
Non-profit overview: Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River

Woodstock, Virginia

Chesapeake Bay Watershed



History of the organization

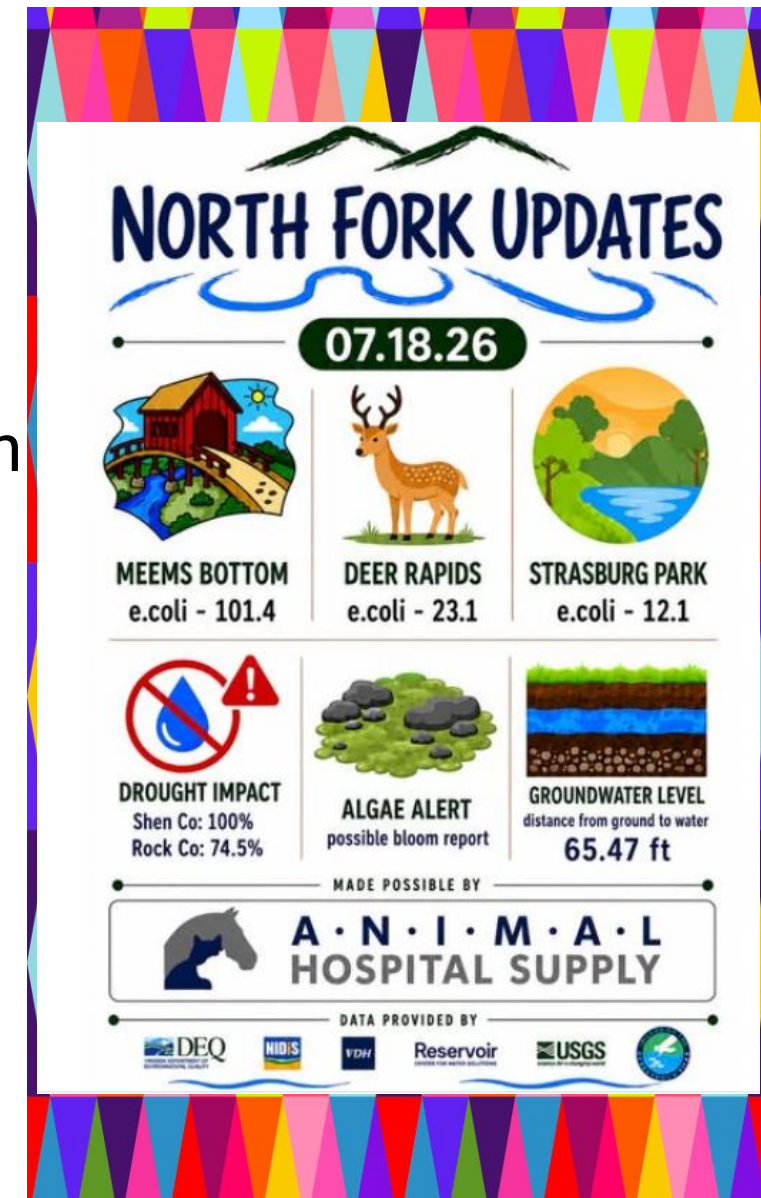


The Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (FNFSR) was founded in 1988 to preserve and protect the health of the waterway.

Nearly 40 years later, FNFSR is committed to this same mission: to **educate, monitor, steward, and advocate** on behalf of the river.

Overview of current activities

- **Educate:** FNFSR conducts *educational activities for youth and adults* in partnership with local schools, camps and Seven Bends State Park. From January-August 2025, the organization engaged 1,500 students and over 40 teachers.
- **Monitor:** FNFSR tracks up to date information about water quality and publishes it via *Weekly River Condition Reports* on their facebook page and website, reaching thousands of viewers (Example: see photo).



Overview of current activities

- **Steward**: FNFSR hosts river clean-ups and is currently training volunteers in benthic invertebrate monitoring to assess river health. The organization supports land owners to install Best Management Practices on their forest and farmland to protect watershed health.
- **Advocate & Connect**: FNFSR hosts several annual events such as *North Fork Fest* and *Rendezvous for the River* to raise awareness about the importance for protecting and caring for the Shenandoah River.



Staff

The Friends of the North Fork is a lean organization. Laura Bennett serves as the Executive Director. She is supported by part-time staff and interns. The organization relies on a dedicated board of directors and many committed volunteers who assist their efforts.





Future plans and challenges

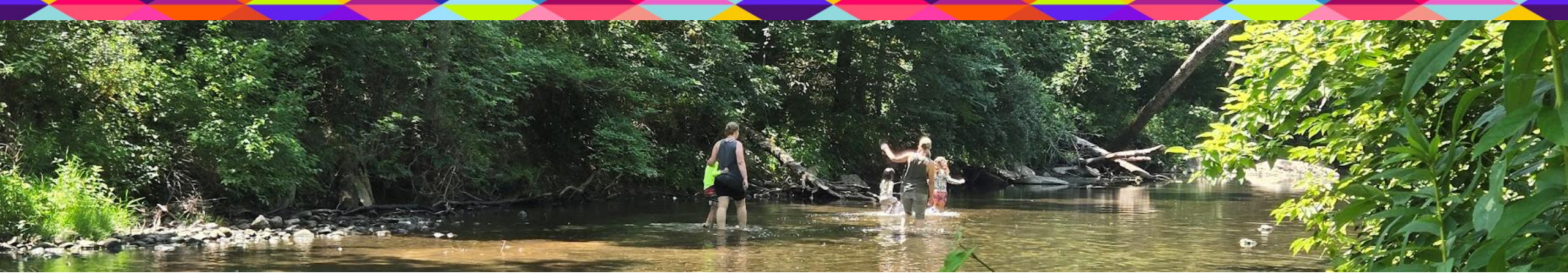
FNFSR shares similar challenges as many small non-profits with an ambitious mission and impactful reach. Despite a small staff and limited funding, FNFSR engages and educates thousands of people to care for 116 miles of the river, covering a watershed of 1,034 square miles spanning three counties.



Future plans and challenges

FNFSR strategically engages with partner organizations to advance its work. As a member of the [Shenandoah Valley Conservation Collaborative](#), FNFSR is able to reach new audiences, including farmers and landowners. FNFSR is also a core lead within [Shenandoah Networks](#), a project funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Regional [Capacity Building Initiative](#) and convened by the [Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley](#). Other key partners are the Seven Bends State Park and Department of Environmental Quality.





Friends of the North Fork and Stony Creek Farm

Stony Creek farm is a tributary to the North Fork of the Shenandoah River.

In 2025, FNFSR assisted the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality with outreach regarding an impaired stream assessment of Stony Creek.

By implementing best management practices (such as fencing livestock out of the stream), the actions we take at Stony Creek Farm directly impact the health of the river that our family and neighbors swim, fish and play in.

Bibliography

- Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. (Accessed 28 July 2026).
<https://www.friendsofthenorthfork.org/>
- Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. (Accessed 28 July 2026). Facebook.
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsNFSR>