

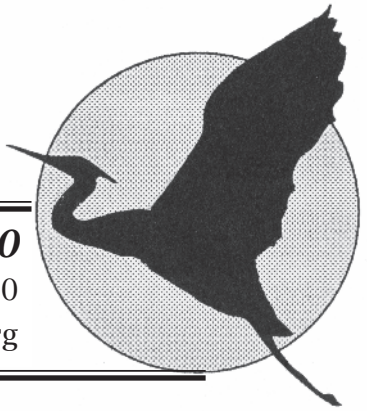
Voice of the Haw



The Haw River Assembly August 2020

P.O. Box 187 · Bynum, NC 27228 · (919) 542-5790

email: info@hawriver.org · www.hawriver.org



Climate Action Campaign!

This spring, as the Covid-19 pandemic spread throughout the world, we launched a new campaign at the Haw River Assembly for Climate Action. This effort is being coordinated by HRA's Kyleene Rooks, with support from other HRA staff and Board members. Even though we cannot have gatherings and events right now, we believe the most crucial and pressing issue facing us, and future generations, is the far-reaching impact of a planet warmed by greenhouse gases.

The Haw River Assembly is ramping up our efforts to respond to the climate crisis. We are researching and understanding what the local watershed and state impacts will be. We are partnering with other organizations in the state on current climate crisis issues, and for urgent policy and regulatory changes. We support an economic recovery that puts climate solutions and climate justice at the forefront. Just as it is important to look at environmental and economic issues through the lens of racial equity, it is equally important to look at those issues through the lens of climate crisis.

This means fighting against frack gas pipelines, including Mountain Valley

Pipeline Southgate proposed for Rockingham and Alamance counties, and the pipeline Dominion has proposed for Durham county. We hope that the economic and regulatory reasons that resulted in the cancellation of the Atlantic Coast pipeline (and DAPL) will hold true with the pipelines we are fighting right here. We will continue to oppose new development projects like Chatham Park that will replace carbon sequestering forests with sprawling housing and retail. We are working to stop single use plastics, made from fossil fuels. We're adding our voices to the campaigns of other activists and organizations in the state fighting bad projects and policies that add to the climate crisis, like the wood pellet plant in Lumberton.

Our new Climate Action committee at HRA is researching and compiling summaries on a wide range of climate change topics, focusing on information that tells us the most about what those impacts will look like right here in the central Piedmont. Two big reports were released in NC this spring: the new "North Carolina Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan" published by NC government agencies; and the North Carolina Climate Science Report from the Institute for Climate Studies, an NC inter-university project. We are taking information from both these reports, as well as other sources, for these topics: *continued on page 7*

Our VIRTUAL hosting of the 2020 Wild and Scenic Film Festival! August 20, 2020

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, we've decided the best place to host this year's film festival is from home. So join us for a night of environmental and adventure films that depict the beauty of the natural world, the challenges facing our planet, especially climate change, and the work communities are doing to protect people and the environment.

Tickets are \$10 for HRA members, and \$15 for non-members. All tickets include 5 extra days to stream the Festival, and those purchased by August 5 include a raffle ticket for great prizes. Purchase tickets and see the list of films being shown at:

<http://hawriver.org/wild-scenic-film-festival/>

Thanks to the Jester Group, and Epting Hackney, Attorneys at Law, for their sponsorship!



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Cynthia Crossen, *Newsletter Editor*

Thanks to **Jan Burger** for art throughout this newsletter: Climate Action Logo, ACP/MVP graphic, and River Watch Heron.

To join the Haw River Assembly or renew your membership, send a check to **HRA, P.O. Box 187, Bynum, NC 27228**; or go online at <http://hawriver.org/join-hra/>.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Note: After many years, we're raising our membership dues by \$5.

Thanks for your support!

Individual: \$30 Family: \$45

Sustaining: \$60 Heron Circle: \$100 & above

Low Income: \$10

The Haw River Assembly is a nonprofit grassroots organization founded in 1982. Our mission is to protect and restore the Haw River, its tributaries, and Jordan Lake; and to build a community that shares this vision.

(919) 542-5790 www.hawriver.org

Notes from the Haw

The Haw River Assembly joins ongoing efforts to look deeply at issues of inequity and injustice in our society. We are looking through that lens as we fight against pollution and for clean water in our watershed. As a Board and as staff we have worked to educate ourselves about environmental justice, and why diversity and inclusion are important for our work to succeed. We have looked closely at our underlying mission and our work throughout the watershed to make sure we are serving all – without contributing further to the burdens experienced disproportionately by communities of color. We continue to work to make our Board more representative of the racial demographics of our watershed, and to make our organization more welcoming and more responsive to people and communities of color.

But at this critical moment, it is not enough.

We cannot have a just and peaceful society, nor even clean water, ultimately, if we ignore the institutional inequalities that have created not only the pollution, but also the poverty and lack of opportunities that persist for so many people of color. We cannot ignore the realities of our United States history where lives, land and labor were stolen from African-American and Indigenous people. We cannot ignore the structural racism that is endemic in our country. We must stand up and say no more harassment, abuse and murders by the police of black people and others who do not belong to the dominant white culture. We must demand change.

We must listen to voices, ideas and stories of people of color, and then we must act – putting our actions where our ideals are. We must look to our communities and ensure that activities taken for granted by white people are safe and welcoming for all people. What are we doing to make sure that being in nature – bird watching, jogging, taking a hike or kayaking – are not perceived as unsafe or unwelcome if you are black or brown? Of what use to communities of color are these joyful pursuits in nature if they are impaired by bigotry or violence?

As we look towards November we can use the power of our vote to end the racial inequities and abuses of our current system.

I wish you all wellness and safety as we continue to look out for each other during this pandemic, and to a more equitable future beyond it.

For the river,
Elaine Chiosso,
Executive Director



Photo by Fred Tutman

Photo by Elaine Chiosso

HRA Outreach and Watershed Education

Photo by Milada Vachudova



from Kyleene Rooks (at left), Outreach & Event Coordinator (919) 542-5790; krooks@hawriver.org

Update on the Learning Celebration 2020 For 30 years the Learning Celebration (LC) has brought together students, teachers and volunteers to the Haw River for three weeks of learning, song, and cheer. As you can imagine, it brings us great sadness to announce that for our 31st year we are unable to hold the Learning Celebration as an in-person event. With the spike in COVID-19 cases and the restrictions on how schools will be participating in their fall semester, the Haw River Assembly feels it would be irresponsible for us to gather and put all of our volunteers and participants at risk.

With that in mind, we are excited to announce a new, virtual project for the LC! Our goal is still to provide fourth graders in our watershed with an experience to learn about the river and its cul-

tural and natural history, and inspire them to visit it with their families during this time of social distancing. HRA will be releasing a series of videos of some of the same experiences students would have if they attended the LC themselves! We'll share this virtual experience with you and the thousands of students in the watershed who may have not been able to attend our wonderful event due to limited space.

We have begun a Crowdfunder campaign for our "Virtual Learning Celebration" video project. As you can imagine, we had not envisioned this in the budget we created for 2020 – so your financial support will be greatly appreciated. Together we can do this! You can learn more and make an online donation at www.hawriver.org/join-hra on the LC Crowdfunder tab, or use the membership form with this newsletter to make a special donation by mail.



Photo by Milada Vachudova

Learn About the Haw River!

HRA Educational Resources Since the pandemic cancelled so many in-person activities, HRA staff has been creating weekly talks and tutorials about river issues, updates on our projects, and some fun activities to do with kids. Go to <http://hawriver.org/resources/education/> to check them out!

HRA Website We offer an extensive array of information on our website about the river, pollution issues, history, geology, and much more. From the front page, www.hawriver.org, use the tabs on the top menu bar:

About the River - The History page provides a historical overview of our watershed, plus specific articles on the 19th century textile mills, the Underground Railroad, the Sissipahaw people, geography, and geology. Check out several Maps of our watershed, and use the Recreation page to find out about hiking, paddling, and outfitters.

River Issues - Find out the latest on issues and our Haw Riverkeeper's advocacy work. Use the dropdown menu to learn about industrial contaminants in the Haw, MVP Southgate, sustainable agriculture, Jordan Lake, Chatham Park and more.

Programs - The River Watch page shows you where our volunteer teams are monitoring, and includes info and tutorials on our methods. Learn how to evaluate water quality by identifying the water insects and other aquatic life in a creek near you! Muddy Water Watch teaches volunteers how to identify and report construction sediment and erosion control violations using a smart phone app. Swim Guide is our summer weekly report on how safe it is for swimming at 8 sites on the Haw and Jordan Lake, based on E-coli monitoring. Learn more about the 30 year Learning Celebration program.

Report a Problem - Use this form to tell us about a pollution problem in our watershed.

Publications - All kinds of information, including how to co-exist with beavers, native plantings for our watershed, all about algae, our Stream Steward handbook, archived reports on the river, HRA newsletters, and much more!

You can also follow us on social media where we are uploading videos of demonstrations about water quality and other topics, and activities for students K-12 that you can do with materials you already have at home.

◆ Facebook: [@hawriverassembly](https://www.facebook.com/hawriverassembly) ◆ Instagram: [@hawriverassembly](https://www.instagram.com/hawriverassembly) ◆ Twitter: [@HawRiverkeeper](https://twitter.com/HawRiverkeeper)



HAW RIVERKEEPER®

Issues in the Watershed

from Emily Sutton, HAW RIVERKEEPER®

Stop the NEPA Rollback!

In a race to rollback environmental regulations, the Trump administration hobbled the nation's bedrock environmental protection, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a law that has given marginalized communities a say in what happens to them when governments propose life-altering projects like highways and pipelines.

In doing so, the administration illegally cut corners on a path in a way that the courts have rejected time and time again. Haw River Assembly is joining litigation with Southern Environmental Law Center to challenge this rollback, along with 15 other conservation organizations. The rollback limits public input by limiting what information is available for public review. The NEPA rewrite also curtails agencies from considering climate change in their reviews. Further, it also eliminates consideration of what is known as "cumulative impacts." For example, under the original NEPA, when a new highway or bypass was proposed near a current interstate, the projected increase in pollution was added to the existing pollution levels to get a full understanding of the total (cumulative) impact on how nearby communities would be affected. This and other important rollbacks must be stopped.

Update on PFAS Water Contamination

The UNC Policy Collaboratory has released their initial sample results showing PFAS compounds are present in most basins throughout the state. These "forever chemicals" are used by industries for a variety of applications to resist water, fire, stains, and other uses. Pittsboro's water supply (sourced from the Haw) continues to have the highest levels, at over 880 ug/L of total PFAS. We have not seen the urgent actions or responses needed from Pittsboro leadership to address this issue in a timely manner, or commitments to provide safe drinking water to its customers. This is inexcusable. At Haw River Assembly, we are continuing to work with Southern Environmental Law Center to investigate sources of PFAS in Burlington's wastewater effluent (the largest discharger of PFAS in to the Haw River). We have now entered into an agreement for Burlington's continued sampling, investigation, and abatement of all PFAS discharges in their system and in their sludge application. We will continue to keep our members updated as this case progresses.

Greensboro 1,4-Dioxane in the News

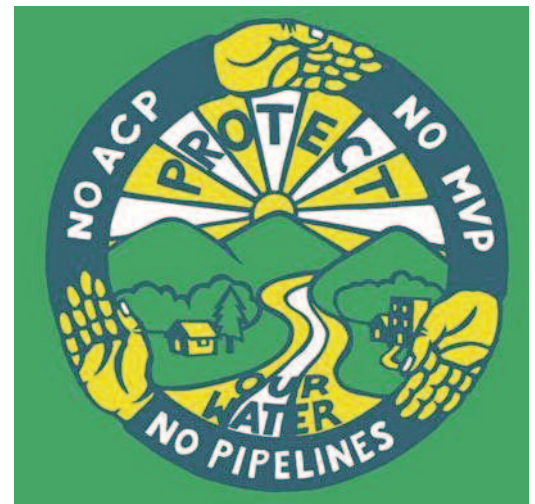
As you may have heard, NC DEQ released a draft Special Order by Consent (SOC) for the T.Z. Osborne Wastewater Treatment Plant in Greensboro for the City's 1,4-dioxane discharges originating from industrial plants. These discharges have been contaminating downstream drinking water supplies for years, and we believe that the SOC does not require Greensboro to do enough, quickly enough. We are asking DEQ for a public hearing on this SOC, and thank all of you who also sent in this request. Continued 1,4-Dioxane pollution for 2 more years will impact all water users downstream, including Haw River, Jordan Lake and Cape Fear users. DEQ needs to put downstream communities first. The goal of this SOC should be to eliminate the pollution from the industrial sources in Greensboro – not to allow discharges to continue at a level that presents a serious threat to people downstream. Pittsboro and other downstream communities have suffered enough from industrial chemical pollution from upstream dischargers, and shouldn't have to continue to choose between their community's health and safety, and footing the bill for Greensboro's pollution.

Pipelines: ACP Cancelled, MVP Southgate Next?

In a surprise move on July 4th, Dominion and Duke Energy announced that they were cancelling their \$8 billion fracked gas Atlantic Coast Pipeline after years of challenges, permit delays, and ballooning costs. We're cheering for all of our environmental partners and communities in NC and VA that have been fighting for this win for over six years. Now we're going to be doubling down to make sure MVP and MVP Southgate meet the same fate.

There have been multiple publications citing the lack of need for additional pipeline infrastructure and fossil fuel sources in North Carolina and across the southeast. North Carolina is one of the leading states in solar power, and Gov. Cooper's Executive Order 80 commits us to lowering Greenhouse Gas emissions to 40% below 2005 levels. New pipeline projects do not fall within that commitment.

The MVP mainline has been met with several legal battles and water quality violations, and is still under a stop work order. In May, two MVP customers amended a 2016 agreement to terminate the deal if service doesn't begin by the end of 2021.



Graphic by Jan Burger

That goal is looking more and more unlikely. NCDEQ is in the process of reviewing information submitted for MVP Southgate's 401 stream crossing permit. They requested more information in mid June, and received a response that did not address all of the concerns laid out by NCDEQ. NCDEQ also requested an update on MVP mainline actions, including a detailed list of all water quality violations, status of permits, and all legal challenges to date. They are keeping a close eye on the status of the MVP mainline project, and we hope they will deny the 401 permit for the Southgate project in the coming weeks.

State Denies Chatham Park's Permit

On June 1, the NC Division of Water Resources (DWR) sent a letter to Chatham Park Investors (CPI) and NC DOT denying their application for the 401 Certification for new development in North Village, the huge swath of land between Pittsboro and Bynum, adjacent to the Haw River. No work can be done in Chatham Park for the North Village development that would impact streams and wetlands, without the 401 Certification. DWR told CPI that the 401 application was incomplete due to a large number of reasons – many of which HRA pointed out in our comment letter to DWR and the Army Corps of Engineers. Reasons for denial include an incomplete analysis of indirect and cumulative impacts and incomplete stormwater management information. Thanks to everyone who sent comments in, and a big thanks to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners for letting the state know their concerns about the inadequate public opportunity for commenting. You can read HRA's comment letter and the denial letter from DWR to Chatham Park on our website at <http://hawriver.org/river-issues/chatham-park/>.



Chatham Park Investors can appeal this decision, or re-submit with more complete information. We will be watching carefully, and will let you know what happens next, and actions we can take.

Alamance Opens Trails at Cane Creek Mountain Natural Area

The Pine Hill Trailhead features 3.5 miles of trails in Alamance County's largest natural heritage area. Hikers will enjoy rolling Piedmont hills, abundant creeks and streams, and some of the best views in Alamance.

The development of the park will continue over the next several years. Upon completion, the Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area will total over 1,000 acres and include an observation tower, camping facilities, wildlife observation areas, and more.

Planning to visit? Due to current social distancing requirements, the park is open by reservation only. Visitors can secure a reservation at the park by visiting alamance.recdesk.com. Reservations are available to groups of 10 or less in 3-hour time slots for exclusive access to the park. Beginning August 15, the park will be open to the public without reservations.

Cane Creek Mountains Natural Area is located at 5075 Bass Mountain Rd, Snow Camp, NC 27349. For more information and a map of the park, visit www.alamance-nc.com/rec.





Standing in the Stream

Project News from Emily Sutton, **HAW RIVERKEEPER®**

(919) 542-5790; emily@hawriver.org

Though we are not training new teams right now due to Covid-19, this is a great time for experienced teams to get out in their creeks and the river and send us their monitoring results. We are working to upload all existing surveys into a new database to send to the NC Department of Water Resources for inclusion in the Integrative Water Quality Report. We have also had other Riverkeeper partners use these citizen science benthic monitoring results to influence basin planning. The state agencies responsible for collecting this information have not had adequate funding to do field assessments in most waterways for over a decade. Using our teams' data in new ways is exciting and further underscores the importance of regular monitoring and thorough surveys. Thanks to all of our stream water volunteers for your hard-and fun-work!



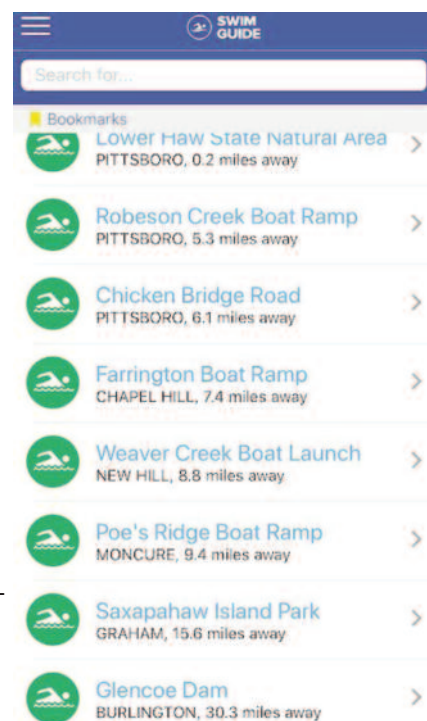
Photo by Erin Jobe



Meet our Swim Guide Intern!

My name is Ariel Lam and I am a rising junior at UNC-Chapel Hill. This summer, I have been interning as the swim guide technician for the Haw River Assembly. I was assigned eight locations to visit every week: Glencoe Paddle Access, Saxapahaw Mill, Chicken Bridge, Farrington Paddle Access, Weaver Creek Boat Ramp, Poe's Ridge Boat Ramp, Robeson Boat Access Ramp, and the Lower Haw River State Park in Bynum. For the past few months, I've been collecting water samples and taking measurements such as dissolved oxygen and pH levels at these sites. Then, I process and analyze the samples to calculate the E. Coli levels at each location. This is extremely important because the public should be

aware of whether E. coli levels are safe in the waters that they swim in, or use for other recreational activities. So far, I have discovered that E. Coli levels rise during weeks of heavy rain. However, the weather in the past weeks has been clear with little rain, yielding water samples with extremely low levels of E. Coli. You can see the weekly results on our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, weekly e-newsletter or website (www.hawriver.org). You can also download the Swim Guide app on your smartphone to see all the beaches in the Swim Guide program across the country: <https://www.theswimguide.org/get-the-app/>.



Above is a example of Swim Guide results, from July 17.



Photo by Cynthia Crossen

When I am weary and burdened by cares,
Sorrows seem heavy and so hard to bear,
I sit by the water and find comfort there,
On the river, I'm home,

Down by the river, the beautiful river,
Down by the river, river so free,
Flow on forever, beautiful river,
Beautiful river, fill me with peace.

From the song "Beautiful River" by Cynthia Crossen.
You can listen at http://cynthiasongs.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/ONL-013-Beautiful_River_HRV.mp3

Climate Action Campaign, *continued from page 1*

- Increased temperatures and changes in drought frequency
- Increased flooding and storm events
- Impacts and limits on drinking water supply
- Increased wastewater and sewer overflows in storms
- Climate Justice – inequity of communities affected by climate change
- Projected population increase and new development in our watershed
- Biodiversity and species extinction in our watershed
- Impacts on agriculture

Some of these climate changes have already begun here. Three of the five biggest floods on the Haw River since 1975 were in the past two years. Night-time summer temperatures are increasing, as are storms with higher rainfall rates. We will use the information we compile to inform ourselves, but also to educate and lobby legislators who need to be making faster and much better policies and regulations to deal with the urgency of climate crisis.

We have created a new webpage where all of this information is being posted. Many thanks to Jan Burger for designing our new Climate Action logo! Here's what you can find on our webpage, <http://hawriver.org/home/climate-action-campaign/> :

“Keep it in the Ground: Break Free From Fossil Fuels” – The excellent video by Jan Burger (Paperhand Puppets) and friends.

Publication and Live Streams: We're posting the latest articles and live streams we are finding about the climate crisis, including its relationship to the pandemic and racism.

How to Take Action Join us in sending comments and attending public hearings (virtually) on issues in our watershed and around the state.

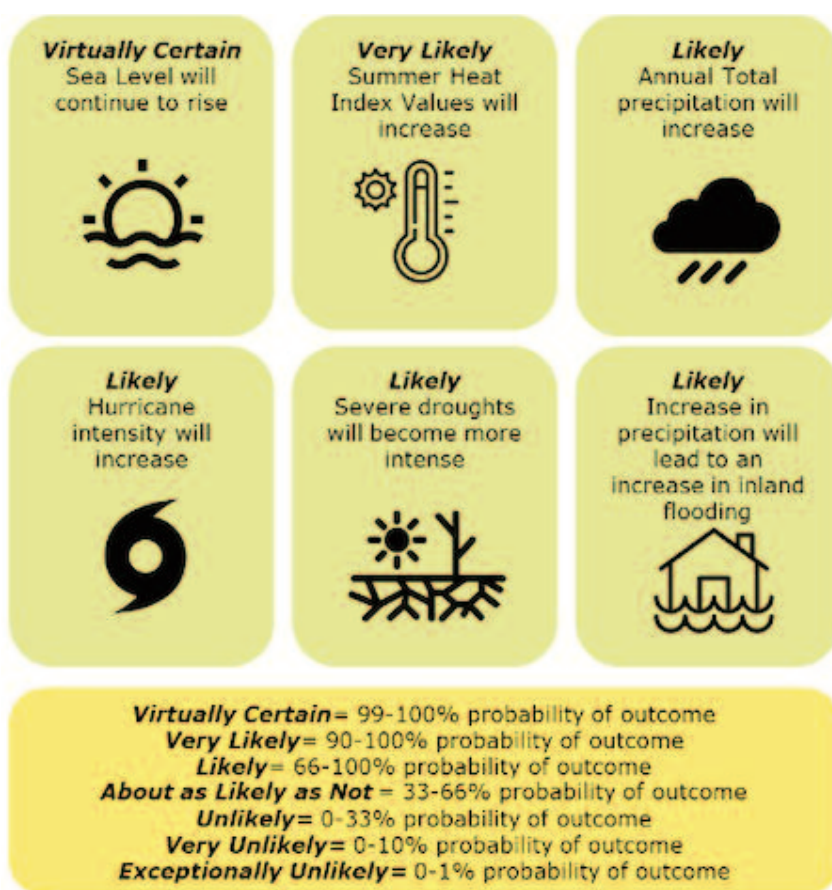
Climate Change Impacts in the Haw River Watershed This is where we are posting our research summaries on topics listed above.

Sign up for Climate Action Updates Join the list serve to get breaking news.

Partners Links to websites of organizations in NC working on climate crisis.

Let us know if you have information to share, or would like to join the committee to work on this urgent issue with us (all meetings are virtual at this time). Contact Kyleene Rooks, project coordinator, at krooks@hawriver.org.

The illustration to the right shows likely impacts in North Carolina due to climate change (NC Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan, May 2020).



Send Some Love to Clyde Jones

Bynum's own nationally recognized, self taught, folk and outsider artist, Clyde Jones, has given so much art to our world – for schools, children, museums, public spaces, Clydefest, and all the art used for our T-shirts at HRA!

Due to advanced age, failing eyesight, and an unfortunate series of recent falls, Clyde was hospitalized this spring, and for now is being cared for by his beloved Bynum neighbors and friends. He loves getting greeting cards from his friends and supporters – and a photo or hand drawn card from you or your children would be especially terrific! You can mail cards to him at: Clyde Jones, P.O. Box 44, Bynum NC, 27228.



Upcoming 2020 HRA Events

Thursday, August 20, Virtual Wild and Scenic Film Festival. See page 1 for details.

September 19-20, Haw River Watch Monitoring weekend. For info, contact Emily Sutton at emily@hawriver.org, 919-542-5790.

For **paddle trips on the Haw River** contact our partners Haw River Canoe and Kayak Company, hawrivercanoe.com, and Frog Hollow Outdoors, froghollowoutdoors.com.

November 2020, HRA Annual Membership Meeting and Board Elections. Online meeting, date to be announced

Updates and details can be found at www.hawriver.org, on our Haw River Assembly Facebook page, and from our weekly E-newsletters which you can sign up for at info@hawriver.org.

Our 2020 T-Shirt is Here!

This year's shirt features a bass fish that is one of the many wonderful critters painted by Clyde Jones on the foundation of the Haw River Assembly office, with assistance from his neighbor, Carla Lilley. It's a soft green shirt made with 100% organic cotton by T.S. Designs. Map of Haw River on back.



\$25 (adult) S, M, L, XL, XXL

\$25 (ladies style) S, M, L, XL

\$20 (youth) S, M, XL (sorry, no youth Large)

To order from HRA, send check to HRA, P.O. Box 187, Bynum NC, 27228. Add \$5 per shirt for postage and transaction fee.



Masking Up! With T. S. Designs

T. S. Designs in Burlington, that makes our beautiful and sustainable T-shirts, is now offering face masks for Covid-19 protection, made from organic cotton T-shirt remnants.

Go to <https://tsdesigns.com/> to see all their options for face masks (including with custom logos), as well as their T-shirt styles and pricing.

Virtual Wild & Scenic
Film Fest August 20

Address Service Requested

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Haw River Assembly

Permit No. 490

Chapel Hill 27514

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