



Friends of the Appomattox River
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2013 Annual Report

Submitted 24 January 2014 by William A. Shear

The mission of the Friends of the Appomattox River is to preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Appomattox River watershed by promoting stewardship, education, responsible recreation and improved river access.

Membership Report

Individuals, families, businesses and organizations, who are in agreement with its mission and willing to subscribe to the Bylaws and Policies of the Friends of the Appomattox River, are eligible for membership upon payment of dues.

According to our membership chairman, Chuck Green, 11 new members joined in 2013 for a total membership of 57. Of that number, 46 are family memberships, five are individual memberships, five are lifetime or honorary members, and one (Town of Farmville) is a business membership.

Treasurer's Report

The organization's fiscal year is January 1 to December 31.

Beginning Balance:		\$3,943.01
<u>Income</u>		\$1,080.00
Dues	\$760.00	
Fundraisers	320.00	
<u>Expenses</u>		\$ 771.18
Operating	\$299.00	
Activities	37.63	
Outreach	434.55	
Ending Balance:		\$4,251.83

We are thus in better financial shape than at the beginning of the year. In part this might be attributed to an increase in membership.

Accomplishments

2013 was, as usual, a busy year for the Friends of the Appomattox River.

STEWARDSHIP

The Stewardship Committee, led by Lee Woodruff, arranged four scheduled river/lake cleanup efforts. The focus of the cleanups was on the Appomattox River, Buffalo Creek, Briery Creek Reservoir, Sandy River Reservoir and Wilcks Lake.

The Fall cleanup on October 5 had 12 volunteers who collected approximately 628 pounds of trash, and was part of the International River Cleanup and Clean Virginia Waterways effort. The Spring cleanup on April 20 had 15 volunteers who collected 475 pounds of trash. The June 1 cleanup involved partnering with High Bridge State Park and the Friends of High Bridge in celebrating National Trails Day and Clean the Bay Day. An excess of 500 pounds of trash and tires were retrieved from the Appomattox River by 9 volunteers. These three cleanups collected a total of approximately 1,600 pounds of trash from our local waterways near Farmville and involved 36 volunteers.

During the week of September 23, eight members of the Navy Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) team cleared and cleaned up obstructions from the Appomattox River from the Main Street (Rt. 45) bridge to the Jamestown area below High Bridge. Alecia-Daves-Johnson served as the FAR liaison to the Navy EOD team.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trip chairman Damien Fehrer, with assistance from Corson Spencer and Woodfin and Ann Ligon, arranged several outings on the Appomattox River and Farmville Blueway. On April 13th a large group enjoyed a paddle along the upper Appomattox between Routes 618 and 626. Class I rapids and a couple of shallow falls added some excitement to the adventure. On May 25th we paddled the Farmville Blueway. On July 13th a small group drove over to Petersburg to paddle the lower Appomattox from the Chesdin Lake Dam to Ferndale Park. The lower half of that trip took the group along a section of the old bateaux canal. On November 2nd, a large group enjoyed a paddle on the Appomattox River from the abutments of the old Jamestown Bridge to High Bridge — upstream, then downstream. It was a mild, sunny day with plentiful fall color along the river – a great way to end the 2013 paddling season. Special thanks to the Ligon family for allowing us to access the river from their property.

PROGRAMS

Noelle Prince Shear led the Programs Committee. Four programs were presented to the membership during 2013. On March 30, a Paddle Safety program at Lancer pool was conducted by Rena Koesler and Lee Woodruff. Ten members attended and learned how to right capsized canoes, how to re-enter a righted canoe and various rescue techniques. It was a great success and some felt it worth repeating fairly regularly. On May 9, Longwood

biologist David Buckalew presented a program at the Mill Room on his water quality testing research in the area waterways to a full house (about 28 FAR and community members). It was very well received and was followed by great refreshments from the Social Committee. On October 4, Rachel Goodman of the biology department at Hampden-Sydney College gave a very interesting talk on the fauna that live in the vicinity of our local waterways. She spoke at the Mill Room, also to a good audience that included non-FAR members. Her talk covered interesting research on the virus that is appearing in turtle populations, in which she is involving her students. Finally, on October 4, Will Daniel of Chesterfield presented his photography and experiences in preparing his new book on the James River. Members were able to purchase signed copies of Mr. Daniel's previous book on Virginia rivers, which includes a number of photographs and stories of the Appomattox River.

Each of our programs was accompanied by Refreshments arranged by Beth Woodruff and the members of the Social Committee. They also worked to produce a splendid Christmas party hosted at the home of Woodfin and Anne Ligon, where members enjoyed a view of High Bridge from the second floor landing of the house.

OUTREACH

Chuck Green sent photos and narratives to the Farmville Herald to keep the public abreast of the activities of the Friends. He also sent articles to the paper to announce our public programs. The outreach committee coordinated FAR's effort at the Heart of Virginia Festival, where we had a booth with information on FAR and the Farmville Blueway. Birdhouses, T-shirts, books and bandanas were offered for sale.

BLUEWAY

The Farmville Blueway Committee consists of Chairman Damien Fehrer, with Chuck Green and Jim Davis.

In 2012 the Blueway Committee:

- defined the Farmville Blueway,
- developed a new Blueway Project Outline,
- drafted a brochure and map, and
- determined where signs may be necessary at Wilcks Lake and Riverside Park.

These accomplishments were reviewed with the Board of Directors in its November 13, 2012 meeting. The committee informed the Board that development, promotion and maintenance of the Farmville Blueway would require substantial funding and an on-going commitment from the FAR and the Town of Farmville. Approval to proceed was requested and received from the Board.

2013 was another productive year for the Blueway Committee. The Committee determined project costs and prepared a budget. The Blueway map, signs, brochure and budget were reviewed with FAR's Board of Directors with a request for comments and suggestions.

Robin Sedgwick, Joe McCutchen and Lee Woodruff assisted the Committee with improvements to the Blueway brochure and map. A presentation was prepared for the Farmville Town Council and a meeting was requested with them.

A presentation on the Farmville Blueway Project was made to the Farmville Town Council on May 8, 2013. At the conclusion of the presentation, the Blueway Committee requested approval from the Town to proceed with the Farmville Blueway Project. An endorsement of the FAR and their work to promote and maintain the Appomattox River Watershed was received from Town Manager, Gerry Spates. A vote was held and the Town Council unanimously approved the FAR's plans to develop and promote the Farmville Blueway. Project plans made the front page of *The Farmville Herald*.

Following approval from the Town Council, three meetings were conducted with Mr. Spates and Proctor Harvey of Harvey Design Land Architects. In those meetings, the Committee reviewed its plans for the Farmville Blueway; the FAR's commitment to the Farmville Blueway Project; the Committee's schedule for implementation; draft maps, brochures and signs; available funding; and requests for assistance from the Town. On September 27, Mr. Spates gave the Committee the go-ahead to proceed with its plans to develop and promote the Blueway and agreed to underwrite the costs incurred by Harvey Design Land Architects for any design work required to ensure that the signs and brochures conform to the town's design theme. He also agreed to provide town resources to assist with trail upgrades and installation of the signs. HDLA is currently in the process of finalizing markups for the signs and brochure.

The Committee also met with Cindy Morris, Town Planner, to discuss the potential for grant funding for the Farmville Blueway Project. In that meeting, it was determined that DCR's Recreational Trails Program grant would be a good match for the project. Funds from that grant can be used to pay expenses already incurred.

The next phase of the project will involve placing a trail map at Wilcks Lake, printing a few smaller maps for placement at the visitor center, library and Appomattox River Co, and printing brochures for placement at the same locations.

The final phase of the project will entail manufacture and placement of a permanent Farmville Blueway sign, manufacture and placement of smaller directional signs, and upgrades at the Wilcks Lake portage and Buffalo Creek access point above the Third Street Bridge. The Committee hopes to complete the Blueway Project this winter and conduct a "grand opening" for the Blueway Trail this spring.