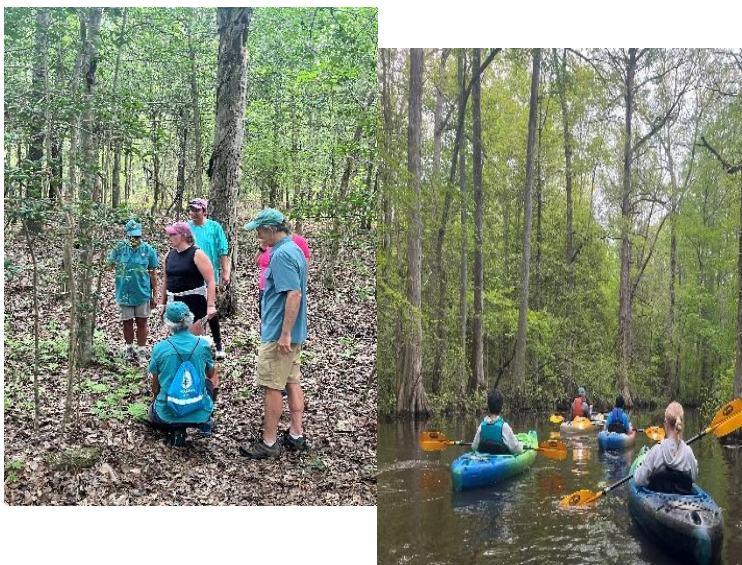


Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation 2024 – 2025 Virginia Watershed Educational Programs Projects



For a few immersive days on the Dragon Run, seven teachers from three public school districts, Gloucester, King and Queen, and Middlesex stepped into the shoes of students. The last week of July marked the second year Friends of the Dragon Run hosted Middle Peninsula educators as part of the Dragon Run Environmental Academy Mentorship (DREAM) program. The three-day. (18 hours plus the 10-hour required MWEE class), DREAM, took the educators out into the field and onto the waters of the Dragon Run to teach them about the local watershed and help them develop lessons to bring back to students. All of this is thanks to the planning and coordinating of the DREAM Team, composed of retired teachers and master naturalists along with the generosity of the DCR Virginia Watershed Educational Programs Projects and other donations.

Over the next school year, these educators will give what they learned back to their students by integrating it into state curriculum requirements and developing a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE), a learner-centered framework developed by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. As the 2024 class begins to brainstorm MWEEs, school counselor Sheri Gross said she hopes to incorporate nature into after-school programs for anxiety, depression, and grief.



Each educator has the support of a mentor from the DREAM Team as they develop a MWEE. A select number of students have already had the opportunity to participate in a field day in the fall while others wait for their turn in spring 2025. Students hiked trails, performed water investigations,

and paddled the waters of the Dragon Run. All of this will culminate in an action project co-developed and co-conducted by students.

