

GEORGIA Adopt-A-Stream

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Adopt-A-Stream Staff, Editors



Paddle Georgia 2019: Withlacoochee & Suwannee Rivers



Water Quality Monitoring Results

This June, Adopt-A-Stream staff and volunteers embarked on a week-long monitoring effort on the waters of the Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers as part of Paddle Georgia, a project of Georgia River Network. For 15 years, Paddle Georgia has provided an opportunity for hundreds of community members to experience a seven day paddle trip on a different Georgia river each summer. This year's Paddle Georgia trip was held June 15-21 over 92 miles of the Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers. Blackwater, limestone shoals and springs highlighted the route. This marked the first time that the project brought paddlers across state boundaries!

Adopt-A-Stream staff and volunteers were invited to participate and lead outreach activities and water quality monitoring during the paddle. Outreach by the monitoring teams included hosting a chemical monitoring workshop, providing demonstrations and answering questions while out in the field, and announcing sampling results to all participants each evening. Samples were tested for AAS core chemical parameters (water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and conductivity) as well as turbidity and *E. coli* bacterial levels. A total of 69 sites were sampled (25 mainstem, 22 springs, 11 tributary sites and 11 additional sites of interest). A summary of the trip's sampling results are included in the chart on the following page.



We would like to congratulate the 12 paddlers who participated in the chemical monitoring volunteer workshop! These newly certified monitors practiced using water chemistry sampling techniques and learned how to get involved in AAS in their own communities. Lastly, we'd like to thank Paddle Georgia, the AAS trainers, volunteers and the monitoring team for another great trip!

Paddle Georgia 2019 Withlacoochee & Suwannee Rivers continued...

Complete results are available from the AAS State Office.

For more information on understanding monitoring results, please reference the State of Georgia's surface water quality standards for recommended levels for specific parameters.

These are available online from EPD: epd.georgia.gov/georgia-water-quality-standards.

Paddle Georgia 2019: Withlacoochee & Suwannee Rivers (Min-Max)			
Parameter	Mainstem	Tributary	Spring
Air Temp. (°C)	23.60-33.30	23.80-32.40	22.70-31.90
Water Temp. (°C)	21.50-27.70	23.40-28.10	20.60-28.30
pH	6.50-7.50	5.0-7.25	6.50-8.00
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)	3.90-7.51	4.31-8.26	0.04-6.56
Conductivity (µS/cm)	33.10-505.90	32.51-148.50	234.60-965.60
<i>E. coli</i> (cfu/100mL)	0.00-100.00	0.00-5,530.00	0.00-66.0
Nitrates (ppm)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Turbidity (NTU)	0.08-11.70	2.28-151.00	0.28-8.15
Total Sites Sampled	25	11	22



WWALS Watershed Coalition Inc./ Suwannee Riverkeeper wwals.net

WWALS Watershed Coalition Inc. (WWALS) is an IRS 501(c)(3) educational non-profit charity located in south Georgia and north Florida. Started in 2012 in response to major flooding in the region, WWALS was founded by John. S. Quarterman and other locals to assist organizations, local government and the community in addressing water-related issues. In the beginning, WWALS covered the Alapaha River and Withlacoochee River watersheds and all their tributaries. In 2015, the Upper Suwannee River was added with the remaining Lower Suwannee in 2016. Today, WWALS serves the entire Withlacoochee and Alapaha watersheds and all of the Suwannee River from the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia through Florida to the Gulf of Mexico. In 2016, The Waterkeeper Alliance (WKA) approved WWALS Watershed Coalition as a WKA Member with Quarterman as the newly appointed Suwannee Riverkeeper. "Suwannee Riverkeeper®'s aim is to provide strong advocacy that will result in an improved quality of life for all citizens, whether they rely on it for drinking water or recreation or whether they simply value the Suwannee River Basin's continued well-being," says Quarterman.

WWALS' mission to advocate for the conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida is achieved through education, awareness, environmental monitoring and citizen activities. WWALS encourages community involvement within their watershed and provides paddle trips, waterway cleanups, educational outreach and water quality testing certifications to youth, students and adults. With the help of Adopt-A-Stream local coordinators and staff, WWALS organizes regular monitoring workshops for interested volunteers. This past May, AAS staff traveled to the Flint RiverQuarium in Albany, GA to certify volunteers in macroinvertebrate monitoring. "We have three new trainers in our watersheds: WWALS Executive Director Gretchen Quarterman, South Georgia Regional Commission's Environmental Projects Manager Erica McLelland and Gaskins Forest Education Center's Heather Brasell," says Quarterman. Volunteers certified through WWALS have gone on to make impacts in their area through monitoring efforts.

WWALS joined Georgia River Network and represented their rivers on Paddle Georgia in June, 2019. Quarterman paddled alongside participants, towing the Suwannee Riverkeeper® banner (pictured on the right). On the third evening, he led the evening program with an overview of the history and geography of the Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers. Following his presentation, Quarterman unveiled the new Withlacoochee River Water Trail signs. With these new signs, the Withlacoochee is now a recognized water trail. The signs will help paddlers navigate the river and provide them with information on the water trail, safety and river etiquette.



Photo by Joe Cook

"Thanks to Georgia Adopt-A-Stream on Paddle Georgia, WWALS now has another trained tester: Allison Ray of Berrien County. She's a teacher, and we hope she can get some of her students involved [with AAS monitoring]. Thanks to Harold Harbert and others for testing during Paddle Georgia on our Little, Withlacoochee and Suwannee Rivers."

- John S. Quarterman

Community Partnership Highlight: Fulton County Department of Public Works

Volunteerism— what does that mean to us?

by Jennifer McLaurin, formerly of the Fulton County Department of Public Works



Volunteerism is defined as the principle of donating time and energy for the benefit of other people in the community as a social responsibility rather than for any financial reasons. It wasn't until the Great Awakening in the 19th century that formal charitable organizations started showing up, providing opportunities for citizens and corporations with volunteer opportunities. Groups like the YMCA, American Red Cross and the United Way began and paved the way for so many volunteer organizations. Why is it important to volunteer our time and expertise? A simple answer is this: the more we give, the happier we feel. Your role as a volunteer can give you a sense of pride and identity and a way to pass down expertise and knowledge.

How does volunteerism fit into the environment? One way you can volunteer your time and help your community is with the Fulton County Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) program. This program educates citizens about the importance of water quality, fosters relations with the community and helps the water utility keep a watchful eye on our streams, rivers and lakes. We offer workshops to become a certified AAS volunteer in Macroinvertebrate, Chemical, or Bacterial monitoring. All you have to do is decide what type of monitoring you would like to do. Once you are a certified volunteer the commitment is only a few hours a month.

Not able to commit to being a certified AAS volunteer but still want to help out? Come out and help with a creek cleanup during the Georgia Rivers Alive Annual Waterway Cleanup held every fall. You can also contact us and we will help you set up a cleanup anytime of the year! If you are interested in becoming a certified volunteer with the Fulton County Adopt-A-Stream program or you are looking to help clean up our waterways with a service project, contact Shelley Lange at shelley.lange@fultoncountygga.gov or call (404) 612-7768.



Call for Abstracts!

Adopt-A-Stream is looking for science poster submissions to display at Confluence 2020! Students (high school, undergrad, or graduate) and AAS volunteers are encouraged to participate.

Guidelines and Abstract Submission Forms can be found on the [Poster Session page](#) under the Confluence tab on the Georgia

Adopt-A-Stream website at AdoptAStream.Georgia.gov. Travel stipends are available for eligible participants. Abstracts and posters of previous presenters can be viewed on the [Water Science Poster Presenters & Winners page](#).



Abstract Submission Deadline: Monday, January 13th, 2020

Award Nominations!

We need your help to recognize Adopt-A-Stream award winners for 2019! Submit a nomination for an active volunteer, trainer or watershed group that sets outstanding examples of the five goals of our program.

See full award category descriptions and submit nominations on the [AAS Awards Submission page](#) at AdoptAStream.Georgia.gov.



Deadline for Nominations: Monday, January 13th, 2020

Community Partnership Highlight: South River Watershed Alliance

Partners in Revival of a Once Forgotten River

by Jacqueline Echols, PhD, President of South River Watershed Alliance

The South River is Atlanta's urban river. Its headwater streams piped and covered over by development many, many decades ago, now the river rises into daylight just north of Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in East Point along busy Norman Berry Drive. After being piped under Interstate 75/85S at the Airport/Macon split, it flows through diverse, modest and low income neighborhoods on Atlanta's eastside. From here the river courses south through DeKalb, Rockdale, Henry, Newton and Butts counties, ending in Jackson Lake Reservoir sixty miles southeast. Below the reservoir's dam, South River waters become part of the Ocmulgee and Altamaha Rivers, the largest river system in the state of Georgia, before finally reaching the Atlantic Ocean near Darien, fifty miles below Savannah.

The South River has struggled with pollution and lack of visibility for decades, and even though the struggle continues, the future for the river is much brighter thanks to the work of South River Watershed Alliance (SRWA) and a host of partners. Building community awareness and support are essential to the river's restoration. Today, communities all along the South River are poised to reclaim their most valuable natural resource. Public access and recreational use are creating competing demands for the river that have increased its human and environmental value. This resurgence is evidenced by more and more people using and talking up the river, as well as support from an array of foundations and nonprofit and for profit organizations. Even local governments and state agencies are embracing the possibilities and have become partners in the river's revival.

Over the past decade, SRWA has focused on implementing programs and activities that increase mindfulness and connect people to the river all year long. Our annual tire and debris roundup in partnership with Rivers Alive draws attention to preventable pollution caused by carelessly discarded tires and trash that is washed into the river by stormwater. To help deal with this type of pollution, DeKalb County has joined with SRWA to invest in a much needed trash trap for the river. Several Atlanta foundations are also interested in joining this effort. Impacts of river bank erosion and scouring from uncontrolled stormwater runoff and habitat encroachment from invasive vegetation like Chinese Privet and Japanese Hops are emphasized through our Rivercane Restoration project in partnership with Panola Mountain State Park. Since 2012, recreational use of the river has been actively promoted through Beyond the Bridge, SRWA's canoe and kayak paddle program. Funding from Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance and Patagonia Atlanta make it possible to offer these outings at a reasonable cost, attracting a diverse group of hundreds of paddlers, many from communities surrounding the river who had never paddled before. Finally, work to create the South River Water Trail, which will provide safe and legal access to the river, is ongoing with the City of Stonecrest and Rockdale County. These are just some of the partnerships that are making restoration of the South River a real possibility.



Provided by Jacqueline Echols

Fresh water is our most precious resource. The rivers we have now are all the rivers we will ever have. Urban areas like Atlanta are where most people live, where waterways like the South River are the most threatened, and where opportunities for partnerships can help revive and protect the river are most plentiful. The many partnerships in support of reviving this once forgotten waterway show how we can effectively unite behind the restoration and protection of our natural resources.

Rivers Alive Cleanups and T-Shirts!



Thanks to the efforts of our organizers and volunteers, Rivers Alive is having another successful year! So far in 2019, 50 cleanups have engaged 1,170 volunteers to remove over 90,000 pounds of debris from 105 miles of Georgia's waterways, and there are still many more cleanups scheduled throughout the remainder of the fall! In addition to removing trash, these cleanups help educate citizens across the state about water quality issues.

If you hold a cleanup this fall, please submit your final tally as soon as possible so we can report accurate numbers on our website.

Please return extra shirts and materials to the Rivers Alive state office so we can share them with other volunteers! Visit RiversAlive.Georgia.gov or call (404) 651-8517 for more information.

Board Member Highlight: *Jessica Warren, UGA Cooperative Extension*

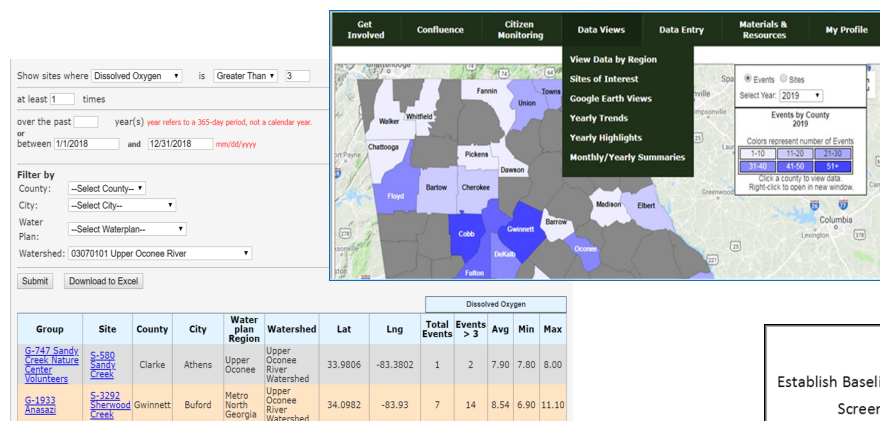


Jessica grew up in the Piedmont of north Georgia and spent her youth exploring the woods and creeks of her parents' property with a dog at her side. A love of all things natural and wild was instilled at a young age. Jessica pursued a Bachelors of Forest Resources with a concentration in Wildlife at the University of Georgia, and later a Master of Natural Resources focusing on Conservation Education also at the University of Georgia.

Jessica's involvement with Adopt-A-Stream began in 2008 when she took a position as a program assistant in the state office between her undergraduate and graduate work. While pursuing her graduate degree she served as a graduate assistant for Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities creating and implementing a K-12 water conservation education program and curriculum. Jessica's work history also includes teaching Environmental Science and Natural Resources in the Georgia Governor's Honors Program and working for the University of Tennessee's Tree Improvement Program as a Research Associate funded by a National Science Foundation grant.

Jessica currently serves as the University of Georgia Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent and County Extension Coordinator for Camden County on the Georgia Coast. In her five plus years with UGA she has focused much of her programming on coastal water quality as well as invasive species management (terrestrial and aquatic). She offers a Georgia Master Naturalist class each year which helps local citizens to better understand and become stewards of their unique coastal environment. She currently serves as a local trainer and coordinator for Georgia Adopt-A-Stream and hosts one to two Rivers Alive cleanups each year. Jessica lives on seven wooded acres outside of Woodbine with her husband Josh and their two dogs, Oliver and Zoe. When she's not working you can find her in the woods, on the beach or otherwise travelling and adventuring with her husband.

How Are Adopt-A-Stream Data Used?

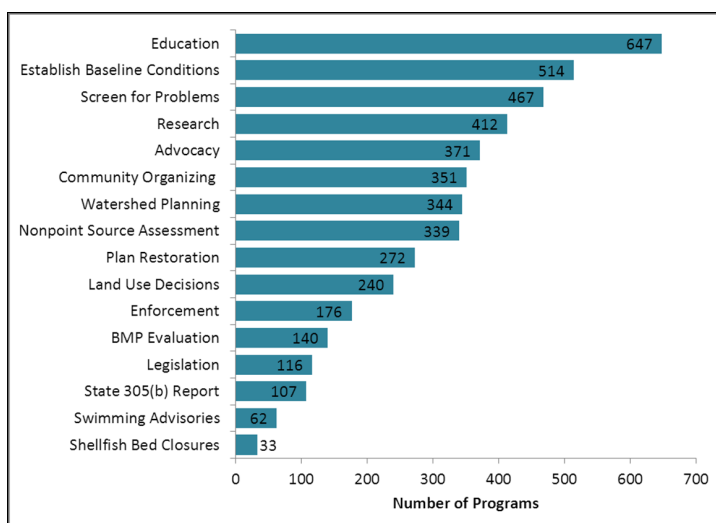


When you monitor a site with Adopt-A-Stream, you enter and share your data in the statewide database! Did you know that AAS data can be publicly viewed and downloaded from queries by city, county and watershed? Visit the [Data Views tab](#) for Yearly Trends, Yearly Highlights, Monthly/ Yearly Summaries, Sites of Interest and more!

Volunteer data can be used in a variety of ways, including:

- Trend analysis of water quality data for changes over time
- Public education, student research, academia
- Identify sewage spills, leaking pipes, septic leaks
- Agriculture and forestry Best Management Practices & Erosion and Sedimentation issues
- Permit violations
- Develop watershed-based plans
- Support statewide monitoring plans

To see how AAS volunteers and students are using their data, visit the [AAS Science and News page](#) at AdoptAStream.Georgia.gov.



Source: National Directory of Volunteer Environmental Monitoring Programs, 5th Edition

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GO BLUE!

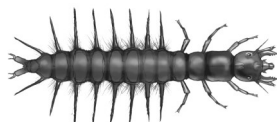
Sign up for our e-newsletter
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AAS@dnr.ga.gov



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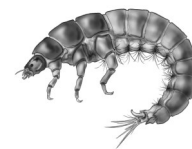
Riffle Beetle



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Save the Date

Confluence 2020: March 27 – 29

Adopt-A-Stream Annual Conference

Friday evening: Water Science Poster Session and Social

*Saturday: Water Quality Workshops, Exhibits and Awards
Ceremony*

Sunday: Water Quality Workshops & Special Activities

Unicoi State Park & Lodge in Helen, GA

For more information, visit the [Confluence page at](http://AdoptAStream.Georgia.gov)

AdoptAStream.Georgia.gov

~~ Registration will open February 2020 ~~



Stay Connected!

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram to stay up-to-date on the latest Adopt-A-Stream news! Use #gaadoptastream or tag us when you post photos of yourself monitoring. We love to see all the good work you do!



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