

THE RIVER RUNS

News from the Cowpasture River Preservation Association



Inside This Issue:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ø From the President | Ø Walton Tract Clean-Up |
| Ø Executive Assistant's Corner | Ø Water Safety Article |
| Ø Field Trips — Fall Hikes | Ø Atlantic Coast Pipeline Update |
| Ø River Float Highlights | Ø Thank You to Our Donors |
| Ø Online Auction | Ø Notice of Correction |
| Ø Water Quality Essay | Ø Join or Renew Your Membership |

This photo of the Cowpasture River running south through Berriedale Farms was taken by Nelson Hoy on October 2, 2010.

Please send us your best photos of the Cowpasture River and the wildlife that accompanies it.

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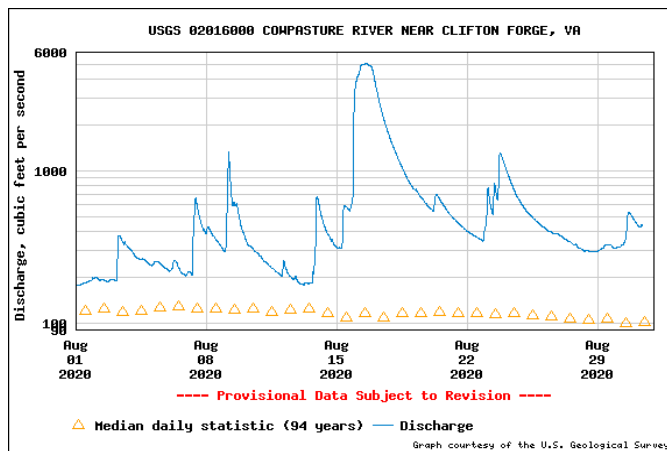
From the President

What a lot of change in just one year! I won't spend any time on the worldwide pandemic or its many consequences. Instead, what a difference from one year to the next on our river.

Last year at this point, we were five weeks into a drought. This year according to my nonscientific rain gauge, we've had more than 10 inches of rain in August alone.

And, for a scientific view, here's the USGS

data, which is available at https://nwis.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?cb_00060=on&cb_00065=on&format=gif_stats&site_no=02016000&period=&begin_date=2020-08-01&end_date=2020-08-31



Note how much above the median daily average we are this month.

Other examples of how different this year is from last year? Well, Mindy and I have a robust vegetable garden,

much greener because of the frequent rains. And, we've become active foragers in the local woodlands. How about this from an hour hike in our wet woodlands?

We found these chanterelle mushrooms along a public trail in the George Washington National Forest on the last weekend in August. What a treat!



Many thanks to our members for all you do for the Association. We've included our annual list of members in this issue along with my piece on water quality, a boating safety guide, and some great shots of some of our members. — Dick Brooks



Executive Assistant's Corner

As we head into the fall, we want to recognize all of our donors who have given to our association since the most recent annual campaign kicked off on November 1, 2019. Many thanks to those who are listed on pages 13-15, as well as to those donors who have requested that their names not be listed. We were fortunate to have several new donors this year who made contributions as a result of the Supreme Court press coverage that we received. We so appreciate having the support of these like-minded individuals from all over the country.



Even though we were unable to have our usual summer picnic due to Covid-19, we compensated for it by having a “social distancing” river float on July 25, 2020, the same date that the summer picnic would have been held. We managed to have a fun and rejuvenating time with each other, while still keeping our distance. 20 people came out to float the Cowpasture River, thanks to the gracious hospitality of Witcher and Elizabeth Dudley. Check out the photos on pages 4 and 5.

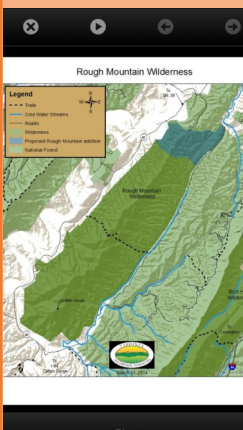
To continue on with our social distancing events, we will be offering two fall hikes. The cost is \$10 per hike. There will be a limit of 12 people for each hike. If interested, please contact me at directorcrpa@gmail.com or phone 540-620-7795. Details are provided in the box below.

Finally, please consider participating in our online auction which kicks off on Thursday, September 10 and runs until Friday, October 9. The proceeds will benefit the Bill Hardbarger Education Scholarship Fund. Check it out at <https://www.cowpastureriver.org/auction/>. More details are provided on page 5. It's for a great cause, and we hope you'll choose to participate. Thank you.

JOIN US FOR OUR TWO UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS — FALL HIKES

(Note: Social distancing will be practiced for both hikes.)

Sunday, September 13, 2020 — Nature Observation in the Alleghenies: Skills to Practice Afield. Led by CRPA Board Member Michael Hayslett (9:00 am—1:00 pm). While enjoying a mountain stroll, we'll discuss natural history and nature's phenology, wildlife observations, field journaling and more. Be sure to bring a sack lunch. More details provided upon your RSVP. (Limit of 12 people)



Saturday, October 3, 2020 — Crane Trail Hike. Co-led by Grant Colip (from the United States Geological Survey) and CRPA Member Dave Peters (9:00 am—1:00 pm). There are limited opportunities to hike the Rough Mountain Wilderness Area in Bath County due to the lack of established trails and access. Join us for a hike of the western portion of the Crane trail. This will be an up and back walk with time on top to discuss future hikes. The ascent will take about 1 1/2 hours. Included in this event will be some stops along Rt 42 (the Cowpasture River Highway) for observation of geology of the river valley and karst development. Be sure to bring a sack lunch. More details provided upon your RSVP. (Limit of 12 people)

River Float Highlights

In the quest to find a way for people to get together while still socially distancing, Witcher and Elizabeth Dudley hosted a fun-filled river float for CRPA members on Saturday, July 25th. The float began upstream and ended up at Windy Cove, where the Dudleys' home is located. The weather was gorgeous, and the ability to see everyone again, even though it was from a distance, was refreshing to the soul. Many thanks to Witcher and Elizabeth for their gracious hospitality.



Photo by Witcher Dudley

Everyone "putting in" upstream at the starting point.



Photo by Witcher Dudley

And off they go. . .



Photo by Kathy Wood

The middle of the journey. . .



Photo by Lynne Griffith

Nan Mahone Wellborn painting while others paddle.



Photo by Kathy Wood

Encountering some white water along the way. . .



Photo by Lynne Griffith

Coming in for the home stretch. . .

More River Float Highlights



Photo by Lynne Griffith

Pam Bracey arriving at the “take out” point.



Photo by Lynne Griffith

Our hosts, Witcher and Elizabeth Dudley, and their dog, Rodeo.



Photo by Lynne Griffith

Three generations of the Kent and Ellen Ford family.



Photo by Lynne Griffith

Board member Andrew Young and his wife, Linsey Wilkinson.

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE AUCTION **(Proceeds go to the Bill Hardbarger Education Scholarship Fund)**

In an effort to carry on Bill Hardbarger’s passion for river education to students of all ages, several CRPA members have donated items to our online auction. The proceeds will be used for river educational purposes, a cause that was dear to Bill’s heart. Many thanks to Mike Whiteside for coming up with this great way to honor Bill. Mike kickstarted the auction by contributing an Orvis fly rod and a fishing butt pack. In addition, there are many other items that have been donated, some of which include paintings from both local and non-local artists, a gift certificate to the Garth Newel Center, a vacation cabin rental on the Cowpasture River, among others.

The auction kicks off on Thursday, September 10 at 6:00 am and wraps up on Friday, October 9 at 6:00 am. Check it out at <https://www.cowpastureriver.org/auction/>.

Water Quality

by Dick Brooks, CRPA Board President

"Thousands have lived without love, not one without water."

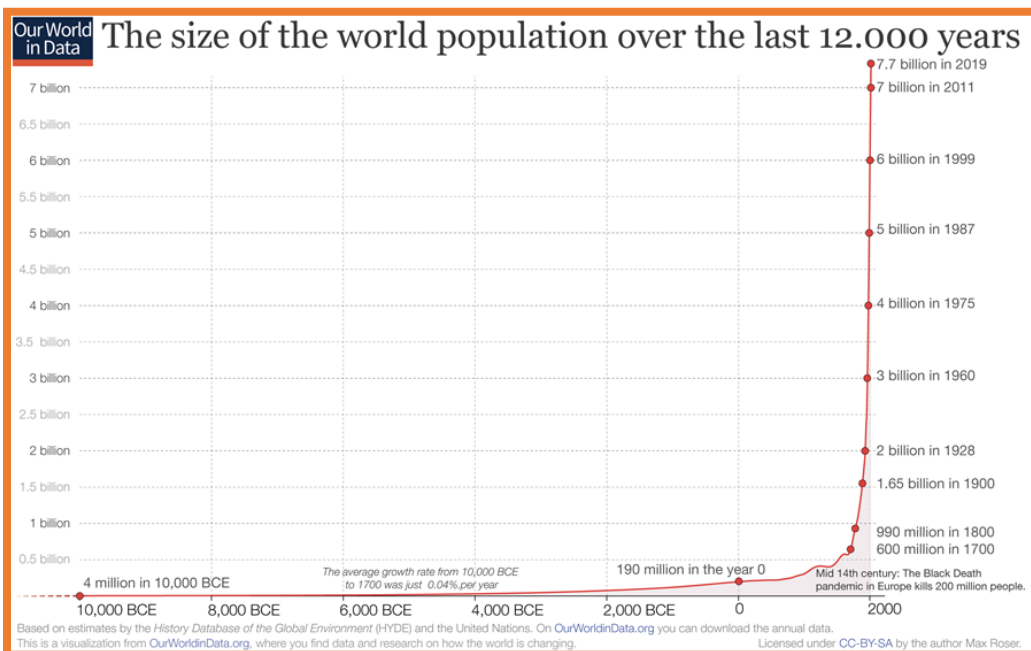
W. H. Auden

What do we mean and what should we think about when we talk about *water quality*? The term is used in reference to everything from the water we drink to the water that produces our food to the water that we play in. According to Wikipedia, *water quality* refers to the chemical, physical, biological, and radiological characteristic of water. It is a measure of the condition of water relative to the requirements of one of more biotic species or to any human need or purpose.

In the next several pages, we'll take a look at the history of water quality, some of the measures of water quality, and we'll round out the discussion with some examples from the Cowpasture River. You knew we had to land there.

Brief History

It's no secret that water quality degradation closely followed the pace and spread of the Industrial Revolution and the growth in worldwide population. Even before that, waterways and water bodies were used to dispose of everything unwanted, up to and including the carcasses of animals and occasionally comrades. Simply heave something in and it disappears. In reality, whatever went in might wash up onto neighboring land or break down into something noxious. But usually that became someone else's problem.



This chart shows the dramatic rise in worldwide population over the past 600 years. With this growth in population, we see increased pollution of all types, but especially of water. It is now estimated that 1.2 trillion gallons of untreated sewage, stormwater and industrial waste are dumped into U.S. waters each year.¹ And, as many

as 40 percent of our lakes are now too polluted to support aquatic life, fishing and recreation.² This has taken place over the last several decades. How did we get here?

In part we sacrificed the environment for the economy. Bringing a growing population out of poverty has had significant costs. As recently as 1939, two thirds of Americans were poor or impoverished.³ Today, that number is closer to 12 percent.³ And, our population has grown from 130.9 million in 1939 to approximately 330 million today.

Along the way, we have developed a framework for ensuring water quality that has both successes and failures. In 1948, the U.S. passed the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. This relatively toothless act was substantially amended in 1972 and renamed the Clean Water Act, which:

- Established the basic structure for regulating pollutant discharges into the waters of the United States.
- Gave EPA the authority to implement pollution control programs such as setting wastewater standards for industry.
- Maintained existing requirements to set water quality standards for all contaminants in surface waters.
- Made it unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable waters, unless a permit was obtained under its provisions.
- Funded the construction of sewage treatment plants under the construction grants program.
- Recognized the need for planning to address the critical problems posed by nonpoint source pollution.

Coincidentally, 1972 was the founding year of the CRPA, but that's a story for another day.

This legislation was an outgrowth of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 and has been amended many times since. Enforcement has substantially been pushed to the states.

Water Quality in Virginia

Much of the administration of these environmental rules is done by the VA Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the State Water Control Board (SWCB). They do this through a series of water quality standards. These standards have three components: water designated use, water quality standards to protect designated use, and antidegradation policy.



DEQ STANDARDS

“Designated uses are those uses specified in water quality standards for each water body or segment whether or not they are being attained. All Virginia waters are designated for the following uses: recreational uses, e.g., swimming and boating; the propagation and growth of a balanced, indigenous population of aquatic life, including game fish, which might reasonably be expected to inhabit them; wildlife; and the production of edible and marketable natural resources, e.g., fish and shellfish....Through the protection of these minimum uses, other uses such as industrial water supply, irrigation and navigation also are protected. Should additional standards be needed to protect other uses as dictated by law (such as public water supply) or improved knowledge, they will be adopted.

“Water quality criteria can include general narrative statements that describe good water quality and specific numerical concentrations that are known to protect aquatic life and human health. The criteria are adjusted as needed to reflect changes in law and science. Numerical criteria are for specific physical, chemical (toxics), and radiological characteristics of the waters (e.g. minimum of 4.0 mg/L dissolved oxygen, 2.5 ug/L ammonia, 9.0 ug/L copper). Narrative criteria include general protective statements known as the "free froms."

This narrative criteria says that all state waters shall be free from substances attributable to sewage, industrial waste, or other waste in concentrations, amounts, or combinations which contravene established standards or interfere directly or indirectly with designated uses of such water or which are inimical or harmful to human, animal, plant, or aquatic life.”

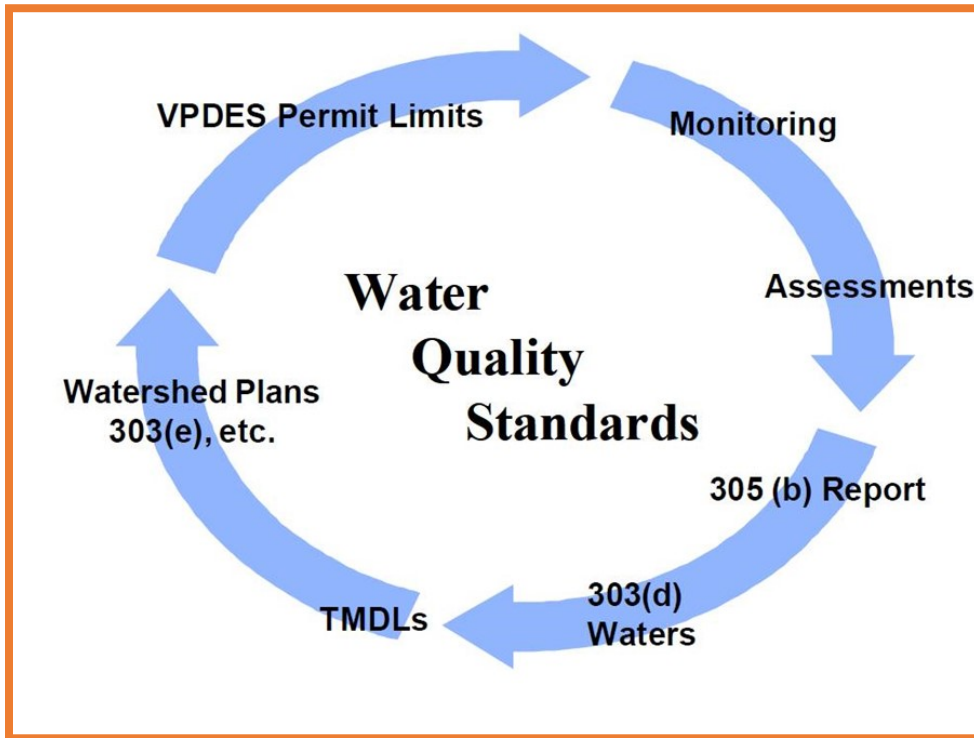
The antidegradation policy protects three tiers of water quality:

“Tier 1 specifies that existing instream water uses and the level of water quality to protect the existing uses shall be maintained and protected. This means that as a minimum, all waters should meet adopted water quality standards.

Tier 2 protects water that is better than specified water quality standards. Only in limited circumstances may water quality be lowered in these waters.

Tier 3 are exceptional waters where no new, additional or increased discharge of sewage, industrial wastes or other pollution are allowed. These waters must be specifically listed in the regulation.”

Each of these works together as described in the illustration on the next page:



Cowpasture River

While we respect the job that the DEQ does statewide, CRPA members have felt the need to protect this watershed ourselves.

As we say over and over again, the mission of the Cowpasture River Preservation Association is "To preserve the natural condition and beauty of the Cowpasture River and its tributaries for present and future generations." This gets to the core of our two most

significant activities: water quality monitoring and water quality education. Teams of volunteers do both of these and with the utmost reverence.

Water quality monitoring as practiced by CRPA falls into two broad categories – benthic macroinvertebrates and fecal bacteria. Both categories share a need to get up close and personal with the river itself, meaning getting wet. The former involves collecting, identifying and counting the macroinvertebrates present in each river site for a specific time limit. It is done twice per year at streamside. The latter is done monthly and involves taking water samples back to the laboratory for incubation, reaction and observation. Then a "value of fecal matter present" can be assigned to each site. (See Additional Reading, below, for a deeper look into these methodologies.)

Water quality education is conducted both in classroom and streamside for students in Allegheny, Bath and Highland counties. Using the benthic method mentioned above, students learn about water quality in the Allegheny Highlands by observing macroinvertebrates collected at area waterbodies and, when possible, the students do the collecting. This serves the twin benefits of driving home water quality awareness to local citizens, and it satisfies Virginia's Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) requirement.

The Big, Really Big Payoff

Kudos to the volunteers in each group. They serve the broader needs of this geography and are recognized leaders in both monitoring and education. The big contribution they make is recognition of the quality of the Cowpasture watershed. It remains clean and pure for all our many activities. Just how clean? Our watershed always tests in the top percentage of tested waterbodies nationwide. It is a treasure. We know it, and thanks to our volunteers, we can quantify it.



Further Reading

Water Quality Information by Topic by USGS - <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/water-science-school/science/water-quality-information-topic>

Water Quality Monitoring - A Practical Guide to the Design and Implementation of Freshwater Quality Studies and Monitoring Programmes

Edited by Jamie Bartram and Richard Ballance
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/41851/0419217304_eng.pdf

Stream Biomonitoring Using Benthic Macroinvertebrates – Rosanna Sallenave

<https://aces.nmsu.edu/pubs/circulars/CR677.pdf>

Footnotes

¹ - Chambers, Neil B. "How Infrastructure Makes Water Work for Us." Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

² - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Nonpoint Source Pollution: The Nation's Largest Water Quality Problem." Web Accessed April 25, 2015

³ – "Poverty in America." Isabell V. Sawmill Library of Economics and Liberty

Come Join Us for the Walton Tract Clean-Up Saturday, October 24, 2020 (1:00—4:00 pm)



Photo by Lynne Griffih

It's that time of year again when we join forces to collect litter along the Cowpasture River at our adopted site in the national forest. We will meet at the Walton Tract lower public access point ("rope swing"). To sign up, send an email to directorcrpa@gmail.com or call 540- 620-7795.

We will endeavor to physical distance at least six feet from one another at all times. Further details will be provided upon your RSVP.

Our Walton Tract Clean-Up volunteers on October 26, 2019: Gilbert Ramey, Marc Koslen, Bucky Wells, Jim Bayliss, Glovie Lynn, Dick Lynn, Dick Brooks and Puggy Farmer. (Please note — We will not be standing this close to each other on October 24, 2020.)

River Fun! Tips for Safe Boating

by Kent Ford III (from Colorado)

A Tale of Two Rivers

At low water, backyard boating on the Cowpasture is not that much different than playing in a swimming pool. A safe experience depends on swimming ability, not going alone, and not diving into water that could be shallow.

What is low water? Most of the summer the Cowpasture meanders at tranquil water levels of about 200 CFS and below. CFS is a stream measurement, cubic feet per second. Think of it as the number of basketballs floating by a spot in a second. (Note: The CFS flow can be found from the link *How is the River Running* on the CRPA website.)

The river can change character

At flows somewhere over 200 CFS the river becomes a true whitewater river, where there are commonly accepted protocols for safety:

- High water, and flooded rivers, especially if combined with cold water, are frequent killers. Check the river flow and prepare for deceptively powerful currents if the flow is over 500 CFS. Re-evaluate to be sure your skills and training are up to the challenge when the flow is approaching or over 1000 CFS.
- Wearing a lifejacket is the most important precaution for insuring your safety. Not wearing a lifejacket puts you in a high-risk category.
- Strainers are trees and branches that choke the flow and can trap a boat or paddler. Look ahead and avoid them! Have the skills to angle your boat and paddle away.
- Tangling with anything manmade is problematic. Fences, low water bridges, and dams are more dangerous than most natural features on the river. If in doubt, get out and scout!
- If you swim, stay upstream of your boat. Swim on your back, feet downstream, to get oriented. Swim aggressively for safety where there is less current. Never stand up in a current, as standing can trap your foot on the bottom. Only stand when it is less than knee deep.
- Your gear matters! If you tip over, anything that could tangle and trap you is a problem. For that reason, paddle leashes are discouraged in current. Loose ropes holding a cooler are similarly problematic. At medium and higher flows, boats should have extra floatation, so the boat doesn't sink and be at the mercy of the current.

Boat Selection tips

Sit-on-tops with a relatively flat hull are a great choice for summertime runs on the easy riffles of the Cowpasture. Canoes or kayaks with cockpits should have aftermarket floatation bags to keep the boat afloat if it tips at medium flows. Boats with a "V" hull track a straight line well on a lake, but this shape of hull is very punishing on shallow riffles.

Working as a group is part of the fun of running the river. Check the flow to be sure it's appropriate. Wait for others below rapids, so you can help if needed. Set a protocol for the leader and sweep paddler to watch out for less experienced paddlers. Pickup any trash you see and respect any landowners, as you are likely paddling through their backyard. If you visit other rivers, study www.americanwhitewater.org for safe paddling information. Enjoy!

For kayaking instruction, visit www.performancevideo.com for free downloads and streaming.

Atlantic Coast Pipeline Update

by Dick Brooks, CRPA Board President

For all of our members and friends, this is, I hope, the last Atlantic Coast Pipeline Update. Here are a few headlines from the big announcement in early July:

- **Atlantic Coast Pipeline Canceled as Delays and Costs Mount**
New York Times
- **Energy Companies Abandon Long-delayed Atlantic Coast Pipeline**
Washington Post
- **Dominion Cancels Atlantic Coast Pipeline, Sells Natural Gas Transmission Business** *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

And, perhaps my favorite from our local paper, *The Recorder*:

- **Out of Gas**

The most damaging and destructive threat to our watershed in a generation has come to an end. After six years of protests and legal battles, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline has been abandoned.

As with many of life's major events, the particular moment I heard the news is one I'll never forget. On Sunday, July 5, my wife, Mindy, daughter Rebecca, and I were fishing in the Cowpasture River. After a few hours of wading and casting, as we were preparing to leave, Mindy got a text with the message "Is this about your pipeline?" but the signal wasn't strong enough for her to click through to the story. A few minutes later, my phone rang, but again, we didn't have enough signal to get the call. The phone rang again. Then again. We knew something was up, but there was no way to know if the news was good or bad.

We packed up and headed for home. As we left the river, we finally had enough signal to get the news, and our response was a mix of joy and disbelief. By the time we arrived home, we were flooded with celebratory texts, emails, and voicemails – this long fight was finally over. And, for us, it happened while we were waist-deep in the river we were fighting to protect.

For all of you who helped us in this David vs Goliath battle, thank you, thank you, thank you. Our CRPA mission statement reads, "To preserve the natural condition and beauty of the Cowpasture River and its tributaries for present and future generations." And, with this victory, that's exactly what we did.

Thank You To Our Loyal Watershed Members

The following list includes dues and gifts received since November 1, 2019 during our 2019-2020 Annual Campaign season. Thanks for your continued support, and welcome to our **new members who are highlighted in bold.**

Total donations for the current campaign = \$54,014.00. (Note: Some donors asked that their names not be published.)

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Tom Watts

Michael Wildasin

The CRPA's current annual campaign runs from Nov. 1, 2019—Oct. 31, 2020. This campaign is nearly through its cycle. Dues and gifts received during this campaign are essential to the CRPA being able to carry on its mission of stewarding the Cowpasture River. Please consider sending us your support if you have not already done so. Thank you.

If we overlooked anyone or made an error, please let us know. We would like to correct any errors in the next newsletter. Please contact Lynne at directorcrpa@gmail.com.

Correction to the Summer 2020 Issue of *The River Runs*

The beautiful cover photo on the Summer issue of *The River Runs* was taken by Jeff Sullivan, not Jeff Carson. My apologies for the error. — Lynne Griffith



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DALEVILLE, VA

Protect The Things You Love

Please join us today. The river needs your time, talent and support!

Your donations are tax deductible!

☐ \$25 Adult Membership (*minimum annual dues per individual*)

☐ \$50 River Guardian Donation

☐ \$100 Headwaters Circle Donation

☐ \$250 Watershed Steward Donation

☐ \$500 Wallawhatoola Society Donation

☐ \$1,000 Bedrock Patron Donation

☐ Memorial Donation \$ _____

in memory of _____

☐ \$12 Junior Membership Dues

☐ I am a NEW member!

☐ I am RENEWING

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY — STATE — ZIP

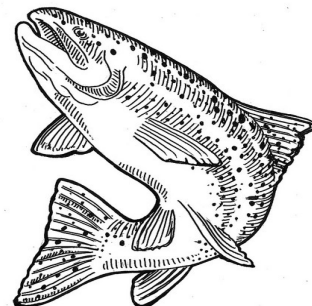
PHONE

E-MAIL: _____

☐ I prefer to NOT have my name published as a contributor.

☐ Please send my newsletter by email version only.

☐ I am interested in becoming a volunteer and/or river monitoring.



(Note: A financial statement is available upon written request from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services — Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs.)