

# Rivanna Currents

Fall 2007

Rivanna  
Conservation  
Society

*The Rivanna Conservation Society is dedicated to safeguarding the ecological, scenic, recreational and historic resources of the Rivanna River and its watershed*

Volume 17 Issue 2

## The Rivanna River Runs Free Through Charlottesville:

### Woolen Mills Dam Breached

*By Jason Halbert and Leslie Middleton*

**A**fter nearly six years of dedicated and tenacious effort by RCS, and its Rivanna River Restoration Committee the breaching of the Woolen Mills Dam took place on August 15, 2007. The result of this time consuming, bureaucratically laden and relatively expensive project (but far cheaper than the alternatives) is that the beautiful Rivanna River is running free through Charlottesville for the first time in 177 years.

Nearly 100 supporters and members of the press gathered at Riverview Park (just a little upstream of the dam) to commemorate the breaching. After a short ceremony, participants walked to the dam site to find that a section thirty feet wide had been removed almost to bedrock. On this perfectly sunny summer morning, the demolition was well underway, with construction equipment pulling blocks of cut stone and the rubble from a section of the dam. Onlookers were delighted to see the river running through the breach.

**History:** The dam was built some 177 years ago to provide power to the Woolen Mills. After operating as a power source for a number of years, the mill transitioned to electricity rendering the dam, as a power source, unnecessary. Even so, the structure was picturesque and a familiar landmark, so the dam remained in place nearly

18 decades. In recent times the Woolen Mills Dam has been the property of the Thach family who has owned the dam since the closure of the Woolen Mills back in 1964. So the breaching of the dam, proposed by RCS, had to have the blessing and support of the owners.

As civic minded neighbors, the Thach family has for many years allowed the Rivanna Trail to traverse their private property abutting Moores Creek, below the dam, so the RCS was hopeful that the Thach family would approve the breaching of the dam. Having secured the support of the Thach family, the RCS contracted for an engineering study in 2003, to ascertain the viability of removing a part of the dam to allow passage of migratory fish, (shad, herring, and American eel). The RCS also wanted to assure safe passage for canoeists and other recreational boaters, while making an effort to maintain some of the historical characteristics of the existing dam. No small task to say the least.

**The Process:** The RCS began the process of raising funds to move from concept to reality. Through the gracious funding support of the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation, Bama Works, Canaan Valley Institute, Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries and American Rivers and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the feasibility study was undertaken. Contractors were selected through a formal bidding process and Rettew, Inc. of Lancaster, PA evaluated the project's feasibility and did sediment testing, surveying, and breach design. The Rettew study characterized the hydrology, impoundment, bottom topography of the river, composition of river bottom sediment (the tests for heavy metals and other toxins were negative-nothing found), and predicted the end result of removing 195 of the 270-foot dam. Pressure to remove the dam intensified with the tragic, accidental drowning at the dam in 2004.

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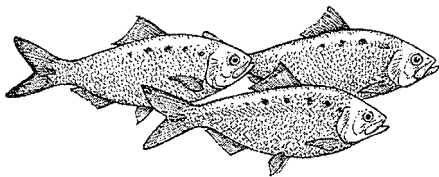
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## President's Message


*By Angus Murdoch*

In his first major foray into public life, a young Thomas Jefferson lobbied the Colonial legislature and organized local landowners for a campaign of navigational improvements along the Rivanna River from Charlottesville to the James. In many cases, the passages which cleared the way for the bateaux era built on the already substantial fish weirs which the Monacan Indians had maintained across those same Rivanna riffles a generation or two before Virginia planters arrived in the Piedmont. We are told that these weirs once stretched from bank to bank, a substantial investment in the local peoples' time and energy, and a testament to their hopes, expectations, and dependence on what was once an enormously productive fresh-water fishery, especially when waves of American shad made their annual spawning surge inland from the sea.

Early colonists also relied heavily on their inland fishery and testified to the enormous bounty of Virginia's rivers, even if the settlers' main attention was focused elsewhere. Bateaux infrastructure improvements paved the way for the canal boat era of the nineteenth century, which transformed the Rivanna from a free flowing stream to a stepped series of long ponds which filled canal locks and turned mill wheels along the length of the Rivanna's main stem. These developments—here again, an enormous investment of their society's financial, technical and physical resources – opened Central Virginia to world trade and industry, but crushed whatever was left of the native fish runs, which would have already been stressed by agricultural runoff and massive deforestation.

For better or for worse, the canal system was, in its turn, rendered obsolete by the railroads. Steam and electric power enabled industry to move to safer areas outside the floodplain. Commerce now surges along the I-64 ridgeline while once thriving river towns have become sleepy backwaters. Rivanna Mills and Rasawek are, today, probably visited as often by bear and eagle as they are by human beings. Time, neglect, and high water removed the dams on the lower Rivanna years before most of us were born. Today, with the removal of Charlottesville's Woolen Mills Dam, the river is once again free flowing for most of its course, and there is the very real prospect that a strong shad run might one day be restored.

Water is no less critical to our society today than it was to those who came before us, and our communities are presently struggling with serious water supply and management challenges which will continue to require a large portion of our brains, muscle, and cash if they are to be successfully met. At the same time, we have near at hand, the luxury of a largely intact natural system which, even if not pristine, could still be allowed to flourish as a refuge for its wild and human neighbors for generations and generations to come. In today's world, this is an increasingly rare and precious gift which merits our ongoing care and attention.

Once again, hearty thanks to all of you who have kept RCS afloat since 1990 (and the Scenic River and other local activists who paved the way before that!), and a warm welcome to those of you just getting to know us. We look forward to having you aboard through the year ahead. 

*-Angus Murdoch*

# Executive Director's Report

*By Robbi Savage*

**W**hat a summer we have had, the breaching of the Woolen Mills Dam, the hosting of the James River Sojourn, the Annual Rivanna River Clean-up, the co-sponsorship of the Rivanna River Regatta and Festival, the hosting of the Fluvanna County Youth Education and Field Experiences, the initiation of the Watershed Scorecard Project, the creation of the Third Thursday Brown Bag Educational series, the establishment of the Student Intern Corps and most recently the RCS Annual Meeting and River Paddle.

Each event and program has increased public awareness and expanded community involvement in the protection of the Rivanna River. And, in addition to the on river programs, the RCS has undertaken a series of internal and operational improvements, including the revamp and upgrade of the organization's website, the consideration and Board approval of the Seven Year Strategic Plan, the restructuring of the RCS Committees and the streamlining of fiscal and project reporting systems.

Throughout the following pages you will read about this summer of activity and accomplishment. In each case, success was directly linked to the dedication and participation of the RCS members and volunteers. Please accept our most sincere thanks and appreciation for this incredible level of contribution. Without your support, the activities of the summer of 2007 could not have become reality.

In 2008 look for RCS to expand its programming to include a Teacher Watershed Summit, a Youth Watershed Summit, the initiation of the Rivanna River Sojourn and the implementation of the Clean Rivanna Campaign.

*- Robbi Savage*



*World Water Monitoring day founder Robbi Savage with students from Stone Robinson School at Camp Albemarle*

## Perfect Timing for Annual River Clean Up

**F**ollowing shortly after the breaching of the Woolen Mills Dam and before a generous rainstorm, more than 100 volunteers took to the Rivanna River and shorelines August 25th to remove tons of trash. The area just upstream and downstream of the dam site yielded long buried items including an old public telephone, newspaper box, shopping cart, tires and construction debris. Downstream in Fluvanna, the low water level enabled RCS Board Members Angus Murdoch and Phyllis White to lead a dedicated team of U.Va. students and Lake Monticello residents on a very long day of removing, among other things, 17 tires, the back of a Dodge van, a vintage adding machine, a piñata, and items never before seen by the younger volunteers - pop-tops from aluminum cans!

Organized by Phyllis White of RCS and Garnett Mellen of The Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District, this year's annual clean up saw a record number of children and young adults enthusiastically participating. Thanks to Blue Ridge Mountain Sports and Fluvanna Parks and Recreation for donating the use of boats and gear. Also, Whole Foods, Albemarle Square Shopping Center's Management Company, ACAC, Rebecca's Natural Foods, Harris Teeter and Barracks Road Kroger donated snacks and supplies. The Daily Progress and CBS 19 covered the event. HUGE THANKS to all of the great volunteers who were all happy to contribute to the health of Virginia's first Scenic River. *~*

*-Phyllis White*

## Conserve Water

**With a 60 gallon recycled shipping barrel that originally brought olives from Spain to the U.S.!**

**Purchase RCS Rain Barrels by check only at the following locations:**

**Eltzroth and Thompson Greenhouse in Charlottesville; the Garden Barn in Advance Mills; Pennington's Nursery and Gifts in Rochelle, or Garden Trade Nursery and Garden Shop in Faber**



***Barrels are \$95 each or \$80 when two or more are purchased***

## Rivanna River Watershed Scorecard

*by Morgan Butler*

**T**he Rivanna Conservation Society has embarked upon an ambitious project to analyze the environmental and land use ordinances of the four localities that encompass most of the Rivanna River watershed. The project seeks to identify opportunities where local ordinances could better promote the use of "low impact" development practices that help maintain and improve the health of the Rivanna River and the local waterways that flow into it. Working with the University of Virginia's Environmental Law Clinic and the Southern Environmental Law Center, the project is focusing first on the more populous City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County. An Ordinance Review Committee, composed of individuals from all three groups, has been working together for nearly a year and is in the process of finalizing recommendations for those two localities. From there, the focus will shift to the Counties of Fluvanna and Greene. Stay tuned!

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## Rivanna Teacher Course Review

*By Allan Thompson*

**F**or five days last June CBF and RCS took a group of eleven local teachers (9 from Albemarle county, 1 from Madison and 1 from the Lewis and Clark Education Center) on an investigation of our local watershed. We floated stretches of the Rivanna, tested water quality by biotic and chemical methods, and visited water treatment facilities. We also incorporated historical aspects of the river by investigating the locks and canals that were once a livelihood for this area. Teachers were able to share ideas on how to communicate this information with their students and all promised to follow up with lesson plans on the course content.



## 2007 Day of Caring Supports RCS

*By Keith Crawford, Darden School of Business*

**T**he Day of Caring was established in 1992 by the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area to promote the spirit and value of volunteerism, increase the awareness of local human service agencies and schools, and demonstrate what people working together for the community's good can accomplish. In 1999, the Day of Caring was renamed the United Way Laurence E. Richardson Day of Caring in honor of Larry Richardson, long-time volunteer of the United Way and the community, and past president of the Charlottesville Broadcasting Company.

On September 19, 2007, nearly 2,500 volunteers from local businesses and organizations proved once again that they care about our community by reporting to work sites at local nonprofit organizations and public schools to tackle meaningful volunteer projects. Volunteers made a difference at 230 project sites in the Charlottesville, Albemarle, Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson communities. Employees from more than 70 local businesses, churches and civic organizations contributed more than 13,000 man-hours to the day's events. Additional information regarding the Day of Caring can be accessed on-line at [www.dayofcaring.info/home/](http://www.dayofcaring.info/home/)

During the 2007 Day of Caring, a team from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business assisted RCS by staffing an Information/Sale booth on the Downtown Mall to sell kayak and rain barrel raffle tickets, watershed maps, water use effectiveness technology, RCS memberships, and provide general information about RCS and conservation efforts within our Rivanna watershed. Additional information regarding the Darden School, which is a professional school that works to improve society by developing leaders in the world of practical affairs, can be accessed on-line at [www.darden.virginia.edu](http://www.darden.virginia.edu) ☛

### Help RCS When You Search the Web

[www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) is a new search engine that contributes to the RCS each time you search the web. This site is part of Yahoo and was created to support nonprofits.

*Continued from front page*

Working in concert with Virginia's Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) Fish Passage Coordinator, Alan Weaver, RCS hosted a series of meetings with state and federal government agency personnel, followed by community based meetings with the Woolen Mills neighborhood to facilitate the necessary permit process for removing the dam. Seven permits or waivers were needed. The next step was for RCS to submit applications to the US Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits 27 and 33, Virginia Marine Resources Commission permit, Department of Environmental Quality waiver for Clean Water Act permit compliance, Department of Conservation and Recreation Dam Safety permit, and an Albemarle County demolition permit. All permits were approved.

Not surprisingly, given the age of the structure, the dam qualified for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Sites. This designation required the development of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between RCS and the Department of Historic Resources, to assure historic mitigation. Once the permits were submitted and approved by Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), RCS worked with DGIF, ACOE, and the Department of Historic Resources to draft a MOA outlining each party's responsibilities during and after deconstruction. This Agreement provided for full documentation of the deconstruction process, historic signage and kiosks on both sides of the river (to be completed), donation of representative block and timber samples to the local Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society and more.

With water quality and aquatic habitat in mind, the RCS, in cooperation with the US Fish & Wildlife Service's State Fisheries Coordinator Albert Spells, contracted with the University of Virginia to document fish population through a monitoring study conducted before and after dam removal.

After a formal bidding process, the RCS awarded the

demolition contract to the lowest bidder: Shelbeck Excavation of Scottsville, VA. Isaac Shelley and his crew (JJ, Thomas, and Billy) took advantage of the low water caused by the summer drought and in early August built a ramp and causeway from the private driveway of Security Storage Allied Van Lines at the end of E. Market Street. This causeway went down into the river and allowed for the transport of the heavy equipment necessary to complete the demolition. RCS Committee members, including engineer Pat Punch, were on site almost every day to monitor and guide the work. The Shelbeck track hoe operator (JJ) did an outstanding job of removing the blocks of cut stone, one by one. This careful process ensured the gradual release of the impounded water. With precision, each course of block was removed, allowing water to spill over the lowered dam, causing the impoundment behind the dam to fall, foot by foot.

Aided by the mostly dry weather, the entire Woolen Mills Dam deconstruction took less than 3 weeks. The demolition process was extensively documented by a historical resources consultant from Gray & Pape, Inc. The process was also documented by RCS members, area homeowners and the local press. A small of community onlookers gathered each day at the site to watch and talk about the historic process. Personal stories were shared, memories of fishing, swimming and playing in the waters above and below the dam.

The Shelbeck team was moving to completion and using the engineering plans developed by Rettew, Inc. removed approximately 195 out of 270 feet of the structure, leaving short sections of block on both sides of the river for historic interpretation. Stone supports for wooden gates of the old sluiceway that carried water to the mills, will remain on the Market Street side. On the other side of the river, the old lock and a non-functioning fish ladder also remain— both of which can be easily accessed by the newly created Old Mills Trail. The dam materials –




12 inch by 12 inch timbers fastened together by iron spikes and the hand-hewn stone blocks, were returned to the Thach family who still own the remaining structure. A representative piece of the wood structure, one full stone block, photos and historical documentation will be delivered to the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society for their collection.

As the water level behind the dam dropped over the course of several days, the structure and shape of the river bottom began to emerge, revealing dying and decaying algae (algae growth is bad and is the result of the stagnant, oxygen-depleted water behind the dam). Behind the rock face of the dam, the timber cribbing appeared. The breach revealed a short section of another impounding structure--perhaps a coffer dam used to divert water for work on the main dam.

**The Result:** The Rivanna River, through this section of Charlottesville, is now a very different river, returning to a natural state, much like it was before the structure was built in the early 1800's. In those days, the entire length of the Rivanna, from the Port of Pireus to Columbia, contained a series of flat-water impoundments behind dams, used to harness water power for mills and to fill locks for transport of goods and people. The only remaining structures now on the Rivanna main stem are the dam that created the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir, impounded for our urban drinking water supply, and small dams on the North Fork at Camelot (also for drinking water) and Advance Mills (no apparent use).

The beautiful rock garden now revealed at Riverview Park will be a kayaker's haven once the rains return and the river level rises again. When the water is up the peaceful sounds of the rippling rapids will return to Riverview Park, a sound that hasn't been heard there for 177 years. When the shad and eels begin to migrate upstream, the community will witness the events as nature intended and as they have unfolded for countless centuries before the intervention of man.

To help ensure that the shad and other aquatic life return to upstream Rivanna, the RCS and the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries are committed to stocking shad fry at Darden Towe Park. As has been the case the past three years, elementary school children come to help release the shad fry. The intention is to educate the community and its students while providing a future fish stock for the Rivanna. Neighborhood anglers are excited about the potential for improved fishing on the Rivanna and canoeing the river will be much easier and a lot more fun.

This project could never have come to fruition without the support and generosity of its members (and non-members) who gave of their time and money to make this project a reality. Without the dedication of committee volunteers, the RCS Board and staff, and the donations of Society members, foundations and government agencies, this dam breach project would have been possible. Thank you one and all! We'll see you on the river! 

*Thank you to the RCS Boards of Directors and to the Rivanna River Restoration Committee for their support of and dedication to this important project.*

*And, without the donations and contribution of our major supporters, the Woolen Mills Dam Breach could never have been accomplished. RCS extends its most sincere appreciation to:*

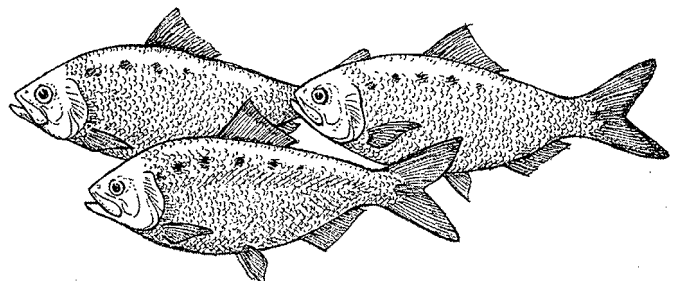
American Rivers  
Anonymous Local Foundation  
Bama Works Fund (The Dave Matthews Band)  
Charlottesville Area Community Foundation  
I.J. & Hilda M. Breeden Foundation  
Canaan Valley Institute  
Chesapeake Bay Program of U.S. EPA  
FishAmerica Foundation  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration  
The Hartfield Foundation  
The Perry Foundation  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Wal Mart  
WestWind Foundation

*Rivanna River Restoration Committee Volunteers:*

Dr. Marty Albert  
Pat Calvert  
Eric Gilchrist  
Jason Halbert, Chair  
David Hannah  
Hank Helmen  
Michele Mattioli  
Angus Murdoch  
Leslie Middleton  
Pat Punch  
Tim SanJule  
Erik Wilke

*Ceremony Coordination:*

Robbi Savage, Executive Director  
Mary Anderson, Administrative Assistant  
Sara Becker, Student Intern Corps  
Jackson Means, Student Intern Corps  
Stefanie Zaenker, Student Intern Corps



# RCS Adopts Its New Strategic Plan

**O**n Saturday September 8, 2007, the RCS Board of Directors met for an all day retreat to develop its Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan will guide the organization for the next seven years, with the understanding that it is a living document that can be modified over time to reflect changing situations within the RCS and the Rivanna River Watershed.

**Central Themes:** Education, Advocacy, Financial sustainability

**Problem Statement:** Human activities within the Rivanna River basin are increasing, placing pressure on the environment, natural habitat, and [both] water quality and quantity

**Priorities:** The Rivanna Conservation Society is committed to the protection and enhancement of the Rivanna River Basin's water quality and water quantity

**Mission:** To develop public support to safeguard the ecological, recreational, cultural, scenic and historic resources of the Rivanna River Watershed

**Board of Directors:** The Board of Directors is composed of persons who are members of the organization and who are dedicated to the mission and goals of the RCS

**Officers:** President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary, are members of the Board of Directors elected annually by the RCS membership. The role of the Board of Directors is to set policy, determine priorities, establish the annual budget and approve the dues structure

**Executive Director:** The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the organization, including; data management, fiscal management, personnel management, media outreach, meetings management, member services, personnel management, student intern program and website management

**Committees and Assignments:** The Board of Directors has created three standing committees to carry out the programs and projects of the organization.

**Advocacy Committee :** Regulation, Policy, Ordinances, Legislation

**CHARGE:** To work with government and non-government groups to promote projects, programs, policy and legislation to improve the health of the Rivanna River Watershed.

**Public Outreach and Education Committee:**

Education Programs, Public Involvement Projects, Media

Relations

**CHARGE:** To create and implement educational programs and public involvement projects designed to safeguard the ecological, recreational, cultural, scenic and historic resources of the Rivanna River Watershed

**Development and Resources Committee:** Fund Raising, Board Development, Internal Operations

**CHARGE:** To secure the fiscal resources necessary to successfully operate the organization; to work with the Executive Director to establish sound fiscal and operational procedures, and to facilitate board and personnel development and training.

The activities, programs and projects of the RCS are carried out by the standing committees and the by the organizational staff. These include:

## **Advocacy Committee**

Government/Legislative Advocacy

Public Water Supply Mitigation Plan

Political Candidates Forum

Rivanna River Restoration Program

Rivanna River Basin Commission Liaison

Sustainability Commission Liaison

Watershed Scorecard Project

## **Public Education and Outreach Committee**

Buffer & Restoration Program Facilitation Kiosk Construction & Maintenance

Earth Week Booth and Exhibit

Old Farm Days participation

Rivanna River Clean Ups

Rivanna River Paddles and Floats

Rivanna River Regatta

Rivanna River Sojourn

Scheier Natural Area Education Programs

Shad Fry Release

Student Field Experiences

Teacher Watershed Summit

Third Thursday Brown Bag Public Forums

Youth Watershed Summit

World Water Monitoring Day

Woolen Mills Landscape & Mitigation

Xtreme Fest

*Continued from previous page*

## **Development & Resources Committee**

Board Development

Fund Raising

Internal Operations

Major Donors Programs

Membership Appeals

Memorials and Bequeaths

Raffles (Kayak and Rain Barrels)

Rain Barrel Retail Sales Program

Rivanna River Watershed Map Sales

Volunteers are needed to service on the RCS members Committees. If you are interested in participating on an RCS Committee please contact us. ☎

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## **Meet Our New Board Members**

### **Repp Glaettli**

Repp is the stormwater inspector for the County of Albemarle, as position he has held since 2005. Prior to coming to the Charlottesville area, Repp served as the Stormwater Drainage Technician in Killeen, Texas. Repp also spent two years working as a science technician for the State of Pennsylvania's Department of Natural Resources. Repp is a StreamWatch volunteer, a master naturalist volunteer and a member of the Earth Week Coordinating Committee for the Charlottesville, area. Repp has a Bachelor of Science in Art from James Madison University and a Master of Science in Geo-Environmental Studies.

### **Miranda Maupin**

Miranda holds a Masters Degree Landscape Architecture, University of Washington, A.S. Degree Environmental Horticulture, Santa Barbara City College, and a B.A. Degree English Literature, UC, Santa Barbara. Miranda is also part of the Faculty, University of Virginia. Miranda and her family have recently moved to the Charlottesville from Seattle, Washington where she was a Strategic Advisor to the City of Seattle, providing policy and budget recommendations to executive leadership and elected officials regarding high-priority or politically sensitive projects and programs. Miranda was also a city planner in Seattle developing land use regulations, programs and

capital projects to improve the health of urban watersheds. Miranda has extensive experience in stormwater management and watershed planning and was a Team recipient of Harvard Business School Excellence in Government Award for the internationally recognized Natural Drainage Program.

### **Michael Wheelwright**

Michael and his wife Jean have recently moved to the Charlottesville area after living many years in Massachusetts and prior to that in Santa Barbara, California. Michael is Land Planner and landscape architect and has been involved with bioengineering for many years as well as in the field of solid waste recycling. Michael worked for the Department of Planning and Zoning in Orange County, VA, as a town planner in Norwood, MA, Program Development Director, Cambridge, MA, Senior Landscape Architect, Bioengineering Group Salem, MA, Environmental Project Manager Quincy MA, Planner III, Redwood City, CA and Planner III, Santa Barbara, CA. Private Practice Landscape Architect Santa Barbara, CA. Michael has for many years been an active environmental volunteer and managed a nonprofit organization while in California. ☎

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## **Personnel Changes**

RCS extends its sincere appreciation to Mary Anderson and Britton Miller who have provided tremendous support and assistance to the organization – Mary as the Administrative Assistant and Britton as the Education Coordinator. Many thanks to Mary and Britton, We wish them well as they assume new positions.

RCS is grateful to Laurie Miller who is providing part time office support as the interim Administrative Assistant and Tanner Council, program assistant, who is working with the Executive Director to plan the Teacher and Youth Watershed Summits that will be held in 2008.



# RCS Testifies before the Albemarle Board of Supervisors

October 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board,

My name is Robbi Savage and I am the Executive Director of the Rivanna Conservation Society. RCS would first like to associate itself with the comments made by Mr. Butler, Mr. Cannon and Mr. Schuyler. RCS urges the Board of Supervisors to extend the County's current stream buffer protections to intermittent streams located in the rural areas, and to preserve steep slopes from access roads and driveways.

## Intermittent Streams

Intermittent streams are an invaluable natural resource and play a critical role in the overall health of a stream system because they often represent the headwaters of a watershed's stream and river network. During storms, intermittent streams can contribute large volumes of sediment and other pollutants to the stream system. Buffers along intermittent streams help reduce these threats by keeping streambanks from eroding and by trapping sediments before they reach the stream. Buffers also reduce the severity of floods by slowing water that reaches the floodplain and riparian area.

Currently, the County's intermittent streams only receive a protective buffer against new disturbances if they are located on land that drains into our public water supply reservoirs or intakes. Under the proposed amendment to the water quality ordinance, buffer protection would be extended to all intermittent streams located in the County's rural areas. Without this protection, many of our other efforts to promote the health of our local streams and river network are severely undermined.

The RCS views this important proposal as amounting to a simple and straightforward change to the County's existing stream buffer ordinance. The end result will be an increase in the number of intermittent streams that receive protection under the ordinance. In practice, it would involve application of the same County staff survey procedures currently used to identify intermittent streams on lands located within the County's water supply protection areas. As long as these survey procedures are clearly defined and thoroughly publicized, to ensure fairness, with objective and consistent application, we see no reason not to adopt this important provision.

## Critical Slopes

The County recognized the water quality benefits of protecting and conserving steep hillsides when it passed the critical slopes ordinance in 1989. The preamble to that ordinance enumerates many of the dangers that disturbances to critical slopes present to the environment (as well as public health and safety) and makes clear that the ordinance intends to "discourage development on critical slopes."<sup>1</sup>

We understand that the existing critical slopes ordinance has been interpreted in a way that often exempts residential roads and driveways from restrictions against disturbing steep slopes. RCS is generally opposed to private access roads or other development on slopes greater than 25 percent and we urge you to adopt provisions that adequately protect these fragile natural resources by limiting the land-disturbing activities that may take place upon them.

These two of the provisions will provide important benefits to the County's rivers and streams and limit damage to important natural resources. For these reasons we urge you to extend the County's current stream buffer protections to intermittent streams located in the rural areas, and to preserve steep slopes from access roads and driveways.

Thank you for your careful consideration to these provisions.      - Robbi Savage

<sup>1</sup> Albemarle County Code § 18-4.2.

## Albemarle County Candidates Forum

**O**n October 18, The Rivanna Conservation Society joined with the Piedmont Environmental Council, Advocates for a Sustainable Albemarle Population (ASAP), Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation (ACCT) and Citizens for Albemarle (CfA) to sponsor the Albemarle County Candidates Forum held on Thursday, October 18, 7:30 PM, at Westminster Presbyterian Church Library.

More than 50 persons were in the room to listen to the seven candidates for three seats on the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors respond to questions relating to water resources, traffic and population growth. In addition to serving as the "time keeper" for the event, RCS put the following question before the candidates, which engendered a lot of enthusiastic discussion.

### Question

Current land use trends pose growing threats to the quality of ground and surface waters in Albemarle County and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Meanwhile, residential and commercial water demand is steadily increasing.

What measures would you support to:

- Protect and improve water quality?
- Pay for necessary water supply and pollution control infrastructure improvements?
- Manage and conserve limited water resources during times of drought?

For a summary of the event, log on to Charlottesville Tomorrow's website at:

[http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville\\_tomorrow\\_/2007/10/asap\\_forum.html](http://cvilletomorrow.typepad.com/charlottesville_tomorrow_/2007/10/asap_forum.html)



## Student Intern Corps

**R**CS is delighted to welcome the newest members of the Student Intern Corps. The group gathered for its organizing meeting on Saturday November 10<sup>th</sup> and are ready and able to help the Executive Director on a number of Administrative projects.

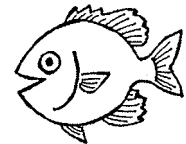
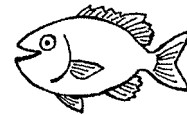
Kelly Bowman

Sarah Cannon

Derek Fikse

Evans Martin

Danielle Waller



## RCS Fall Calendar

**RCS Board Meetings** are held on the first Thursday of each month at 6:00pm at the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library, Main Branch, Downtown Charlottesville.

**Thursday Dec 20, 2007** – RCS Third Thursday Brown Bag – Speakers Pat Calvert and Alan Thompson (Chesapeake Bay Foundation) will speak about youth education programs designed to bring the young ones to the Rivanna River.

**StreamWatch Activities:** Please keep an eye out for scheduling announcements via email. If you are not currently on the StreamWatch email list, but would like to be, contact John Murphy at 434-923-8642 or [johnmurphy@streamwatch.org](mailto:johnmurphy@streamwatch.org)

**For more information call  
RCS at 434 97-RIVER  
or log on to the RCS Website  
[www.rivannariver.org](http://www.rivannariver.org)**

# RCS Position on the Farm Bill

**T**he Rivanna Conservation Society is engaged in the national debate on the reauthorization of the Federal Farm Bill. This important piece of legislation has become even more meaningful to those of us within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed because provisions are being considered that would greatly benefit our area. To assure that the Congress hears the voice of the public the RCS developed an organizational position and provided it to the Virginia Congressional Delegation and members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees.

The RCS position on the Farm Bill Reauthorization of 2007 is as follows:

The Rivanna Conservation Society (RCS) is a nonprofit watershed organization representing members in 4 counties and 1 city in the heart of central Virginia. Based in Charlottesville, RCS is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the historic Rivanna River.

The Rivanna Conservation Society encourages the United States Congress to reauthorize the Farm Bill, with inclusion of certain provisions as follows:

- 1) Statutory goals focused on the protection and improvement of the air, the water, soils and natural habitats in lands associated with Farm Bill programs.
- 2) Locally-led working lands conservation programs adequate to support the needs of watersheds such as the Rivanna River Watershed and the nation overall.
- 3) Environmentally sound programs to protect and improve the quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries
- 4) Technical assistance provided to USDA program participants through hands-on fieldwork and computer training, supported by the easily accessed availability of soil and agricultural specialists
- 5) Conservation programs designed to ensure the provision of the full range of program options needed by landowners to meet conservation and resource program requirements.
- 6) Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP) to ensure adequate funding for private landowners and op-

erators to address environmental resource concerns.

7) Conservation Security Program (CSP) to provide adequate funding incentives to enable all participating landowners and operators to comply with the program's conservation goals and directives.

8) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs (CREP) that includes protection for environmentally sensitive areas on a continuous sign-up basis.

9) Integrated Environmental Qualities Incentives Programs (IEQIP) to include working lands programs (e.g. Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Forest Land Enhancement Program, Agricultural Management Assistance and Grasslands Reserve Program).

10) Comprehensive conservation planning process enhancement that encourage participation of private working land participating in farm bill programs, (e.g. contour farming and no till planting).

11) Technical and funding assistance to support the farming community in the development and implementation of plans and programs, as outlined above

12) Citizen work groups and community forums established to assure the involvement of the public and local officials with the decision making of the USDA State Technical Committees.

As Farm Bill legislation works its way through Congress, please be sure that these important provisions are included at the earliest possible stages and are kept in through the final legislation sent to the President.

The Rivanna Conservation Society Board of Directors is available to meet with Congressional members and their staffs to provide additional input on behalf of the grassroots, volunteer based organizations, comprised of citizen volunteers who are dedicated to the health, quality, quantity and cultural well being of the Rivanna River, as it flows into The James River and out into the Chesapeake Bay.

RCS Contacts: Angus Murdoch, President, Tatyanna Patten, Advocacy Committee Chair or Robbi Savage, Executive Director at [exec@rivannariver.org](mailto:exec@rivannariver.org)

# Scheier News

**S**cheier Natural Area has been buzzing with activity this season. Clean up and renovations of the caretaker's house and out buildings began. Second Year U.Va. Echols Scholars braved extreme heat and angry wasps to clean up the pond areas and outbuildings. Mike Dixon of Dixon Trash generously provided a truck and crew to haul away old appliances and other clutter.

The second season of **4th Sundays at Scheier** was successful thanks to the volunteer program leaders: Hugh Gildea, Eileen Rowan, Phil Stokes, Michele Prysby, Peter Warren, and Jim Kennedy. The trails remain open though year round for your enjoyment.

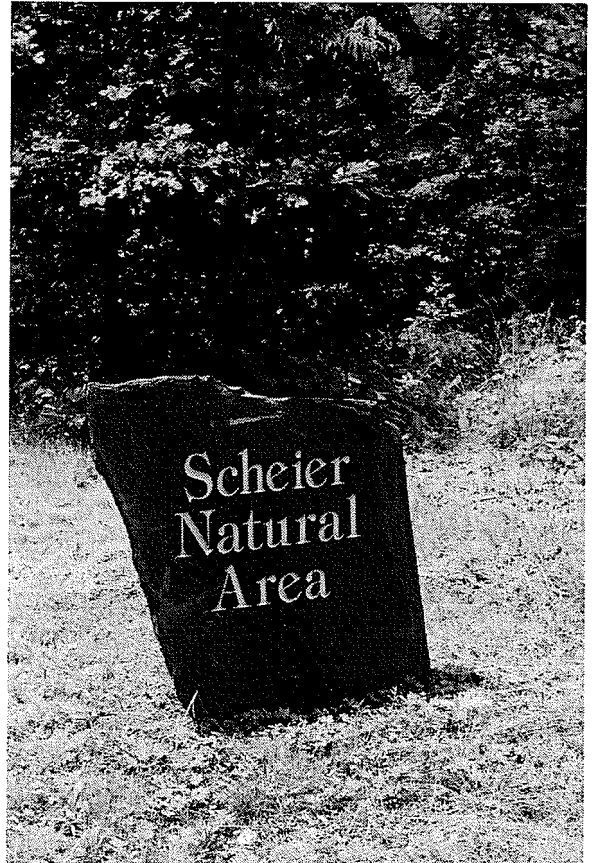
## **Directions to Scheier Natural Area, Fluvanna County, Virginia**

### **From Palmyra, VA** (travel time 10 - 15 minutes)

Take Route 15 South right onto Route 640 West, right onto Long Acre Road/ Route 639 for about 5 miles (past Hidden Valley). Look for the small slate sign, the wood kiosk and parking on the right.

### **From Charlottesville, VA** (travel time 30 - 40 minutes)

Take Route 20 South, turn left onto Route 53 East, continue about 13 miles and pass the Texaco/Dairy Queen on your left, then turn right shortly after the Cunningham Market onto Route 660/619. Turn left at fork onto Route 660, continue to the end, right onto Route 640 West, immediately right onto Long Acre Road/Route 639 and travel about 5 miles (past Hidden Valley). Look for the small slate sign, the wood kiosk and parking on the right.



## **The Rivanna Conservation Society– Membership Information**

Yes, I want to join the Rivanna Conservation Society to protect our precious natural resource, the Rivanna River

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Waterpenny (seniors, students)....\$25.00    Shad...\$35.00    Wood Duck...\$60.00    River Otter ....\$125.00

Blue Heron....\$250.00    Osprey....\$500.00    Bald Eagle...\$1000.00+    Lifetime Member...\$1,500\*

Corporate Support : Green Heron...\$500.00    Mink...\$750.00    Kingfisher...\$1,500.00    River Protector...\$2,500

River Guardian...\$3,500    Lifetime Supporter...\$6,000\*

\*Payable over a three year period

All contributions are tax deductible. All members receive our quarterly newsletter, invitations to special events, and exclusive events at Scheier Natural Area. Thank you for your support.

Please complete and mail with check, made payable to:

Rivanna Conservation Society, PO Box 1501 Charlottesville, VA 22902

Or join Online! [www.rivannariver.org](http://www.rivannariver.org)

*View of the recently breached Woolen Mills Dam*



**Rivanna Conservation Society  
PO Box 1501  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
Return Service Requested**

**Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Charlottesville, VA  
Permit No. 758**

The date above your name is the date of your last contribution. Please consider renewing your membership if more than a year has passed.

***The Rivanna Conservation Society (434)97-RIVER [www.rivannariver.org](http://www.rivannariver.org)***