



# GEORGIA ADOPT-A-STREAM

Georgia's Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program

[AdoptASStream.Georgia.gov](https://AdoptASStream.Georgia.gov)



## JULY-SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Paddle Georgia 2023 on the Savannah River
  - Board Member Highlight: Jon Becker
  - Save the Date: Confluence 2024
  - Program Updates and Upcoming Workshops
  - Riffles Around Us
-

# PADDLE GEORGIA 2023 ON THE SAVANNAH RIVER



*Cecilia Nachtmann (AAS State Coordinator) leading a chemical workshop for Paddle Georgia 2023 participants.*

This June, Adopt-A-Stream staff and volunteers embarked on a week-long monitoring effort on the waters of the Savannah River as part of Paddle Georgia, a project of the Georgia River Network. However, due to extreme weather, Paddle Georgia didn't go as planned and AAS staff was only available to paddle for one day and sample 5 sites. The good news is that AAS staff was able to certify 29 volunteers from across the state and beyond in chemical monitoring, including a pair of volunteers all the way from Boston, MA! The really good news is that the Georgia River Network will be hosting more paddle trips throughout the year, and AAS staff is looking forward to joining as many paddle trips as possible in order to gather water quality data and educate more Georgia water enthusiasts!

Interested in learning more about Georgia River Network's Paddle Georgia? For over 15 years, Paddle Georgia has provided an opportunity for hundreds of community members to experience a seven day paddle and camping trip on a different Georgia river each summer. Paddle Georgia trips connect Georgians to their rivers so that they might be inspired to advocate for Georgia waterways. Participants enjoy

educational speakers, workshops, catered meals, and community during this week long adventure. [Check out their website here.](#)

---

## **BOARD MEMBER HIGHLIGHT**

### ***Jon Becker, EPA Region 4***



Jon grew up in the Dallas/Fort Worth area of Texas before attending the University of Texas at Austin, where he received a Bachelor of Journalism degree. He became increasingly interested in water and environmental issues and obtained a Masters of Applied Geography in Environmental and Resource Studies at Texas State. During graduate school, he performed volunteer water quality monitoring in Austin for the Lower Colorado River Authority. In 2001 he took a position with the US Environmental Protection Agency's Region 4 office in Atlanta. Since then, he has worked mostly in the Water Division, focusing primarily on geographic information systems and data analysis for the Region's water programs.

As a data analyst, Jon sees tremendous value in citizen science and utilizing technology to enhance environmental understanding. Local and state government staff can only monitor a small fraction of the state's waterbodies, and Adopt-A-Stream data can help fill in the gaps and identify water quality issues. Jon is also interested in how technology can engage volunteer monitors, make their data more accessible, and make connections between water quality and possible pollution sources. He has given a couple of presentations at the AAS Confluence conference to volunteers about websites/apps they can use to better understand watersheds and waterbodies.

Another citizen science project Jon is active in is iNaturalist, an app and website where people can report sightings and locations of any species. There are more than 300,000 active iNaturalist users who've made over 200 million observations, providing a vast network of "eyes and ears" for the biological world. (Jon's iNaturalist ID is jonwbecker).

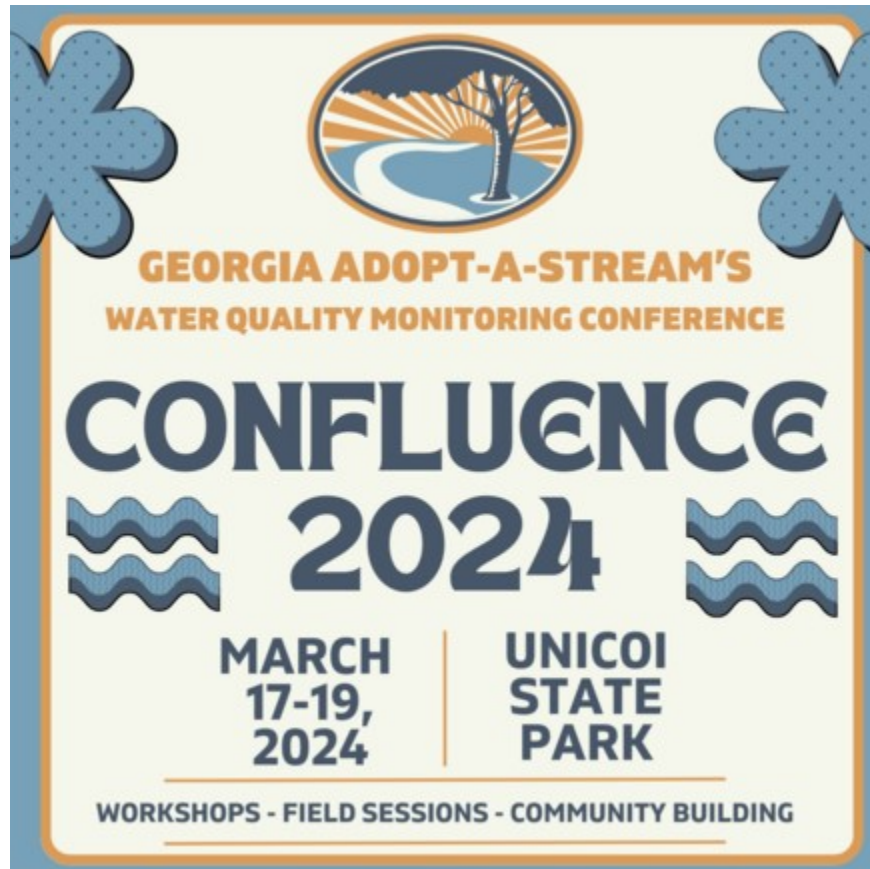
Jon also enjoys paddling on Georgia's waterways and has participated in a couple Paddle Georgia events and several Rivers Alive clean-ups. The Okefenokee Swamp is Jon's favorite place in Georgia and somewhere he tries to visit at least once a year. As a non-native Georgian, he is always amazed how many Georgians haven't visited the Okefenokee, since it's such a beautiful and peaceful natural treasure. Jon lives in DeKalb County just north of Decatur with his wife and two sons. In his free time, he enjoys playing tennis and painting, focusing mostly on natural subjects.



*"Restored" by Jon Becker*

*Watercolor painting depicting a healthy stream after a dam removal.*

## SAVE THE DATE!



AAS is excited to announce that Confluence will be returning to **Unicoi State Park and Lodge March 22nd-24th!** We've got another great conference in store for AAS trainers, volunteers, partners, and friends! Registration will open early next year, but go ahead and secure your Confluence 2024 lodging by calling Unicoi State Park and Lodge at 1-800-573-9659 and using room code **10058** to book. Additional information can be found on our [Location and Lodging](#) webpage.



# UPCOMING WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES



Get certified or recertified in an AAS monitoring program! You can find workshop opportunities near you on the [workshop calendar](#) on the AAS website or contact your [local coordinator](#) or [AAS@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:AAS@dnr.ga.gov) to set up a workshop in your area.

---

## WELCOME NEW ADOPT-A-STREAM GROUPS!

These groups monitored for the first time in July-September 2023!  
**Welcome to the AAS team!**

- [Joseph](#)
- [Poopeh Police](#)
- [Sewell@McGarity](#)
- [Haven Hardy](#)
- [The Wright Family](#)
- [Hydronauts](#)

- [M&M](#)

- [Phoebe Rowe's Stream](#)



### [Sci4GA Sci.toberfest](#)

A night of nerd networking at [Emory's Hatchery Innovation Space](#) on Sept. 28th from 6:00pm-8:30pm. [Get your tickets here!](#)

### [Georgia River Network Paddling Trips](#)

[Click here](#) to check out various dates and locations throughout 2023!

---

If you'd like to become an AAS trainer, please contact the [State Office](#) for workshop information.

Visit our [online calendar](#) for monitoring workshops and AAS events!

