



**NEW RIVER WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE
QUARTERLY MEETING**

July 29, 2020 | 10:30 AM to 11:30 PM | via Zoom

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

- We discussed the state of the river. We heard from a number of folks who commented on river usage being up across the region. Brad Buchanan stated that he has never seen so many folks utilizing the banks of the river in McCoy. Cheri Stanz with FOCL let us know that the back to back 100 year floods this Spring revealed record amounts of woody debris in Claytor Lake. FOCL has removed over 2000 tons of woody debris and 35 trash bags from the lake this year to date. Ann Goette updated us on the new boat launches and mile markers in Giles.
- Stephanie Houston, an associate with Draper Aden introduced herself and discussed a Go Virginia Grant Program that allocates \$5000 to be used by a local business to partner with students to produce education materials. These funds are being used for the Peak Creek restoration project in Pulaski County. Welcome Stephanie!

2. Christiansburg Restoration Projects Patricia Colatosti

- Ms. Colatosti, Environmental Program Supervisor for the Town of Christiansburg, shared a presentation, Urban Stream Restorations: What Happens After Construction. She discussed three projects: Diamond Hills, Blue Leaf and Towne Branch restorations. Along with describing the differences in the individual projects Patricia spoke about overcoming the challenges of changing local landscape aesthetic and the public's reaction. People are used to seeing turf mowed up to the creek's edge, some have challenged the newly messy aesthetic. Patricia discussed one thing that has really helped is split rail fences and mowing along pathways. Manicured borders cue to folks that these landscapes are not forgotten but are intentionally left this way. Additionally, the Town developed Grow Zone signage which explicitly state the reason for the no mow zones. Other strategies have been to leave holes in the fence to allow residents to access the creek, bridges/creek crossings for water views, and notifying the public about upcoming landscape changes—including showing photos of creek restoration projects so people can become familiar with what their neighborhood landscapes will begin to look like. Some residents have welcomed the new aesthetic and have reached out in appreciation of the improved wildlife habitat. Christiansburg has also found partnership for these wild spaces with Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and an individual monitoring for diatoms in the water looking to make a connection with water quality. The Town of Christiansburg has two additional restoration projects in their pipeline. For

questions about the restoration work Christiansburg is doing, reach out to Patricia at pcolatosti@christiansburg.org.

3. ReNew the New All

- August 29, 2020, All event info will be housed on www.renewthenew.org
- Locality Update
Montgomery County: hosting an event from Aug 29 to Sept 6. Folks can drop off trash and pickup a shirt from their consolidation station in McCoy. Details here: <https://arcg.is/1yn5OH>
Giles: Will host a clean-up, on Aug 29, Celanese to Camp Success, 80 spots on the water. Pre-registration online only. Folks will meet at Camp Success and will be bused in groups of 24 to Celanese. 30 spots available for land crews at Camp Success. Additionally, they will promote Fall into the New as a month-long event. Folks can post a selfie of themselves with a bag of trash for a free ReNew the New shirt. Orange bags will be available at boat ramps. **Big Stoney:** Pete Jackson will coordinate with Giles to get a cleanup going on Big Stoney.
Pulaski: Will host a water-based cleanup from Riverview Park to Bisset Park—bring your own boat. Folks will paddle over and cleanup the Pulaski side. Land cleanup will meet at the Hazel Hollow boat ramp or the Bell Springs Post Office. All on Aug 29. Registration at www.renewthenew.org with a cap of 15 people per site.
Radford: Will hold an informal cleanup on Aug 29, mostly relying on community groups. This event is BYOB (bring your own boat). Folks without boats can spread out in Bisset Park. August 29th, 8:30AM-10:30AM and 11AM-1PM (we’re separating into two groups so we can keep within the 50 person max/gathering that Council passed). Meet near Dudley’s Landing, Bisset Park. This event will be BYOB (bring your own boat!). Most clean-up will be along the shore and banks because the river flooding has left a lot of trash there this year. Folks will sign waivers at the site and will review our designated areas for clean-up/debris drop off.
- VDOT has donated 1000 trash bags to our clean-up. These will be distributed with t-shirts in August.
- T-shirt Design: Giles County ReNew Committee has designed the regional shirt this year. The Commission will provide up to 50 shirts for each locality.
- Water Level – 2’ from 9 am to noon. This info has been requested through Steve Knowles. He will do his best to comply, but given the high flows this year, 2.5’ might be more likely. Reminder: water level drop is only available if the weather cooperates.
- Future Sponsorship/Fundraising: Moving forward we need to develop an event and roundtable sponsorship strategy. If you have fundraiser know how or ideas, please reach out to Nicole.

4. DEQ James Moneymaker

- Funding Opportunities: There is an RFA out for implementation work in Crab Creek and the Upper Roanoke. Unfortunately, you cannot count activities from this funding

towards MS4 requirements. Both watersheds have MS4 requirements. To use these funds, BMPs should be installed on private property

- DEQ has offered the NRWR nine additional months of funding beginning Oct 1, 2020. With this funding DEQ has approved the production of a Special Report on Conservation Landscaping for Watershed Health in SWVA. Conservation landscaping improves water quality by using native plants, removing invasive plants, conserving water, eliminating or reducing chemical fertilizers and pesticides to reduce pollution and conserve resources, shaping the ground for better infiltration and erosion control, and enhancing aesthetics and wildlife habitat.

5. NRWT Mile Marker System..... Charlie Mullins

- There are now three mile markers along the New in Giles County, Next time you are out on the river look for the mile 142 in Pembroke and 136 in Eggleston, now posted on the water trail.
- Deb Cooney reached out to me after the meeting and asked if she could have a mile marker map made for Radford. They aren't quite ready to paint, but want to start associating locations with mile markers. Please find that map attached and let me know if you would like a similar map made for your locality.
- Another note on the NRWT: Charlie Mullins wasn't available for our meeting, but he contacted me afterwards and asked about our NWRT safety program. As river usage is up, there have been more water rescues this year. Let's make sure to cover this at our next meeting.

6. New River Water Watchers Report.....New River Conservancy

The New River Water Watchers program has seen a dip in the number of folks willing to monitor during COVID. There is a need for testing sites in Pulaski County, along tributaries to Peaks Creek. Suzanne Joyner plans to host online Water Watcher trainings this Fall. It is highly recommended that anyone interested in becoming a Water Watcher join an existing WW for a testing demonstration. Cathy Hanks and John Copeland are both available for this. Nicole Hersch has signed up to monitor along Crab Creek and will be reaching out to Patricia Colatosi to confirm a good location. Perhaps this can be done in partnership with the diatom monitoring??

7. Water Quality Monitoring..... All

We will continue our water quality monitoring discussion at a future date. Cheri Strenz will share the Lat/Long coordinates for testing sites along Claytor Lake to create a more complete picture of regional testing. FOCL has noticed a decrease in interest in water quality monitoring due to COVID.

8. Report Out All

- VT Engage, Catherine Cotrupi let us know that VT Engage is going all virtual this year. She is looking for opportunities to connect faculty and students with online service-learning opportunities. If you have a digital need, please reach out to her at cotrupi@vt.edu.
- Doggie Waste Bags Nicole

Doggie waste bags are available for distribution. Please reach out to Nicole if you are ready for them. I will hold some for all localities and community groups to distribute at future in-person events.

9. Upcoming Events

- July 30: 7:00 pm: **New River Conservancy 2020 Annual Meeting** , via Google Meets: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i_V87v1AiBwFsvHWXnhue5aXFPZrhk6N/view?usp=sharing
- August 3: 7:30 – 8:30 pm: **Webinar: Lessons from the Living Landscape that is our Home Habitat** :: <https://www.audubonva.org/asnv-events/living-landscape-webinar>
- August 4: noon - 4 pm: **Water Watchers, Heritage Park, Pulaski, VA**
- August 29th - Sept 6th: **ReNew the New 2020**, visit www.renewthenew.org for details
- Sept 26th: 10 am – 3 pm: **Virginia Native Plant Sale**, SEEDS –Price House Nature Center, 107 Wharton St SE—part of Sustainability Week (social distancing and mask required).
- Oct 3rd: 10 am, **Friends of Peak Creek Clean-up downtown Pulaski**, meet at 41 First St NE (the parking lot behind the Senior Center)
- Oct? **Karst Workshop Primer**, Date: TBD
- Nov 10: 7:30-8:30 :: **Chelsea Blount, Restoration Director at New River Conservancy** will talk to the New River Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society via Zoom. Call is open to everyone. Meeting info:
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87397450413?pwd=SVBBRGZtOUlMVGxYUQ3amx5RmZCU>
T09

Meeting ID: 873 9745 0413

Passcode: 601304

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+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

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- **2021 New River Symposium** (Hosted at Virginia Tech/Zoom) Details + Date TBD

2020 Meeting Dates

September 30th, 2020 (online)

January 27th, 2021 (online)

April 28th, 2021 (tbd)

July 28th, 2021 (tbd)