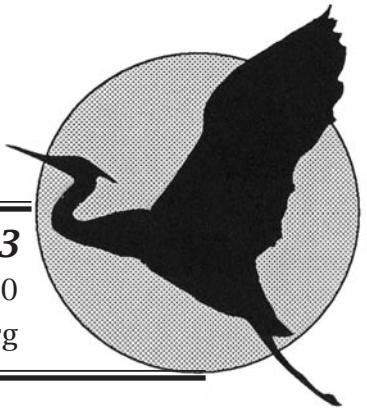


Voice of the Haw



The Haw River Assembly *Spring 2023*

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

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



Our Biggest Haw River Cleanup Ever!



Our 33rd Haw River Clean-Up-A-Thon took place throughout our watershed on March 18. Forty teams of volunteers removed trash from stream banks and out of the water from Greensboro down to Jordan Lake. They picked up 267 bags of trash, 22 tires, and all kinds of larger and strange items before this trash became a hazard to wildlife and water quality. Our clean-up was also part of Week of Creeks in several counties in the watershed, including Chatham, Orange, and Durham counties. Huge thanks to our volunteers and local business sponsors! Read all about this year's Clean-Up on pages 4 & 5.

At left: The C-STEP group of Alamance Community College, and Zachary Mathews, worked diligently around the ACC campus and Jimmie Kerr Road to remove 13 bags of trash, metal poles, and even a crockpot.

Haw Riverkeeper Takes to the Skies to Document Sediment Pollution


Alamance: Muddy waters caused by construction sediment can often be very hard to trace to the source by land, so in March Emily Sutton took a look from the sky. A concerned community member had reported sediment coming from the new Waggoner Proctor industrial distribution center, near I-85 in Graham, but the site was completely surrounded with fences and cameras. In order to document the issues without trespassing, Emily did a flyover with Southwings, a non-profit group of pilots that helps Riverkeepers investigate pollution. The photos she took show documented inadequate buffers and protective construction stormwater measures. Alamance County does not have a local sediment erosion control program, and relies on minimum regulations and enforcement from the state's regional office in Winston Salem, which does not have sufficient staff to inspect and enforce these regulations. That's why we have begun Muddy Water Watch trainings for volunteers in Alamance this year, to have more eyes on the ground to help us report sediment pollution.

Chatham: After a few weeks investigating sediment pollution in creeks in the Moncure area of Chatham County, we used Southwings again to better understand the sedimentation issues happening at VinFast, the huge electric vehicle manufacturing site being cleared for proposed construction. After many days of no rain, the stream leaving the VinFast site is still filled with sediment. Emily could see failing erosion control measures, and reported this site to the state.



**Earth Day Saxapahaw
Island Ramble,
Saturday, April 22**

Walkers, runners, and rambles are all welcome to join us in celebrating Earth Day with this scenic 5K run by the Haw River at Saxapahaw Island Park. Competitive or recreational participants are all welcome. Learn more and register at: <https://hawriver.org/haw-river-island-ramble/>.



**Haw River Festival
Saturday May 6,
4 - 8 pm, in
Saxapahaw**

Join us in Saxapahaw from 4 to 8 pm for fun by the river! Our free festival includes live music by Honey Magpie, Saludos Compay, and Jasmine Kelly; a farmers market; a silent auction; a Perception kayak raffle; river monitoring; canoe rides for kids; and a puppet parade. Find out more at: <https://hawriver.org/haw-river-festival/>.

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Anita Moore, *Communications Manager*
Mike Wallace, *Field Technician*
Carolyn Paden, *Office Manager*
Cynthia Crossen, *Newsletter Editor*

Thanks to **Jan Burger** for art throughout this newsletter: Climate Action Logo, River Watch Heron, Haw River Festival Heron, Learning Celebration logo, and Haw River Ramble.

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.

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 *Elaine Chiosso*, Exec. Director

After a mild and wetter than usual winter, we saw spring burst out in February, only to get slowed down by a March freeze. North Carolina winter weather is always crazy—from warm to cold and back again. But there's no question that our native plants are responding to global warming, many blossoming at least two weeks earlier than what used to be "normal" in the Piedmont.

Climate action is a key part of our work at HRA. We continue to urge elected officials to pass bills to stop fossil fuel use, fund clean energy and energy conservation projects, and act on the urgent need to protect those most vulnerable to the impacts of flooding, extreme temperatures, and storms. We hope you'll take our Climate Impact survey – read more on page 7.

Thanks to the generous legacy donation from the late George Pauly, we are growing at HRA, with new staff and expanded programs. We are also planning ways to honor George's dedication to nature and the power of environmental education, through native plant gardens and an upcoming scholarship fund.

We hope you're enjoying the Friday e-newsletters that have been given a big facelift under our new Communications Manager, Anita Moore. You can sign up to get them on the front page of our website, www.hawriver.org. Starting Memorial Day we'll also be posting our Swim Guide results each week.

Welcome To Our New Staff!

Three terrific staff members joined us in January, and hit the ground running! This great team increases our capacity to fight pollution, work for clean water, and get our message out to the watershed community.

Hannah Welborn-Lewis is our new full-time Events and Volunteer Coordinator. She previously worked at the City of Greensboro Water Resources Department as a Public Education and Social Media Specialist. After volunteering for the Learning Celebration in 2022, she was happy to join us on staff, and is busy recruiting volunteers and organizing our big spring events.

Anita Moore is our new half-time Communications Manager. She's from Alamance County, currently lives in Saxapahaw, and teaches Critical Thinking at Alamance Community College. She's our point person at HRA for graphic design, social media and increasing public awareness of issues and HRA's work!

Mike Wallace, our new part-time Field Technician, is in his last semester at NC Central University, completing a master's in environmental, earth and geospatial science. At HRA he combines data collection and fieldwork with geographic analysis, and is investigating high E. coli levels in the river, monitoring stream sedimentation, and updating our watershed maps and stream delineations.



HRA staff at our Bynum office: Mike Wallace, Hannah Welborn-Lewis, Elaine Chiosso, Anita Moore, Emily Sutton. Photo by Carolyn Paden, Office Manager



Issues in the Watershed

from Emily Sutton, HAW RIVERKEEPER®

PFAS and 1,4-dioxane

Pittsboro Angel of Alabama Screening

On March 7 we held a film screening and panel discussion on PFAS in Pittsboro. *Angel of Alabama* features Brenda Hampton, who returned home to rural Alabama as her mother’s health was failing, and launched an investigation in the PFAS poisoning impacting her county. Brenda’s efforts led the manufacturer, 3M, to filter the water supply and to stop further environmental damage. She is a great inspiration to all of us fighting PFAS. The film was followed by a panel discussion led by Emily (pictured below at the podium), with the film’s director Elijah Yetter-Bowman; Dr. Mark Strynor, chemist; and Dr. Jessica Merricks and Katie Bryant, co-founders of CleanHawRiver.org (pictured below in order as listed).



Burlington

We’ve been negotiating the final PFAS settlement agreement with Burlington for several months now, and they are dragging their feet. Emily has stressed the urgency of this issue for downstream Pittsboro, and how long we’ve been working to stop this pollution. Two of the main PFAS dischargers, Shawmut and Elevate Textiles, have switched to closed loop systems. The third, Unichem, is closing its business and moving to South Carolina. Levels of precursors of PFAS were low after the initial switch in May, but results from November and December have been above 10 million ppt. The main source of PFAS contamination, Elevate, has not been addressed. Because of this, we’ve been a lot more strict on sampling frequency. Emily plans to bring our concerns directly to the Burlington City Council.

We Want Stricter Limits on 1-4 Dioxane in Wastewater Permits

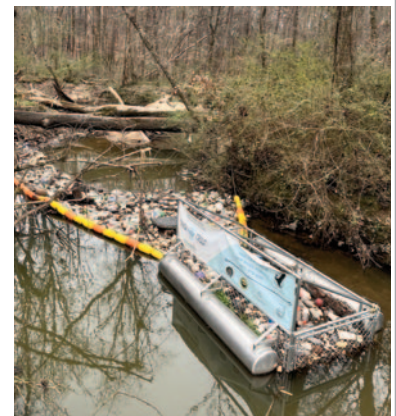
Haw Riverkeeper and other staff and HRA members spoke at a public hearing on March 7 on the Sanford Wastewater Treatment Plant and its upcoming wastewater treatment permit which has *no* numerical limit on 1,4-Dioxane, PFAS, and other dangerous toxins. This could impact a huge drinking water supply, as Sanford’s wastewater discharges upstream of their drinking water intake. This threatens drinking water for not only Sanford, but other jurisdictions that buy or plan to buy water from them, including Chatham County, Holly Springs, Fuquay Varina, and Pittsboro. We told the hearing officers why strict numeric limits on 1,4-dioxane are needed to protect public health. We plan to turn out even larger crowds to call for 1, 4-dioxane limits, when public hearings are scheduled for the wastewater permits for Greensboro, Reidsville, and Burlington.



Hannah Welborn-Lewis and Emily Sutton lobby at the North Carolina General Assembly.

Installing New Trash Traps in the Watershed!

We are installing new in-stream trash traps in the coming months in Durham, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Greensboro. Later this year, we’ll also be adding trash traps in Burlington, Cary, Reidsville, and Pittsboro. We’re excited to be partnering with our local community colleges to build them. With our new traps, we’ll need new volunteers! If you are interested in signing up as a trash trap volunteer as we install them in new cities this year, contact Emily Sutton at emily@hawriver.org. After one year of our trash trap in Third Fork Creek in Durham, volunteers have removed 10,699 pieces of litter in nine clean-outs since last summer; 9,139 of those pieces were styrofoam (85%) and 662 of those pieces were plastic bottles (7%). Our intern Jason Reynolds has scouted the watershed for sources of this plastic pollution so that we can tackle it before it gets into our creeks. *Photo at right shows the Trash Trout on Third Fork Creek before it was cleaned out by volunteers.*



Another Successful Clean-Up-A-Thon!

On Saturday, March 18th, we hosted the Haw River Clean-Up-A-Thon. This was our 33rd annual watershed-wide effort to remove trash from creeks, streams, and trails leading to the Haw River. The event served to raise awareness about the impacts of our consumption habits, and brought people across multiple communities together for a common good. **A total of 320 volunteers at 40 different locations removed 12 tires and 298 bags of trash.** Check out the awesome work our team leaders and their teams accomplished around five counties within the Haw River Watershed!

* David Jester led friends and family on a big cleanup of the gamelands on the **Haw River arm of Jordan Lake**, collecting 23 bags of trash. * Elaine Chiosso led a clean-up of the **river in Bynum** with neighborhood volunteers and members of Girl Scout Troop 1006. * Chris Sandt and Orange County employees took on **Merritt's Pasture Parking Area** and part of **Morgan Creek** to gather 3 large bags of trash. * Belinda Johnson and Girl Scout #2517 tackled **Glencoe Dam** in Alamance. * Lexie Wolf and Yoga Garden of Pittsboro picked up 5 bags between the **Kiwanis Park and Town Lake Park** (pictured at right). * John Randall and members of the Morgan Creek Valley Alliance gathered 8 full bags from **Morgan Creek**. * The Eastern Alamance Environmental Club helped clean up **Red Slide Park**, removing 6 bags of trash and a tire. * Westover Church removed 17 bags of trash and several construction items from **North Buffalo Creek**. * Jeff Pettus picked up 2 full bags of trash and plastic car parts around **Chicken Bridge** in Pittsboro. * Brooke Hassett led the Durham Girl Scout Troop 1702, and took on **Garrett Park in Durham**, where they collected 8 bags. * The C-STEP group of Alamance Community College, and Zachary Mathews, worked diligently around the **ACC campus and Jimmie Kerr Road** to remove 13 bags of trash, metal poles, and even a crockpot. * Eric Kirk and friends joined forces to help in Orange County remove 10 bags of trash on **Dobbins Drive**. * Lionheart Academy of Greensboro collected over 20 bags of trash at **Oak Henry Park**. * Alison Westbrook and The Turtle-Possum Coalition used kayaks to clean up along **Saxapahaw Lake**. * Also helping out in **Saxapahaw** were Chris Carter and Sam Berryhill, who led a small group of students. * Kendall Glaze and her fellow Buildsense workers cleaned up a litter hotspot location on **Third Fork Creek** in Durham. * Cathy Markatos and several neighbors retrieved litter near the **Dry Creek bridge** on Old 87. * Jim Allen and members



of the Windham HOA cleaned up around **Hwy 15-501 in Bynum**. * Led by Charles Coble, members of Orange-Chatham Interfaith Care for Creation picked up around **Bolin Creek**. * Just around the corner were Maggie Murner and her group, collecting 6 bags of trash at **Umstead Park**. * Sarah Goddin and Redbud neighbors worked on the **east side of Haw River** from Pokeberry Creek. * The Friends of the Lower Haw River State Natural Area group was led by Reuben Wilson and Anne Geer, where they retrieved 8 bags of trash around the **Hwy 64 bridge** (pictured at left). * Harold Kernodle and friends helped at **Alamance Creek** near Swepsonville. * Led by Lisa Lackmann, the Community Church of Chapel Hill retrieved 12 bags of trash from behind **Timberlyne Shopping Center** in Chapel Hill.

* Sandra Cooke and members of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church collected 10 bags of trash at **Town and Country Nature Park** in Burlington. * Tayton Alvis and friends picked up 7 bags at **Union Bridge**. * Haw River Assembly hosted neighbors around the **Lower Haw River State Natural Area** and collected 10 bags. * Maire Noel and members of the Piedmont Plateau Group Sierra Club of Greensboro removed 6 bags of trash along the stream at **Cascade Park**. * Team Milada, led by Chad Bryant, picked up trash around the **Saxapahaw Lake Paddle Access**. * A friendly competition occurred between the Rotary Clubs of Alamance and Pittsboro, with Alamance leading the way in collecting 38 bags



of trash along **Gerringer Mill Road** from Highway 87 to Burch Bridge Road. * Gary Simpson and the Rotary Club of Pittsboro worked along the **streets of Pittsboro** to collect 34 bags of trash (pictured at left). * Mike Reed and Rudy Cordon used kayaks to retrieve 10 bags from near the **Altamahaw Paddle Access** in Elon. * Shane Brown and members of the Carolina Canoe Club used kayaks along **Robeson Creek Canoe Launch** to remove 15 bags of trash and even the side of a portapotty wall (pictured at right). * Rachel Wilfert and



neighbors picked up trash in the **Rock Rest neighborhood**. * Lauren Bradshaw and friends removed 5 large bags from **Swepsonville River Park Lower Access**. * The clean-up behind the **Food Lion on Jones Ferry Road** in Carrboro was led by The Kalisher Family and Friends. * New Horizons West helped clean up the **banks of Jordan Lake**, in collaboration with Clean Jordan Lake. * Gail Fairbanks and friends worked to remove trash near the river at **Petty Road** in Saxapahaw. * Two more teams plan to do their clean-ups on March 25: Kathryn Royall and other employees at **Haw River State Park**, and Richie Difrancio leading volunteers behind the **Chapel Hill Community Center**.

Thank you to the sponsors of the Haw River Clean Up A Thon

AbunDance Healing Arts, 224 East St, Pittsboro, NC 27312; (919) 636-2545; abundancehealingarts.com
Benjamin Vineyards, 6516 Whitney Rd, Graham, NC 27253; benjaminvineyards.com
Branley Electrical Service, Inc., 1824 Chandler St., Elon, NC 27244; (336) 538-9953; www.branleyelectricalservice.com
Country Farm & Home, 101 S. Small St, Pittsboro, NC 27312; chathamfarmsupply.com
Compassionate Wildlife Removal, Graham, NC; compassionatewildliferemoval.com
Crosswinds Boating Center, 565 Farrington Rd, Apex, NC 27523; crosswindsboating.com
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Mediterranean Deli, Bakery, and Catering, 410 W Franklin St, Chapel Hill, NC 27516; mediterraneandeli.com
Mellow Marsh Farm, 1312 Woody Store Rd, Siler City, NC 27344, (919) 742-1200; mellowmarshfarm.com
Pittsboro Toys, 15 Hillsboro St, Pittsboro, NC 27312; (919) 545-1546; pittsborotoys.com
Rotary Club of Alamance, 103 E Front St, Burlington, NC 27215; alamancerotary.org
Rotary Club of Pittsboro, Pittsboro, NC; rotaryofpittsboro.org
Starrlight Mead, 130 Lorax Ln, Pittsboro, NC 27312; starrlightmead.com

A special thanks to these organizations and individuals who helped with providing additional materials & coordinating trash arrangements: ♦ Alamance County Parks and Recreation ♦ Chatham County Solid Waste Department ♦ Clean Jordan Lake ♦ Guilford County Environmental Offices ♦ GSO Goes Green ♦ Greensboro Parks and Recreation ♦ Keep Durham Beautiful ♦ Saxapahaw Rivermill ♦ Town of Pittsboro ♦ Town of Haw River ♦ Town of Graham ♦ Town of Chapel Hill.



The Haw River Learning Celebration is Coming This Fall!

From September 23 through October 14, the 33rd Haw River Learning Celebration will take place in Bynum, Saxapahaw, and Camp Guilrock. This hands-on riverside educational program brings 4th-graders in our watershed on a field trip to learn about their river and how to protect it. Volunteers make this program possible and trainings are included. You can camp with us, or come for a day or more. To volunteer, register on our website, www.hawriver.org, under the Programs tab.





Standing in the Stream

Project News from Hannah Welborn-Lewis, Events and Volunteer Coordinator
(919) 542-5790; events@hawriver.org

and Emily Sutton, HAW RIVERKEEPER® (919) 542-5790; emily@hawriver.org

Welcome, New Haw River Watch Teams!

Please welcome our new River Watch Teams! These teams completed their River Watch Training on March 11th and were able to explore New Hope Creek at Hollow Rock Nature Park in Durham with Haw Riverkeeper Emily Sutton.



Harold Kernodle previously worked with Mountains to Sea Trail along the River. He believes that being part of Haw River Assembly is a logical extension!



Jennifer Andrews & The Splash Puppies have joined the project. Jennifer is a water enthusiast raising her mudpuppies in Alamance County!



Cotton Bryan & Family love the Haw -- they have canoed it many times, flyfished it, and hiked along it. "We have participated in the clean up for several years and are looking to deepen our connection to the river."

Stephanie Willis loves nature and being outside. She joined because she wants to support efforts to protect the environment, and preserve natural spaces.

Eric Kirk & Friends are a group of educators & scientists living in Carrboro looking to become more involved in protecting the environment we live in and enjoy.

Would you like to start your own River Watch Team?

Bring your waders and join us for our next training sessions on Saturday, June 10th, from 10 am to noon; or on Saturday, September 16th, from 10 am to noon! Teams are trained and equipped to monitor water quality through biological, chemical, and visual parameters. Working with the Haw Riverkeeper, volunteers act as guardians of their streams, and notify state agencies if water quality is threatened. Learn more about the River Watch program and sign up for a training on our website at: <https://hawriver.org/projects/stream-monitoring/>



Hannah Welborn-Lewis (center, with bin) with volunteers at a River Watch training in March.



Nick Harper explains live staking to volunteers.

Volunteers Join in Live Staking Stream Restorations

Streambank restorations are an important remedy to stop erosion and banks from washing away. Live staking is a low cost practice that land owners can easily do on their own property. Stem cuttings, taken from trees during their dormant season (before the buds break in the spring), are inserted directly into stream banks. These cuttings, called "live stakes," will eventually grow into new trees, and are an effective way to establish a root network in the stream banks and help prevent further soil loss. We have hosted two riverbank restoration events earlier this winter and spring. With guidance from Nick Harper, a native plant expert from Saxapahaw, volunteers planted hundreds of native plants along eroded stream banks, with a mix of elderberry, black willow, silky dogwood, red mulberry, and chokeberry. It will be fun to follow up with these sites as the plants become established and the many benefits can be observed! Thanks to Nick for donating these live stakes and providing instruction to the Haw River Assembly volunteers at these events!

HRA Happenings

Introducing HRA's Amazing Interns!

We're thrilled to be working with five interns from local universities this Winter/Spring semester. They are all doing invaluable work for HRA, with contributions to our projects, research, and outreach that we couldn't do without them. Thanks to Emily Sutton as primary manager for this internship program, and to Hannah and Elaine as mentors.



Jason Reynolds (at left) is our Plastics Reduction Intern. He is a junior studying environmental science at UNC-Chapel Hill. When he's not helping volunteers clean out our Durham Trash Trout, he's tracking sources of the plastic pollution in the Third Fork Creek watershed. Jason has identified multiple sites where litter is being dumped.

Reagan Jarrett (at right) is studying Environmental Studies and minoring in Media and Journalism at UNC Chapel Hill. Reagan is our Education and Events Intern. She assists at events, demonstrates the Enviroscope watershed model, and works with Hannah on our volunteer programs.



Brandon Sisnett (at left) is HRA's Sustainable Agriculture Intern and a senior at Guilford College, studying environmental studies with a minor in art. Brandon is identifying local farms and creating a comprehensive list of sustainable farms that are using river-friendly methods!

Jonas Hattman (at right) is a junior and Environmental Science major at UNC Chapel Hill, and is our River Watch Intern. He is helping our River Watch teams to document water quality across the tributaries and riverbanks of the Haw, giving us a clearer picture of the river's health by determining the type and location of pollution sources.



Kaitlin Peck (at left) is a senior undergraduate from UNC-Chapel Hill studying Environmental Sciences, and is HRA's Climate Action Intern. She's working with HRA's climate committee on a climate impact letter to elected representatives, investigating existing climate initiatives by local governments, and working on the public climate survey announced on this page.

Take our Climate Impact Survey!



HRA's Climate Intern Kaitlin Peck and our Climate Action committee have created a Climate Impact Survey to learn about your concerns on climate change in our region, and how it may directly impact you. All survey results will be anonymous. We will use this information to inform our elected officials about the need to act, and what you see as priorities. Please go to the front page of our website www.hawriver.org for the Climate Impact Survey, or email us at info@hawriver.org for the link.



Saturdays on the Haw are monthly events, and opportunities for volunteers. Here's our lineup for the coming months! (Go to our webpage hawriver.org/saturdays-on-the-haw/ to sign up, or contact Hannah at events@hawriver.org.)

May: Be a volunteer with our Haw River Festival on Saturday May 6 to help us set up and break down, run booths, help with our silent auction, organizing the puppet parade and more! We'll need volunteers for set up starting at 12 noon, during the Festival hours from 4 to 8 pm, and for breakdown immediately after.

June: Would you like to start a River Watch stream monitoring team? Join us for a training on Saturday, June 10, from 10 am to noon. We'll have another River Watch training September 16. See details on page 6.

July: Join us for a wetland hike along the New Hope Creek Wetlands in Durham on Saturday, July 22 from 10 am to noon. Dogs on leashes are allowed. We encourage you to bring gloves and a trash bag for our walk to leave it cleaner than when we arrived! Registration is required in advance.

August: Join us for a hike along the the Reedy Fork Trail along Lake Brandt in Greensboro on Saturday August 5. Dogs on leashes are allowed. We encourage you to bring gloves and a trash bag for our walk to leave it cleaner than when we arrived! Registration is required in advance.

Upcoming 2023 HRA Events

Saturday, April 15, 11 am - 4 pm, North Park, 849 Sharpe Road, Burlington. Join HRA for Spring into North Park with the NC Science Festival.

Saturday, April 22, Earth Day Saxapahaw Island Ramble 5K. See page 1.

Saturday, May 6, 4 - 8 pm, Haw River Festival in Saxapahaw, with live music, kayak raffle, silent auction, and more! See more on page 1.

Saturday, June 10, 10 am - noon, Haw River Watch Stream Monitoring Training. Pre-registration required; see p. 6.

June 17-18, Haw River Watch Quarterly Stream Monitoring by current volunteer teams.

Saturday, July 22, Hike along the New Hope Creek Wetlands in Durham. Pre-registration required; see page 7.

Saturday August 5, Hike on Reedy Fork Trail along Lake Brandt in Greensboro. Pre-registration required, see p. 7.

Saturday, September 16, 10 am - noon, Haw River Watch Training. Pre-registration required; see page 6.

September 23-24, Haw River Watch Quarterly Stream Monitoring by current volunteer teams.



September 23 - October 14, Haw River Learning Celebration. The 33rd Annual Learning Celebration will take place in Bynum, Saxapahaw, and Camp Guilrock. To volunteer, register on our website, www.hawriver.org, under the Programs tab. See more on page 5.

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

Get our E-newsletter: We often announce new activities in our weekly online newsletter. Subscribe to it using the form on the front page of our website: www.hawriver.org.

**Haw River Festival in
Saxapahaw Sat. May 6**

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