

Summer programs: think warm thoughts

Remember Summer? These children sure will! Be ready for our Summer Camps again next year. We plan to host three separate day camps for various ages ranging from rising first through ninth graders. Details coming soon.



Concha Mendoza joins Friends' staff



As a high school student, our newest staff member was enjoying local swimming holes and helping Friends with water quality monitoring. Today, well prepared with work experience spanning the nonprofit, legal, and journalism fields, and a Yale degree in Latin American studies, Concha Mendoza is back in Woodstock, helping the river she loves. Concha's new position as our Operations Manager—like everyone's at a small organization—involves a mix of office work, fundraising, communications, and program work. Concha was a great help behind the scenes with the Fish Fry. She recently joined Cindy to help with sixth grade science students and hopped right in to run some sessions with first graders. Concha shares: "Friends is a unique organization with a large cadre of community volunteers ready to celebrate and help protect the beautiful Shenandoah, a river that has shaped the place I've called home for most of my life. I'm excited to see where all of us can take Friends of the North Fork together in the years ahead."

Board changes

We are excited to have Jay Eiche and Bud Griswold join the Friends Board of Directors. Long-time directors Mary Gessner and John Holmes had to step down this summer due to term limits.

Jay has embarked on a second career as an environmental attorney after 24 years serving both active and reserve roles in the Judge Advocate General's Corps of the U.S. Army. An avid fisherman, Jay is very active with the Potomac River Smallmouth Club. Jay and his wife Tanya Harvey have both been very active with Friends. They make their home in Arlington but try to get out to their place along the North Fork as often as possible.



Bud was born into an outdoors loving family in Michigan. Early experiences ultimately led him to a PhD in Fishery Science, a career as a Fishery Biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and time as a member of the graduate faculty at Ohio State University. Living in Woodstock since 2002, Bud has focused on contributing to local environmental issues including the ongoing concern of fish health in the river and as chair of the County's Water Resources Advisory Committee and Conservation Easement Authority. Bud's wife Mary Gessner is also very active with Friends and in other conservation efforts in the community and region.

Expanded office space

Friends of the North Fork has occupied its office space in Woodstock for decades, and we had the boxes of records, piled high, to prove it. This summer we expanded into the adjacent office space next door—the former Dupont Community Credit Union—essentially doubling our office. In addition, thanks to the dedicated efforts of volunteers Jack Chapman, Eli Haun, and Ron Falyar, we also managed to remove several truckloads of nonessential materials and accumulated detritus that were dutifully recycled.

The result is that we now have a clean, well-lighted place, with enough room for simultaneous groups to have meetings, stuff envelopes, offer workshops classes, strategize and socialize.

If you didn't make it to our open house on Friday evening, December 12th, please contact us and we'd love to give you a tour.



Save the date

July 6-10, 2015

North Fork to the Bay
Teacher Professional
Development

Valley teachers will again learn from Friends and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation as they investigate the changing landscapes of the North Fork and beyond in this 5-day, hands-on course.

Source water protection

With assistance from the Virginia Department of Health, the Town of Woodstock has engaged a consulting firm to create a plan for protecting the source of its drinking water—the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Friends' Executive Director, John Eckman, serves on the Source Water Protection Committee which recently reviewed a preliminary draft of the plan.

We believe Woodstock should be commended for getting out ahead with this initiative. The Town recognizes there are various potential threats to the water intake, including malfunctions of treatment plants upstream, natural disasters—including drought, and accidental toxic spills. While the chances of such trouble are small, the impacts could be huge. It's cheap insurance to plan ahead for alternative water sources should such a disaster strike. In a little over a year we've seen a coal ash spill on the Dan River, a train car derailment and fire on the James River in Lynchburg, and the loss of drinking water for hundreds of thousands from a leaking chemical tank that pretty much shut down Charleston, West Virginia. You never know when these things can happen. Every community should have a plan.

Stormwater: what falls down, must run off

While our region seems to retain much of its rural character, the pressures of growth and development, which were slowed by the recession in recent years, promise to pick up as the economy continues to improve. We still might expect to see as much land developed across Virginia in the next 40 years as we've seen in the last 400. This is worrisome for every watershed in the Commonwealth, and for the North Fork in particular.

From the river's perspective, with growth comes increased impervious surfaces—the parking lots, roads, roofs and compacted new lawns that disrupt natural hydrological flow and absorption of rainfall. As impervious surfaces increase, the water flowing off of them carries polluted runoff into our streams. The water will also move faster,

having more force to undercut banks and erode sediment into the river.

While having cows in a creek or spreading too much fertilizer are big problems for the river, pavement is a much more permanent one. We think the right to save a place should be as strong as the right to pave one.

The key to managing this threat is good planning to keep growth close to towns and cities, preserve open space and farmland, and offer strong incentives to encourage developers to reduce their polluted runoff footprints. Retrofitting existing sources of polluted runoff can be as simple as putting a rain barrel on your downspout to capture, use, and slow the rain from your roof, or as involved as installing an industrial-scale rain



garden with special filtration to capture oils off a big box store parking lot. Virginia now has regulations requiring new development to handle not only the quantity of stormwater running off a site, but also to ensure the quality of that water.

Shenandoah County has elected to have the state run its stormwater program. Other communities have their own programs. In larger communities with an MS4 (Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System), like Harrisonburg, there are other requirements driving changes. Friends is involved with an effort by the City of Harrisonburg to establish a Stormwater Utility Fee that will charge every property based on the amount of their impervious surface. This program will offer credits for various green technologies that help capture, absorb and filter runoff. The result of all these changes is that both new and existing development will have incentives to limit the footprint of their projects, use more efficient designs, and retrofit existing sources of polluted runoff.

Your River, Your Gifts

Thank you to everyone who has supported our work this year. You still have time to join, renew, or provide a year-end gift. Friends of the North Fork gets about 50% of its financial support from individuals, families and businesses in our watershed community. Please consider the importance of clean water in your life and give generously this season.



it's growing fast, but it also straddles the North Fork and the South Fork. The divide isn't as dramatic as the way Massanutten Mountain borders our watershed, but it is certainly as important.

Many folks don't realize that the North Fork begins not only at the tops of mountains, but also in quiet fields and parking lots in the relative flats of the valley floor. On the west side of I-81, Linville Creek begins in small tributaries flowing north just over the hill from Eastern Mennonite University. It traverses the most intensive animal agriculture area in the North Fork—land that also has more sinkholes and caves than any other portion of our watershed.

East of I-81, Smith Creek starts as a native trout stream in Fridley's Gap on Massanutten, flowing through more intensively farmed land all the way to Mount Jackson where it joins the North Fork. Various other streams and small rivers begin in northwest Rockingham County, in the area where potential "fracking" has caused much concern.

I share all this geography because the majority of our members reading this live far downstream from these points. Most of you are in Edinburg, Woodstock and Strasburg, and your support and volunteer energy are why we have such a strong program in that part of the watershed. My goal for 2015 is to spread that energy and the work of Friends more broadly upstream. For starters, this year's Family Fun Day will return to Smith Creek, south of New Market, for a great day in the warm May sun. This is also one of the reasons why we are hopeful about passage of the proposed Stormwater Utility Fee in Harrisonburg. Friends is trying to educate the public on the value of this equitable approach to cleaning up polluted runoff.

Friends has such a strong core, it's not a worry to branch out, explore our headwaters more fully, and seek the source of both our clean fresh water, and some of our toughest pollution issues.

John Eckman, Executive Director

Looking upstream

I start my morning trip to the Friends' office in Woodstock by cresting a hill on the northend of Harrisonburg. Laid out before me is the North Fork valley, and I'll be losing elevation as I drive downstream for the next 40 minutes of my commute. Harrisonburg is a city on the cusp, in many ways. Yes,

River clean ups net more than a ton of trash

Friends of the North Fork picked two beautiful Saturday mornings for our Fall River Cleanups. On October 25th, a crew from Virginia Eagle Distributing in Winchester joined several long-time volunteers and worked the river from Strasburg south to Woodstock. They were met at Lupton Bridge by another crew coming downstream from Quicksburg. On November 8th, crews gathered at Plains Mill, between New Market and Timberville. Girl Scout Troop 1261 worked with Garbage Guru Jack Chapman to focus on the river along Plains Mill Road, picking it clean while also learning a lot about the riparian habitat along this stretch. Another crew led by Ned Overton of Timberville, focused upstream near Broadway. Our garbage transportation specialist, John Modolo, (aka: the guy with the big truck), stayed busy with several sites. The real heavy lifting came from Zach Grandle, the owner of the historic Plains Mill, and his parents who brought their truck mounted winch to haul two sets of bedsprings, a car bench seat, numerous tires, old computers, a battery charger, and a working child's bicycle from two sites. In all we pulled over 17 tires and about two tons of trash over two Saturdays. Join us in the spring for more muddy fun!



*Thank you for
caring about
the river!*

Year-end giving: stocks and IRAs

Please support the river by renewing your membership or providing an extra year-end gift. Remember, if you donate highly appreciated stock you can avoid paying taxes on your capital gains. Also, if you are over age 70½ and have an IRA, speak with your financial planner to see if you might qualify for potential tax benefits for transferring money directly from your IRA to Friends of the North Fork.

Friends of the North Fork
of the Shenandoah River

John Eckman *Executive Director*
Cindy Frenzel *Education Coordinator*
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Another Great Fish Fry!

Friends' 10th Annual Fish Fry and Auction found 180 fun-loving, river-loving people packing the Woodstock Moose Lodge on October 18th. Thanks to everyone who attended and to all the businesses and individuals who gave so generously to help Friends of the North Fork raise over \$37,000 for the river. "It was a festive and fun event with a large, enthusiastic turnout," April Moore, Fish Fry Committee Chair, said. "We are grateful for the community's continued support which ensures strong efforts to protect our watershed."

10th Annual Fish Fry

This year's artists

Ali Carithers
Penelope Carroll
Susan Chiamonte
Maureen Crisman
Lynne Crumpacker
Diane Charuhas Gould
Alex Hofgren

Hannah Huddle
PJ Designs
Martha Mobley
Deborah Kay Nees
Helen Jean Smith
Laurel Vaughan



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Bill Grillo
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Russ Shay & Debbie Sease

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John Holmes and Diane Zipursky Quale
Margaret Lorenz
John and Pat McKenna
Margaret Nelson
Chuck and Beverly Veatch

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David and Leah Jeffers
Jan and Roy Sommerfeldt
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Kim Uhl and Sara Garland

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David Evans
John Hall and Ingrid DeSanctis
Warren and Barbara Halvorson
Brenda and Bruce Hatton
Martha Heisel
Lee and Toni Jetté
Andi Kasarsky

Barbara Kirkland
Nat and Mary Jane Kirkland
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The Market in Woodstock
Cristina's Cafe
Hi Neighbor Restaurant
Dandy Restaurant Cruises with Capt. Ryan Wojtanowski
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Deirdre Cochran
Rob Schwartz
Jay Eiche and Tanya Harvey
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