

## 2026 SPRING PADDLE SEASON

Friends of Dragon Run (FODR) welcomes you to one of the most beautiful rivers in Virginia. We are dedicated to preserving this waterway and want to show you how special it is. In the spring, the Dragon Run swamp is particularly beautiful with the emergence of flowers and the leafing of the bald cypress. It is also the best time to see the beautiful prothonotary warbler. We thank you for your interest in Dragon Run and look forward to meeting you on the day of your paddle trip.

**Dates:** April 15<sup>th</sup> through May 19<sup>nd</sup> (excluding Wednesdays), weather permitting. Nine guests will be assisted by five crew members each day. We will paddle by reservation only. **Every paddler must be at least 18 years old and we can not accommodate guests over 275 pounds** (this is our kayaking safety standard). We will hold a limited number of group paddles on Wednesdays. For group paddles contact us at [presidentdragonrun@gmail.com](mailto:presidentdragonrun@gmail.com).

**Route:** The meeting location will be FODR's launch site at its **Big Island Complex**. Paddlers will launch from Big Island and return there after about 3 hours. Part of the route is against the current and may be somewhat strenuous.

**Start times and place:** We will meet at our **Big Island Complex**. The meeting time for all the paddlers is **10:00 am**. We will be off the water approximately 1:15 pm. Directions and a map are provided below.

**No lunch break:** We will not stop for an extended group lunch break, but we will take several short breaks for folks to hydrate, so bring water and snacks.

**Reservations:** Reservations will open on **3/14/25 at 9 am**. Go to [www.dragonrun.org](http://www.dragonrun.org) to register. You must provide for each participant: their cell phone number, their email address, and their mailing address. Donations must be made at the time of reservation. The suggested amount is \$60.

**REFUND POLICY:** Refunds will only be offered if FODR has to cancel the paddle due to weather or water conditions. If we must cancel a paddle or make any changes, we will call the phone number that you give us when you make your reservation.

IRS requires that a receipt be provided to any donor upon request, and that a contemporaneous receipt be issued at the time of any donation of \$250.00 or more. FODR will provide a receipt if requested, which will disclose that the trip is valued at \$15.00, and that any donation in excess of \$15.00 may be considered a donation to Friends of Dragon Run, a 501c (3) organization. We recommend you consult your tax advisor about tax deductions.

Any time you have questions, you may email [paddlemasterdragonrun@gmail.com](mailto:paddlemasterdragonrun@gmail.com).

We provide a kayak for each paddler, a paddle, and a PFD (Personal Flotation Device). DO NOT bring your own boat. The kayaks are sturdy 9.5-foot kayaks designed for slow moving rivers and streams that are ideally suited for navigating the Dragon Run's narrow, twisting channels. We will "fit" you with a kayak and adjust your boat's seat and foot braces to ensure your comfort.

You may bring your own paddle and PFD. However, your PFD must be a standard U.S. Coast-Guard approved PFD, not inflated by a cartridge. WE REQUIRE PFDs TO BE WORN AT ALL TIMES WHILE ON THE DRAGON RUN. PFDs MUST BE ZIPPED AND/OR BUCKLED AT ALL TIMES WHILE ON THE WATER.

We will be on the water about 2.5 - 3 hours, depending on water levels and the overall ability of the paddlers. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, trips usually end around 1:15 p.m. It is not wise to schedule other events on the day of the paddle because of the uncertainty of trip length.

Parts of the trip will require paddling upstream against a current as this is a round trip paddle. For this reason, the trip may be a bit more strenuous. Spills can and do rarely occur; so be prepared to get wet. Dress for the weather on the day of your paddle. Bring rain gear and/or a jacket if rain is forecast. Layers of clothing might be appropriate if it is breezy or chilly. Other items you may want to bring include: gloves, hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses.

There are port-a-johns where we launch and takeout. However, there are NO facilities of any kind along the paddle route. Pack your food and water in a small, soft-sided bag that will fit in the kayak. Secure cameras, binoculars, phone, and other expensive items in waterproof bags that you can tether to the kayak or wear around your neck (waterproof phone and key bags are available for loan at the launch site).

**NOTE:** We strongly recommend that persons with heart problems or other serious medical conditions consider very carefully whether they should make the trip. Remember, we will be in the wilderness. Medical help and transportation are a significant time and miles away. If you have a physical condition that would require treatment while you are on the water, be sure to bring necessary medications and equipment you normally use to treat the condition. If you are allergic to stings, be sure to bring whatever medication you use to counteract a reaction.

**Please notify your Crew Leader if you have an existing medical condition that we should know about.**

**What about bad weather?** We will definitely cancel in case of thunderstorms or if the river is running too fast or the water level is too low or too high. We usually cannot make the decision to go or not to go until the morning of the paddle. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a telephone number where you can be reached the night before and early on the morning of your paddle. If we decide to cancel the paddle, we will notify all those who have reservations at or before 7:30 am on the day of the paddle.

If you feel ill on the day of your paddle, stay home! And, if you have to cancel for any reason, **PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!** That will enable us to fill your seat with someone else.

We will sell FODR merchandise each day after the paddle. New Merchandise will be available for purchase to celebrate FODR's 40th Anniversary. We have T-shirts, long-sleeve t-shirts, long sleeve solar vapor shirts, quarter-zip long-sleeve performance t-shirts, long-sleeve performance hoodies, hooded sweatshirts, caps, and bucket hats for sale, with all proceeds benefiting FODR. We will also be selling limited edition prints of the Dragon by a local artist (\$60 / \$90 framed). We take cash, checks, or credit cards.

This information sheet and the attached Friends of Dragon Run Liability Release Form should be given to everyone in your party. The release form must be filled out and signed (one person for each form) by each participant. Bring it to the launch site on the day of your paddle.

The above information is intended to help you have a safe and happy trip and to enjoy the special wonders of Dragon Run. We look forward to escorting you on this exciting adventure.

## GENERAL DIRECTIONS to the FODR Meeting Place:

We will be launching from the **FODR Big Island Complex**. We will have you drive directly to the launch site. **The Launch site is at the end of a one mile dirt road. Please drive slowly especially if you have a low ground clearance vehicle!** Use the following GPS location: **558 Piedmont Road, Shackelfords,(some GPS use Mascot or Church View,) VA 23156** to get you onto the dirt road. There will be FODR signs and a FODR Crew member stationed at the transition between the paved and dirt road.

If you have problems with GPS, directions are as follows:

Heading North on Route 17: Approximately 6 miles north of the Rt 33 and Rt 198 intersection, turn left onto Farley Park Road (Rt. 603). Travel 4 miles and turn right onto Coldwater Road (Rt. 610). In 3.1 miles continue right onto Piedmont Road (the sign at this intersection says Dabney - this is still Rt. 610). In 0.4 mile, you will exit the paved road onto a dirt road. There is a yellow house off to the right and a sign for “Three C Kennel”. Continue straight past the sign on the dirt road that follows the wood line to the launch site.

Heading South on Route 17: Approximately 17 miles south of Tappahannock, turn right onto Brier Swamp Road (Rt 606). Travel 1.6 miles continuing onto Dragon Road. In 1.5 miles, turn right onto Wares Church Road (Rt 602). In 1.7 miles, make a sharp left turn onto Piedmont Road (Rt 610). In 1.1 mile, you will turn left onto a dirt road. There will be an FODR sign and a yellow house off to the left. Follow the dirt road along the wood line to the launch site.

Heading from West Point: Travel East on Rt 33 for about 4 miles, turn left onto The Trail (just after the Dragon Run Brewing Co). In 2 miles, turn right onto Elsom Mascot Road (Rt 610) (this becomes Coldwater Road at a stop sign – continue straight). In 8.6 miles continue right onto Piedmont Road (the sign at this intersection says Dabney - this is still Rt. 610). In 0.4 mile, you will exit the paved road onto a dirt road. There is a yellow house off to the right and a sign for “Three C Kennel”. Continue straight past the sign on the dirt road that follows the wood line to the launch site.

**On the day of the paddle, if you get lost or expect to be late,  
please call our Spring Paddle Master: Andrea Mitman 804-761-7119**

