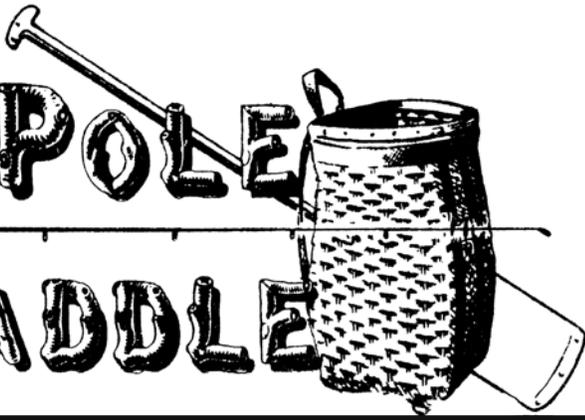


FISHIN' POLE PACK & PADDLE



Float Fishermen of Virginia

Fall 2010 Issue



photo courtesy of Allison Herbert

PRESIDENT'S PADDLE

Fellow Paddlers,

Well it seems once again we have made it into the middle of October with almost no water again. We did have enough water to have a wonderful Labor Day weekend at the Slate River Properties. There was a great turnout from old members and some new members as well.

I would like to thank all of the officers that have stepped down this year for the wonderful job that they have done to make the FFV the organization that it is today. Without you volunteering your time and energy we would not have the membership or great floats that you helped us organize.

The winter business meeting is tentatively scheduled for December 4th, 2010. The state forestry office is



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having their plumbing redone over the winter and is not sure of the dates of the work to be done. Our using the building is dependent on when the construction is going to be scheduled. Please check the web page for updates on the meeting dates and time.

I am looking forward to being your president for the next two years and to all of the wonderful things that we can accomplish in that time.

The New Prez,

Brian Vande Sande

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River Conservation Battle Lines

Clean rivers is the goal of the new Chesapeake Bay Act. It will be the conservation issue in Virginia for the next 5-10 years. Finally, everyone has made the connection: if you clean up the rivers, you will clean up the bay. Remarkable, isn't it, that it has taken 30 years to connect the dots.

That's how long the voluntary bay program has been in place, basically putting clean rivers on hold since 1980.

On October 4, 2010, the EPA held a public meeting in Harrisonburg to present the bay cleanup plan and to hear comments. There were over 300 people present, mostly farmers, as Harrisonburg is the center of chicken manure for Virginia, not counting other kinds of manure produced there as well.

The EPA plan calls for each bay state to submit a WIP or Water Improvement Plan, for approval.

At the end of the EPA presentation, the Sec. of Natural Resources office presented the Virginia WIP (Water Improvement Plan) that would comply with the EPA plan. Except it did not.

The Virginia WIP was made vague and dubious by Gov. McDonnell, so the EPA will not approve it without changes. For example, the language states that the WIP "...could result in the banning of cows from streams...". McDonnell changed the language from "will" to "could".

Now I want to know, who is it that still wants cows in streams?

The EPA presentation was poor, talking about and showing the improvements in Virginia since 1985, instead of dealing with the realities. One reality is that the Bay Report Card has been failing for about 20 years. It still is failing. That is why we are looking at a mandatory EPA plan.

There was no Bay Report Card in the EPA slide show to allow the public to connect the dots.

Then came the Virginia section of the slide show. There was no Water Quality Assessment, just out in September, in the slide show to illustrate that Virginia now has 2,000 more

miles of polluted water than the last WQA did two years ago. Again, the public could not connect the dots.

I raised the question of the WQA showing more polluted miles in Virginia.

The Secretary's rep tried to say that there were more polluted streams because we are doing more monitoring. God help us if we continue this monitoring, as we may find thousands more miles of pollution.

Another guy from DEQ said while there were more polluted streams in Virginia, the water is getting better at the fall line. Let's see, would that be where the streams enter the bay. Yep, the bay that has a failing report card.

But Rep. Bob Goodlatte took the microphone and said things are getting better, so there is no need to change the plan. Let's keep it all voluntary and keep the government out of our local business.

The farmers applauded wildly.

So the battle lines are shaping up. Let me oversimplify. Some want cows in the streams and some don't.

For example, at Solitude there is a half mile shoreline on the James River. There is a neighbor downstream who has his cows fenced out of the river under a conservation program. Yet upstream of the Solitude property, the neighbor has cows in the river...even a dead one recently.

So, the upstream neighbor's cows are crapping on us and the downstream users. When my kids and grandkids are in the river, swimming and playing, I have to hope that on that day the cows are not active, or that there is dilution of the pollution.

Somehow, that does not seem fair to me or my downstream neighbors.

How does it seem to you?

Let me know if you want to do something about it.

From the front lines of the clean rivers battle...

**Bill Tanger
Conservation Chair**

Labor Day Meeting

President

Don Sims called the meeting to order September 5, 2010 at the Slate River property and asked for reports.

Secretary

Linda VanLuik stated that the minutes from Labor Day were published in the Fishin' Pole, Pack and Paddle; some members stated they had not received their newsletters.

Treasurer

Katherine Waller Boyd reported that our \$75 contribution to American Whitewater resulted in a box of granola bars to be distributed to the membership. She presented the FFV's current financial information: \$10,176.39 in checking, with almost as much in CDs. She has deposit slips for local treasurers to deposit dues from local chapters straight into the FFV State account.

Membership

Beth Willoughby reported that we currently have 172 paid members.

Newsletter

Allison Herbert stated that those who had not received their newsletters prior to the meeting should be receiving them shortly. Her Email list was lost and she is asking those persons who were receiving their newsletter by Email to please contact her at editor@floatfishermen.org and give her your current Email address.

Conservation

Bill Tanger reported on the Water Quality Assessment the state does every two years as required under the Clean Water Act. The WQA Executive Summary provides maps and tables the go back ten years. It shows that 10 thousand to 12 thousand miles of Virginia's rivers, lakes and tidewaters are polluted, an increase over the years. A letter from FORVA and 40 other groups is requesting renewal of



photo courtesy of Maria Vande Sande

the Clean Water Act. (Go to www.deq.virginia.gov for additional information). Since Chesapeake Bay Foundation's voluntary plans to clean the bay are not working, a suit is calling for plans that will be mandatory and based on TDM— Total Maximum Daily Load-- how much pollution can go into a river before adverse effects occur. Phosphorus has been reduced so the number one pollutant is now nitrogen. A Federal Consent Order to clean up rivers identifies the number one polluter as run-off from pavement and number 2: agriculture. On another issue, Bill reminded everyone to keep their eyes on a project that could result in coal ash being dumped near the New River.

Webmaster

Bob Born needs contacts to help put information from local chapters on the new FFV website.

Access

Issues as reported on by Bill Tanger include Rutrough Road at Explore Park and Locker Landing at the confluence of the Maury and the James. As a test case, we're "looking for someone to get arrested" at the Rutrough Road access point. There is plenty of documentation that can be taken to court showing the access is an old ford and therefore, a right of way that is under VDOT's jurisdiction, not Explore's. Property at the confluence of the Maury and James Rivers that belongs to the railroad and is a part of old canal property will either be donated to, or

purchased for the town of Glasgow to oversee. If there is a need to purchase the property, interested parties will be involved in fundraising. An easement goes under the railroad tracks but will need a "debris roof".

Old Business

Erica Sims Goode reported that 43 kids participated in the annual Kids' Float and FFV Summer Float. Quite a few repeat kids who showed up for a shorter trip this year from Warren's Ferry to Hatten's Ferry.

New Business

President Don Sims thanked the Slate River property owners for their hospitality and the Dickels for a fine barbeque chicken dinner; he then asked for the nominating committee's report. Brian Vande Sande was nominated as president and ROC Cooper as a vice president to fill Brian's old position. In addition to these changes, our new membership chairperson is Tim Stuller. Linda VanLuik, Katherine Waller, Bill Tanger, Bob Born and Allison Herbert will remain in their positions. Don then presented the FFV briefcase to Brian as an official transfer of the presidency. After the meeting adjourned, the Dickels raffled off a Bottle of (what else?) George Dickel to an expectant crowd.

• Editor's Note

• The opinions expressed in FPP&P are those of the author and not necessarily those of FFV or its members. Articles and material for publication may be submitted to the FPP&P editor. Preferred format: E-mail with attachments in Word, RTF and/or JPEG. Dates for submitting material for publication: 1st of February, April, August and November. The Editor reserves the right to edit as needed. Comments, criticism and compliments are always welcome.

Paddle Faster

While I was growing up, my family went camping every summer. At about the age of ten I was a Junior Naturalist. Junior Naturalists were kids who, like me, had irritated their mothers during their summer vacations. This earned them the right to ride their bikes to the Meg's Point Nature Center and make themselves scarce.

The Nature Center had some interesting things. Horseshoe crabs, blue crabs, snakes and fish- you name it, if it was something you could find roaming the land or swimming in Long Island Sound, "it" or a picture of "it" was there. During the long kid summers at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Connecticut, nature hikes were organized according to age and abilities. Our forays were led by sixteen year -olds that had scored some great summer jobs. We hiked through the marshes and along the shore, noting the wildlife, eating some edible plants including seaweed. We even made some sort of drink from the berries of the sumac plant, which I am sure would have resulted in some helmeted, asthmatic kid being heli-vaced off the beach had the concoction been brewed today. But no, these were the early eighties, a time when parents weren't always watching and kids were allowed to ride their bikes with no shoes and explore what was down the street.

My curiosity about the outdoors has never wavered. I have always thought that, given half a chance, if I could just pull myself away from the drudgery of working and going to school, of being a mom and a wife and a boring 30-something, overweight white female, I would do something fantastic. Something adventuresome and daring. Something involving, well, nature. I had been a Junior Naturalist, after all. Maybe this is why I accepted an invitation to go whitewater rafting.

The weekend started off pretty well. We arrived at the New River Gorge campsite early Friday evening and set up camp, which was pretty easy to do since my husband Ted and I had decided to simply sleep in the minivan. (It was kind of buggy and damp on the ground, ya know...) What a good sport Ted was. I had signed us both up to accompany our neighbor on this rafting trip. He never questioned whether it was a good idea, never tried to talk me out of it. He simply wanted me to learn a lesson the hard way, and be there to watch.

My neighbor's wife had decided to stay home. I secretly felt that she was being a big ole' Scaredy Cat, and I was proud of myself for being the only female in the group now assembling around the campfire. We opened a few beers and began to chat. As the day slipped into night, I became acutely aware of the fact that I was way out of my depths intellectually. This is never a good feeling. The men sitting casually around us in holy jeans and well-worn hiking shoes were discussing scientific theories, geology and meteorology. With a good beer buzz going, one guy spoke prolifically on global warming. Most of the camp out discussions I had previously participated in involved dirty jokes and the pros and cons of using a potato launcher as a weapon. I was intimidated, but I gave myself credit for having the sense to stay perfectly quiet.

The next day, we all got up leisurely and started to gear up for our trip. At the edge of camp stood a faded outdoor shelter of sorts, filled with mismatched and weathered rafting equipment. Multicolored life jackets, paddles and helmets hung perpetually ready for action. It appeared that our group leaders were once owners of a more commercial-type outfit, but had long ago given up on the idea. Now the group operated as a loosely formed rafting club. Invite only.

I chose my gear and waited patiently as the guys finished topping of our rafts with air and strapping them to our vehicles. It appeared that each raft would hold about 6-8 people, and we had 3 rafts. Prior to setting out, we had an extremely brief safety lesson. Our leader, Bill, explained the "do's" and "don'ts" of rafting, and threw in a couple of "what if" scenarios for good measure. What if, for example, you are thrown from your boat and come up for air under your boat? This doesn't happened very often, Bill pointed out, but you should still know what to do if it does.

One might panic. Yes. One just might.

We got on the road and stopped at what apparently was the traditional breakfast place on the way to the river. It was your typical southern fare; 10- pound brick-like biscuits with gravy or a slab of toe-curlingly salty ham. My biscuit descended in a heavy lump into my stomach, where it stayed undigested for 3 weeks. We supplied ourselves with sandwiches and drinks. We secured our lunches in "waterproof" boxes. Later, these boxes would be put together in a net bag and clipped to the inside of the raft for safekeeping.

Our little caravan of vehicles traveled through a few windy miles of West Virginia countryside on our way to the river. It was a bumpy ride, and it became apparent that Bill was saving the brakes for a real emergency. I worried about the safety of my lunch banging around in the backseat and possibly the danger of breakfast revisiting, but my husband seemed completely serene. Or maybe it was resigned. I couldn't tell.

We made it to the put-in and reassembled. Bill was in charge of

one boat and had designated two men to be guides in the others. Our 'teams' were selected. I felt confident that I was being placed with a competent, beginner-friendly guide, and that my boat would be filled with rafting pros who would willingly help me on my journey and keep me out of harms way. My guide was Mo. Mo had long grey hair and unshaven but a "not-quite-a beard" kind of look. He seemed amiable and laid back. My heart, which had started to do a little fluttery dance, slowed to a more normal rhythm as two other beginners were chosen to be in my boat. All together, in our slightly smaller boat, we had two experienced (including Mo) and three beginners, including myself, my husband Ted, and a man I will call Pete. Clearly, this was the boat that would be following behind, taking its time to learn as it went while the other boats took on some of the rivers' more hair-raising challenges.

We launched our boats onto the then placid water. I felt uncomfortable sitting sideways on the edge of the boat. I was self-conscious about the huge roll of flab that was probably poking out under my PFD. I couldn't see it, so I decided to pretend it wasn't there. My self-absorption was interrupted when Mo announced that we were going to do a few drills before going any further. One thing we needed to know how to do, he said, was something called "high-siding". Basically, we all had to know how to balance the boat to keep it from flipping if one of the sides came up out of the water and say, we were stuck on a rock or something of that nature. Tom decided that the person he was most worried about failing to do this was me. He had all the other boat members bail out and hold down the side of the boat while I balanced on the other edge and tried to keep it from flipping. I did very well. I wasn't afraid of getting wet or taking a swim. (I had camped

at Hammonasset). I felt a temporary sense of accomplishment as the guys finally flipped me and I flew through the air and fell into the water.

Apparently, this was all we needed to know.

Within minutes we were approaching our first rapids, and I felt my entire body tense up. I looked over at Ted. He gave me a weak smile. I glanced across from me at Pete. He looked as though he was about to be unloaded on Omaha Beach on D-Day. It occurred to me that he was more terrified than I had seen a grown man, and indeed he might even have been more scared than I. The previous hour, Pete had talked almost incessantly. He was from an urban area, and he strove to radiate a certain street-smart but funny toughness. In reality, he was an overweight white guy who was about to go for several involuntary swims. It was Pete who scared me the most as we began a slow paddle towards out first set of rapids, for in his eyes I saw pure fear. I suddenly took serious notice of all the gear in our boat. All the hard plastic edges. All of the potentially flying helmets and bodies. Pete's paddle. Oh God. Pete's paddle. It might as well have my name on it. Tom yelled, "Remember, when you fall out, HOLD ON TO YOUR PADDLE! You don't get back in the boat without your paddle!"

Why in the world, I thought, is this guy assuming we're going to fall... I swallowed a huge mouthful of river water. My body, unaccustomed to exercise let alone being smashed into swiftly moving water and banged up against sharp rocks, felt as if 300 little elves were stabbing it with sharp daggers. My back groaned. I opened my eyes but saw nothing but a bubbling smear of colors, much like a Jackson Pollack painting. Well, I wasn't blind. That was good. I was alive, but I realized immediately that I did not have my paddle. I still had my hand curled as if I were holding it, but it wasn't there. I saw the boat,

already through the rapids, floating with only one man in it. Tom. This did not surprise me, as he was our guide and probably knew how to avoid being thrown from the boat. It did not occur to me yet that perhaps he was talented enough to throw only us from the boat.

The current was taking me in the right general direction and I spotted my dear husband. He wore an expression similar to that of a cat who had been given a bath, but he appeared no worse for the wear. He had my paddle. Did I mention I love that man? We made our way back to the boat, where, I discovered, I had absolutely no upper body strength. We were expected to pull ourselves back in the boat. This was ridiculous. I got about halfway in when another boat member gave me what amounted to an atomic wedgie and pulled me the rest of the way in. (Did I mention Ted was trying to push me in from the water?) I tried not to think about the scene I made as I floundered my way back into the inflatable trampoline.

The next set of rapids approached before I had a chance to think about what had went wrong. Tom offered no insight on the matter. We concentrated on digging in our paddles together and following Tom's directions, confident that we going to improve. Pete was in front of me this time. I focused on his paddling and tried to stay in sync with his movements. I braced myself for another swim, but was pleasantly surprised as we managed to make it through without losing anyone out of the boat. A feeling of relief swept over me as I relaxed enough to take in the surroundings. The Gorge was absolutely beautiful, and like the sign said as we entered West Virginia, it was wild and wonderful.

Stay tuned...The balance of this story will be continued in the Winter 2011 newsletter.



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The Winter Meeting is scheduled for December 4th!

For time, location and details please visit: www.floatfishermen.org

SEE YOU THERE!

