



The Dragon's Tale

PO Box 882
Gloucester, VA 23061

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September 2017

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.

David Milby, Forester and Arborist

Please join us at the next Friends of Dragon Run General Meeting for a free, informative program about forestry and best practices for land stewardship that apply to land trusts like FODR.

Northern Neck Area Forester and FODR Board member, David Milby, will present the program. Come find out how Virginia might have looked in the 18th Century and the years between then and now, what "conservation" has meant to political leaders and others throughout the years, and much more!

David Milby brings expertise and a passion for trees and forests to FODR. He graduated from Rutgers University with a Bachelors Degree in Forest Management. He then worked nine years with a consultant forestry firm near Richmond, VA. He has held several positions with the Virginia Department of Forestry over the past 25 years. He is a Certified Forester as well as a Certified Arborist. David is a member of the Society of American Foresters, and he has served on the Board of Directors of the Friends of Dragon Run for over 10 years. He resides in Hartfield, Va.



The meeting will be held Wednesday September 27, 2017 at the Gloucester Public Library located at Main Street Center in Gloucester Courthouse. Program begins at 7 pm and is free and open to the public. Please join us and bring a friend!

PADDLE CREW WANTED FOR FALL 2017 SEASON

We are considering a Fall Paddle Season in late October, 2017. If we do that, would you be interested in serving as a crewmember on those trips? We are thinking about long weekends from 19 October through 22 October and 26 October through 29 October. You can choose the number of days you want to work and which days are best for you, and we will work you into the schedule. We will have two orientation days during the second week in October to acquaint you with how the trips are run and what we expect of crewmembers.

If you would like to sign up or get more information, contact Janice Moore no later than September 27, by emailing her at jrmoore27@gmail.com or calling 703-217-0610.

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Roadside Trash Pickup September 30 9:00 AM

Meet in the parking lot of
Rappahannock Community College
in Glenss.

For more information, contact
Hugh Markham at
hughr.markham@gmail.com



FODR IS GOING DIGITAL.
SEE PAGE 6 FOR DETAILS.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Janice Moore

Another Successful Paddle Season

Thanks to Teta Kain and our dedicated volunteer crew members, we had a very successful spring paddle season, and most of this issue is devoted to celebrating that success. I hope that you will enjoy all the photos of the groups of paddlers that are featured in this newsletter.

You will see in Teta's article that we have been working hard to find another water trail on the Dragon, and we are preparing a landing a few miles south of Mascot. Many thanks to Robert Gibson for letting us use his property. Soon, we hope to announce October dates for a fall paddle season. If we proceed, we will need talented members to join us again as volunteer crew for these paddles, and I hope to hear from many of you. As Teta also mentions in her article, she will NOT be retiring from our paddles but will continue as our expert guide, with the rest of us doing all the other jobs that she's had for so many years. For the fall paddles, we expect to meet paddlers at Food Lion in Saluda and also to sell T-shirts and hats BEFORE the paddle once again.

Thanks to David Milby, who will present the program at our next general meeting. David has been a great resource for your Board as we have deliberated our stewardship responsibilities and ordered updated management plans for our parcels. I do hope that you can join us on September 27 at 7 pm for a valuable educational experience so that you can understand and appreciate the decisions that we have reached.

Be sure to keep track of what's going on with the fall paddle season and other news by checking our website <http://www.dragonrun.org/> frequently. Remember that you can now pay your membership dues and also order and pay for our new Dragon Run tee shirts and new hats using our website and PayPal. And follow us on Facebook!!

Don't forget to send me an email at President@dragonrun.org, 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!

Thanks and Farewell to Wanda Eberle

We owe a lot to Wanda Eberle, a long-time FODR member and Membership Chair. Many years ago, she agreed to step in and handle all the details associated with membership in FODR. She worked tirelessly to learn about all our members and create a database that could be used to track their contact information and dues payments. Wanda kept us all aware of what was going on with our members, including when a founding member was ill or had died. Alas, Wanda feels the need to devote more time to other things at this point, and we're transferring the dues tracking responsibilities to our Treasurer, as she has recommended. We will always be grateful, Wanda, and we wish you the best always.

Memorials

Founding member John Brown "Cotton" Kimberly III, 84, died Saturday, March 25th.

Long-time member, John Levy, died April 2nd.

FODR appreciates all the memorial contributions that we receive.

THE 2017 SPRING PADDLE SEASON *by Teta Kain*

Spring 2017 was another great paddle trip season. Two hundred sixty-nine people made reservations in the first 24 hours after registration opened! A week and a half before the first trip took place, every one of the 360 available spaces had been reserved. Inclement weather forced us to cancel five paddle days, but during the remaining 25 days we escorted a total of 278 participants down the river. Part of that high attendance rate could be attributed to the fact that we started April 14, a week later than usual, so that we would not have so much rain and low temperatures at the beginning of our paddle season. This year, we were off to a huge start when all 12 participants showed up on each of the first four days.

Although it was not really warm this April, weather was good and we enjoyed easy and comfortable trips. Unlike 2016, when foliage was very slow to emerge, this year spatterdock blooms were already beginning to open, and silky dogwood leaves were unfolding right from the first day. A few days later, the spiky flowers of summer-sweet were everywhere. Featherfoil was very much in evidence along the edges of the channel and emerging bald cypress needles draped gracefully over us from the first trip.

Early on, low water levels had us wondering just how long we'd be able to continue the trips. The ubiquitous smart weed (*Polygonum* sp.) was seriously impeding our progress through several areas and the kayaks dragged on the river bottom in a few places. Just in the nick of time, however, it rained on April 24 and 25, filling the river up nicely. We were able to do every trip for the next nine days, but water levels again began to drop. Rains came again during the first part of May, causing cancellation of trips for another three days, but we did manage to squeeze in a few more paddles. Our very last day (14 May) was perfect - mild wind, mild temperatures, and high water.

The beavers were around, as usual. This year we had to install six "gates" on the dams for easy passage. As the water level rose after rainy days, we were able to skirt around some gates, but there were a couple of beavers with an "attitude" and even though we made life easier for them by replacing the gates after everyone went through, a couple of the cheeky critters still persisted in stuffing all manner of sticks, grasses, thorny bushes, and huge logs in front of and behind our gates.

Even though it is tough and tricky work, most crew members love to get out of their kayaks and clear the way around the dams. It can be a sporty adventure. Sharp gnawed-off sticks, wickedly deep holes, vines with plenty of thorns, poison ivy, heavy logs that are quite slippery, and all manner of floating vegetation and glop make for a very tricky, and sometimes painful, experience if one makes a misstep or doesn't exit or re-enter the kayak properly. Still, one feels rather heroic when successful. All those hazards, however, are more than we want our guests to contend with, so we ask them always to remain in their kayaks while the crew clears the way.

This year 36 people signed on as volunteers, eight more than last year. We owe the success of our trips to their hard work. Crew members take care of every detail to ensure participants' safety, comfort, and enjoyment. They assist with every facet of the day's activities. They rise very early in the morning and drive long distances to arrive for duty by 8:30 a.m. Most days they don't get back home until 4 or 5 p.m. Collectively, we estimate that our crew members drove about 12,250 miles. And that's not counting the work/orientation days preceding the actual 30-day paddle season. Crew members receive no compensation for gas, time worked, meals, or expenditures for personal equipment or services.

Sadly, some crew members did not return, but we gained eight new members: Anne Atkins, Tom Cramer, Meo Curtis, Jeff Deschamps, Boone Ferrebee, Katie Hawks, Kevin Howe, and Roger Weakley. Others on the volunteer team for Spring 2017 season were Bob and Emily Anderson, Mark Boland, Becky Day, Bob Hancock, Reyn Kinzey, Anne Ducey-Ortiz, Gary Driscoll, Adrienne Frank, Don Gallagher, Tim Gilbert, John Jensen, Andy Lacatell, Anne Lankey, Janice Moore, Danny Ortiz, Jim Pettyjohn, Bruce Pully, Davis Rhodes, Bernard Robins, Debbie Rollins, Lois Spencer, Kearfott Stone, Wayne Turner, Jerry Varner, and Jeff Wright. Special mention is extended to Bob Hancock who is our "maintenance man extraordinaire" who is often called upon to repair boats, construct ramps, service vehicles, and equipment, and myriad other tasks that none of the rest of us can quite manage to figure out, and he always does it with a smile. And, as always, many thanks to Martha Graham, who handled all the reservations with grace and efficiency.

We were also fortunate to have the assistance of members Louise and Phil Friday of Fridays Marine, who donated new life vests and helped us get discounted prices on new paddles and even more life vests and other equipment that we

(Continued on page 4)

needed to update our fleet at the beginning of the season.

We are often asked about extending the paddle period, but several obstacles stand in our way. Perhaps the biggest hurdle is that the Dragon gets choked with vegetation and the water levels drop so low that we can't get from Big Island to Mascot, and the beavers have a heyday building dams. We have been exploring other parts of the river both above and below the present Big Island/Mascot route, and we have found a route that we are preparing for a fall paddle season in late October. Please watch our website and our Facebook page for news about dates and how to make reservations!

This was my last year serving as paddlemaster – but I'm not retiring completely. Conducting the trips has been an exciting and very rewarding facet of my life. I estimate that I have escorted at least 3000 people down the river over 15 years or so. It has been rewarding to witness the steady expansion of the program and the increased interest by many paddlers from all over the state and beyond. In the future, other FODR members will oversee the general management and operation of our paddle trips. I'll be back as nature interpreter and general trip leader. Now, that's my idea of a dream job and I snapped it up faster than you can say "Dragon Run!"



TOP LEFT TO RIGHT—MAY 1st, 2nd, 6th and MAY 9th PADDLING GROUPS.



TOP LEFT TO RIGHT—APRIL 15th, 19th, 21st, 22nd, 28th, and 30th.



We have been debating the wisdom of printing and mailing our newsletter for some time now. Lately, we've noticed that many non-profits with a conservation mission like FODR have decided to stop making and distributing paper copies of their newsletters. For a small organization like ours, costs are also an important factor in our decision because it's one of our largest expenses—over \$300 to print and mail each issue. So, FODR's board has decided to follow that

lead and only send electronic copies of the newsletter, beginning in 2018. If we have an email address for you, you will see the newsletter in your email inbox rather than in your mailbox or at the post office. We realize that a few of our members do not have any access to a computer, and so we will send a printed copy to those members. You can help us by giving us your current email address when one of our volunteers calls you. You can also contact Deb Rollins at debcrollins@gmail.com to give us your current email address. Many thanks for helping to save a Dragon!

Friends of Dragon Run Hats and T-Shirts

Ball Cap and T-Shirts—\$20.00 each
 Bucket Hat -\$25.00
 \$5.00 for shipping
 Go online to order yours today!
www.dragonrun.org



Join, pay your dues,
 and shop on line!
 Go to dragonrun.org
 Click
 "Donate" button!



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



Be sure your Amazon account is set up to donate to FODR! For every purchase you make, Amazon will donate to FODR!

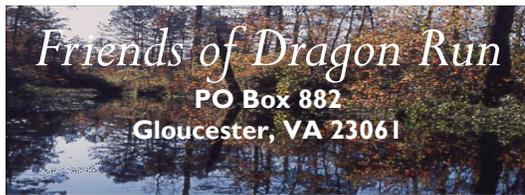


IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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www.facebook.com/FriendsofDragonRun





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

FODR Activities for 2017

September

9-10 Mathews Market Days
23 Deltaville Farmer's Market
9:00 AM
24 Boots & Barbeque—Grove
Mount Estate, Warsaw—noon
25 Business Meeting
27 General Meeting—Gloucester
Library 7:00 PM
30 Highway Trash Pickup-
Rappahannock Community
College 9:00 AM

October

7 Fall Picnic-Big Island-noon

14 Fall Picnic Rain Date-
Big Island-noon
14 Newsletter Deadline
23 Business Meeting

November

8 Annual Meeting-Gloucester
Library-7:00 PM
13 Business Meeting
18 Highway Trash Pickup-
Rappahannock Community
College 9:00 AM

Did You Know?

When FODR members choose to receive the Dragon's Tale electronically, they reduce paper waste, as well as printing and mailing costs. Those saved funds are redirected toward our primary mission of the preservation, protection and encouragement of the wise use of the Dragon Run and its watershed.

Contact debcrollins@gmail.com
to sign up for FODR e-newsletter.