



## Fishin' Pole Pack'n Paddle Summer 2020

Greeting Fellow Paddlers,

FFV State Officers

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Annual Dues: Due January each year

- \$20.00 per Individual or per Family (spouse & children 0-18)
- Individual chapters may have additional annual dues.
- Contact your CHAPTER Treasurer to pay dues.
- Please, DO NOT send dues to Membership Chair or State Treasurer

### Chapter Treasurers:

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\*\* No Internet Access & need to contact your Chapter Treasurer to pay dues: Please call Ginnie Peck @ 434-962-3224 \*\*

I hope everyone is having a great summer despite the "new normal". Let's hope this ends soon so we can get back to our "real normal".

The weekend of the July 24<sup>th</sup> I found myself and a few others at the Slate River property paddling and working on the beginning of construction on the new pavilion by the fire pit. Thanks again Andy and Mike McEwen. On Saturday I saw several on the Hardware to Bremono Bluff. We had a great time surfing, swimming and some rest and relaxation although quite hot. Sunday brought another day of paddling and a heroic rescue of little Ro Ro from drowning by Gaige Hall and me. The place was the spot just above the James River bridge at Fork Union, a nice island everyone stops. River left. I heard a hollering by Gaige and realized that I was ten feet away and he was holding his brother's head up out of the water. A rope had caught his ankle in fast moving current. I got there and cut the rope. It all happened so fast. He was a lucky boy, that Ro Ro. So, by the power vested in me I will recognize Gaige on Labor Day for his rescue. Hope to see everyone there and will try to organize a safety instructional clinic on Saturday. We will also honor Pete and Johnny O' this weekend. Music by T. Rawles and open mic on Sunday.

Just a reminder, please remember to pay your dues to the chapter treasurers. Refer to the website for their individual e-mail addresses if you have questions.

Vera Houghton will be retiring as our Newsletter Editor at the end of this year. Let me know if anyone would be interested in becoming the Editor in 2021.

Please be safe, wear your mask and keep your social distance and we will get through this. I look forward to seeing everyone soon. Call me anytime at (804) 244-6853.

Paddle on!

Rock



## Currents & Eddies

### Franklin County Projects

Courtesy of Bill Tanger

**Pigg River Dam Removal:** The Pigg River runs free, except for strainers and one huge logjam! We recently removed two 200 foot wide logjams that caused massive erosion. We intend to work on logjam #3 when weather improves. Could use additional boaters with chain saws.

Need to move some river rocks below the dam base from river right to the left shore. Will likely need some equipment.

**Pigg River: Lynch Park:** Shoreline restoration and strengthening. Working with US Fish & Wildlife to stop erosion problems below Rocky Mount walkway from Lynch Park to Veterans Park. Work funded and should start in July.

**Pigg River Dam boating access:** Continuing restoration of the boat access we put in before Hurricane Michael blew it out. Could use workers and monitors to keep the access clean. Could use an Adopt-a-Landing team.

**Blackwater River (Franklin County):** Working on creating a parking lot at the Rt 122 crossing of the Blackwater River to provide parking for river access.

**Blackwater River Blueway:** have a contract to buy a property along Blue Bend Road for better and more secure river access. This property to hopefully be part of a Blackwater Blueway. Negotiating with county to either donate the property or provide a tax elimination if FORVA holds it. Another Adopt-a-Landing opportunity

**Blackwater River access properties:** Working on several new access properties and some improved access sites. Need input from Creek Freaks on priorities and need info on access property owners supportive of a Franklin County blueway.

**Blackwater River (Franklin County):** Working on removing the Altice Mill dam on the Blackwater River. Early studies completed on fish, sediment and restoration. Seeking funding help next.

**Franklin County Blueway Assessment 4/20/2017:** This assessment done in 2017 by the Regional Planning Commission desperately needs updating. Could use a few dedicated Creekers to do up a revise with group input. This document would help support a blueway program for the county.



## Courtesy of Bill Tanger

Logjams – Pigg River float trip 3-30-20

The Pigg River Restoration Project

In August 2016, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia took out the Pigg River Power Dam. Twenty five feet high and two hundred twenty feet wide, it was built in 1915 and abandoned in 1965. Exactly 50 years after being constructed.

The Pigg River lies just below the Blue Ridge Mountains and runs for over 75 miles to the Roanoke River, which empties into Pamlico Sound near the Outer Banks.

The dam backed up the river for two miles, and by the time 50 years had passed, was almost completely filled in with sediment and woody debris. After 100 years, the former river was only a stagnant two mile backwater pool, populated by beavers and carp.

So when Friends took out the dam, it precipitated an amazing time warp, as 100 years of built up bank sediment and trees began collapsing in fast motion to pile up in the river. Twenty foot high riverbanks with 80 foot high trees were falling in and washing downstream.

Giant logjams piled up and got bigger and bigger. One below the dam was over 250 tons of wood. Two more upstream were the same size. Friends role was to restore the river. Breaching the dam was step one. Step two was to remove the logjams, which were river wide and causing the river to eat up the riverbanks on either side. Friends employed huge excavators to remove two of the logjams. The third was inaccessible. In addition, a dozen smaller logjams made boating extremely difficult.

Fast forward to March 2020. A group of four boaters with the Float Fishermen of Virginia armed with chainsaws floated the river, determined to open a channel if at all possible. The remaining logjam forced a portage, climbing up the riverbank about 15 feet, carrying boats and gear 300 feet and then roping the boats back down to the river. The chainsaw gang then went to work on the remaining multiple river logjams to create a channel. Seven hours later the four boaters finally floated out. With the exception of the last giant logjam, the river was floatable.

The Pigg River, looking like a geologic catastrophe, is an amazing example of a river returning to being a river instead of a dead pool. The restoration continues. Funding is being sought for another excavator-led attack on the last massive logjam. Stay tuned for more geology, river restoration and challenging float trips on the Pigg River.

Bill Tanger, Friends Chair & Float Fishermen Conservation Chair  
with the help of Mike Byrd, Duck Stanley and Tom Christenbury,

The Chainsaw Gang.



## REB Stewart FFV Stories!

### History of FFV

Fun and Films were the highlight of the early FFV meetings for the Tidewater area chapters. Jack Albert and I learned to film river trips with our Super 8 movie cameras from the legendry Les Fry.

We quickly outgrew meeting in my basement. As an Army officer, I had privileges at the spacious Portsmouth Naval Hospital Officers Club. Coats and ties were required and the ladies dressed accordingly. We started meeting in a small side room but soon took over the main ballroom. We turned a slow night at the club into the biggest night of the month.

The films were a huge draw. Our rapidly growing membership brought their families, friends and neighbors. We set up funny scenes and skits to delight the crowd. Of course, shots of big fish and running rapids were the film highlights. Also, we had ladies nights, dances and even a theatrical production "Floatenstein". This play was produced and directed by Pete Pine who was famous for his years of devotion to the Norfolk Little Theatre. Pete was also the narrator in his very dramatic British accent. The scene was a remote mysterious castle in Transylvania where Dr. Floatenstein (REB) and his half brain hunchback assistant, Fritz (Judge Jimmy Hawks) set out to turn a cadaver into the ultimate Float Fisherman. All of the canoeing and the fishing replacement organs went into the body just fine...until they got to the brain. Perhaps we can rerun this one day and you will learn the rest of the story. This one is a hoot if you have never seen a "sheet operation" before.

FFV's days at the Officers Club were wonderful. Some of the Doctors and Nurses joined us. Some of our biggest fans there were the three bartenders: Jim, Charlie, and Iron Man. We made them honorary members. They confided in me that "the floats tip a lot better than the Navy".

The Tidewater Chapter developed a problem. Too many people were on the river. Five or six boats makes a good fishing trip but thirty boats began showing up. I encouraged groups to form new chapters to break up the congestion which spoiled the fishing and overflowed our small riverbank campsites.

Phil Wolford, Doug Cowley and Herb Coleman Senior formed the Back Bay Chapter. A youth movement led by Rick Mattox and David Tugwell started the Scotts Creek Chapter. Late Piwe and Albert organized the very active geriatric chapter. They all ran their own weekend floats, but we all continued to meet at the Officers Club. Great Times!



## **Fishin' Pole Pack'n Paddle**

2020 Revised Trip Schedule

### 2020 Trip and Event Schedule:

**Labor Day Weekend** – 9/4 to 9/7 at the Slate River property; \$400 was budgeted for port-o-johns.

**Annual Business Meeting** (9:00 a.m.)– 12/5 at the Slate River property

Rock Willoughby is the contact for both events. Please reach out to him if you have any questions.

Email: [willoughbys3@hotmail.com](mailto:willoughbys3@hotmail.com)

Phone: 804-244-6853

Below is the link to the Trip Sites Event Page

<http://floatfishermen.org/page.html>

The next page has the site address and directions for the two events still scheduled for this year.



**Fishin' Pole Pack'n Paddle**  
Current Trip Location and Directions

**SLATE RIVER PROPERTY - Address for GPS**

10330 Bridgeport Road  
Arvon, VA 23004

**From Richmond:**

Take Route 6 River Road West  
(from downtown that's 64 West to the  
Oilville exit South on 617 Oilville  
Road, right on 250 West Broad Street  
Road, Left on 632 Fairgrounds Road,  
right on Route 6, go West), follow to  
Fork Union, stay straight on Route 15  
James Madison Hwy, cross the James,  
after roughly 1.5 mi. take a right on  
Route 652 and cross the Slate River.  
Driveway will be first left.

**From Charlottesville:**

Take Route 20 South through  
Scottsville and across the James River.  
Turn Left onto Route 652 (Bridgeport  
Road). Follow approximately 9 miles  
and turn right into field. If you cross  
the Slate river, you have gone a half  
mile too far

**From Lynchburg:**

Take Route 60 East to Route 15  
(James Madison Highway)North.  
Turn left on Route 652 (Bridgeport  
road) at Arvon. Route 652 and cross  
the Slate River. Driveway will be first  
left.

# Editor's Note

**I will be retiring as the editor of the newsletter at the end of 2020. No one could have asked for kinder people that helped me along the way as your Newsletter Editor. I learned a lot about the local rivers and took my first solo paddle. The Float Fisherman offers friendship, fellowship and great outdoor fun. I love paddling with everyone and hope to see you on the river on the Labor Day gathering.**

**The opinions expressed in FPP&P are those of the author's and not necessarily those of FFV or its members. The editor is responsible for editing the content of the newsletter and its construction. Members are responsible for providing content. Please send submissions to the editor via email attachment. The following formats are preferred: Word, RFT, and/or JPEG. The newsletter goes out quarterly: Feb 1, May 1, August 1, Nov 1. All Submissions MUST be received by the 15th of the preceding month.**

**If you receive this newsletter via US Mail, we do not have a current email address for you. Contact your local treasurer or the Membership Chair to update your information.**

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