

# WINTER 2026



Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Newsletter

## AAS Board Annual Work Session

This January Adopt-A-Stream Board members met at the Suwanee River Eco Lodge near the Okefenokee Swamp to plan and outline goals for 2026. Several new committees were formed to work on some exciting new projects. Board members also selected the 2026 AAS Award Winners based on the nominations you all submitted, so thank you for those! This was also the first board meeting for three new members, please help us welcome them!



## This issue:

**Board Updates**

PAGE 01

**Confluence 2026**

PAGE 02

**Volunteer Spotlight**

PAGE 03

**Staff Updates**

PAGE 04

**Event Calendar**

PAGE 05

## New Board Members

### Chris Kodani

Professor of Biology at Clayton State University, Chris has been involved in AAS since 2003, and been a trainer since 2006. Chris has done several research projects with AAS data, and his passion for AAS is a very welcome addition to the board.

### Alexa Robinson

City of Griffin Watershed Protection Specialist, Alexa Robinson has also been involved in AAS since 2003 and been a trainer since 2006. Alexa works very hard educating the public on water quality issues and we're very happy to have her.

### Garret Dufty

Garret is the Environmental Outreach Coordinator at Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful. Garret is our newcomer, first starting with AAS in 2020 and getting his trainer certification in 2024, but his fresh ideas and willingness to dive right into the deep end has been very appreciated.





# Confluence 2026

## EXCITING EVENTS AT CONFLUENCE '26

- Presentations
- Recertifications
- Student Posters
- Awards Luncheon
- Speakers
- Adopt-A-Stream Junior
- Fieldtrips

## Celebrating another year of amazing watershed work!

We're taking confluence to the coast! This year's Confluence will be held March 13-15 at Villas by the Sea Resort and Conference Center on Jekyll Island. Come celebrate all of your hard work and enjoy networking, concurrent sessions, and fieldtrips including those focused on coastal watersheds. Lodging is available at Villas by the Sea as well as nearby hotels. Kids are welcome and Adopt-A-Stream Junior events will include a visit to Camp Jekyll and Tidelands Nature Center! Early bird registration is \$35 (\$25 for AAS Junior) and ends on Feb 14. Regular registration (\$50) closes March 6. We hope to see you there!



# Confluence Registration is Open!

Head over to the Adopt-A-Stream website to register for Confluence now!

[adoptastream.georgia.gov](http://adoptastream.georgia.gov)





# Volunteer Spotlight



Pictured above: Erin Yi (9<sup>th</sup> grade) and Jayden Lee (8<sup>th</sup> grade)

If you would like to highlight a volunteer or experience, send info and photos to our Program Assistant at [madeleine.brown@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:madeleine.brown@dnr.ga.gov) for a chance to be featured in the next AAS Newsletter!

## Meet Erin and Jayden

Two dedicated young Adopt-A-Stream volunteers are already making a difference in protecting Gwinnett County's streams. The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders have participated in water sampling, stream cleanups, and workshops! They even created their own team name, "BTS," which stands for Bacteria Testing System.

The pair reported that "The sampling process and chemical reactions are fascinating to watch, and they make science feel real and exciting."

Erin and Jayden plan to continue sampling and remain actively involved in protecting their local ecosystems. These are two young scientists you'll definitely want to keep your eye on!





# STAFF UPDATES

We are excited to share that our Adopt-A-Stream staff is growing!

Monica Kilpatrick recently stepped into the role of Outreach Unit Manager for the Watershed Protection Branch. With more than 25 years of experience in environmental education, she has led statewide programs like Project WET and River of Words, supported educators across Georgia, and built strong partnerships that promote environmental

literacy. She's excited to bring her passion for outreach and collaboration to this new role and looks forward to working closely with the Adopt-A-Stream community as we continue strengthening watershed education and engagement across the state.

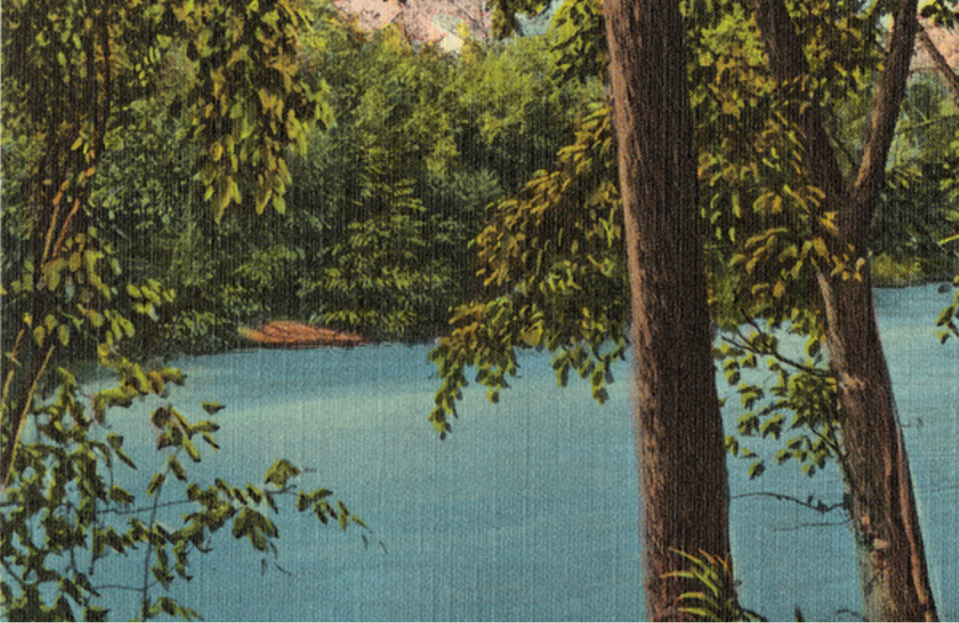


Welcome Camila Rountree, our new State Coordinator! Camila earned her Environmental Science degree from Georgia State University, where she spent years immersed in the study of Atlanta's urban waterways and regional watersheds. When she wasn't wading through local streams, she was on stage with the university orchestra. Her connection to the cello remains a central part of her life; she currently balances her scientific background with a love for teaching music and a lifelong dedication to environmental advocacy.



Welcome Maddie Brown, our new Outreach Program Assistant! Maddie is an Atlanta native who studied Aquatic Biology in California before returning home to focus on more local waterways. She enjoys paddling and teaching children about macroinvertebrates in her other role at the Chattahoochee Nature Center.





# Okefenokee Bonus Photos

## CALENDER OF EVENTS

### February

- 21<sup>st</sup>: Forsyth County Chemical and Bacterial Workshop
- 24<sup>th</sup>: Gwinnett County Chemical Workshop
- 26<sup>th</sup>: Cobb County QA/QC Chemical Workshop

### March

- 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>: Confluence 2026 at Jekyll Island
- 21st: Jackson and Gwinnett County Partnership Chemical and Bacterial Workshop

### April

- 7<sup>th</sup> - Gwinnett County Bacterial Workshop

Check our homepage for more information!  
[adoptastream.georgia.gov](http://adoptastream.georgia.gov)

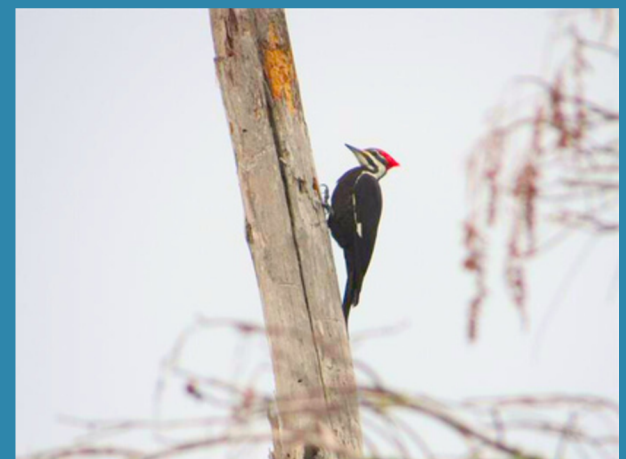


Photo credit: Garret Duffy

## ATTENTION AAS TRAINERS!!!

Help us fill our calendar!

If you are planning a public training, please let us know at least a week in advance

Send an email to [AAS@gaepd.org](mailto:AAS@gaepd.org) with:

- Workshop title
- Date and time
- Location
- Description of the workshop
- Instructions on how to register

Your workshop will then be posted on the AAS homepage calendar for more people to see!



Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is a Georgia Environmental Protection Division program that is funded, in part, by the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

