

## Backyard Briefs

*A weekly column*

*By Judy Jessop, Nature Conservancy Volunteer*

Many of my experiences paddling in this region have been along the Roanoke River Paddle Trail and Camping System. During summer trips brilliantly colored birds (many of them summer migrants from Central and South America) fill the air with song as they go about the business of courting and nesting. In fall I have been lured up many a black water creek, my eyes pulled by the striking colors of the vegetation that thrives in peaty soil. A mild winter night on one of the camping platforms seems to guarantee visits by barred owls, arriving on silent wings, only to pierce the darkness with startlingly loud, monkey like calls. Then there is the spring, full of chatter, the rustle of movement, life renewed.

At present the trail has four completed platforms and three more in planning stages (two of these have material and funding already in hand). These next three platforms will supplement the four already in use, ever expanding the variety of options open to paddlers. Once this trail is completed it will stretch from Weldon to the Albemarle Sound and will have multiple camping platforms dotted throughout the lower Roanoke, the Cashie and parts of the Albemarle.

This Paddle Trail is the result of the diligent efforts of the Roanoke River Partners, a local non-profit group of individuals and organizations formed to create a positive vision and future for our region.

As the Partners explain on their web site,

“People join the Partners because they understand that the quality of our lives and our children’s lives are intricately linked to the health of our environment, the health of our businesses, and the health of our culture.

Contributors to Roanoke River Partners help develop and coordinate community and regional projects that create economic opportunities (businesses) in our region. However, the type of businesses we promote are special... we want to help new and old businesses that embrace, highlight, steward and sustain our unique environment, communities and culture.”

The Paddle Trail is one of several projects this organization has developed. Now they are planning to hire an Executive Director that will be working full time to move forward with the goals of this organization. If you would like to learn more about this position and the Roanoke River Partners in general go to this web site: [www.roanokeriverpartners.org](http://www.roanokeriverpartners.org) or call 252-794-2793.