

## Mark your calendar

**March 31** - King & Queen County 6th graders River Day (rain date April 19) at Sandy Point

**April 25** - Area III Envirothon Competition at Rice Center, Charles City Co.

**April 29** - MPRA Annual Meeting & Picnic at Campbell's Pavilion on the Mattaponi

**May 17** - York River & Small Coastal Basin Symposium, VIMS, Gloucester Point

**May 20** - Walkerton Fine Arts & Wine Festival, Locust Grove, Walkerton

**June** - River month paddle TBA



Garnett's Creek paddle

## Your Dues are Due . .

\$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.

## Introducing Heather Strother

MPRA is very happy to welcome our new friend, Heather Strother. Heather joined the working team at Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR) based in Fredericksburg in August of 2021. While she has partnered with FOR and Waterkeepers Chesapeake, her position encompasses the York watershed as the Mattaponi/Pamunkey/York River Steward engaging in education, outreach, and restoration efforts.



Her position includes implementation of urban best management practices (BMPs) in the Mattaponi watershed through a Department of Environmental Quality 319 Nonpoint Source grant to fund bioretention areas, rain gardens, tree and shrub establishment, and pet waste stations. The projects will reduce E. coli bacteria and help decrease nutrient and sediment management loads to help reach water quality goals in the Mattaponi.

From the headwaters to the mouth of the York River, she will be working diligently on environmental impacts throughout the watershed.

"I'm looking forward to connecting with community members, learning more about the surrounding environment, and having conversations about how and why caring for our rivers matter," said Heather. "Whether it be on land or on the beautiful waters within the watershed, I look forward to working alongside environmental advocates to protect and promote the basin."

Heather enjoys environmental education and will be helping us at the March 31 River Day for King and Queen County schools sixth graders, summer paddles and activities, and helping us create a database of shoreline owners.

Welcome Heather!

## 2022 Activities In Review

The weather put a damper on many of MPRA's plans this year. We had to cancel or reschedule several paddles and a River Day planned for King and Queen 6th graders. In spite of that, we did manage to get kids out on the Mattaponi to fish, had a big turn-out for a rescheduled paddle from Zoar to Aylett and our annual paddle on Garnett's Creek. It was the first MPRA paddle for several people of a variety of ages.

We had the annual meeting outside again in April, with Covid still a consideration when planning events. Thanks to Eugene & Suzanne Campbell for letting us use their pavilion. Percy Ashcroft, KW County Administrator was the

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Zoar to Aylett paddle



**2022 Activities, continued**

speaker. We also surprised Sally Mills with a 60th birthday celebration, planned by her daughter who was visiting from Prague, Czech Republic.

Audrey Mitchell and several board members have been active in the York Watershed Roundtable through Zoom meetings and helped host an in-person workshop held in King William. MPRA was also active in RAFT (Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool) project with Audrey serving on the King William committee and Dawn Shank serving on the King and Queen County group.

We moved our Holiday Hike at Zoar State Forest to January. DOF forester/MPRA vice-president Dave Slack, led the hike with several new-to-MPRA people attending.

A new venture for MPRA this past year was to help start an Envirothon team at King William High School. Earth Science teacher, Amy Slack, is the coach. Husband Dave and Dawn Shank have been helping. Five members chosen from the class will be competing at the Area III contest in Charles City County in April.



The King William High School Envirothon class learned about aging and measuring trees, and forest management at Zoar State Forest in October. The group is also studying soils, wildlife, aquatics and the effects of climate change. Five members and two alternates will compete in the April competition.

Above, left to right: Past-president Dawn Shank, Secretary Mary Shipman & surprised birthday girl, Sally Mills, at the April Annual Meeting.



Zoar Holiday Hike January 2023



Nine future MPRA members enjoyed fishing at Sandy Point State Forest. The Fishing Day was co-sponsored by VA Cooperative Extension 4-H. The kids learned about fish, the river habitat, and spent hours fishing. Each participant went home with a new fishing rod, thanks to JoJo's Express in King William. Scott's Store provided worms.



## Teta Kain, Legend

By Dawn Shank

For the past 22 years, Teta Kain has spent the first of the year counting birds for the annual New Years' Audubon Bird Count, stopping at our house on Garnett's Creek. This year, she was accompanied by our old friend, retired Chesapeake Bay Foundation eagle expert, Bill Portlock, and three other volunteers. Teta keeps track of the Audubon bird counts for the Virginia-Washington DC region, which has been going on for 122 years. In 2018, Teta reported that there were 51 active bird counts taking place in the region. Several MPRA folks, including former MPRA president Brad Davis, have volunteered in the past.

Teta is a legend, not only as a long-time observer of birds, but as a member of the Friends of the Dragon Run, where she has led paddle trips and served the organization for more than 25 years protecting and preserving the Dragon Run watershed. Teta is known as the Empress of the Dragon and in 2021 was presented with the Friends of Dragon Run's prestigious Bald Cypress award.

I'm not sure how old this tiny ball of energy is, but I'm pretty sure she is a few years older than I am, and I'm 71. Her passion and love of the environment has been an inspiration to me since the first time I met her when she was giving a presentation at Rappahannock Community College decades ago.

"I think this is my last year," Teta told me in her charming New England accent. "I'm having some memory issues and I can't remember a lot of the birds to identify them," she said.

Teta may have forgotten more birds than most of us will ever to learn in a lifetime. I will miss seeing her with her binoculars on her winter visits to the marsh behind our house. Her legacy and work will live on. It's important that we instill her kind of passion in the next generation. I'm getting forgetful too, but Teta Kain is one Empress I will never forget.



Audubon volunteers looking for birds at Garnett's Creek (top photo). Bottom: Bill Portlock (left) and Teta Kain (far right) in the Shank's driveway.

## President's Corner

Farewell to COVID (hopefully). This past year has given us the opportunity to finally meet again and begin edging our way back to normal. Despite Mother Nature's best efforts, we have had some terrific paddle trips, however our River Day for King and Queen 6th graders has been postponed until spring. It will be wonderful to share the beauty of the Mattaponi with students.

Many new opportunities are developing for our organization. With the addition of Heather Strother, our new part-time York Watershed Steward, we hope to expand our goals of education, conservation and recreation.

Mark your calendars for our annual meeting at Campbell's Pavilion, just below the King William Courthouse on April 29th. We will have our annual picnic. MPRA will furnish chicken, BBQ and sides.

We ask members to bring a dessert or appetizer. Watch your email and the Country Courier for paddle dates, youth activities and workshops.

**Audrey Mitchell**  
MPRA president



Photos from Garnett's Creek paddle in August



## Mattaponi Watershed DEQ 319 Grant Resources

These funding resources are available to mitigate bacteria concerns within the Mattaponi Watershed. Please contact if you are experiencing erosion and runoff on your property, or know of a location in your neighborhood that could use a pet waste station!



### PET WASTE STATIONS

Pet waste stations provide doggy bags for pet owners to use on the go

- Fecal matter contributes to E. coli bacteria reducing water quality
- Pet waste does not have enough time to naturally break down if left near waterways or storm drains



### TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT

Trees and shrubs provide a buffer zone for runoff after storm events

- It is important for rainwater to be filtered by the soil before entering waterways so it does not decrease water quality
- Water infiltrates into the ground which is soaked up by plant roots



### RAIN GARDEN

Rain gardens collect and treat stormwater runoff

- Bowl shaped underground area captures excess stormwater runoff
- Native plants placed in garden with permeable layer to filter pollutants out of stormwater



### BIORETENTION AREA

Bioretention areas collect and treat stormwater runoff

- Similar to rain gardens. Larger in size, still capture and filter stormwater
- Used in areas with high impervious surface where water cannot penetrate into the ground

### CONTACT INFORMATION

email: [heather.strother@riverfriends.org](mailto:heather.strother@riverfriends.org)  
cell: (540) 847-9678

When you send in your membership dues, help us update our mailing list and database. Please include:

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in:

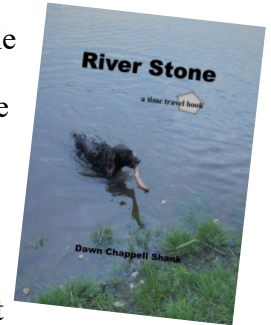
- ☐ Helping with environmental education
- ☐ Learning more about conservation efforts
- ☐ Paddles
- ☐ Fishing
- ☐ Serving on the board (meet mostly monthly)
- ☐ Suggestion for place to paddle
- ☐ Projects (installing bird boxes, cleaning up boat landings, cleaning out fishing line boxes, planting, installing a rain garden)
- ☐ Hikes
- ☐ Boating
- ☐ How to maintain my shoreline
- ☐ Planting vegetation/trees

Send \$15 check to : MPRA, P.O. Box 115,  
Walkerton, VA 23177

## MPRA is featured in time travel book

Former MPRA president Dawn Shank recently self-published a juvenile fiction time-travel novel set in King and Queen County. River Camp, the annual MPRA River Stewardship Day, Wacky Walkerton Waft Wace and MPRA paddles are featured in the story. You may even recognize characters in the story and in a few photos, although their names are changed.

In *River Stone*, 12-year old Lissie enjoys spending days with her grandparents' dog by the river. She has fun kayaking, going to River Camp and volunteering with her Mam and Pop. When she finds an unusual five-sided stone in the woods, she learns a lot about the history of King and Queen, but not from reading books.



Lissie travels through time and makes friends with a Mattaponi Indian girl from the 1600s, meets a slave girl who lives on Newington Plantation in 1735, eavesdrops on some bullies who attend Green Mount School for Girls in 1879, and encounters a boy at the 1950 Taylor & Caldwell cannery in Walkerton. The book is available on Amazon.com for \$15 plus shipping. Signed copies are available at the King & Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum with some of the proceeds going to the museum, where you can see the actual five-sided stone and learn about the places and history that inspired the book. Dawn will also have copies available at the MPRA Annual meeting.

### MPRA Board 2023

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I care about our rivers.  
I care about our environment.  
Reduce single-use plastic. Reuse. Recycle.

