

THE RIVER RUNS

News from the Cowpasture River Preservation Association

The Land Where The Cowpasture River Begins: Shaw's Fork

By Keith Carson, Editor



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- From the President
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People:

Thank YOU
Welcome

Shaw's Fork meanders through Highland County meadows framed by Shenandoah Mountain to the east and Shaw's Ridge to the west. It runs along the tree line on the right in this photo with Shenandoah Mountain in the background. Shaw's Fork travels about 10 miles south from its upland sources to the confluence with the Cowpasture River at the crossroads known as Liberty. This part of the northeast corner of Highland County includes some private land, especially in the bottoms, but much of the land is George Washington National Forest. John Shaw was one of the pioneer settlers of Highland County and appears in land sale records dating to 1756. He also appears in other Augusta County documents dating to 1751. Highland County was formed in 1847 and prior to that time was part of Augusta County for a time and then, Pendleton County and Bath County later. Augusta County was established in 1738 and extended from the Blue Ridge in the east all the way to the Mississippi River. It is likely that Shaw's Fork and Shaw's Ridge were named by or after John Shaw or one of his relatives. Historical information in this article is from Morton's History of Highland County Virginia, published in 1911. Story continues on pages 4 and 5.

CRPA

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www.cowpastureriver.org

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2012-2013

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From the President

Even though the calendar reads "Spring" its hard to believe it when you look outside. However, we occasionally catch a glimpse of a robin or see a crocus or snow bell peeping from a skiff of snow. Hopefully we can rest assured that before much longer the warm spring winds and April showers will be here. Most of us agree that its been a long, gray winter, but that will make us appreciate bright sunny summer days even more.

We have been busy though preparing for the upcoming "on the river days" As you read through the River Runs

you will see that we have scheduled several CRPA activities. Look for details on the rain barrel workshop, the annual CRPA business meeting at the Fairview Community Center, the summer picnic. In May or June we are hoping to sponsor a kayak/canoe float from the Evans Tract in McKinney Hollow (on the lower section of the Cowpasture) to Iron Gate . A social will follow, of course. We are still working on details, so please let us know if you are interested in joining us. The US Forest Service has big plans for the George Washington National Forest in the Cowpasture River watershed, so stay tuned as they unveil their plans. So our hibernation is almost behind us. Looking forward to seeing you folks on the river!

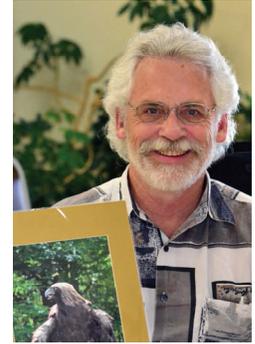


Allegheny County is finishing work on the Sharon Park and Public River Access facility on Nicelytown Road next to the Sharon Community Center. The boat ramp and other structures on the site including the picnic shelter are still under construction. The facility is expected to open later in 2013. There will also be restrooms at the site. The Allegheny County Parks and Recreation

office plans to rent the picnic shelter for public events. Folks who live along the Cowpasture River in the Sharon area have expressed concerns about this facility due to anticipated problems with noise, public drinking, trash disposal and other issues.

Executive Director Update

Although we did not see large snowfall events this year like those during the snowy winter of 2009-10, the current winter has still been one for the record books. We had 40 inches of snow just in the month of March in Blue Grass. Needless to say the recent spring-like weather has been most welcome. The higher than average snowfall this winter bodes well for groundwater and waterway levels as we start this growing season. As our expanded river monitoring program continues to build on last year's great start, we can be grateful that the Cowpasture is not experiencing the difficulties with algae blooms like those plaguing the Shenandoah River (see article on page 7). We have been fortunate to receive a donation from the local Covington-Allegheny chapter of the Isaak Walton League and we greatly appreciate the fact that this community group places such confidence in our organization. Please note the article on the book from Trout Unlimited, *My Healthy Stream* (page 7). This little paperback is packed with great information and tips on land and water conservation strategies. I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events!



It is lambing and calving time in the Highlands! There's nothing like a sheepskin bed for an afternoon nap.



Calves in a variety of colors are romping in farmers fields this spring hoping that the green grass will sprout soon. Last year in late March some of us were already mowing lawns!

Upcoming Events

Spring River Clean-Up at the Walton Track, Sunday, April 14, 2013, 2 PM. Meet at the Rt. 42, Crizers Gap Road intersection at 2 PM sharp to receive supplies and location assignment.



Annual Meeting, Saturday, May 4, 2013, 5 PM at the Fairview Community Center near Millboro Springs. The speaker will be Patrick Sheridan, District Ranger, US Forest Service, George Washington and Jefferson National Forest. See page 10 for registration form.

Rain Barrel Workshop, Tuesday, May 14, 6 PM at Dabney Lancaster Community College, Moomaw Center. Make your own rain barrel and learn about watershed conservation. Charge is \$40 per barrel. Register through the college non-credit course office, Judy Clark 540-863-2863 or jclark@dslcc.edu.

Check the website this summer for other events like canoe/kayak outings, nature walks and the Summer Picnic. For further information on any CRPA event, call Keith Carson at 540-474-2858, or email directorcrpa@gmail.com.

The Land Where the Cowpasture Begins (continued from page 1)



About 2.5 miles north of Route 250, Shaw's Fork passes under Route 616 on its way south to Headwaters. Shaw's Fork runs through a wide valley bordered by stands of hardwoods and evergreens.



In the northern section of Shaw's Fork, a few miles from its source, water drains from the western slope of Shenandoah Mountain and the eastern slope of Shaw's Ridge. At this point Shaw's Fork is a shallow stream running over shale bedrock and sandstone cobbles.



Looking south from the Rt. 250 bridge in Headwaters, Shaw's Fork carries a robust flow along the eastern side of Shaw's Ridge (on the right) headed south to the confluence with the Cowpasture River.

The Land Where the Cowpasture Begins (conclusion)



Looking west along Rt. 250, the historic village of Headwaters sits at the base of the western slope of Shaw's Ridge (in the background). In eastern Highland County, the village of Headwaters is located where Shaw's Fork crosses under Rt. 250, on the far side of the buildings shown in this photo. The Presbyterian Church on the left was built in 1897. The historic Miller's Store is in the complex of silver-roofed buildings across the street from the church. Shaw's cabin is thought to have been located on a hilltop just south of the village (to the left out of the field of view). In 1751, John Shaw was one of several local citizens appointed to help Wallace Estill build a road from his mill on the Bullpasture River to join an existing road several miles east at the Calfpasture River. In 1753 this road was extended from Estill's Mill west to William Wilson's Mill on Bolar Run, near the village of Bolar. This road, some 32 miles long from Bolar Run to the Calfpasture River, was the first public road in Highland County. The road crossed the Bullpasture River near Clover Creek using a ford that is still there today. The road then ran east alongside the Cowpasture River to Liberty where it turned northward and continued adjacent to Shaw's Fork on to the village of Headwaters. The road then crossed over Shenandoah Mountain and continued east to the Calfpasture River where it joined the road to Staunton.



Looking east from the bridge at Liberty, the Cowpasture River (left) joins Shaw's Fork (right) and continues on a course headed southwesterly to join the Bullpasture River about 10 miles downstream just south of Williamsville in Bath County. Too shallow to carry even a canoe or kayak most of the year, each of these waterways nonetheless provide habitat for fish and support our local wildlife. The abundant flora in the riparian buffers in the upper parts of these waterways help keep the water clear and free of excess nutrients.

People Matter: Thank You and Welcome New Members

After the first four months of the 2012-13 Annual Campaign (November, 2012 through March, 2013), members have generously given over \$26,000. This list includes dues and gifts received between November 16, 2012 and March 26, 2013. If you have not paid your dues yet for 2013, they are overdue.

Bedrock Patrons

Kent & Ellen Ford
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Nelson Hoy and Elizabeth Biggs
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Rhonda & Wayne Cross
Bill & Christie Hardbarger
Jean Howell
Jon & Kathy Jencks
Anna & Tom Lawson
Mary Powell-McDaniel
John & Doris Percy
David K. Peterson
Ron & Vicki Schoop

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John H. Turner, Jr.
Margaret & Michel Van Yahres
Walnut Tree Farm
Roland & Itsuko Walters

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Bonnie & Tim Carpenter
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Mike Goode
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Marlibba Farms
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Fred & Peggy Paxton
M.E. Plitt and H. Dickerson
Roy Simmons & Sally Branch
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Jimmie Houff

Lucius and Pam Bracey
Jim & Katherine Morris

Howard Newlon

Jim & Katherine Morris

Robert Slusser

Jim & Katherine Morris

Welcome New Members!

Bryan Bruns, Warm Springs
Thomas Lambdon, IV, Roanoke
Patricia Savage, Clifton Forge
Scott Williams, Mechanicsville
Sandra Denius Wright & Jacob Wright,
Covington

Junior Members

Nora Pichette
Gabriella Pichette
Michael Pichette

Did we get it wrong? We're sorry for any errors or omissions in this list. It covers those donations received since the last newsletter and through 3/26/13. We are happy to correct errors.

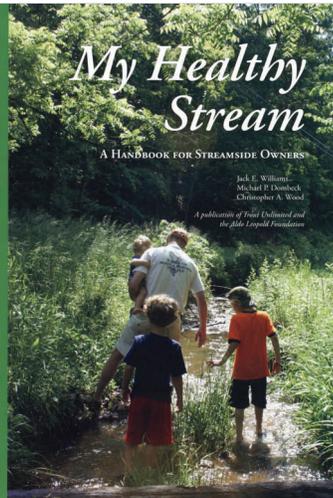
Email directorcrpa@gmail.com
or call 540-474-2858

Natural Resources Conservation Service Workshop Held in Warm Springs

On Thursday evening, March 28, at the Old Dairy in Warm Springs, Charles Ivins, of the NRCS made a presentation on federal conservation programs for landowners. He summarized the large number of programs available for conservation work on private land including stream bank stabilization, cover crops, livestock watering, tree planting, warm season grasses, invasive species control and many others. NRCS staff will come to your property and advise you on conservation programs that will benefit your property. Some programs have cost-share and others do not. Their technical support and suggestions are free of charge. You just have to call them to set up a visit. For Highland County residents, call Charles Ivins in the Verona office at 540-248-6218 or email him at charles.ivins@va.usda.gov. For Bath County residents contact Charles Simmons in the Lexington office at 540-463-7124 or email him at charles.simmons@va.usda.gov. This workshop was co-sponsored by the CRPA and the Virginia Hot Springs Preservation Trust.

Farewell to Dedicated Friends of the River

Robert Thompson Tavenner, 88, and Frances Lee Harris Tavenner, 87, passed away on December 8 and December 7 respectively. Robert and Lee were married for 62 years. He was a native of Clifton Forge and served in World War II. Bob came ashore with the D-Day invasion force as one of the 238th Combat Engineers group. His father was William Oscar Tavenner, a pharmacist and former mayor of Clifton Forge. Bob attended the University of Virginia and retired from The Life Insurance Company of Virginia as a senior vice-president. He was an avid hunter and also loved to fish the Cowpasture River. The Tavenner's river camp was north of Clifton Forge adjacent to Route 42 and has played host to several generations of Tavenner children. Lee was a native of Newport News, Virginia, attended Mary Washington College and received her degree in nursing from the University of Virginia. Bob and Lee attended many CRPA meetings and picnics over the years and treasured days spent at their river camp with family and friends. Their families hope to continue the Tavenner traditions at their Cowpasture River camp.



BOOK REVIEW This wonderful book contains chapters on Celebrating Healthy Streams; Thinking Like A Watershed; Everything Trout Need; Keeping an Eye on Stream Condition; Bugs, Frogs, and Water Quality; Riparian Areas: Streamside Habitat; Healing Troubled Waters; Stopping Invasive Species; Dealing with Extreme Weather: Floods and Drought; and Planning for Stream Health. Individual copies can be ordered through the Trout Unlimited website at www.tu.org/about-us/marketplace/, or from the Aldo Leopold Foundation at www.aldoleopold/books/. Discounts are available for bulk orders. Contact Jack Williams at jwilliams@tu.org for further information on this excellent publication.

Shenandoah River Algae Problems Impair Recreational Use

According to a recent article in the Harrisonburg Daily News-Record by Candace Sipos, “the Shenandoah River has become the poster child for nutrient pollution in a free-flowing river”. So said Jeff Kelble head of the advocacy group Shenandoah Riverkeeper. He is looking to get the river included on the EPA’s list of impaired rivers for algae blooms. Much of the river is already on the EPA’s impaired list, but for reasons other than algae problems. Kelble once led fishing tours on the river in the late 1990s and noticed that algae blooms became a problem starting in 2002 when a four-year drought ended. Every year since then, the river has been under an algae bloom of some kind. Although there is no evidence that the algae is harmful to humans, it is a nuisance that causes the river to smell like sewage. Some of the algae covers the river bottom making it very slippery, while clumps of algae tangle fly fishing lines and lures making fishing nearly impossible. If a river is designated as impaired for recreational use, that is a violation of water quality standards and the problems must be addressed and corrected. If the EPA decides against listing the river for its algae problems, Kelble may appeal that decision in court. Monitoring of nutrient levels in the Cowpasture in the future will provide an early warning on rising levels and can help prevent future algae problems.

2013 Virginia Legislature Looks To Address River Issues

Senator Chad Petersen (D) introduced a bill SB 737 that passed out of the Agricultural Committee and went to the Senate floor for a full vote. This bill was initiated by a canoeing/kayaking organization.

SB737 read:

Navigation of freshwaters by nonmotorized vessels.

The bays, rivers, streams, and creeks of the Commonwealth, excluding legal and permanent impoundments and tidal waters, shall be open to navigation by nonmotorized vessels for purposes of recreation between sunrise and sunset. This section shall apply notwithstanding the status of the bay, river, stream, or creek as navigable or nonnavigable or the public or private ownership of the adjoining banks. This section shall not be construed to allow navigation on portions of bays, rivers, streams, or creeks where prohibited by local, state, or federal laws or regulations for purposes of conservation or safety.

A. No person shall be liable for civil or criminal trespass for travel upon the rivers, streams, or creeks within the Commonwealth if the travel consists solely of floating in or upon the water in a nonmotorized vessel for purposes of recreation. Nothing in this section shall be construed to change existing ownership rights in real property, to permit travel on adjacent banks or wading upon the streambed, to permit hunting or fishing on land or waters where the same is otherwise prohibited, or to allow travel upon portions of rivers, streams, or creeks where prohibited through exercise of the legislative or rulemaking authority of local, state, or federal authorities for reasons of conservation or safety.

B. This section shall apply only to rivers, streams, or creeks of the second order or larger. Streams of the second order are defined as those formed by the confluence of two streams of the first order. Streams of the first order are those indicated by the device of a solid blue line on United States Geological Survey topographic quadrant maps at a scale of 1:24,000.

This bill was defeated by a 21:18 vote, but you can see how close this bill came to passing in the Senate.

One result of the recent Jackson River case is likely to be that sportsmen's groups will continue to lobby their legislators to pass legislation to increase legal access to Virginia's waterways. The issue of legal access to the state's waterways is currently very ambiguous since the fishermen sued in the Jackson River case appeared to be following the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries recommendations for state fishing areas.

Sen. Creigh Deeds (D), also sponsored legislation regarding Virginia's waterways. Since the recent Jackson River case fell in his district he was particularly interested in clarifying the matter of who owns the riverbeds of the state's waterways. This likely motivated him to introduce SB 880 which read:

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission shall cooperatively inventory those nontidal waters that (i) flow above state-owned bottomlands and (ii) may be used by the public for recreational activities, including fishing. Each agency shall make the inventory available to the public through its website. An agency decision regarding the listing of particular waters shall not constitute a legal determination or affect land ownership.

After constituent feedback, Sen. Deeds pulled his bill from consideration by the Agricultural Committee, however, not before telling the committee that what happened in the James River case was unjust because the fishermen were following the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries recommendations and that he felt a work group needed to be formed, with representatives from all stake-holders, to solve this problem of clarifying river access issues.

Nature Note

CRPA member and volunteer monitor Roger Barody recently snapped this picture of a river otter, *Lontra canadensis*, on the banks for the Cowpasture River at Fort Lewis Lodge. This critter ranges widely over North America from Alaska and Canada throughout the United States with the exception of parts of the southwest. The river otter was considered endangered west of the Blue Ridge in Virginia in 1978. In 1988 several otters from Louisiana were released in the Cowpasture River in the vicinity of Millboro Springs, and since then its numbers in Virginia's Highlands have increased significantly.



CRPA Annual Meeting Reservation Form

Saturday, May 4, 2013
Fairview Community Center — Rt. 39 at Rt. 629, west of Millboro Springs

- 5 p.m. Registration - Meet and Greet
- 6:00 p.m. Business Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- 7:15 p.m. After Dinner Program with Guest Speaker: District Ranger Patrick Sheridan of the George Washington/Jefferson National Forest speaking on "2013 Conservation Programs in the Cowpasture Watershed"

IMPORTANT - Make Your Dinner Reservation Early!
Space is limited at this location and once the room capacity has been reached we will have to stop accepting reservations.

Cost: \$15 per person, \$10 children 12 and under
 Please send this reservation form along with checks payable to CRPA by **April 20** to:
CRPA, PO Box 215, Millboro, VA 24460
 Or, **AT LEAST** email or phone in your intentions by **April 26 at the latest: directorcrpa@gmail.com, 540.474.2858**
(We must guarantee the number attending the dinner to those preparing the meal).

Name (as you wish it to appear on nametag)	Dinner Cost (\$15 adult, \$10 children)
Total	

Please see page 10 for PROXY if you are unable to attend meeting.

Complete the RESERVATION FORM on page 9 if you are attending the dinner meeting.

IF YOU CANNOT BE PRESENT AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, PLEASE RETURN THIS PROXY BY APRIL 20, 2013 ALONG WITH ANY UNPAID DUES* TO:

CRPA, PO Box 215, Millboro, VA 24460

PROXY

I am unable to attend the 2013 Annual Business Meeting and do hereby name the following Director (Circle one) to be my/our Proxy. I/we authorize him/her to vote for the new Directors and on any other business to come before the membership.

Ann Batley Elizabeth Biggs John Fowler Bill Hardbarger

Bill Jones Read Lunsford Dick Lynn Dave Peters Lou Robinson

George Snead, Jr Mike Whiteside Joe Wood Robin Wood

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Please Note: Unsigned proxies will be void. Unpaid dues will disqualify your vote.

But, in case you're behind on your dues.....

* Membership Categories:

- Member (\$20 minimum contribution for individual)
- River Guardian (\$50)
- Headwaters Circle (\$100)
- Watershed Steward (\$250)
- Wallawhatoola Society (\$500)
- Bedrock Patron (>\$500)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

**40th Anniversary Commemorative Merchandise
is now available on the CRPA Website.**

**Gift a friend or relative with a CRPA membership and a treat
such as a t-shirt, a mug or a tote bag.**



**T-Shirts
100% Cotton
Available
in
Green or Blue**

**\$15 each
(SM, MED, LG, XL, XXL)**



Large Cotton Tote Bags \$15



Mugs (14 ounce) \$10

**Visit the CRPA website at www.cowpastureriver.org, click on the
“Merchandise” link at the top right and follow the directions to place orders.**

Not a member? Want to help make another 40 years happen? Join today!

- \$20 Individual (minimum annual membership donation)
- \$50 River Guardian
- \$100 Headwaters Circle
- \$250 Watershed Steward Other _____
- \$500 Wallawhatoola Society
- >\$500 Bedrock Patron
- Junior Membership(s): 15 years and under; Cost—4 hrs./year volunteer service

NAME(S) As You Want Them Published

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- I prefer not to have my name published as a contributor.
- I am interested in becoming a volunteer river monitor
- I want to help save valuable resources, please send my newsletter by email



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