Ecological Significance of Dragon Run

(Continued from page 5)

features in need of conservation and protection, including species, natural communities, and natural diversity, and with the goal to use this information to suggest priority sites for protection. The first program was in South Carolina with West Virginia, Mississippi, and Oregon following in 1975. The plan was for TNC to start a program in each state, operate it to full speed in two years, then let the

state take over. Virginia started the program in 1986 and it became Virginia's Division of Natural Heritage in the Department of Conservation and Recreation in 1988. This TNC program along with another TNC program became NatureServe in 2001.

The TNC funding of the Smithsonian Institution's report documenting the ecological significance of Dragon Run has helped keep Dragon Run well protected and much like it was before Europeans arrived. But that is only half the story. The efforts of local residents are the other half; so look for the rest of the story about the protection of Dragon Run in the fall issue of the *Dragon's Tale*.

Wondering What to Wear?

With cooler weather and autumn colors on the way, it's time to plan your fall wardrobe. What could be more stylish than a long-sleeve FODR quarter zip tee and a baseball or bucket hat for those cool autumn days. And, don't forget to pick up a short sleeve tee for the warm October afternoons.

We have a colorful array of shirt styles: long sleeve, short sleeve, and quarter zip shirts. The long sleeve shirts are made from sun protective SPF fabric—a great way to look stylish while protecting your skin from the harmful rays of the sun. Don't forget to pick up a hat to complete your outfit. We have ball caps and bucket hats. And, all shirts and hats carry the iconic FODR logo.

Visit dragonrun.org/shop or catch us at one of the fall season paddle trips.



Streamside Attractions

Birds and Berries

By Kevin Howe

As a guide on Dragon Run, people often ask me when is the best time of year to kayak on the Dragon. Wow. Anytime on the Dragon is best; but I have to admit that fall is really special. The weather is cooler, fall flowers are blooming, various fungi are visible, colorful berries are popping, the leaves are changing color, and migrating songbirds are passing through.

It's a time to reflect on these migrators and the arduous journey that birds make twice a year. Winter is tough in the north, so it makes sense to migrate south. And research actually suggests that it is more energy efficient to migrate than to stay in the north. Who knew!

Approximately 350 species of North American birds migrate, some for long distances, such as the Arctic tern who migrates 25,000 miles, one way. Others travel short distances such as the blue grouse which travels 1,000 feet. They need lots of food before and during the travel period—nutritious and readily available food. Some of the



migrating birds will double their weight prior to migrating.

In the fall, insect meals become scarce so what fills the bill, literally and figuratively—berries. Fall migrants require high-fat, high-carb food to meet their travel needs; and on the fall paddle trips, the Dragon explodes with berries, from silky dogwood, American holly, winterberry, spicebush, Virginia creeper, and many others.

Interestingly, many of these native berries contain a 30-50% fat content. In contrast, exotic, invasive berries, such as those from autumn olive, multiflora rose, and Asian (Amur) honeysuckle, contain only 3-4% fats. These exotics are bad news for migrators because they just do not supply the nutrition needed for travel. Birds have starved to death feeding on these exotic low-fat berries. This is just one more reason that the Dragon is special—very few invasive/exotic plants are found here. And, the Dragon Run watershed is a significant refuel location, a high-quality stop-over.



Winterberry

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Birds and Berries (Continued from previous page)

Plus, the plants benefit from the intensive fall berry eating. The birds disperse the seeds, digesting the flesh of the fruit and pooping out the seed. This is a classic example of co-evolution— birds get loads of great energy, and the progeny of the plants get dispersed to new ground, even with a bit of fertilizer!

Thinking about these winter berries, I would be remiss if I did not mention the late spring and summer berries which contrast with winter berries in that they are high in carbs and protein rather than fat. Insects which are abundant in the spring and summer are also high in carbs and proteins. High carbs and protein are vital to stimulate growth at a time when fledging birds are just leaving the nest and searching for food on their own.



Hearts-a-bustin



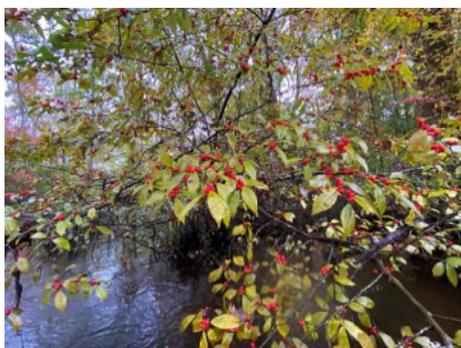
Golden Pholiota—fall fruiting mushroom



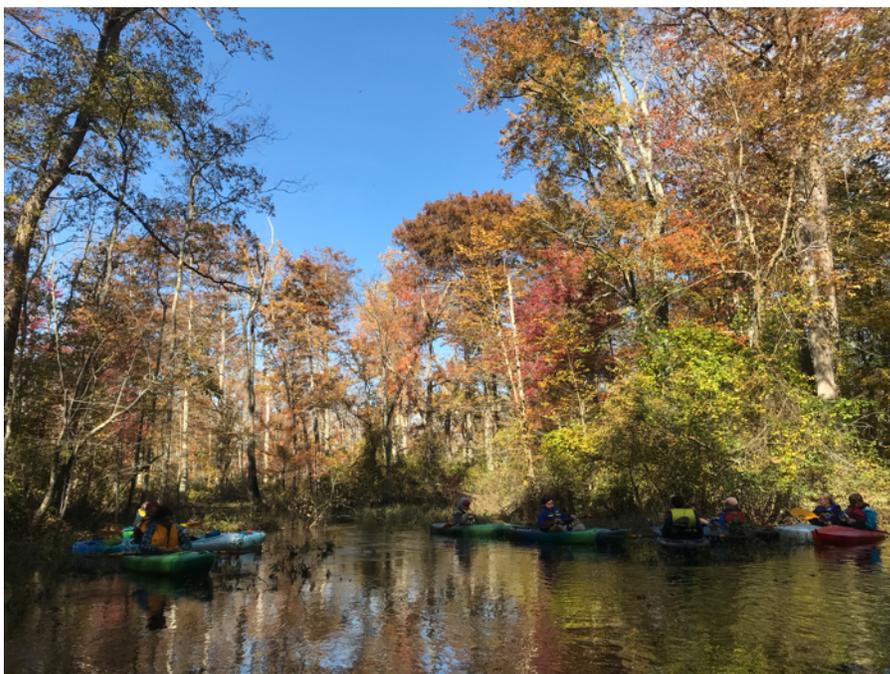
Fall blooming white Turtleheads



Tiny white flower of fall blooming Smartweed



Bright red berries of Spicebush



Trash Pickup September 25

The next trash pickup will be held September 25. Volunteers will meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of the Rappahannock Community College, Glens Campus.

Earlier this year, VDOT provided new procedures for picking up trash which will be reviewed prior to beginning the pickup. Some of these safety tips warn volunteers not to pick up anything sharp and never to walk on the road or outside a guard rail. Volunteers will be provided with VDOT-issued orange safety vests, orange trash bags, and pick-up sticks.

During the previous pickup this spring, VDOT asked FODR not to collect trash around the bridge crossing Route 17 due to construction. Since construction will be finished by September 25, we will again include that location in the trash pickup.

For the past two trash pickups, volunteers recorded all the items collected in Clean Swell, an Ocean Conservancy app that records the trash collected. During the March 6 and April 24 trash pickups, FODR volunteers collected a total of 1,319 pieces of trash, weighing almost 450 pounds. Clearly, the trash pickups have a significant impact on cleaning up the environment.

Join FODR volunteers on September 25 for this important activity. Remember, every piece of trash collected is one less that might end up in the Dragon.

*See you
September 22
for the FODR General Meeting
and
September 25
for the Trash Pickup*

**Friends of Dragon Run, Inc.
P. O. Box 882
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