

MPRA NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021



**Your Dues are Due . .
BUT since you didn't
get your money's
worth last year, it's
optional!**

\$15 year/family
Send a check to MPRA,
P.O. Box 115,
Walkerton, VA 23177 or
pay online through our
Paypal account, which
can be accessed through
www.mpra.org.

MPRA mourns the loss of former president Eugene Rivara

2020 was a difficult year for so many reasons. This past September, we lost one of MPRA's most dependable volunteers and champions of our rivers, Eugene Rivara. Eugene, age 65, passed away in a tractor accident on the Stevensville farm he and his wife, Janet, had moved to last winter.

Eugene served as president of MPRA and was the chair of the Legislative/River Issues committee for decades. For more than 20 years, Eugene led the walking crew for the annual river clean up on River Stewardship Day. He filled up water jugs for middle school River Days. He helped set up tents and hosted the River/Kids Tent at every Locust Grove Wine and Arts Festival. He always provided the wine and beer for our annual meeting. Eugene attended almost every meeting concerning the King William Reservoir Project, which was defeated after a 20-year fight, and was a founding member of Save the Mattaponi.

Before retiring, Eugene made a career of electrical and maintenance work, including for King William Public Schools. He was a KW Supervisor for several years, served on the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission,

Continued on p. 2

Annual meeting tentatively set for April 23

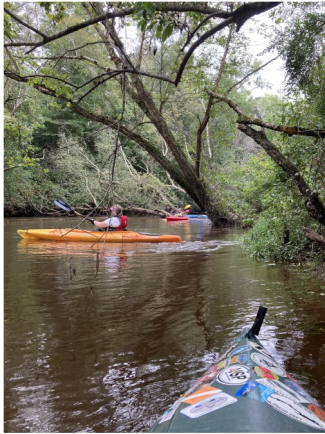
Due to the pandemic, we didn't have our annual MPRA meeting and pot luck dinner in January. Hopefully, the virus will be on its way, people will be vaccinated and things will be back to normal soon. Plans are tentative (for everything in our lives right now), but we reserved the KW Ruritan building & pavilion for Friday, April 23. The event will be held outdoors and won't involve a pot luck, due to restraints from the pandemic. We will honor the memory of Eugene Rivara at the meeting.

This newsletter usually showcases our annual achievements. The board has continued to meet virtually. We had a few small, masked paddles and were active virtually in the York/Small Basin Watershed Council. We got local school art teachers involved in the Trash to Art project and participated in a KW Parks and Rec Natural Resources Fair. Get vaccinated when you can, wear a mask, social distance and be safe now so that we can all get back together in person soon!

(Rivara, cont.)

chaired the King William Parks and Recreation Board and umpired at KW Little League games. After retiring, he worked part time at Queenfield Golf Course. Active in St. David's, and later, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, his faith and family were important to him. He was a man of service, dedication and love of the outdoors. He is survived by his wife, Janet, daughters: Kate, Cori and Monica, son-in-law Christopher, three grandkids and many river stewards.

After his death, MPRA wanted to do something special to honor his life. His family suggested that we do something around Earth Day. So, we're making plans to hold a celebration at our annual meeting on April 23, dedicated to Eugene, if the pandemic has subsided. We were all blessed by his involvement in MPRA.



Five MPRA river girls paddled from Zoar to Aylett this past spring. It was great to get out on the Mattaponi together. The highlight of the trip was seeing a sturgeon breach and make a big splash during the paddle.

Permit now required for Dept. of Wildlife Resources Access Sites

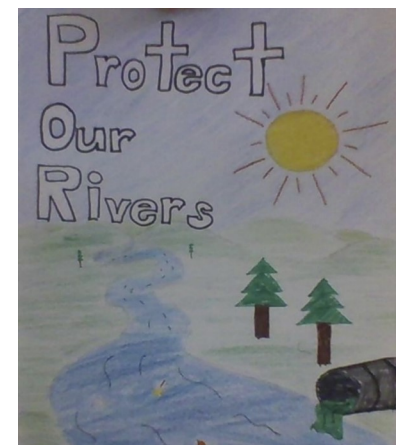
There has been a change in Virginia legislation that now requires a permit to use Dept. of Wildlife Resources (DWR, formerly DGIF) managed access sites. This law brings rules in line to allow all users equitable access to DWR-managed facilities. As of Jan. 1, 2021, anyone over the age of 17 must have a VA hunting, trapping, or fishing license, current boat registration or a Restore the Wild membership to use an access site. This applies to canoes, kayaks, tubes and stand-up paddleboards.

If you already have a hunting or fishing license, that counts, but if you're like a lot of MPRA paddlers, you may not. You'll need to get a Restore the Wild membership permit. There are three membership levels starting at \$25/year. I purchased the \$25 Hummingbird membership, which gives me access to any DWR management site statewide, a newsletter and a sticker (which I will add to the collection on my kayak.) If you are trying to decide which permit to get and fish occasionally, you may want to go with a fishing permit, which will give DWR some federal funding to match the money you pay for a fishing license.

There is a list of DWR access sites on the DWR website, www.dwr.virginia.gov. Sites on the Mattaponi and Pamunkey include: Melrose Landing, Waterfence Landing, Aylett, Lester Manor and West Point. There is a fine of \$50 plus court costs, if you don't have a permit. You can download the **Restore the Wild** membership app or purchase a license online by logging into GoOutdoorsVirginia.com. Fees from the sale of permits help DWR with the increasing demand of outdoor recreation opportunities, including purchasing land, constructing new access sites, and maintaining the 225,000 acres of public lands in Virginia.

Pictured right and on page 3 are posters that local art students created for MPRA's Trash to Art Project last spring. School art teachers in the watershed were just beginning to send in artwork when schools went virtual due to the pandemic. We hope to reboot the project

2 next school year.



Well water testing offered by Virginia Cooperative Extension

Virginia Cooperative Extension is planning a well water clinic in April for King William, King and Queen and Essex Counties. The program will include a Kickoff Meeting with a brief presentation and instructions for collecting water samples from home water taps. Participants will collect samples on a specified day and drop them off on April 14. Samples will be transported to the Virginia Tech campus for analysis for iron, manganese, nitrate, lead, arsenic, fluoride, sulfate, pH, total dissolved solids, hardness, sodium, copper, total coliform bacteria and E. Coli bacteria.

At an Interpretation Meeting, easy-to-read confidential reports will explain the results and give participants options to consider on how to deal with water problems. Experts will be on hand to answer any specific questions. If you are interested in participating, or want information about finalized dates, times and cost, contact Tina Vincel at the Extension Office at 804-769-4955, 804-443-3551 or email tina68@vt.edu.



Scenic Rivers Program celebrates 50 years

Submitted by Elizabeth Christeller, Legislative/River Issues chrm.

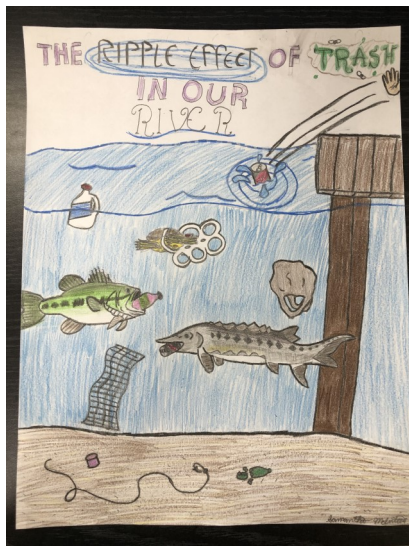
Virginia celebrated 50 years of its Scenic Rivers Program in 2020. The program's intent is to "identify, designate and help protect rivers and streams that possess outstanding scenic, recreational, historic and natural characteristics of statewide significance for future generations." To date there are 36 statewide designations and 971 miles of river that can boast this honor. Seventy-nine miles of the Rappahannock and the South River in Waynesboro are seeking approval this year.

There are several steps in the designation process which begin with residents asking their local supervisors to request a study by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. If a segment is found to meet the minimum criteria for designation, the Board of Supervisors can choose to take the next step by asking the General Assembly for approval.

Several years ago, MPRA members asked the supervisors in King and Queen to request a study of a segment of the Mattaponi River but failed to elicit interest. Scenic River designation would give our rivers the recognition they deserve and encourage closer review of projects and proposals by state agencies and localities, especially in the case of dam projects.

MPRA hopes to renew action on getting a 12-mile segment of the Mattaponi from Walkerton to the Mattaponi Indian Reservation recognized. If you would like to see this happen, especially if you are a riparian land owner, let us know by emailing matpamrivers@gmail.com.





Virginia Conservation Network helps MPRA speak for the rivers

MPRA is one of 150 Virginia Conservation Network (VCN) partners, including the James River Association, the Southern Environmental Law Center, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, The Garden Club of Virginia, Preservation Virginia and the Sierra Club. VCN is a facilitator of strategic action, a resource for Network partners statewide, and a constant conservation presence in Virginia's Capitol. It helps the conservation community speak with one coordinated voice.

Each year VCN publishes an Environmental Briefing Book called Our Common Agenda. Members of the VA General Assembly and state administration officials value the collection of papers published each year. You may access the briefing book and learn more about VCN on their website: www.vcnva.org.

A few issues VCN is encouraging us to support are: funding the Virginia Agricultural Cost Share Program, Stormwater Local Assistance funding and Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades to help meet Chesapeake Bay Clean-up goals; supporting HB2030 & SB1404 which deal with polluted stormwater runoff and local water quality restoration; and HB2042/SB1393 to conserve and expand tree canopy. Another issue MPRA is supportive of is reducing plastic pollution in Virginia's waterways. HB1902 and HB2159 deal with single use plastics, such as balloons and Styrofoam food service containers. Let your representatives know how you feel about these issues. Thanks to VCN & our MPRA Legislative/River Issues chair, Elizabeth Christeller, for helping keep us aware of these and other issues.

