**“Geo-Tagging”: Mapping Trash and River Conditions**

In late July Stream Sweepers, a not-for-profit river maintenance and restoration service out of Northern Virginia, came to Augusta County and trained a core group of FOMR members on how to do a river resiliency and trash assessment.

For three days in early August, Wayne Nolde, Roger Robinson, John Bauman, Paul Bryant, John Sills and Reb Stewart teamed up to survey the 16 miles of the lower Middle River from Dam Town Road to the confluence of the North River. Using Stream Sweepers’ Garmin GPS units, teams paddled down the river with one team on the left side of the river and one on the right. As they paddled they “geotagged”(entered data into the handheld GPS unit) every quarter mile (minimally) and rated the river according to the following categories:

* Canopy Cover (how much of the river was shaded by trees)
* Buffer (width of woody vegetation on each side of the river)
* Bank Erosion
* Riverbed Substrate
* Bank Cover
* Bank Geometry (degrees of bank slope)
* and Bank Height.

If the quality of one of the above categories changed dramatically as we proceeded, new geotagged data points were recorded. Major trash in the river was also geotagged and photographed so that large items can be planned for removal in future river clean-ups by Stream Sweepers or FOMR members.



FOMR is looking into having this data analyzed by Stream Sweepers or other entities to assess the river’s weakest features where we could potentially work with the landowners to strengthen the river’s overall health.

As one of the participants, I found this to be a very rewarding experience--enjoying the river and good weather, and making new FOMR friends.

– submitted by John Bauman

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 Wayne Nolde Entering a Geo-Tag