

THE RIVER RUNS

News from the Cowpasture River Preservation Association



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A late summer photo of the Cowpasture River looking downriver, taken by Tom Watts from his deck at Lynchburg Camp on September 7, 2025.

Please send us your best photos of the Cowpasture River.

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Candice Dupoise

Puggy Farmer

Kelly Kemper

Ann Warner

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Nan Mahone Wellborn

Kathy Wood

Staff:

*Lynne Griffith,
Executive Assistant*

Editor: *Lynne Griffith*

We know our members live in a variety of places – not all of us are on or near the river. But if you live in any rural area, as I do, then I’m sure you have a bear story like this one.

A couple of weeks ago, we discovered that our bear-proof compost tumbler had been knocked over, and its partially decomposed kitchen scraps were turned into an all-you-can-eat buffet. What a mess! A deck chair near the front door was out of place but we didn’t notice any other signs of a visitor. That was enough, however, to put us on full alert. The Brooks family did not want to find a bear in our kitchen going through the refrigerator, something we’ve seen on many You Tube videos.

We righted the tumbler, cleaned up the scattered compost and secured its bins. We piled garden tools on the tumbler to make tipping it over a little surprising and noisy. We also, wisely, brought our bird feeders inside.

Two nights later, our visitor returned. This time, the composter lived up to its name and stayed closed. The bear headed for our garden, which is protected by an electric fence, apparently touching a hot wire (ouch!) because the garden stayed intact while the wire was dragged across the lawn.

Would that be enough to discourage a return visit? We certainly hope so. Adolescent bears have come close to our house before, and we’ve lost at least one feeder and experienced a tragic incursion into our bluebird house.

Yet, we live here by choice, knowing that when it comes to bears, deer, skunks, foxes, raccoons, opossums and even groundhogs, we are the ones who moved into their neighborhood. Our small corner of the world, the Cowpasture River watershed, with its clean air and clean water, is home to an abundance of life. We know that’s rare and precious, and it’s a privilege to be here. Enjoy this issue. — Dick Brooks



Executive Assistant's Corner

Spring and summer seem to offer us the most opportunities to gather. And after such a grueling and long winter, what a joy it was to finally gather again for our annual meeting held on May 16th at Camp Mont Shenandoah. Be sure to read all of the details on page 7. We also had a great turnout for Michael Hayslett's "Wetlands Restoration" field trip held on April 12th. We had 17 people sign up, and the feedback from the participants was quite enthusiastic. You can check out the photos on page 14. This field trip has now become a yearly event in memory of George Beckwith, Jr.



Our next big event is the upcoming summer picnic. This year, the picnic will be held on Saturday, July 25th at beautiful Windy Cove Farm, the home of Witcher and Elizabeth Dudley. We will have a big tent set up down by the river. We will once again be grilling hamburgers and hot dogs, and we will also offer vegan and vegetarian options. After you have RSVP'd, you will be assigned a side dish to bring with you. This is my favorite part of the picnic — tasting all of this great homemade food. What could be better! All of the registration details are listed on page 13. We hope you can make it. Let's make the most of summer!

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE WILDFLOWER AND BIRD HIKE



Please join us on Saturday, September 12th for a wildflower and bird hike on the beautiful grounds of Ft. Lewis Lodge.

The trip will be co-led by Annette Naber and Anne Doll. Annette will provide education on the various local wildflowers, while Anne will lead the birding portion, demonstrating identification tools to help us find and hear different species. More information will be coming soon. We hope to see you there!

WALTON TRACT CLEAN-UP

Many thanks to Carl Pattison, Puggy Farmer, Josh Lipscomb, Su Flint, Frank Ford, Jane Lindsay and Dick Brooks (not pictured) for coming out to clean up litter along the Cowpasture River on Saturday, April 26, 2026. The next clean-up will take place on Saturday, October 24, 2026. This is a wonderful way to visit with other members while participating in a great cause. We hope to see you in October!

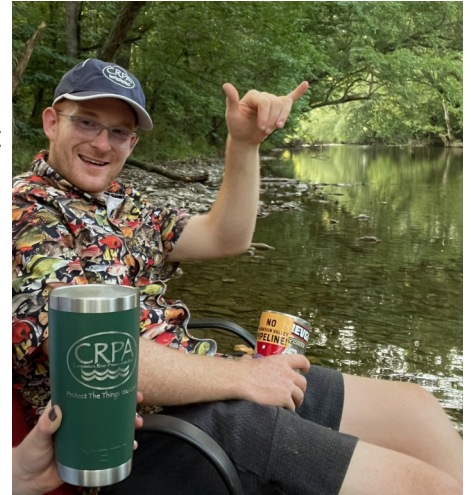


Spring Sampling, Conference Notes, and a Clear Reminder from the Rain

by Andrew Young, Water Monitoring Coordinator

Since the last *River Runs* update, our monitoring program has been busy in about every way possible. Spring always brings a shift in the work. The ice is gone, the rivers start getting used more, the bugs come back, and the sampling calendar fills up fast. That has definitely been the case this year.

One of the highlights this spring was the Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance's (ABRA) trip to the Choose Clean Water Conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania from May 18-20. It was a great chance to meet with water advocacy groups from around the region and the country, compare notes, and talk about the Cowpasture and Jackson River monitoring work we are building here at home.



The biggest thing I took away from that conference is that very few groups, if any, are doing monitoring work quite like this. Some organizations are doing pieces of what we do: E. coli sampling for recreational advisories, benthic macroinvertebrate surveys, or low-cost handheld monitoring for things like conductivity. But I did not run into another group putting all of those pieces together across two watersheds, with this many locations, this much routine data collection, and equipment as advanced as our YSI ProDSS units. That is something to be proud of, and it sets this program apart in a good way.

The conference also gave me a chance to get into the field with scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey. USGS is using top-of-the-line YSI EXO wireless sondes for continuous deployment at locations throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Those are excellent tools, and they are also very expensive - roughly twice the cost of our already expensive handheld YSI ProDSS units. I had one of our recently calibrated YSI units with me, the same kind of meter we use every week on the Cowpasture, and it was dead on with the USGS equipment. That was reassuring. When you are collecting data week after week, you want to know your equipment is giving you numbers you can trust. USGS is also doing YSI monitoring and benthic surveys, while the bigger things they are doing that we have not done yet are laboratory sampling and flow-monitoring radar devices at what they call super sites. Those are good long-term goals if we can build the funding and partnerships to support them.

Back home, one of the biggest efforts we completed this spring was a synoptic survey across the Jackson and Cowpasture River watersheds. That means we tried to get a big snapshot of water quality across both watersheds at roughly the same time. By the end of it, we had monitoring data from about 130 locations. That is a lot of stops, a lot of driving, a lot of hauling equipment in and out of streambanks, and a lot of time spent waiting on meters to settle. It is also exactly the kind of work that helps us understand the bigger picture.

Our monthly monitoring has continued as well. We are now routinely collecting data at 22 locations in the Cowpasture watershed, including the Bullpasture River and Shaws Fork, and 22

locations in the Jackson watershed, including Dunlap, Back, and Cedar Creeks. One-time sampling can tell us something useful, but the real value comes from going back to the same places again and again over time. That is how we learn what is normal for specific flow levels, what changes seasonally, and what might need a closer look.

We also completed our annual spring benthic macroinvertebrate surveys for the full Cowpasture River, along with about half of our Jackson River sites before the big Memorial Day weekend rain finally shut us down for the season. The Cowpasture results were excellent again this year. All nine of the ABRA-supported benthic survey locations scored in the Acceptable range, and most were close to perfect, with scores around 11/12 or 12/12. That is a very good sign because benthic macroinvertebrates give us a longer-term picture of stream health than a single water chemistry reading can provide.

One interesting moment came at the Bullpasture site on McClung Road. We saw a tremendous number of black flies and black fly larvae, which usually would not make me feel great about water quality. Afterward, though, Kim Manion talked with Steve Hiner, a benthic expert, who gave us helpful context. Because we sampled early enough in April, we were almost certainly seeing an overwintering black fly species that was close to leaving the system for the season. Had we come back a couple weeks later, they probably would not have been there. It was a good reminder that the river is complicated, and that good interpretation matters just as much as good data collection.

Most of our monitoring sites are at public access points, but some of the benthic locations are on private property. To those landowners, thank you. Your support helps build a long-term record for the river that benefits the whole watershed. It is a real contribution to science, research, and local water quality protection.

As of Memorial Day weekend, we have also started weekly E. coli monitoring for the summer recreation season. We sample on Thursdays, and results are posted Friday afternoons so people can check conditions before the busy weekend. The only exceptions this summer will be holiday weeks for Juneteenth and July 4, when we will sample on Wednesday and publish results on Thursday.

You can find the most recent results through James River Watch at: <https://thejamesriver.org/james-river-watch/>

The photos at the end of this article are a good reminder of why timing matters. We do the best we can to make the data timely, but we are at the mercy of the weather. If you look at the May 21 R-Card, it is mostly red/pink other coliform colonies with just one blue E. coli colony, and the stream photo from that day shows lower, clearer water. After the rain, the May 25 photo shows high, brown colored water, and the R-Card had far more blue E. coli colonies. It is one of the clearest side-by-side examples I have seen of what precipitation can do to bacteria levels from one day to the next.

Our results from Thursday, May 21 showed very little to no E. coli across the Cowpasture Watershed. Then the rain came. After the Memorial Day weekend storms, I took another sample from the Cowpasture in Highland County on Monday during very high flow, and that result came back at 1,666 CFU/100 mL. The Virginia Department of Health recreational advisory level is 235 CFU/100 mL. That is why the rule of thumb still matters: if there has been more than an inch of rain within 24 hours, it is

best to wait at least 48 hours before primary contact recreation like swimming. Check the data, look at the river, think about the recent rain, and make the best decision for yourself and your family.

We will keep doing our part to get timely information out there. The goal is not to scare anyone away from the river. It is really the opposite. We know how integral the river is to everybody's quality of life. We want people using, enjoying, and loving these rivers, but we want them doing it with good information that can give some peace of mind.

A last note, this summer, Kim Manion and I, as well as other ABRA staff, will also be offering benthic trainings and water monitoring education seminars for anyone who wants to learn more or get involved. We are always looking for volunteers to help with E. coli sampling, YSI monitoring, and benthic macroinvertebrate surveys. You do not need to be a scientist to help. You just need some curiosity, a little patience, and a willingness to get your feet wet.

As always, I'm happy to talk about the monitoring program, the data, or ways to get involved.
monitor@cowpastureriver.org

Accompanying Photos to the Article Above — What the Rain Changed: May 21 vs. May 25

May 21 - before the heavy rain

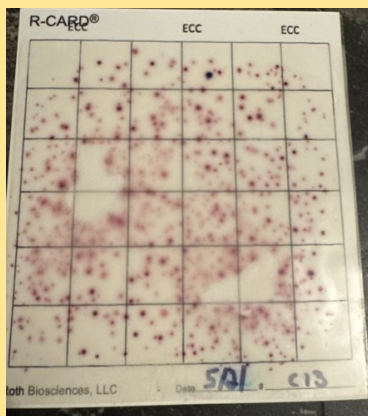


Site conditions on 5/21 at COW-13, Highland County

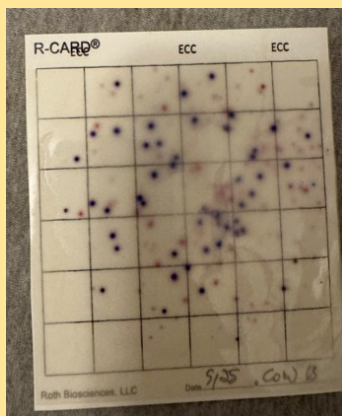
May 25 - after the heavy rain



R-Card: Many more blue E. coli colonies after the rain, way over the 235 CFU health advisory limit.



R-Card: Mostly other coliforms, with one visible blue E. coli colony, no big deal.



R-Card: Many more blue E. coli colonies after the rain, way over the 235 CFU health advisory limit.

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Rain can change bacteria conditions fast. These images are not meant to replace the posted weekly results, but they do show why recent rainfall and high flow matter when deciding whether to swim or wade.



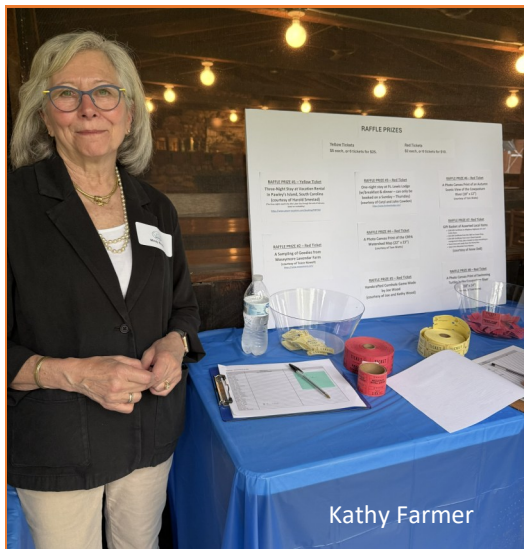
Annual Meeting Highlights



Kathy Farmer

Our speaker of the evening—Jason Hallacher, District Fisheries Biologist.

It was great fun to once again gather for our 54th year as an organization at Camp Mont Shenandoah for CRPA's Annual Meeting. Our speaker this year was Jason Hallacher, District Fisheries Biologist with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. His presentation entitled "*Cowpasture River: State of the Fishery 2026*" elicited many questions from the crowd. A fabulous dinner, along with an outstanding assortment of desserts, was provided by Clair Sax Catering from Monterey, VA. Many thanks to Ann Warner for once again providing Camp Mont Shenandoah as our beautiful venue. And we are grateful to our raffle prize donors listed below who enabled us to raise extra funds to cover the cost of this yearly event.



Kathy Farmer

Mindy Brooks manning the raffle table.



Kathy Farmer

Our dinner spread from Claire Sax Catering was absolutely delicious!

Many Thanks to These Raffle Prize Donors

- **Harold Smestad** — Three-Night Stay at Harold's Vacation Rental on Pawley's Island, South Carolina
- **Teece Nowell** — A Sampling of Goodies from Moseymore Lavendar Farm
- **Caryl and John Cowden** — One Night Stay for Two at Fort Lewis Lodge & Farm
- **Tom Watts** — A Variety of Photo Canvas Prints
- **Joe and Kathy Wood** — Handcrafted Cornhole Game
- **Anne Doll** — Gift basket of assorted local items, including a \$100 gift certificate to Allegheny Highlands Arts and Crafts Store

Spring CRPA Artist Retreat

2026 CRPA Sixth Annual Artist Retreat at Fort Lewis Lodge

The annual CRPA Artist Retreat took place May 3-7, 2026 on the grounds of Fort Lewis Lodge and Farm. Twenty-seven artists arrived from all over the state, and as far away as Ohio, to participate in this relaxing four-day retreat. Their work represented a variety of mediums, including painting, drawing, pastels, watercolor and mixed media. After Sunday evening's welcoming social hour, the group met each evening to share their ideas, techniques, materials and the work that they created each day. For three days they fanned out across the farmland capturing the Cowpasture River at Fort Lewis and Riverside and the Bullpasture River from Beaver Falls. As one artist noted, "There is an inspiring view in every direction!" The artists tell us they appreciate the open atmosphere where they can focus on their art making and enjoy the camaraderie of other artists plus the great meals.



A great looking bunch of talented artists!



Matty Gentry and Lisa Dabareiner are two of the artists who had the pleasure of working by the Mill Pond.



Patti Bartol working in watercolor by the Cowpasture River.



David Bryan showing the work of John Walton-Cale.



Ginger Edwards presenting artist Taylor Wolfe with her painting of Taylor fishing the Cowpasture.

Benthic Highlights from Buxton Farm, Ft. Lewis Lodge, Sharon Boat Launch and The Evans Tract



On April 26th and May 3rd, CRPA and ABRA held Spring benthic macroinvertebrate surveys at Fort Lewis, Buxton, Sharon Boat Launch and the Evans Tract. The sites only took one survey net each to reach the required 200 bugs, and there appeared to be a strong ratio of creatures that require clean water to survive versus pollution tolerant bugs at each site. The data will be finalized and reported to the Clean Water Hub hosted by the VA Save

Our Streams program. If you are reading this, we would love to get you involved with water monitoring. There will be benthic trainings over the summer that will be open to the public. If you are interested in becoming a certified benthic monitor, helping with E. coli monitoring between Memorial Day and Labor Day, or are generally interested in volunteering, please reach out to Andrew Young via his email: monitor@cowpastureriver.org.





BATH COUNTY ART SHOW

JUNE 27 – JULY 5

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ART SHOW

Community Night

Thursday, July 2
4-8 pm

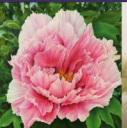
SHOW LOCATION & HOURS
Bath County High School

- Saturday–Monday: 11 AM – 4 PM
- Tuesday & Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday, July 2: 11AM – 4 PM
- Friday & Saturday: 11 AM – 4 PM
- Final Sunday, July 5: 10 AM – 12 PM

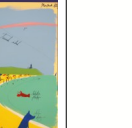
Bath County
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www.bathcountyarts.org/artshow







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Human & Environmental Impact of Chemical Pollution

Jackson and Cowpasture Rivers

Summary of Toxicology Meeting Given on February 26, 2026 by Joe DiNardo, Toxicologist
Summary by Dick Brooks

The primary purpose of the meeting was to address concerns about potential unknown contaminants in the river systems. The organizations invited Joe DiNardo, an expert toxicologist with 36 years of corporate industry experience, to present an analysis of the contamination issues.

The toxicologist, Joe, explained his "reverse engineering" approach, starting with an analysis of cancer statistics in the US and Virginia to identify problem areas. The presentation focused on local industrial activities, specifically the operations of a local paper mill and the nearby Kim-Stan landfill. Joe emphasized the specific, direct link between certain chemicals and diseases, such as asbestos exposure leading uniquely to mesothelioma, which makes the presence of asbestos in the Kim-Stan landfill a major concern. Cancer Rates in Virginia and Covington City.

Comparing 2001 to 2025 estimates, Virginia exhibited cancer death and new case rates significantly higher than the US average. Specifically:

- **Breast Cancer Deaths:** Virginia showed a 16% increase, vastly exceeding the 5% rate in the US.
- **New Breast Cancers:** Virginia had an 80% rate compared to 65% for the US.

Using National Institutes of Health (NIH) data from 2017–2021, Joe presented local cancer rates per 100,000 people, controlled for age and demographics:

- **All Cancers:** Covington City's rate was 550 per 100,000, significantly higher than the US average of 444 per 100,000.
- **Specific High-Rate Cancers in Covington City:** Covington showed marked increases in:
 - **Lung and Bronchus Cancer** (85 vs. 53 US average).
 - **Colorectal Cancers** (60 vs. 36 US average).
 - **Breast Cancer** (143 vs. 130 US average).

Other Concerns: Alleghany County showed slight increases in pancreatic cancer and melanoma of the skin, the latter of which can be linked to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Global epidemiological trends were presented, showing a correlation between paper mills and increased rates of both breast and colon cancer in employees and neighbors across 15 different countries.

Paper Mill Operations and Chemical Concerns

The local paper mill, which is over 100 years old, was identified as a source of environmental contamination. Joe noted that the mill's self-reported emissions data to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is approximately two and a half times less than the actual emissions due to legal loopholes. Major chemical concerns from the mill include:

- **Chlorinated Compounds and PCBs:** Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were banned in the 1970s but still persist due to loopholes and are reportedly not being tracked by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).
- **Hydrogen Sulfide Gas:** The mill emits hydrogen sulfide or sulfur dioxide gas, which, even though not a major cancer-causing agent, is toxic at detectable levels and causes symptoms like nausea, headaches, and blurry vision.
- **Misinformation Campaigns:** Research into the cancer correlation revealed "scientific roadblocks" where papers often deny the link. Joe highlighted that 416 scientific papers written by industry lobbyists or employees were retracted in 2022 after being proven fraudulent.

Kim-Stan Landfill and Toxic Leachate

The Kim-Stan landfill, located about 1,000 feet south of the Jackson River, was a major focus. It covers 24 acres and contains 865,000 tons of waste, including:

- 5,000 gallons of waste oils contaminated with PCBs.
- Aluminum sludge, which releases mercury.
- Buried asbestos.

The site was previously considered a Superfund site. The key problem is toxic leachate—a source of PFAS, heavy metals, and PCBs—which prompted the construction of a dedicated pipeline to send 250,000 gallons of leachate to the wastewater treatment plant. Joe stressed that moving the leachate does not resolve the toxic nature of these "forever chemicals," which are persistent (mercury is an element, and PCBs have a long half-life). The presence of mercury, PFAS, and PCBs in fish tissue suggests that the leachate has likely migrated into the Jackson River. Furthermore, wastewater treatment plants struggle to purify water containing these chemicals, leading to the discharge of toxic effluent into rivers like the Maury River in Rockbridge County. Environmental and Public Health System Failures. Bioaccumulation and Biomagnification.

Pollution compounds as it moves downstream, with toxic substances like PCBs and heavy metals settling into the sediment. This leads to **bioaccumulation** in living organisms, moving from algae and small fish to larger fish like smallmouth bass. **Biomagnification** increases the concentration of these toxins at each successive trophic level, making consumption by humans increasingly dangerous. Lack of Fish Consumption Advisories.

Despite the evident contamination, there is **no official fish advisory for the Jackson River**. The final decision rests with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), whose toxicologist, Dwight Flammia, is alleged to "stonewall" attempts to create stricter advisories.

- **Critique of VDH Standards:** Joe presented a critique of the VDH's rationale, noting their toxicologist set a safe limit based on a 20,000 parts per trillion (ppt) level of PFOS in fish, which is associated with increased cholesterol. Joe argued this is 20,000 times above the threshold where 1 ppt of PFOS can cause liver and pancreatic cancer, accusing the VDH of prioritizing government and industry economic concerns over public health.

- **Health Risk:** Continued consumption of fish with 20,000 ppt PFOS can lead to high blood concentrations (over 4,000 ppt) in humans within five years.
- **Outdated Standards:** Current standards for monitoring toxicity are outdated, often relying on 1970s science that looks at parts per million when some PFAS can be lethal at parts per quadrillion. State fish advisories are described as arbitrary and based on the personal opinions of government toxicologists.

PCB and Mercury Contamination Data

Recent 2024 data for the Cowpasture and Jackson Rivers revealed significant contamination:

- **PCBs:** About half of the fish sampled contained PCBs, with the average level being 2.4 parts per billion—**80 to 100 times above the level that causes neurotoxicity in humans.** This variation in detection is likely due to chemicals accumulating in the fat of larger fish.
- **Mercury:** Mercury was present in *every* fish sampled. The average level was 143 parts per billion, which is **thousands of times above the 0.01 parts per billion level that causes kidney toxicity in humans.**
- **Historical Data:** PCB issues in the Jackson River date back to 1995, and in the Cow Pasture River to 2001, a long-standing problem that Joe stated has been ignored by officials.

Impact on Wildlife and Other Toxins

Contaminants impact the entire food web, with predatory birds like eagles and falcons showing "mind-boggling high levels" of accumulated mercury, PCBs, and PFAS. Historical studies show mercury has adversely affected songbirds and their reproduction. The discussion also referenced a 30% loss of North American bird populations and a 43% reduction in bees due to neonicotinoids (Neonics).

Broader Environmental and Legislative Efforts. Road Salts and Legislative Efforts

The discussion shifted to road salts, which pose a tricky balance between safety and environmental toxicity. The three basic salts (magnesium chloride, sodium chloride, and calcium chloride) are linked to **endocrine disruption**, causing decreased fish reproduction and higher mortality among juvenile fish. Richard Brooks shared that a new bill, **Senate Bill (SB) 482**, has passed the Senate and is moving to Congress. This bill mandates that VOTE conduct research to find the safest and most effective alternatives to current, cheap sodium chloride-based road salts and provides funding for this investigation.

Other Chemical and Economic Concerns

- **Guardrail Brush Control Herbicides:** VDOT uses a mix of three extremely toxic compounds for guardrail brush control, including one component, Freelexx, that contains chemicals key to **Agent Orange**. These herbicides cause long-term damaging effects in fish, increase flammability risks, and can cause human reproductive effects.
- **Economic Drivers:** Richard Brooks stressed that decisions by regulatory bodies like the EPA and VDH are primarily driven by **economic factors**, prioritizing industry concerns over public health. The economic model is flawed; while industries may profit a small amount

(e.g., \$4 billion annually for POS manufacturers), the global cleanup and economic losses from cancer-related disabilities are in the trillions of dollars.

- **Chemical Proliferation:** The Chemical Abstract Service (CAS) has identified 290 million unique chemicals, with safety knowledge minimal for most of the 500,000 commonly used. Over 100 pesticides are used in the US, with 85 banned in Europe due to their toxicity.
- **Stream Health Assessment:** Richard Brooks proposed that current stream health assessment methods (like measuring benthic life and dissolved oxygen) are inadequate. He suggested that testing fish tissue for chemical accumulation, such as PFOS, is essential to reflect the true toxicity of the water and protect human health.
- **Exposure and Consumer Practices:** Chemical contamination spreads through the food chain, well water, and consumer products. The majority of people in rural areas rely on wells that often become contaminated, emphasizing the need for people to minimize consumption of potentially contaminated items.

CRPA Annual Summer Picnic and Family Fun Day



SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2026
SAVE THE DATE!

- 3:30—5:00 p.m.** Come early if you would like to swim or wade in the river
5:00— 6:00 p.m. Happy Hour (self serve)
6:00—7:30 p.m. Picnic dinner

WHERE:

Windy Cove Farm, home of Witcher and Elizabeth Dudley. Address given upon your RSVP.

FOOD:

We provide the burgers, hot dogs, beer, wine, soft drinks and water. Vegetarian burgers and hot dogs will also be provided. Attendees will bring side dishes to share with everyone.

COST:

- \$20 per person; children 12 and under are free. Please register and prepay online on our website at <https://cowpastureriver.org/>
- After you register, you will be assigned a covered side dish to bring with you.
- Please bring your own lawn chairs.

Registration Deadline: July 18, 2026

Questions?: Email director@cowpastureriver.org or call 540-620-7795. We hope to see you there!



Wetlands Restoration in the Lower Cowpasture River Valley



Photo by Doug Albrecht

Seventeen participants signed up for the April 12th field trip entitled “Wetlands Restoration in the Lower Cowpasture River Valley.” The group spent several hours touring various vernal pools in the lower watershed. These pools were constructed by Michael Hayslett, the Principal Consultant at Virginia Vernal Pools, LLC, in response to the growing interest among landowners to restore and enhance wetland environments to improve habitat on their river properties.

Becky Downs, one of the participants, gave

the field trip a high vote of confidence. “The wetlands walk today was absolutely amazing. I learned so much! Mike educated us on topics ranging from amphibians to archeology, geology to wildflowers, native settlements to invasive species. I never want to miss another one of these events. Thank you CRPA, landowners, and Mike for an awesome adventure.”

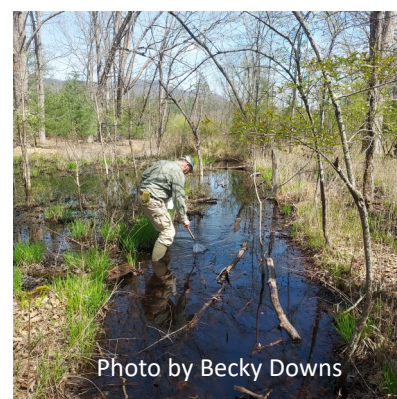


Photo by Becky Downs

On the group’s first stop, they toured six constructed wetland features at two sites on the Beckwiths’ “Upbridge Farm.” This project is in its fourth year and has been wildly successful in enhancing the biodiversity of their farm! The photo below (left) is “George’s Duck Marsh.” As you can see, it was prematurely dry from the extreme drought. The photo on the right shows what the same site looked like back in April 2024. What a difference!



Photo by Michael Hayslett

George’s Duck Marsh — April 2026



Photo by Michael Hayslett

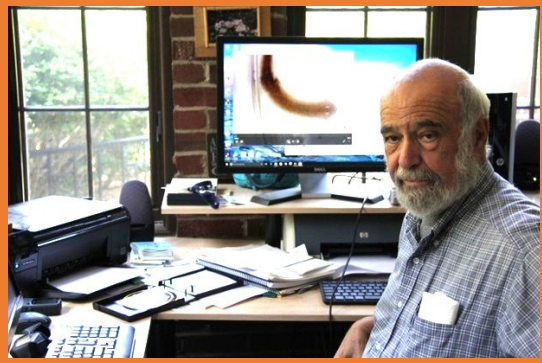
George’s Duck Marsh — April 2024

Michael is a former Executive Director and board member for the CRPA. You can email him at VAvernalpools@gmail.com. He has now made this field trip a yearly CRPA event in memory of George Beckwith, a former CPRA member who passed away last fall. So stay tuned for April 2027!

In Remembrance

A Remembrance of Roger Baroody

by Puggy Farmer



Roger Baroody will always occupy a special place in my memory. He was a smart guy whose interest and knowledge were more than impressive. He co-developed a mainstay glaucoma drug while performing research at Columbia University; he knew wildflowers; he mapped caves in Virginia and West Virginia; he knew water quality; he knew trees; he was truly a walking naturalist encyclopedia; and he was an ordained Episcopal priest.

Roger and his wife, Cynthia, were always on the road for the CRPA and in the Cowpasture River even though they lived in Covington. They covered ten monitoring sites, constantly counting bugs, doing bacteria counts and water quality tests.

Spending a day on the road with Roger was like riding with "Roger the Race Car Driver," and woe to the unsuspecting country slowpoke. On those trips, when his good friend Bill Jones, the hydrologist, was along, sitting in the backseat and listening to them up front was a sequel to *Grumpy Old Men*. I smiled so much my cheeks hurt!

We, members of the CRPA, owe a lot to Roger Baroody, for keeping the monitoring program alive and responsible. I still hear his voice and I cherish his memory.

Reed Williams



Long term Hot Springs resident R. Reed Williams died on Tuesday, April 28 in Millboro, VA.

Reed was a loving son of his beloved Bath County. Born July 10, 1955, he was a sixth-generation resident of the Williams family. His ancestors were landowners in the county as early as 1830.

Reed returned to Bath County in 2017 to look after his aging father. Reed's return to his place of birth was welcomed by old friends and new. He was much-loved in his hometown. One friend nicknamed him Moses because, "Reed could calm any storm and always move people forward to a better place."

Describing his love of the area, Reed said "I am also grateful for the power of place. This place, Bath County, is literally magical. The landscape is very large. It makes you feel small, you are in the presence of God here. This is the world, and this is my place in it. I don't think there is another place that has such singular beauty."

Allen LeHew



We were saddened to learn of the passing of CRPA member Allen LeHew. Allen would joyously donate coffee, tumblers and mugs to the CRPA online auction from his shop, Duck's Cottage Coffee and Books, in Duck, North Carolina. In 2023, Allen moved to Amherst, VA to embrace farm life. He was a husband, father and grandfather. He will be missed.

Eric Titcomb



Eric passed away on April 7, 2026. He was an active environmentalist, and he and his wife, Winifred Stephenson, have been long-time CRPA members. Eric was a certified member of the Amelia Island Turtle Patrol. Our condolences to Winifred.



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

