



## Major “Rain Garden” Completed at Edinburg Mill

Historic Edinburg Mill (1848) has always been tied to Stony Creek. Water powered the Mill, which was spared “The Burning” that destroyed so many similar buildings during the Civil War. You can learn more about this connection at the Shenandoah Valley Cultural Heritage Museum housed in the sprawling structure.

All those roof tops and the large parking area surrounding the Mill site have caused problems for Stony Creek for many years. Polluted runoff from the parking area and the fast wash of water during heavy rains eroded the stream-banks significantly.

In 2015, Friends joined with the Center for Watershed Protection (CWP), the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), and the Town of Edinburg to address this problem. We were able to secure a grant for \$43,615 through the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The grant comes from the “Green

Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns” program at EPA Region 3. This money was matched by volunteer labor and tremendous support from our many partners.

David Hirschman with CWP designed the project and Louise Finger with VDGIF directed the restoration. Bushong Contracting did a great job with the excavation and construction. Crews from the Town of Edinburg were invaluable in helping with all phases of the project and have enthusiastically taken responsibility for ongoing maintenance.

The solution to the erosion and pollution issues was to create a long swale that would capture runoff along the top of the bank and channel it into a deeper “biofiltration” area. Special soil medium there, working with hundreds of plants, will help clean up the water which then filters into the soil. The structure is designed to handle heavy rains in case it overflows.

Final planting was finished in July by a great volunteer crew including the partners and Alice Findler, Nat Kirkland, Jack Chapman, Dan Harshman, Lucy Reilley, and Concha Mendoza. Native plant species came from The Natural Garden in Harrisonburg. The stream-bank was regraded and replanted, keeping more sediment from washing away.

The main challenge now is keeping the duck flock off the new plants!



*Save the date!*

**Annual Fish Fry and Auction**

October 1, 2016 | Woodstock Moose Lodge



# Consider a Legacy Gift to FNFSR

Like Carol Stroebel, many of us were drawn to the Shenandoah Valley because of its beauty, rural atmosphere, and tranquility of its agricultural heritage. While we particularly enjoy the many amenities provided by the North Fork, and contribute in many ways to protecting it and maintaining its ecological integrity, the long-term future health of the river is constantly threatened by the certainty of future development in the Valley. Many of you surely would like to know that endeavors to maintain the resource we now have will continue well into the future, perhaps past your individual lifetimes.

Those efforts must include perseverance and continuity in our science and advocacy programs as future threats inevitably occur. Our efforts in education, especially focused on the young, are critical in maintaining, and hopefully improving, the future of our river over the years.

To this end, and like Carol Stroebel before you, we invite our members to consider a legacy gift to FNFSR through a bequest in your will or revocable trust. It is one way to help assure the activities of the Friends will continue long into the future.

Advantages are many. It is not payable until death and will not affect your assets or cash flow during your lifetime. It is revocable allowing you to change the provisions at any time. It is private and can be kept private upon death if you so wish.

Finally, if you have specific interests or concerns within the scope of the Friends vision and charter, funds can be directed accordingly. In this way you can be assured that efforts to protect this important, historic, and ecologically significant river will endure well beyond your lifetime.

**Bud Griswold**

*Please contact Friends and your financial adviser to consider your giving options.*

## Carol Stroebel: *A Legacy of Caring*

Carol Stroebel of Winchester, a long-time member and early employee of FNFSR, passed away on January 16, 2016. For the last two decades, she was a quiet but effective advocate with the Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN). There she pushed for regulations and legislation that have impacted lives across the nation.

Before she started at CEHN, she was helping out at a little, all-volunteer watershed organization: Friends of the North Fork. Back in 1996, Carol served as Friends' first "hired hand." Our founders recognized the need for the transition to paid staffing—a change that coincided with a move to computers and the challenge of caring for a watershed with only volunteer energy.

Carol brought a new level of professionalism and consistency to the operations. She also brought a level of ethical thinking, showing that people are the key to any discussion about water chemistry or river health.

She recognized that many of the disputes Friends engaged in had winners and losers, and that the losers generally lived downstream from the winners. She did not shy away from pointing out the differences in power between players in many environmental conflicts.

Carol left Friends a generous bequest in her will. This gift is just one more tangible reminder of her commitment. The organization you see today began its second phase of growth with her guidance and hard work.

The river doesn't see winners and losers. Carol reminded us that now more than ever we must seek to engage everyone in our watershed community to be successful.

## River Rangers and River Players Camps

We had 25 River Rangers and 18 River Players in our summer camps this year. The Rangers are 4th to 8th graders who enjoyed kayaking, fishing, river ecology, a cavern visit, and much more. They spent a lot of time reflecting in their journals and developing great final presentations.

The younger "Players" explored as well and incorporated lots of art and creative activities into their experiences. They ended up the week by hiking to and exploring Passage Creek on the Lion's Tail Trail. We also helped County 4-H campers get out kayaking.

As one parent shared: "My kids loved the camp. We are not around water or streams often so thank you for sharing such great knowledge with them."



River Rangers practice fishing skills along the North Fork

# Ron Falyar Eases Off the Board

Looking through the history of Friends, one name survives the decades: Ron Falyar. He has worn many hats and has served as the core of our institutional memory for about as long as anyone can remember.

Ron knew our founders and can help you find the monument next to the spring that was designated as the highest source of the North Fork by the Forest Service in 1993. He was involved with various testing programs back when we ran our own lab. Ron stepped up on many controversial issues over the years. He fought to protect Holman's Creek when a large dam was proposed. He urged better design for the big box stores and parking lots in Woodstock. He helped champion the need to improve municipal sewage treatment systems.

Many of our old photos of kids in creeks have Ron there, showing the way, and so do many of our most recent ones. Ron has driven trucks across the state and returned with hundreds of rain barrels that he helped people assemble and install throughout the watershed.

And through all this, Ron has also served as an active and vital member of our board of directors, including a stint as board president. Ron was there nine years ago when our board voted to institute term limits, and now he's honoring that policy.

Stepping down from the Friends board is probably going to feel like a second wave of retirement for Ron. (We noticed he left on a long trip right away.) We wish him all the best and hope he and Maxine enjoy their many travels ahead.



## Annual Meeting Message: *Upstream is where the action is!*

Over 50 Friends members gathered on April 2nd to socialize, hear about the health of the river, and learn from speaker Bobby Whitescarver. Bobby is a farmer and retired restoration specialist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service. He has worked with hundreds of farmers to help them find ways to fence livestock out of streams and improve the health of their herds and their water. Today he consults with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Bobby shared how upstream riparian tree planting can be a tremendous help for water quality. Improved stream health due to a forest buffer can increase the level of in-stream processing of nutrients and organic matter by 2 to 8 fold.

A major point of the talk was the need to focus efforts upstream. While many enjoy the

larger North Fork river itself, Bobby stressed that to get real gains in nutrient reduction and sediment load, we need to focus work on the smaller tributaries.

Think about Cedar Creek, Passage Creek, Stony Creek, Mill Creek, Narrow Passage Creek, Holmans Creek, Smith Creek, Linville Creek, Shoemaker River, German River and the many other North Fork tributaries. Now think of what feeds those, and then what feeds those feeder streams, and on up the watershed.

Bobby's point was that the smaller streams, high in the watershed, are where you can get the most productive results for restoration efforts. One poorly managed small tributary may contribute a significant pollution load that ruins things downstream.

Smaller streams are often overlooked, even though they generally make up roughly 80% of the stream miles in any watershed. Improving conditions in and along our small creeks and streams can provide tremendous water quality benefits to the river as a whole.

Bobby Whitescarver was recently named the 2016 Watershed Champion of the Year by the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. We congratulate him on his accomplishments and appreciate his dedication to the Valley. Learn more about his work at: [gettingmoreontheground.com](http://gettingmoreontheground.com)

### Over 70? Got an IRA? Consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution

Changes in Federal tax law have made permanent the option of giving to your favorite nonprofits directly from your IRA, helping you save taxes while meeting your required minimum distribution needs. We urge you to speak with your financial advisor and please consider Friends when giving.

#### Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River

John Eckman *Executive Director*  
Cindy Frenzel *Education Coordinator*  
Concha Mendoza *Operations Manager*

PO Box 746  
305 West Court Street  
Woodstock, VA 22664

(540) 459-8550

[fnfsr.org](http://fnfsr.org)





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## What's Happening at Seven Bends State Park? *Contact Friends to get involved!*



Stacey Ellis's Lord Fairfax Community College Outdoor Recreation class built and installed 12 bluebird boxes on Friday, April 29. The boxes have been regularly monitored since the installation and have already been home to a few tree swallow nests. Friends' Board member, Megan Church (right), organized the effort.



Long-time river monitor Dave Timer helped us out by building and installing six bluebird houses—our first on-the-ground project in Seven Bends.



A dedicated crew of volunteers cleared old fencing wire and debris to help make the area safe for children's activities at Family Fun Day. The haul included 42 tires and hundreds of pounds of barbed wire and fencing.

## Board Changes

We are pleased to have several new board members agree to serve since our newsletter last fall.

**Megan Church**, a Woodstock native, recently completed an environmental degree during which she was an intern on our e.coli research project. Megan works as an education specialist with Shenandoah River State Park and has spent much of her life exploring and enjoying the North Fork.

**Bill Grillo** spends any time he can at his restored log cabin near the river outside of Woodstock. Bill is involved with commercial property management in the DC area and has an interest in downtown Woodstock as well.

**Frank Cihlar** is recently retired from his position with the Department of Justice. He has enjoyed his home along the river near Woodstock since 2003 and is happy to now be focused more on the community and spending time fishing.

**Dennis Morris** held a seat on the Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors for 36 years. Raising beef on Moo Manor Farm, Dennis is most interested in maintaining agricultural viability while steadily improving stewardship ethics and practices across the community.

**Russ Shay** is a fisherman and paddler with a home near Deer Rapids. He currently serves as the director of public policy for the Land Trust Alliance and held previous positions with The Nature Conservancy and as a legislative aide.

## River Lessons

Warm weather means field trips for local schools. At the request of one of our North Fork to the Bay Teacher graduates, Diane Nutter, we took students from The Grafton School in Berryville on field trips to the sewage treatment plant, landfill, and river. Friends also helped students learn field science by focusing on how macro-invertebrates (river bugs) are good indicators of stream health. One week we worked with all the 5th graders from W.W. Robinson Elementary in Woodstock at Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp on Passage Creek. Another week we helped all the 6th graders from North Fork Middle School near Quicksburg at the Meems Bottom covered bridge. Again we helped students from Lacey Spring Elementary School in Rockingham County at a site on Smith Creek and provided instruction to Massanutten Military Academy students.