



Holiday Hike — Dave Slack, forester, led MPRA members and friends on a hike at Zoar State Forest on Dec. 6. The hike was followed by hot cider and snacks at the historic Pollard House, which now houses the local Dept. of Forestry office.



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2022 Annual Meeting postponed until spring

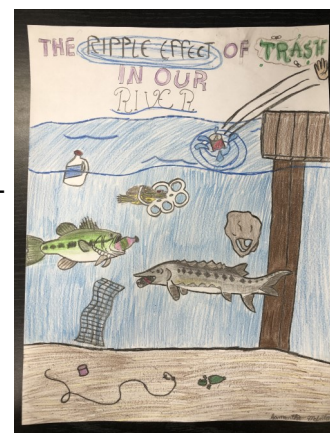
Covid variants are still making it difficult to plan MPRA activities and conduct face to face meetings. We were again unable to hold our MPRA annual meeting/pot luck in January. Last spring, we got together outdoors to celebrate the life of our former president, Eugene Rivara, with a picnic and Annual Meeting at the Campbell family's pavilion on the Mattaponi River. Thanks once again to Gene Campbell and family and the Rivara family for making it a meaningful time to remember Eugene and visit old river friends. We elected new board members: Kitty Cox, Tom Tupponce, Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe; Kayla Huffman, King William Parks & Recreation; and Dan Rabago, VA Dept. of Wildlife Resources.

We're going to wait until spring again for our 2022 Annual Meeting, hoping that the pandemic has slowed down and we can eat together outdoors. More details will follow online in a few months (TBD April 15 or June 10). We will be electing officers and board members, including a new president. If you are interested in serving or would like to make a nomination, contact us at matpamrivers@gmail.com. The board meets the first Tuesday of most months, usually at a local restaurant or outdoors, weather permitting.

Reduce your single-use plastic consumption *by Elizabeth Christeller*

Single-use plastics use up natural resources and are often not disposed of properly, as we can see along our roadsides and rivers. Only 10% of plastic bags make it into recycling bins. Sadly, only a small fraction of plastic put in recycling bins is recycled.

Wildlife, including turtles, birds, fish, mammals, oysters and mussels, often mistake plastic items for food which can lead to death. According to the Ocean Conservancy the deadliest ocean trash is fishing gear, plastic



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Reduce your single-use plastic, *continued*

bags and utensils, balloons, cigarette butts and bottle caps. MPRA has worked with Scouts to install fishing line receptacles at many boat landings in the area. Local groceries have bins to recycle bags.

In 2020, the General Assembly passed a law giving localities the ability to place a 5 cent fee on single-use plastic bags to discourage their use. Several localities adopted the fee this year, including Fredericksburg. We can all do our part to reduce plastic by using our own multi-use bag in stores. In 2021, the General Assembly passed a law that will ban all restaurants and food vendors from using polystyrene food containers for takeout. The ban will take effect for chains next year. Smaller businesses will have two more years to comply. A law took effect July 2021 banning the intentional release of non-biodegradable balloons by anyone 16 or older. The fine is \$25.

Rank	Item	Percent
1	Cigarette Butts	15%
2	Beverage Bottles (Plastic)	11%
3	Grocery Bags (Plastic)	10%
4	Food Wrappers (Candy, Chips, etc.)	10%
5	Beverage Cans	7%
6	Other Plastic Bags	5%
7	Bottle Caps (Plastic)	5%
8	Cups & Plates (Plastic and Foam)	4%
9	Beverage Bottles (Glass)	4%
10	Straws, Stirrers	3%

Top 10 items found in 2019 statewide beach cleanups as reported by Clean Virginia Waterways. Source: Virginia Conservation Network

This year, the General Assembly will consider House Bill 647, which would establish the Packaging Stewardship Program administered by the Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Under the program, a producer that sells products with packaging materials in Virginia pays a fee to DEQ based on the amount of packaging



used and whether it is easily recyclable. Under this program, manufacturers, not taxpayers, are responsible for the waste their products create and bear responsibility for collecting and proper recycling of those products. Extended Producer Responsibility is used around the world to save money for localities, increase recycling rates and incentivize packaging design to reduce waste. Call your Delegate to ask him to support this bill (Delegate Hodges (804)698-1098, Delegate Wyatt (804)698-1097).

Looking for volunteers and landowners for bird box projects

MPRA Wildlife Committee chair, Brad Davis, is looking for volunteers interested in helping him inspect, install and repair duck boxes at Sandy Point State Forest. Currently, MPRA has a dozen boxes at Sandy Point, along with about 40 prothonotary warbler boxes in a variety of places. Brad plans to work in February or early March.



Expanding the bird box project, Brad wants to build and install kestrel boxes on local properties. These boxes need to be mounted near open fields. Kestrels, also called sparrow hawks, are the smallest and most common falcon in North America. They like open country, farmland, the edges of woods and high perches. Providing nest boxes has helped increase declining populations. Brad is seeking permission from local power companies, such as Rappahannock Electric and Dominion Power, to put nesting boxes on power poles; they can also be mounted on poles furnished by MPRA, or in appropriate places on landowners' property. He is looking for both places to install kestrel boxes or help constructing them.

If you are interested in helping with either project, contact Brad at 804-347-8495 or email MPRA at matpamrivers@gmail.com.

2021 Activities In Review

In spite of Covid, MPRA was able to conduct some outdoor activities and participate in watershed coalitions. The board conducted business online, and met several times in person. On June 3, a group paddled from Walkerton to Whitehall. While we were enjoying a reunion chat with Dori Chappell, a storm blew up unexpectedly.

We were caught in the rain and wind and had an exciting and wet paddle back to the Walkerton bridge. The next evening, we held our Annual Meeting & memorial celebration for Eugene Rivara.

The Saturday, July 31 Zoar to Aylett paddle was well-attended by both members and newcomers of all ages. We had a great time and look forward to coordinating this paddle again next summer.

The end of the summer paddle was a fun time and included grandkids and those of us who spend a lot of time on Garnett's Creek. It's a great place to break in younger paddlers and get out and play on the sandbar.

Several board members have been participating in the York Watershed Roundtable. We have been involved in Zoom workshops and committee meetings. A new initiative that MPRA (with several of our board members wearing different hats) is RAFT, the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool project. Board member Elizabeth Christeller serves on the VA Conservation Network Board. Both Elizabeth and board member, Adele Smith, are very involved in the Middle Peninsula Garden Club environmental committee activities.

In December, MPRA sponsored a second Holiday Hike at Zoar State Forest. DOF forester and MPRA vice-president Dave Slack, led the hike and talked about long-leaf pines and other topics of interest to the group. Afterwards, the group shared holiday goodies and hot cider. Hopefully next year we'll be able to have a bonfire and indoor party, but the hike has been a great addition to our annual activities.



Native American Dugout Canoe Found in the Mattaponi River *by Amanda Walker*

Brothers Michael and Brian Foster came across an interesting find during a canoe trip on the Mattaponi. Several miles up-river from Zoar State Forest they saw a unique shaped piece of wood caught in a logjam.



Photo by Michael Foster

Upon closer inspection, they determined it to be a portion of a Native American dugout canoe.

The brothers contacted Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribal Administrator Reggie Tupponce to report their finding. Tupponce, along with Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources Underwater Archeologist Brendan Burke, and a Terrestrial Archeologist for the eastern region paddled up the river to have a look. Upon examination, they were able to determine the canoe is from the post-contact era and was crafted with metal tools. They were unable to locate the rest of the canoe nearby, indicating it had floated from somewhere else to the location it sits now. They did locate a piece of wood nearby that had broken off the canoe and retrieved it for testing. Tupponce said they had not heard anything back yet regarding what, if anything, could be determined from it.

The process to stabilize the canoe for retrieval from the river would have an estimated cost of around \$30,000. If retrieved, the canoe would also need to be stored in a climate-controlled environment to keep it from deteriorating. It was determined retrieval of the canoe would be cost prohibitive, so it was tagged as a historical find and submerged in the vicinity to help preserve it in place. The archeologists also found old cedar bridge pillars in the area.

Fight the Flood Program can help connect you with who can help *by Dawn Shank*

As MRA President, I recently participated in a Zoom workshop as part of the RAFT (Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool) project. RAFT is an 18-month community-driven resilience planning and action support group in the Middle Peninsula, sponsored by the Middle Peninsula PDC, the Jesse Ball DuPont fund, UVA, William & Mary Law School and ODU. *Resilience* appears to be the new buzzword in the environmental academic community. It basically means how well things can bounce back from disasters, emergencies and challenges. The project is assessing localities' collaborations, leadership, risk assessment, infrastructure, community engagement, health and well-being. That's a lot to tackle! The project is developing action priorities and projects to help strengthen communities.

Curt Smith, coordinator of the Middle Peninsula PDC's **Fight the Flood Program**, shared some great information that shoreline property owners might find especially useful. The Fight the Flood Program is a unique web-based program to help landowners and businesses address flooding, sea level rise, and shoreline erosion. It's an online marketplace to connect people with professional services. It also provides information about grants & loans that address solutions, and can help with upfront cash loans for projects that are reimbursable. Check out [www.http://fightthefloodva.com](http://fightthefloodva.com).

