

**Friends of the Appomattox River, Year 2014**  
Report compiled by Al Lookofsky, President

Call to order at approximately 7:00 pm

**OFFICERS' REPORTS**

President's Report (Al Lookofsky)

Current Board: Al Lookofsky, Joe McCutchen, Lee Woodruff\*, Noelle Prince-Shear\*, Woody Ligon, Sam Martin, Robin Sedgwick, Faye Green\*, and Chuck Green\*.

\*Terms expire

New Board nominations: Sandy Willcox, Lee Woodruff, and Marianne Dennison (all 3-year terms), and Ron Heinemann (2-year term). Note: All board nominations were elected by the membership.

Vice-President's Report (Joe McCutchen)

Committee sign-up:

Community Outreach Committee:

Function: Plan and conduct events to promote FAR's mission.

Board Liaison:

Volunteers: Betsy Lookofsky, Elizabeth McCutchen, John Watson

Field Trips Committee:

Function: Plan and conduct field trips.

Board Liaison: Ron Heinemann, Woody Ligon

Volunteers: Phil Bailey

Program Committee:

Function: Plan and conduct programs.

Board Liaison: Robin Sedgwick

Volunteers: Bill Shear, Noelle Shear

Social Committee:

Function: Plan and conduct social activities.

Board Liaison: Marianne Dennison

Volunteers: Sandy Heinemann, B A Klein, Sherry Swinson, Wailee Watson

Special Projects Committee:

Function: Plan and conduct special projects.

Board Liaison:

Volunteers: Alecia Daves-Johnson, Damien Fehrer (volunteered by AD-J)

Stewardship Committee:

Function: Plan and conduct clean-up and maintenance activities.

Board Liaison: Sandy Willcox, Lee Woodruff  
Volunteers: Tom Dennison, Chuck Green, Faye Green, Beth Woodruff

Treasurer's Report (Lee Woodruff)

FAR Annual Treasurer's Report for 2014

Beginning Balance: \$4,251.83\*

INCOME

Dues	655.00	
Fundraisers	275.00	
HOV Sales, Memorial Gift		\$930.00

EXPENSES

Operating	408.00	
Liability Insurance, Incorporation Fee, Moon Star Renewal, P.O. Box Rental		
Activities	149.18	
Navy Food Expense, Corona Hand Saw, Chain Saw Sharpened		
Outreach	1,650.56	
HOV Booth, Blueway Signs (Large Sign at lake, Direction Signs), Blueway Graphic Design Fee, Blueway Construction Materials, 500 Blueway Brochures		\$2,207.74

Ending Balance \$2,974.09

\*Includes Gift Fund of \$350.00

Membership Report (Chuck Green)

Members: 62

Family members: 26 x 2 > 52

Single members: 9x1 >9

Business members: 1x1>1

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62

New members in 2014: 14

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Community Outreach Committee**

Heart of Virginia (Al and Betsy Lookofsky) The one-day event is our best money maker as we sell Bluebird houses, T-shirts, Bandanas, and Appomattox River maps. The building and assembly of the Bluebird houses has also become a popular social event. We are grateful to John and Judy Jamieson for their hospitality at their house and workshop.

Historical Society Program (Damien Fehrer) This was a very successful program presented by Damien, who will be finalizing this report so that it can be given again as requested.

### **Program Committee** (Noelle Prince Shear)

#### 2014 FAR PROGRAMS

On September 25, Ed Lowry, of the Hampden-Sydney Biology Department, spoke to the Friends of the Appomattox River and members of the community on "Rivers as Biological Highways: the good news and the bad news." Ed specializes in the ecology of invasive species and, as a native son, knows the waterways in our part of Virginia well. He brought samples of invasive plants and stirred many questions and discussion from the packed-to-capacity audience. His talk took place at the Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library, which proved to be an excellent venue in terms of size and technical support.

The following month, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, Louise Finger of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and her colleague Dan Michaelson, from the Bureau of Wildlife Resources, spoke to the FAR and community on topics related to river management. Louise is a Stream Restoration Biologist. She provided an informative report on the effects of degraded rivers and streams, and a fascinating account of a restoration project recently completed at Buena Vista.

Dan's portion of the evening was devoted to explaining how fish populations are maintained, primarily for sport fishing. He works in the Farmville area regularly. Both speakers generated many questions at the end of their talk and the discussions continued informally during the social period that followed.

## **Social Committee** (Marty Dorrill)

The three members of our committee are Marianne Dennison, Martha Powers, and me, Marty Dorrill. We operate without a chairman.

Our committee has been loosely involved in 4 very nice events this year:

1. August 29, Faye and Chuck Green hosted a large group (around 40) for a delightful Potluck Picnic, at their home on First Avenue. The Greens provided a main dish of pork loin (and all sorts of other things) and everyone else brought side dishes. We of the committee had very little to do, except to enjoy the friendly atmosphere, Faye's decorative skills, the pool, and conversations inside and outside.
2. September 25, at the Farmville-Prince Edward Library, Noelle Prince Shear sponsored a most interesting lecture by Prof. Edward Lowry, entitled "Rivers as Biological Highways: The Good News and The Bad News". Our committee helped Noelle with refreshments afterwards, with an autumn motif.
3. October 23, Mel's Mill. We heard an interesting double lecture by Louise Finger (Stream Restoration Biologist with the Va. Dept. of Game and Inland Waters), and Dan Michaelson (from Bureau of Wildlife Resources). Our committee provided refreshments afterwards.
4. December 6, Potluck Dinner at the home of Bill and Marty Dorrill on Fayette St. Everyone brought delicious food for 42 people. Afterwards, we sang Christmas carols around the piano.

## **Field Trip Committee** (Damien Fehrer)

(Damien Fehrer, Chair; Chuck Green; Faye Green; Woodfin Ligon; Tom Dennison)

Members and friends of the FAR enjoyed a number of outings this year. The highlight was our inaugural float on the Farmville Blueway. Eighteen members and guests were joined by Gerry Spates, Town Manager; Helen Person, the Director of Downtown Farmville; and Ken Woodley, Editor of *The Farmville Herald*. The weather was perfect, the water flowed swiftly, and spirits remained high throughout the trip. Our 2014 field trips are listed below.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>
May 24	Farmville Blueway inaugural float	21
June 14	App. River under High Bridge – Taylor to Ligon property	21
Sept. 6	App. River – Lake Chesdin Dam to Petersburg Canal	7
Oct. 18	Farmville Blueway	11
Nov. 8	App. River – Rt. 609 to 608	3



### **Stewardship Committee (Lee Woodruff)**

#### 2014 FAR Stewardship Committee Annual Report

During 2014, the Friends of the Appomattox River participated in three scheduled river/lake cleanup efforts. The focus of the cleanups included the Appomattox River, Buffalo Creek, Briery Creek Reservoir, Sandy River Reservoir and Wilck's Lake.

The Fall cleanup on September 13 had 13 volunteers who collected approximately 628 pounds of trash from the above locations, and was part of the International River Cleanup and Clean Virginia Waterways effort. The Spring cleanup on April 12 had 14 volunteers who collected approximately 557 pounds of trash from the above locations.

During the week of September 22-26, members of the Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team cleared and cleaned up selected sites on Buffalo Creek and the Appomattox River. Alecia Daves-Johnson served as the FAR liaison to the Navy EOD team.

### **Special Projects Committee (Damien Feher)**

Blueway (Damien Fehrer, Chair; Chuck Green; Faye Green; Jim Davis)

The Blueway Project is nearing completion. Early this year, the Blueway Committee completed the Farmville Blueway map, signs, and brochure with the help of Harvey Design Land Architects, the firm contracted by the Town of Farmville to manage the Town's design theme. The Town underwrote part of these costs. In March, orders were placed with Farmville Printing and Farmville Signs to print the brochure, maps and signs.

In April, the Farmville Public Works Department:

- upgraded the Buffalo Creek access point above the 3rd St. Bridge and the take-out on the west end of Wilck's Lake by surfacing them with coarse sand.
- constructed a set of wooden crib steps between the western shore of Wilck's Lake and the Sarah Terry Trail.
- installed the blueway sign near the Wilck's Lake boat ramp.

The steps on the west shore of Wilck's Lake were requested by Gerry Spates. He was concerned that someone may fall on the dirt path. The Town underwrote the labor and equipment costs for these projects. The Friends of the Appomattox River reimbursed the Town for the construction materials necessary to build the steps and install the blueway sign.

The Blueway Committee installed directional signs at the lakeside portage entrance, the Sarah Terry Trail portage to Buffalo Creek, the "Y" in Buffalo Creek, and the Buffalo Creek take-out upstream of the Third Street Bridge. Destination signs were placed at the Buffalo Creek take-out and the Riverside Park boat ramp.

Posters and brochures were placed at the Farmville Town Office, the Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library, Virginia's Heartland Regional Visitor Center, and the Appomattox River Company.

On May 24 the Friends of the Appomattox River conducted its inaugural float on the Blueway. This was preceded by a short ceremony that included a brief review of some of the work that went into development and promotion of the Blueway and recognition of the people and groups whose contributions made the paddle trail a reality. The ceremony was concluded with the presentation of a Certificate of Lifetime Honorary Membership to the Town of Farmville. Members of the Friends and their guests were joined by Gerry Spates, Town Manager; Mayor-elect David Whitus; Helen Person, the Director of Downtown Farmville; and Ken Woodley, Editor of *The Farmville Herald*.

Eighteen members and guests paddled the Blueway on the 24th. Gerry Spates, Helen Person, and Ken Woodley participated in the outing. The weather was perfect, the water flowed swiftly and spirits remained high throughout the trip. Thank you letters were mailed to Gerry Spates and Robin Atkins, Director of Public Works, after the inaugural ceremony.



The inaugural float made the front page of *The Farmville Herald* and was followed by an editorial the next week. The Friends of the Appomattox River should be proud of their role in the establishment of the Farmville Blueway.

Final Project Costs came to \$1488.10.

To complete the Blueway project the Blueway Committee needs to:

- update the FAR website with the latest Blueway brochure and map and articles from *The Farmville Herald*.
- work with the Town and County to post links to our updated website.

[Navy EOD Team's 2014 River Obstruction Clearance Project \(Alecia Daves-Johnson\)](#)



During the week of 21-26 September 2014, a ten-member team of Navy and Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Specialists, led by the USN Mobile Unit 2 Detachment, conducted training in the Appomattox River. This training benefitted the team as they achieved in-situ handling of natural materials, refined special techniques, and employed mechanical methods of lifting and removing heavy objects which simulated removal of diffused underwater mines. This training also gives the team leadership valuable experience working directly with civilian populations; often this aspect of the training can be the most entertaining.

The 2014 team was able to clear nine major obstructions from the river, working mostly from private properties in the section downstream of the Rt 45 'N. Main Street' bridge to a point upstream of High Bridge. Two satellite sites staged from Longwood Foundation property achieved the clearance of an obstruction which had begun causing severe erosion of the banks along Buffalo Creek and the clearance of recreational passage through an obstruction downstream of the confluence of Buffalo Creek and the Appomattox River. The team brought a Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) or 7-ton truck, which is an all-wheel drive all-terrain vehicle used for its incredibly low-g geared, low-torque pulling power and winching capabilities at the river's edge.

The previous work done by FAR to establish riparian buffers along Buffalo Creek and the Appomattox River has been so successful that passage on land to the obstructions is nearly impossible because of the thick woody growth. This presented a challenge for access to the obstruction in the Appomattox River. Due to the thick overgrowth, the MTVR could not access the obstruction from the Longwood property. Other impediments to full clearance of this obstruction include the proximity of parking lots full of windshields and vehicles, abrupt landscape features, and fixed plate glass windows on nearby dormitories which might not flex with the blast overpressure and could crack. Ironically, the first EOD Training site was staged from this same property in 1999, when there were grazed-field conditions, gentle rolling hills, and no residential dwellings in the proximity.

Both the private and public sectors of our community rallied behind this training by providing response to calls from alarmed citizens hearing the blasts, private landowner contacts, lodging, meals, and other comforts during the week.

- Town of Farmville provided Dispatcher support and project notification to surrounding localities, access to ice at their shop, on-call police assistance, munitions storage, and other support.
- Cumberland County Sheriff's Department provided landowner contact and general security services.
- Mel Smith generously provided berthing quarters in the Old Mill, the Town provided specialized quarters at Wilck's Lake Island, and Tom Walker provided

lodging on the first night of the training.

- Meals were provided by several establishments including Longwood Aramark, Merk's Place, Applebee's, Glenn Memorial Baptist Church – Special Blessings Committee, Granny B's Market, Retired Admiral Picotte & Sandy Whiteley, Riverside Café, Charley's Waterfront Café, The Fishin' Pig, and FAR.
- Longwood Health and Fitness Center and the Southside Family YMCA gave the team access to physical training and shower facilities.
- At least nine landowners offered access for staging: Longwood Foundation, Richard Cralle, Denise Penick and her farm manager Mark Estes, Don & Catherine Gantt, Alvin & Nancy Burks, Paul and Sarah Schember, George and Jeff Perkins, Hugh and Glenda Webb, Keith and Diana Massey.
- The FAR membership offered fantastic support. To name a few, Woodfin & Ann Ligon and Alecia Daves-Johnson assisted with scouting trips to identify work sites as well as landowner notification; Lee Woodruff and Damien Fehrer were instrumental in recommending potential work sites; Al Lookofsky worked with publicity and correspondence.
- *The Farmville Herald*, *The Southside Messenger*, and numerous local area radio stations provided public notice of the training and potential associated noise.

It is believed that 2014 was the 16<sup>th</sup> evolution of this Inland Waterways Training mission. This is important to the mission of FAR because the work accomplished by these teams has allowed for flood reduction, protection of river banks and less erosion of the river bottom, and improved recreational use. Sites of past work now demonstrate characteristics of bank and riverbed stabilization. The removal of major obstructions is especially valuable because as an organization of volunteers, it is unlikely that the FAR could achieve as efficient and effective results independently.

Following this year's evolution, an inquiry was received from a biology professor at Longwood University. This professor is interested in monitoring sediment transport at the obstructions before and after the removal techniques employed by this FAR-USN partnership. This research would also document the changing characteristics of the river channel, bed, and banks.

This team does not desire publicity for the training that they conduct here. The FAR sends the team a letter of commendation and prepares a 'humorous' plaque for their wall of fame at their shop. The collaborative partnership that FAR developed with this team is valuable and unique. The continued dedication of FAR to provide any assistance necessary to sustain the team's return in the future is vital.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Programs for younger members and/or families

The membership brainstormed ideas to encourage participation by our younger members and their families.(also to attract younger members). Some of the ideas suggested include:

- Inviting outdoor clubs from local schools and universities to participate in our activities.
- Hosting a progressive paddle on the Appomattox between 608 and 609. Event to include stopping at locations for eating and activities.
- Canoe safety and activities for kids at Wilck's Lake.
- Most unusual trash award.
- Hosting a booth at Demo Day at Wilck's Lake.

### **Adjourn**

Motions were made and seconded and the meeting adjourned about 8:45 PM. The refreshments and social were enjoyed by everyone.