

FRIENDS OF THE NORTH FORK

of the Shenandoah River

Our River, Our Community, Our Choice



Volume 25 Number 1

Spring 2014

Join Friends at our 26th Annual Meeting and Family River Day on May 3, 2014 Down by the River at the Strasburg Town Park!

Friends of the North Fork invites YOU to spend an afternoon with us getting to know the river in your own backyard. **Please join us from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm and discover the wildlife and insects that live underneath the river's surface, in the water and under the rocks.** Learn how wildlife and fish and, us humans, depend upon healthy water for our survival and livelihood. Come and see for yourself what Friends and our partners are doing to help improve the health of the North Fork.

This is our 5th year of bringing the river alive and creating hands-on connections with the water, its challenges and its life for our members and anyone who wants to learn more about the river in our backyards. **The focus of this event is the river and all of the ways that Friends and our partner organizations are working to improve the health of the water that flows into the river and within its banks. Friends and our partners are providing FREE hands-on and interactive activities for the whole family.**

Highlights include:

- **Turtle talk** - learn about wood turtles and how you can help protect them and where they live;
- Hands-on **fly fishing** and casting instruction for kids and adults;
- **Hunting for River Bugs;**
- **Wildlife presentations;**
- Opportunity to learn about **farm and wildlife management** in the North Fork Shenandoah River watershed and in your backyard;
- **FREE LUNCH** by Boy Scout Troop #88.

Our Family River Day begins at 11:30am on Saturday May 3, 2014, at Strasburg Town Park - 295 Park Road in

Strasburg VA 22657. This is a **FREE** event with lunch provided by Boy Scout Troop 88 from Edinburg, **BUT we need a headcount. So please register for the event online at www.fnfsr.org or call our office at 540-459-8550 and let us know how many people you are bringing.... the more the merrier!**

Volunteer Algae Monitors Needed!

The amount of algae in the North Fork has increased significantly over the last 8 years. It has been choking out native grasses and impairing our enjoyment of the river when fishing, paddling and swimming. While it is clear that the river is "impaired" by excess algae much of the summer, government action may be predicated on being able to measure the amounts of algae in various parts of the river. With this in mind, the US EPA has funded an effort by the Interstate Commission of the Potomac River Basin to develop and test a river algae monitoring protocol.

We are in need of three to five teams of two or three people who are willing to help with this important work. The effort will involve surveying algae growth



at a selected transect of the river twice a month through October. This effort requires wading across the river during each survey, so there is some risk involved. You would need to be comfortable wading the river and knowing when not to do so, due to river level or turbidity.

Training of volunteers will occur in April and May. If you do not have a partner for this effort, we will team you up with someone else. If you are not up to this effort, perhaps you know someone who would be willing to help. Please contact John Holmes at john.holmes@fnfsr.org if you are interested in helping with this project.

Education Corner - Cindy Frenzel, Education Coordinator

cindy.frenzel@fnfsr.org, 540-459-8550

Friends Is Offering Exciting New Learning Opportunities for All Ages - Get Outside!!

**** North Fork to the Bay, June 23-27, 2014 - a professional development program for teachers teaching in the North Fork Shenandoah River watershed.**

This year, Friends is teaming up with the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)** to provide public, private and home school teachers from grades **K-12** the chance to follow the flow of water from the headwaters of the **North Fork to the Chesapeake Bay**. Not only is this a fabulous opportunity to learn about water health issues at local and regional levels, **teachers can also receive recertification credits as well as participate in CBF's option to acquire graduate credits** during this week-long exploration.

Excitingly, Friends has obtained funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which allows us to offer this excursion for ONLY \$50 per teacher. This is an incredible value and includes **hands-on field immersion experiences** that will provide teachers with the unique opportunity to investigate firsthand the connections between human actions and water quality. **Participants will explore the ecology, history, and politics surrounding the Shenandoah River and the Chesapeake Bay, and investigate the changing landscape of the Shenandoah River, and learn how it can apply to your students.** Your local ecosystems, from streams to farms to homes, can be valuable teaching tools. We will explore schoolyard habitats, land use practices, and **STEM integration** using the environment. This professional learning opportunity will provide teachers with many new tools and lessons to use in the classroom. **Two days will be spent in the North Fork watershed and then participants will spend 3 days and 2 nights at CBF's Fox Island Education Center in the Chesapeake Bay. Register via Friends' website at www.fnfsr.org or you**

can register at CBF's website under professional development, June immersion programs. Our program is called North Fork to the Bay.



**** North Fork Explorers Summer Camp, July 7-11, 2014 - a camp for rising 6th-12th graders in the North Fork watershed**

Join Friends for a week-long summer enrichment environmental education opportunity for public, private and home-school middle and high school students. **The North Fork Explorers Summer Workshop is a week-long summer river education camp for middle and high school students (rising 6th-12th graders) from public, private and home schools.** The entire class will be conducted in outdoor settings by Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The workshops include: **a canoe trip on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River; visits to river-friendly farms to learn about conservation; meeting forestry, wildlife and conservation professionals; a study of water above and below the ground; fishing and a cookout!** Registration for this camp will begin in May with the Shenandoah County Parks and Recreation Department - 540-459-6777. contd. on pg. 3....



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**** North Fork Shenandoah River Players Summer Camp, July 7-11, 2014 a camp for rising 1st-3rd graders in the North Fork watershed**



This is camp is a week-long student summer enrichment environmental education and dramatic arts opportunity for **public, private and home schooled elementary school students. Students will learn OUTDOORS** - how to care for the environment and wildlife and will have hands-on experience with activities such as building individual worm composting systems, recycling common items into useful objects, making food for birds, and traversing children's trails. They will even learn to build a simple outdoor shelter! Registration for this camp will begin in May with the Shenandoah County Parks and Recreation Department - 540-459-6777. Call Cindy Frenzel at 540-459-8550 or email cindy.frenzel@fnfsr.org for more information.

Friends is the grateful recipient of funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to support the student exploration programs.

Water News

Lake Laura and Tributaries Sampling Complete

Friends of the North Fork's water sampling project at Lake Laura and its tributaries is complete and a report on the results is available on our website at www.fnfsr.org.

Surface water sampling began in 2010 when concerns about water quality in the Lake and its tributaries were brought to Friends attention. A \$25,000 grant from Yellow Spring Institute supported a three year sampling effort and Friends of the Shenandoah River conducted the lab analysis. Volunteer monitor HB Lantz led the volunteer effort and was supported by volunteer Frank Hovermale and others throughout the sampling period. Our thanks to HB and Frank for their efforts in wind, rain, snow

and blazing heat.

A brief summary of the main findings resulting from the sampling are below:

- High nutrient levels in a unnamed tributary to Lake Laura, which received discharge from the Orkney Springs sewage treatment, dropped significantly after this facility was taken offline and sewage was rerouted to a more advanced treatment facility;
- E. coli levels were not reduced in the unnamed tributary to Lake Laura with removal of the Orkney Spring waste treatment facility.
- The data indicate that the high levels of E. coli are correlated with rain events and storm runoff, suggesting that animal and human waste (flushed into the creeks and the lake in stormwater runoff) are an important contributing factor.

All data have been provided to the Department of Environmental Quality for their evaluation. Friends of Lake Laura and private volunteers are working to continue to monitor lake and tributary health.



National Drug Take Back Day April 26, 2014

Once again, localities will be collecting your expired and unused prescription drugs.

Seven national take back events have been held nationwide in the last several years resulting in the **collection and proper disposal of more than 1,700 tons** of pills and prescriptions. This means drugs are kept out of the hands of children and out of our streams and rivers, which is where they end up when they are improperly discarded in a toilet.

There are numerous drop locations in Shenandoah and the surrounding counties that will receive drugs from 10am to 2pm on Saturday, April 26. See our website, fnfsr.org, for locations and more details.

Additionally, Friends and Shenandoah County Family Youth Initiative have partnered to place drug take back boxes in **local** pharmacies in Strasburg, Woodstock, Mt. Jackson, New Market and Timberville. You can stop by these locations at your convenience to dispose of unwanted/expired prescriptions.

SAVE the DATES!

April 26 - National Drug Take Back Day from 10am-2pm

May 3 - Friends of the North Fork Annual Meeting and Family River Day. 11:30am—3:30pm at Strasburg Town Park.

June 23-27 - North Fork to the Bay. Professional Development for teachers in the North Fork Shenandoah River watershed - more info. at [www. fnfrs.org](http://www.fnfrs.org) or call Cindy at 540-459-8550.

July 7-11 - 2014 North Fork Explorers Watershed Summer Camp for rising 6th - 12th graders. - More info. at [www. fnfrs.org](http://www.fnfrs.org) or call Cindy at 540-459-8550.

July 7-11 - 2014 Shenandoah River Players Summer Camp for rising 1st-3rd graders. More info. at [www. fnfrs.org](http://www.fnfrs.org) or call Cindy at 540-459-8550.

October 18 - Friends of the North Fork 10th Annual Fish Fry Fundraiser!

Plan Ahead for our Annual Fish Fry Fundraiser - October 18, 2014
Friends will hold our 10th Annual Fish Fry on Saturday October 18, 2014. Sponsor and plan early to bring all of your friends to this terrific event to help Friends continue our river protection work.
Sponsor at www.fnfrs.org!

RENEW your Membership with Friends! Help Us Help the North Fork of the Shenandoah River

___ \$35 ___ \$60 ___ \$150

___ \$250 ___ \$1000 River Star!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____

Email: _____

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Return Service Requested

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