



### Inside this issue:

<i>Scenic River</i>	2
<i>Summer Associate Spot</i>	2
<i>Water Monitoring</i>	2
<i>3 New OSM VISTAs</i>	3
<i>FORF and the ACCWT</i>	4

### Did you know?

- FORF is always looking for volunteers to help with water quality monitoring and other activities. If interested, contact us by phone or e-mail!
- Allan Comp, founder and director of the ACCWT, recently won the Service to America Medal in the Environmental Category.
- The primary contaminants in our watershed arise from sedimentation, straight pipe pollution, acid mine drainage and illegal dumping.

## *Russell Fork Up for Scenic River Designation*

This summer Lynn Crump of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation evaluated a nine-mile section of the Russell Fork River for the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program, and we are pleased to report that on the basis of her evaluation the Russell Fork is eligible for designation as a State of Virginia Scenic River! If there is community support for the designation, the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors can take the

next step in the process.

Promotion of the scenic river designation would help increase recreational tourism in the region. It can also be used to help protect the river and preserve its features, depending on how the county chooses to implement the program. No land use restrictions are imposed by the state as a result of the designation.

Crump, Environmental Programs Planner at DCR, undertook the evaluation of the Russell Fork at the request of FORF Director Gene Counts and Dickenson County Administrator Mark Vano-ver. She spent two days evaluating the river from Splashdam to the Virginia-Kentucky state line on the basis of a broad range of scenic, recreational, historic and natural features. Members of the FORF accompanied her as river guides

during the field evaluation.

"It was a privilege to spend two days absorbing the awesome images created by traversing the gorge. Those images are not easily forgotten," she said.

On June 25<sup>th</sup> she took a raft trip down the Russell Fork River from Splashdam to the Garden Hole. Counts led the tour in his kayak while Crump rode in a whitewater raft with FORF members Lance Compton and Chris Eberly. The raft was provided free of charge for the purpose by Danny Elswick of Russell Fork Whitewater Adventures in Big Rock, VA.

The raft trip provided leisurely opportunities for viewing the river's characteristics and its unique flora and fauna, coupled with the well-known fast-moving, rocky stretches that required navigational skill by Compton from the back of the raft.



*Lance Compton and Lynn Crump make their way down the Russell Fork Gorge.*

## *More Funding Received for Haysi-Breaks Hiking/Biking Trail*

On November 1, 2008, FORF and Dickenson County submitted a grant request to VDOT for an additional \$378,000 for the Haysi-Breaks Hiking/Biking Trail. Gene Counts, project manager, was responsible for writing the grant. Dickenson County received a grant for \$378,000 in March 2009 for the trail. The funding was provided through the VDOT Transportation

Enhancement Program. The grant was competitive and makes the 4th grant that has been secured for the trail. The first phase of the trail will be a stretch from the John Flannagan Dam to the Bartlick Bridge. This phase will be the most expensive because it will require the construction of four bridges. Leman Kendrick, new county engineer, says that within 30 to 40 days we should

be able to let bids on the trail.



*Bartlick Bridge*

"The expedition was exhilarating and educational. I was happy to be a part of it," said Compton, a summer intern with the FORF.

When she wasn't helping with the paddling, Crump made notes of her observations.

"The sites included steep cliffs that towered over the water several hundred feet, still pools where fish could be seen skirting across the river bottom out of reach of our boat and paddles and different forest types," Crump wrote in her report.

It took Lynn Crump and members of FORF two days to hike and paddle the physically demanding route.

"We traversed steep and sometimes sheer rock



*View of the Russell Fork from the Splashdam Bridge*

## Lance's Time at FORF

Lance Compton, a graduate of Haysi High School and a student at UVA's college at Wise spent the summer working as an OSM/VISTA Summer Associate with Friends of the Russell Fork. Here's what he had to say about his time with the group:

My experience at FORF was both educational and adventure-filled. Time spent both cleaning up the creeks and rivers as well as on the river has placed a lasting impression that will never be forgotten. The largest portion of my working hours, were spend at Cow Fork attempting to determine the cause of the high levels of bacteria in the water. I conducted a septic survey to pinpoint the problem, success was made but the FORF will continue to soldier on, to complete the work and fix the problem.

faces, boulders...varied in size from about the size of a kitchen table to the size of a large truck or tractor-trailer. Rhododendron was in bloom with white clusters framed by pale pink. Other small ground plants created an interesting vegetated carpet under the canopies of ash, beech, maple and oak trees", Crump wrote.

Among other criteria, the scoring process factored in the condition of the streambanks, the quality of fishery, the amount of human development along the waterway, the number of river crossings, historic significance, and rare plant and animal species.

The Virginia Scenic Rivers Program represents a partnership between local citizens, local government and the state. Now that the Russell Fork has met the criteria for scenic river status, the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors can pass a resolution of support and ask its legislators to introduce the bill to the Virginia General Assembly for passage and signing by the governor. DCR serves only in a technical advisory and support capacity.

The Board of Supervisors plans to hold a public hearing on the issue before one of their upcoming meetings.

Once the section between Splashdam and the Breaks Park achieves scenic river status, it will become easier for upstream sections to acquire scenic river status as well.

Of all my experience at FORF the most lasting and most enjoyable was learning to kayak with the master of the Russell Fork River, Gene Counts. Many hours after work, and maybe even a few during, on the river with a paddle in my hand, learning the tricks of the trade.

I will always have a dedication to the FORF and the great things it taught and instilled in me. I am more than grateful for my summer spent there and know that the sky is the limit for the dedicated group, with a burning desire to make things better.

Former Summer Associate

Lance Compton

**"Too few citizens of Virginia have seen the spectacular scenery of the Russell Fork Gorge."- Lynn Crump, Virginia Dept. of Conservation and Recreation**

"Too few citizens of Virginia have seen the spectacular scenery of the Russell Fork Gorge. I hope this designation will help facilitate a greater awareness of its intrinsic qualities for all our citizens and future generations as well," said Crump.

A description of the Virginia Scenic Rivers Program can be found on the web at [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/srmain.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/srmain.shtml)

## Water Monitoring Continues in Haysi-FORF Looking for Volunteers

Friends of the Russell Fork is still monitoring the water quality throughout the area. Sampling areas include: the Russell Fork River, Bartlick Creek, Camp Branch, Happy Hollow Creek, Cow Fork, Little Lick and Grassy Creek. Water samples are being tested for *E. coli*. The data that is collected by FORF is then uploaded to Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality Citizen Monitoring website. Water monitoring helps FORF identify straight pipes and inefficient septic systems, as well as help secure funds to correct these problems. We are looking for volunteers

to help us collect samples and run them in the lab. Volunteers will be trained. If interested please contact us at 865-4918. We would really appreciate your help!





## Three New OSM/VISTAs in Dickenson County

Clintwood and Haysi are now home to 3 OSM/VISTAs who are working through the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team. They are working to continue improving the water quality in the area as well as further water quality education in Dickenson County Schools

### Corey Fleischer with the McClure River Restoration Project

I am from Canton, Ohio. I graduated from Marietta College in May with a Bachelor's of science in geology with a minor in environmental science. My future goal as a VISTA is to increase awareness of environmental degradation and what people can do to help their environment. My future goal is to get a Master's degree in environmental management at any school that will accept me. My hobbies include playing basketball, ultimate frisbee, or anything active. I also enjoy listening, and trying to play music. And I am a conservationist.



### Nicole Tucker with Friends of the Russell Fork

I am a former military brat, so my home is wherever I lay my things but my car does have a Florida license plate since my parents are currently living in South Florida. I just graduated last May from Shippensburg University in south central Pennsylvania, with a B.S. in Physics and minors in Math and International Studies. I participated in and later led Physics Club and Amnesty International. I, also, participated in the Honors program where I did various activities such as tree planting and Excitement in Education. Virginia will be the ninth state/country that I have lived in.

I am excited to help this year with FORF. I wanted to take a break from classes and volunteer my time in a way that I could give and learn at the same time. I have always taken an interest in environment and community, having lived in many places and seen the way it affects the happiness of the people living there. Once I am finished here, I plan to go on to graduate school in Environmental Geophysics where I can get a job doing geophysical surveys to do such things as helping find sources of groundwater contamination.

### Amber Bellamy with Friends of the Russell Fork

I am from Kingsport, Tennessee and attended college at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC. I graduated in May with a degree in Environmental Science. While in college, I was a member of the Honors Student Association and a WyldLife leader at Shelby Middle School. I also participated in an undergraduate research project during the last two years of college that focused on various parameters of water quality monitoring in different locations. I am hoping to attend graduate school to study stream ecology (or something like that) after my time in Haysi. I'm excited to continue to become familiar with the people and places around here and I hope to make my time here very worthwhile- this is a beautiful area and I hope to help people preserve it. I enjoy hiking, camping, exploring, running, reading, playing on the beach, and eating lots of good food.





*The Friends of the Russell Fork (FORF) is a young watershed group based in the town of Haysi with an office on the campus of Haysi High School. The FORF comprises local citizens who want to improve the quality of the waterways in the Russell*

*Fork watershed, restore the diversity of aquatic life, and promote economic development in their community. The FORF partners with schools, businesses, government and federal agencies, and nonprofits to clean illegal dump sites, monitor streams, give citizens access to lawful wastewater treatment, stop sedimentation through reforestation and raise public awareness about environmental issues.*

**Were on the web!**

**<http://forf.weebly.com>**

*The FORF is a partner with the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team (ACCWT), which helps rural communities by building local organizational capacity and partnerships. The Team coordinates 53 OSM/VISTA volunteers who live and work in their Appalachian host communities to promote environmental change. Gene Counts is currently the director of FORF.*



*The ACCWT targets environmental problems in eight Appalachian states (AL, KY, MD, OH, PA, TN, VA and WV) through partnerships between the Office of Surface Mining, AmeriCorps\*VISTA and watershed groups throughout coal country.*

*Founded in response to requests from watershed groups throughout coal country, the work of the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team arms citizen groups with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to make them effective environmental stewards, community leaders, and accelerators of change. Together, the Team and its local partners are propelling a new Appalachian economy based on conservation and development, strong partnerships, and new hope.*

*Founded and directed by Dr. T. Allan Comp, the ACCWT and Allan are both recipients of numerous national awards. The ACCWT was named the Governmental Partner of the Year by the National Summit of Mining Communities in 2006 and received the U.S. Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award in 2004. Allan's work with his AMD&ART Project won a Green Design Award from the PA Environmental Council and the prestigious Phoenix Award from the EPA Brownfields Program, among others.*

