

# THE RIVER RUNS

News from the Cowpasture River Preservation Association



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*The swinging bridge at Lynchburg Camp. Photo taken by Tom Watts on October 15, 2022.*

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



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*Lynne Griffith,  
Executive Assistant*

Editor: *Lynne Griffith*

## From the President

One of the reasons my husband, Witcher, and I decided to move to Bath County was that we wanted to bow out of the “rat race,” go back about 50 years in time and adopt a simpler lifestyle. I was reminded of this sentiment while attending the CRPA summer picnic which was held this year at Lynchburg Camp.

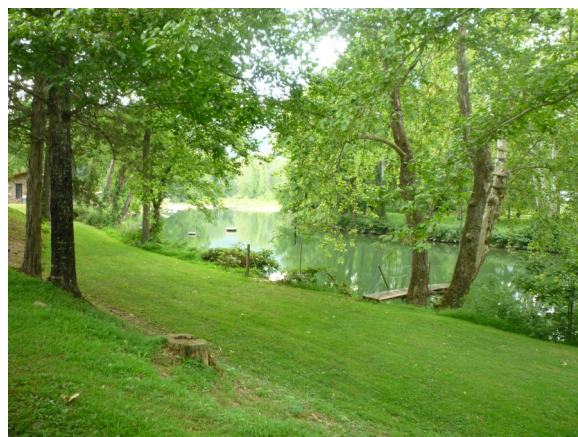


In 1912, a group of 15 friends and avid fishermen from Lynchburg purchased property along the lower Cowpasture River in Bath County. They each built charming but basic cabins and established traditions which their families have continued to uphold for generations. The cabins have undergone some necessary repairs over time but very little “modernizing.” The camp is a truly bucolic and special place, reminiscent of a past, simpler lifestyle.

I was born and raised in Lynchburg and when about nine years old, was invited to go to “camp” by a girlfriend whose family owned one of the cabins at Lynchburg Camp. I have fond memories of spending evenings giggling with a bunch of girls out on a sleeping porch full of side-by-side single beds — it was heaven! That cabin is still there, unchanged in any noticeable way other than to have certainly accommodated many more giggling children, amongst them being my friend’s grandchildren.

The folks at Lynchburg Camp have always been good stewards of the river. They traditionally nominate one member at a time to serve on the CRPA board, and all of the members are supportive of our mission. I want to thank the members of Lynchburg Camp for graciously hosting the summer picnic and allowing me my trip down memory lane, but I especially want to thank them for helping to perpetuate that “simpler life” along the banks of the Cowpasture River.

Yours truly,  
Elizabeth



The Cowpasture River as seen from Lynchburg Camp.



## Executive Assistant's Corner

Fall is my favorite season, and as it arrives this year, I have been reflecting on how very special this CRPA community is. When I attended the recent “Celebration of Life” on August 19 for Kent Ford, Jr., I looked around the room and realized how many of the people there now feel like “family” to me. My heart was so full of appreciation of how very special this community is. Elizabeth reiterated this appreciation in her President’s Letter when she mentioned the graciousness of the Lynchburg Camp members who hosted our summer picnic in August. Both the summer picnic and the annual meeting are wonderful venues for actually “seeing” our members, who I typically communicate with only over the phone or email. Getting to know so many of you throughout my 6+ years here has been such a privilege. I never take it for granted.



On another note, our current annual campaign ends on October 31, and we want to thank all of our donors for their generous support of this organization. We’ve had a great year, and we could not do any of this without you. You can expect to receive a letter from Elizabeth sometime during the first two weeks of November to announce our new 2023-2024 campaign which begins on November 1.

On September 1, we once again launched our online auction benefitting the Bill Hardbarger Educational Scholarship Fund. We had 38 items donated to the auction this year, and the response has been fantastic. You can check out the auction results on page 9.

And be sure to keep an eye out for our 2024 calendars. They should be showing up in our online store sometime in early November. They will make great stocking stuffers if you roll them up!

I wish you all a wonderful fall season, and please keep sending me your photos and stories of the Cowpasture River so that I can share them with others. Thank you. — Lynne Griffith



### **Come Join Us for the Walton Tract Clean-Up Saturday, October 28, 2023 (1:00—3:00 pm)**

It’s that time of year again when we 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 [director@cowpastureriver.org](mailto:director@cowpastureriver.org) or call 540-620-7795. Further details will be provided upon your RSVP. We hope to see you there!



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SUMMER PICNIC

Many thanks to Tom Watts and the other Lynchburg Camp members for hosting our summer picnic this year. And thanks to Jimmy English for jumping in and helping out Dick and Andrew at the grill. We had 80 people in attendance, along with some of the best side dishes you could ever imagine!



Chris Peters, Catherine Dupoise, Leighton & Pinky Houck, Terry King, Dave Peters and Katherine Dupoise



Tim Pistell, Tom Reycraft and Nan Mahone Wellborn



Andrew Young, Dick Brooks and Steve Van Lear



Linda Cauley, Witcher Dudley and Linsey Young



Ted Craddock, Jack Sorenson, and Jack Craddock



Dining in the shade under the tent.



## Help Us Eliminate the Japanese Knotweed

*by Puggy Farmer*

Remember the famous police detective Dick Tracy? Well, the CRPA needs you to become a Dick Tracy on the Cowpasture River and its tributaries. Have you seen a plant like this anywhere along the river or in the river?



The CRPA Board sent out an email requesting reconnaissance feedback on Japanese Knotweed. Some of you heard about this plant at the Annual Meeting, but if you are not familiar with it, you can click on the Penn State Extension link below, which provides an excellent overview.

<https://extension.psu.edu/japanese-knotweed>

This nasty invasive plant is more of a concern to the riparian buffer zone and river than most of the other invasives due to its survival persistence and quick monoculture takeover. It also presents riparian and river problems. The Board hopes to develop an action plan, but they need to know where it is and whether it is in the river. So, please look at the riverbank, and any tributary bank you are familiar with, and send the information to [director@cowpastureriver.org](mailto:director@cowpastureriver.org).

Thanks for becoming a CRPA Dick Tracy!

### 2023 Virginia Water Monitoring Council (VWMC) Conference

**September 26, 2023** (9am-4pm) – Henrico, VA – Nine invited presentations will cover topics ranging from the Chesapeake Bay and septic system assistance to PFAS, deicer, and microplastic pollution, plus more. Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to apply for a scholarship that covers the registration fee. Learn more about the conference program, scholarship opportunity, and registration process at <https://vwmc.vwrrc.vt.edu/conferences/>.

Contact [vwmc@vt.edu](mailto:vwmc@vt.edu) for more information. Organized by the Virginia Water Monitoring Council.



## Education Committee Update

The CRPA Education Committee was happy to sponsor the summer reading program at the Bath County Library this past summer. The program was headed up by Amy Porterfield, the library branch manager. The theme this year was “All Together Now.” One of the programs took the kids (ages 5 years and up) out to a local pond where they learned how the ponds work and how to take care of them, along with conducting some river experiments. The young patrons also had a chance to observe the various wildlife that surrounds the pond. CRPA’s educational scholarship fund provided the money to purchase the supplies for the program, which included a pocket size microscope, microscope slides, a bug viewer magnifying case, bug nets, pond testing strips, a magnifying glass, plastic tweezers and pocket size binoculars. Amy sent in the photos below so that we could see firsthand what a good time the children were having. We hope the funding of this event would have made Bill Hardbarger proud! We suspect it would have.





# Being Good Stewards of the Land: Listen to What Your Plants Tell You

*by Linda Cauley*

I apologize in advance for what will probably be a little (or a lot) “preachy.” It concerns looking beyond your flower beds and veggie gardens and really really seeing what the rest of the plants are trying to tell you. My heart breaks a little as I drive around and see the sorry state of pasture and hay fields. (How I know they are in sorry state will be explained after the “sermon.”) Did you know that 75% of the pasture and hay land in Bath County is improperly managed and could support so many more animals, and therefore people, if brought up to snuff? If you care at all about the animals that depend on the pasture and hay, water quality, food shortages, invasive species and being good stewards of your land, you need to pay attention!

Many of us think we are blessed when some neighbor wants to “help” us by keeping our pastures trimmed (cutting hay) or putting animals in the fields to keep them “up.” Many of us don’t charge a rental fee, nor do we ask the farmer to maintain soil fertility. What you are allowing your helpful neighbors to do is “mine” your land. You wouldn’t allow the land to be “stripped” for mineral mining, but it actually is. Every hay crop removed from the land removes the nutrients. Every cow mines the nutrients (although cows at least put a little back in the form of manure). You are allowing your soil to be stripped of nutrients necessary to keep desirable forage grasses in place and deny non-nutritive “weed” species access. And, of course, your helpful neighbors will be content to harvest the hay and mine the nutrients without cost to them for as long as you allow it. As an example, many pounds of potassium and phosphorus for each ton of hay removed and fields under good management will yield many tons per acre. You should be assuring replenishment of these “mined” minerals to ensure high quality forage, good ground cover, lessened run-off and fewer invasive plants.

If you don’t need the income and can afford it yourselves, put the nutrients back in the form of some kind of fertilizer and lime. If you do need the income, charge rent and get the fertilizer and lime. Our experience has not been very good with trusting the friendly helpful neighbor to honor agreements in this regard, so it’s best to just do it yourself. Our experience involved years of broken agreements about fencing, fertilizing, liming and clipping pastures. We do now have a good tenant, but still we’ve had to threaten to kick him off the farm if he didn’t do what he had agreed to do – time after time. This is why I recommend collecting rent and overseeing the process yourself!

However you decide to go, it is critical that you first test your soils because it does not do you or your plants any good to overfertilize, as that will result in runoff and a decrease in water quality. You can test yourself or pay someone to do it. But most of the people whom you pay have a vested interest in finding nutrient shortages because they also want to sell you fertilizer. Having it tested for major nutrients is free when done through the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office. Virginia Tech extension agents or the federal Natural Resources Conservation management people can come to your farm, but you might have to wait a while. Or you can hire a private consultant. Or you



can ask my husband, Matt. (He did this for a living in Virginia and overseas for many years and has helped out some of our neighbors upgrade and renovate their pastures and hay fields. He loves this stuff!)

If you have kept up with soil testing and adding amendments, read no further and kudos to you! But let's say it's been years of harvesting hay and grazing cows (or sheep or horses or pigs....) without the application of any soil amendments (the general term for fertilizer and lime). Your soil tests results and the resultant recommendations are likely to give you sticker shock. Fertilizer and lime are expensive. The good news is that you can make a multi-year plan to bring the soil back up to peak fertility so the cost can be amortized.

You might look out across your verdant fields and think all is right with the world. But a superficially good-looking pasture can hide many unpleasant truths. The photo below shows a very productive pasture, right? Not so fast.

There are ways to know your soil needs amending without soil testing by taking a walk through your pastures. There are many indicator plants that will scream at you, "This field is nutrient poor" or "this field is too acidic." Little barley, broom sedge, dandelions, hawkweed, oxeye daisy, plantain, annual blue grass and Queen Anne's lace are among them. Some of these "weeds" are useful and beautiful but they give you important mostly undesirable information about the state of the soils beneath them. To see a field taken over by little barley (general low fertility and nutrient imbalances) and broom sedge (high acidity) is very sad indeed. And completely unnecessary with proper soil management. Other undesirable plants will invade your pastures such as stickweed, hempdogbane, fleabane, thistle and spiny pigweed if you don't provide the "good" plants with what they need. Listen to

your plants! (As a practical matter, Japanese stilt grass does not like alkaline soils. We've gotten rid of all of it around the house and near fields by spreading ashes from our woodstoves. This will also get rid of moss. A huge bonus is slightly alkaline soils encourage the growth of clover. Rabbits now love our yard which is full of white clover.)



A pasture at Weltevreden looking towards Warm Springs Mountain. It looks pretty but hides many unpleasant truths about the quality of the soil.





Hawkweed is pretty but indicates poor soil.



Little Barley indicates low fertility and a K/P imbalance.

By properly managing your land, you increase its productivity and nutrient content (including protein, which is so important for growth), see better growth in cows and calves (or your other favorite grazing animals), and protect waterways from run-off. Proper soil management will see an increase in desirable nutritive plants and overall ground cover and a decrease in non-nutritive and sometimes invasive plants. So please, smell your roses but also look beyond them to the rest of your property.

### **CRPA ONLINE AUCTION RESULTS**

The fourth annual CRPA online auction wrapped up on Sunday evening, September 17 at 6:00 pm, and this was our best year yet! We had 38 auction items up for bid, and we brought in a total of \$4,335 for the Bill Hardbarger Educational Scholarship Fund. Thank you to our many bidders who ended up on making this auction such a huge success.

We particularly want to thank those of you who donated items to the auction: Graham and Donna Hobbs, Joe Wood, Dave Peters, Elsie Bailey, Amanda McGuire, Christie Hardbarger, Peggy Terrell, Peg Sheridan, Nan Mahone Wellborn, Meghan Cooper, Tom Oster, Terrell McDermid, Lois Stephens, V-Anne Evans, Penelope B. Matallana, Lyndi Angermeier, Brett LaGue, Jinx Constine, Kathleen Husted, Matt Genry, Tom Watts, Richard Metz and the Garth Newel Center. We could not do any of this without you, and we sincerely appreciate it.

The proceeds from this yearly auction are once again going towards Bill Hardbarger's passion for providing river education to students of all ages. On page 6 of this newsletter, you can read how some of the prior scholarship money was used to purchase the supplies for the summer program on ponds at the Bath County Library. In addition, Jacob Rak, a second year forestry student at Mountain Gateway Community College, was awarded a \$500 scholarship this past May. Jacob had a 4.0 GPA and received an outstanding reference letter from the head of the forestry program there at the college. We hope to tell you more about him in our upcoming winter newsletter. Our hearts are grateful that these proceeds can help fulfill these special educational goals.

## In Remembrance of Kent Ford, Jr.



Sterling Ford and his grandfather, Kent Ford, Jr. Photo taken at the CRPA Annual Meeting on May 20, 2023. Kent wanted to make sure that his cap's message was clearly seen in the photo. The message said, "MAY ALL BE FED." We will miss you, Kent.

Longtime CRPA member and former board member, Kent Ford, passed away peacefully at home on June 18, 2023. He was 92 years old.

Kent served for many years on the CRPA Water Monitoring Committee. He became interested in monitoring the water quality of the river after watching Dave Peters give a demonstration at a CRPA picnic held at Lynchburg Camp. Dave describes the events as follows: "I had a group by the riffles showing them some of the benthic macroinvertebrates of the Cowpasture River and talking about their ecological significance. Kent was one of those in the group. He quickly mastered the concepts and went on to take it to a much higher level. He became a monitor and trainer for Virginia Save Our Streams (VA SOS). He was able to demonstrate the broader

pictures of the health of the Cowpasture River through analysis of data and graphs. In a practical sense. He was a biologist and ecologist, in addition to his formal background in his chosen area of science."

Back in 2018, Puggy Farmer, a former co-chairman of the CRPA Water Monitoring Committee, described Kent Ford this way: "He is the quintessential monitor — dedicated, reliable, precise and patient. He is one of the kindest men I have ever met. His dedication to the CRPA monitoring program is legendary and to have been trained by him is an honor."

Longtime friend, Jean Howell, sent in her remembrance of Kent: "Kent was always available to share his knowledge of the Cowpasture. I remember when my 9-year-old granddaughter visited me at the farm for about a week. I asked Kent if he would be willing to help her learn about macroinvertebrates. He spent the better part of a day with her in the river, kindly teaching her, while at the same time, helping her appreciate the ecology of the river and the importance of preserving it's water quality. That experience contributed to her desire for future study. She graduated this year from the University of Wisconsin with a major in conservation biology and spent five months in Ecuador studying water quality in streams, etc. Her career direction is to pursue a Master's and PhD in wildlife and tropical ecology. One of those 'dropping a pebble in the water. . .' things. Thank you Kent."



Ellen and Kent, along with their dog Buddy. Photo taken in Spring 2018 at their home — Indian Draft Farm.



## In Remembrance of Jean Ann Manner



Longtime original CRPA member, Jean Ann Higgins Manner, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, August 23, 2023. She was 95 years old. Jean Ann was born June 15, 1928 in Clifton Forge, Virginia. Some of her happiest times were at her two camps on the Cowpasture River below Sharon. Jean Ann's mother, Martha Higgins, purchased the camp in 1928. Sadly, that camp washed away in 1936, but the family rebuilt the camp, most recently known as the "Old Camp," and it is where Jean Ann enjoyed all her summers. She loved the beauty of the Cowpasture and the bond of family and friends that the river offered.

She was an active volunteer of the CRPA and served several terms as Secretary on the board. Jean Ann was passionate about preserving and protecting the river for future generations. In 2002 when there was a threat of the river being polluted, Jean Ann organized people to help fight against the point source pollution. She started a letter writing campaign encouraging people to voice their support of the Cowpasture River becoming a designated Tier III waters. The Exceptional State Waters Program (Tier III) was intended to protect high quality waters for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations by prohibiting new or increased point source discharge to the designated water body. Jean Ann organized a charter bus to take people to Richmond to attend the State Water Control Board meeting to promote the Cowpasture River becoming a Tier III water. She was also a supporter of the CRPA water monitoring program and found the macroinvertebrates in the river fascinating. She owned several posters of the "Indicators of Water Quality in North American Streams — Benthic Macroinvertebrates" and would show them to anyone who visited to educate them on the ecology of the place she loved. She always enjoyed it when CRPA would collect samples in front of her camp and count them on her patio.



Jean Ann voting for her granddaughter, Catherine Roland, as an incoming board member at the CRPA Annual Meeting in 2019.



Jean Ann enjoying her red kayak in the river surrounded by family. July 2022.

May her love of the Cowpasture River and her passion for protecting the river live on.

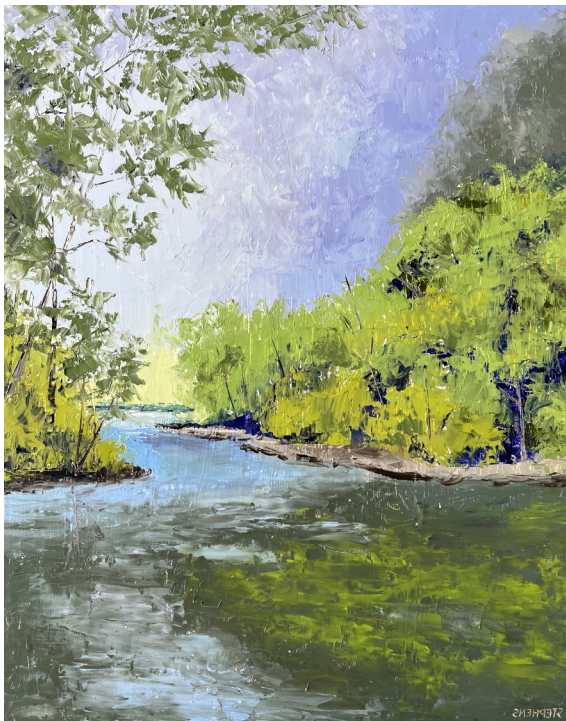


The Manner Family Camp on the Cowpasture River.



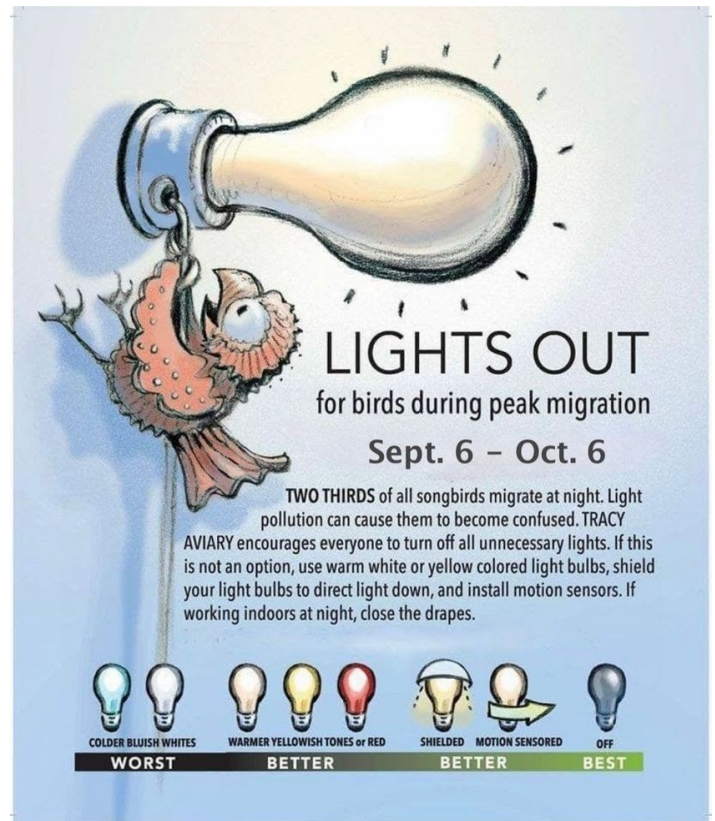
## THE BATH COUNTY PLEIN AIR FESTIVAL IS COMING UP!

Hosted by Warm Springs Gallery, the dates are September 25—October 2, 2023. Thirty nationally acclaimed artists will be participating in this outdoor painting event, capturing the beauty of Bath County, Virginia. CRPA is sponsoring an award for “Best Cowpasture River.” For more information and to get tickets, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bath-county-plein-air-festival-2023-tickets-656701490837?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>



## BATH COUNTY ART SHOW

Congratulations to Lois Stephens for winning the award for “Best Cowpasture River or Bullpasture River” in any medium at the recent Bath County Art Show. “Spring Morning” is a 20” x 16” oil painting. CRPA sponsored this award once again this year.





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Photo by Tracy Fisher



# Thank You To Our Loyal Watershed Members

The following list includes dues and gifts received since November 1, 2022 during our 2022-2023 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 = \$60,937.20.** (Note: Some donors asked that their names not be published.)

## Endowment Fund Contributors

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**Taylor Wolfe**

**Kay Wrenn**

## In Memory of:

Bill Hardbarger

*by Tom Hardbarger*

*Hugh Smith*

Dr. Raymond Claterbaugh

*by Harold Smestad*

Martha P. Craddock

*by Allan and Rebecca Howerton*

Kent Ford, Jr.

*by Edward C. Ambrecht, Jr. & Calvert J. Ambrecht*

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## In Honor of:

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Family of Elgie Ray Connor

*by Hugh Smith*

## In Thanksgiving for:

Norwood and Susan Morrison and

Their Family

*by Robert Morrison*

## Donation Levels

**Endowment Contributor** — \$3000 or more, designated specifically for the Endowment Fund

**Bedrock Patron** — \$1,500 or more

**Wallawhatoola Level** — \$1,000—\$1,499

**Watershed Steward** — \$500—\$999

**Headwaters Circle** — \$250—\$499

**River Guardian** — \$100—\$249

**Streamside Level** — \$50—\$99

**Individual Level** — \$25—\$49

**Junior Member (Under 15)** — \$12

**Memorial Contributions** — Any amount in memory of a loved one.

The CRPA's current annual campaign runs from Nov. 1, 2022—Oct. 31, 2023. 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 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 [director@cowpastureriver.org](mailto:director@cowpastureriver.org).**



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**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 Streamside Level Donation

☐ \$100 River Guardian Donation

☐ \$250 Headwaters Circle Donation

☐ \$500 Watershed Steward Donation

☐ \$1,000 Wallawhatoola Society Donation

☐ \$1,500 + Bedrock Patron Donation

☐ \$3,000+ Endowment Contributor Donation

☐ Memorial Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$12 Junior Membership Dues

☐ I am a NEW member!

☐ I am RENEWING

☐ This is a gift membership for \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY — STATE — ZIP

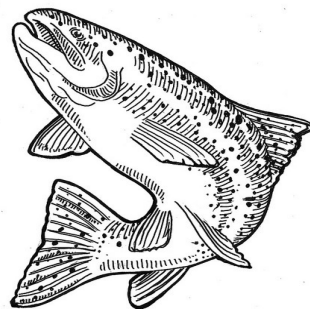
PHONE

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.)