

Lowery Pemberton Becker is the Education Coordinator for [Friends of the Rappahannock](#) (FOR) in Virginia. FOR is a grassroots, membership-based nonprofit organization with a mission to be the voice and active force for a healthy and scenic Rappahannock River. Lowery's initial love for the Rappahannock River began during her childhood with family gatherings and countless days spent within its waters. That love was strengthened into a career desire while attending Rappahannock High School and the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School where marshes were her classroom. After graduation, Lowery attended the University of Virginia and received a Bachelors of Science in Environmental Sciences with a Specialization in Environmental and Biological Conservation. Following college, Lowery was an Americorps VISTA with FOR where she worked to expand FOR's voice into the tidal watershed and raise awareness of water quality issues. Lowery joined FOR as the [Education Coordinator](#) in 2013 and has since received her Master of Education from the University of Mary Washington.

While you may see Lowery leading field trips on FOR's 12 acres nature preserve, tubing through rapids with campers, teaching kids how to paddle in tidal tributaries or sitting on the alphabetical rug in a Head Start classroom; her main passion has been a program called [A River Runs Through Us](#) (ARRTU). In 2000, Virginia signed the Chesapeake Bay Agreement making [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences](#) (MWEE) a mandatory, yet unfunded, educational component for every student in the state. MWEEs incorporate environmental education and awareness through strengthening background information, attending field experiences, [taking action](#) and reflecting. MWEEs are not one-day experiences; they require student growth through experience in order to create behavioral change. Through funding from NOAA B-WET, Lowery has taken *ARRTU*, a program created in partnership with organizations from Three Rivers Environmental Educators, and expanded it from one school to nine within seven counties. Lowery works with each teacher to create a school-specific program with lessons, [action projects](#), field experiences and reflections. A MWEE is not a one-size-fits-all program and many details and components go into each. Students are not the only individuals met by Lowery's programs. [Professional developments](#) for teachers and administrators are also included to strengthen the integration of environmental education into the curriculum. Since 2014, *ARRTU* has taught 1,218 students, met with 111 teachers and administrators and depended on 21 partner organizations. She is excited to see the program grow and watch more students get inspired!