



The mission of South River Watershed Alliance is to protect and restore the water quality and biodiversity of the South River watershed to the beneficial use of people and wildlife.

April 2015

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Wane nor Waiver: Turning Regulatory Failure into Community Success



South River

The perspectives of the crowd that gathered to witness the David and Goliath match up likely fell into two camps - the pessimists who rushed to the conclusion that it's a done deal, and the optimists who reserved judgement thinking it's not over til it's over.

As we wait for the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to respond to comments submitted by the public regarding Atlanta's 2015 draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit the question that looms

large is - how can the state's environmental regulator and the public be so far apart on the crucial issue of whether the proposed permit is weaker than the existing permit.

A weaker permit would amount to 'backsliding' which is expressly prohibited under the U.S. Clean Water Act. For proof, one needs to look no further than the absence of performance standards in the 2015 draft permit that are present in the 2005 permit. Performance standards are objective measures of achievement.

Work towards the master degree in public administration and Ph.D. in political science many years ago was my introduction to the intimate relationship between regulatory agencies and regulated industries. This connection was intriguing and more than a little troubling. Obvious conflicts of interest and the absence of clear lines of responsibility and accountability are precursors to environmental policy failure. Consider the following descriptive excerpts from an article by William Sanjour, "*Designed to Fail: Why Regulatory Agencies Don't Work*" in the context of regulatory agencies such as the GA EPD and regulated entities such as the City of Atlanta.

- 1) Regulatory agencies are created by Congress in order to control some power forces in society - usually corporations. This action is duplicated by state legislatures.
- 2) Legislative, executive, and judiciary authority is vested in a single regulatory agency.
- 3) The interest of the public will wane and waiver while the interest of special interests remain constant.

4) Unlike the public, the regulated community has direct access to and interacts with agency employees at every level.

5) Regulatory agency employees are not paid to implement the intent of policy. They are paid to do what they are told.

This intimate relationship has been documented in many academic studies and earned economist George Stigler a 'Nobel' prize. There is the expectation that public interest in the outcome of the NPDES process will wane and waiver. On this point, there is an abundance of inspiration from those who have fought the good fight. Consider the advice of noted anthropologist Margaret Mead who said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

Whether your inspiration comes from the story of David and Goliath or the insights of Mead, remember what is at stake and that your unwavering support is essential to the future of our rivers and streams, communities, and public health.

William Sanjour, "Designed to Fail: Why Regulatory Agencies Don't Work", Independent Science News, May 1, 2012. Sanjour is a retired 30 year employee of the U.S. EPA whose primary responsibility was writing regulations.

Clean Streams Task Force holds Cut the Crap Rally

More than 15 years ago, environmental, community, and neighborhood groups came together under the banner of the Clean Streams Task Force. Their efforts led to sewer separation of two basins - McDaniel-Glenn and Greensferry - located on the southeast and southwest sides of the City of Atlanta, respectively. Sewer separation means no more combined sewer overflows to foul rivers and creeks with human poop.

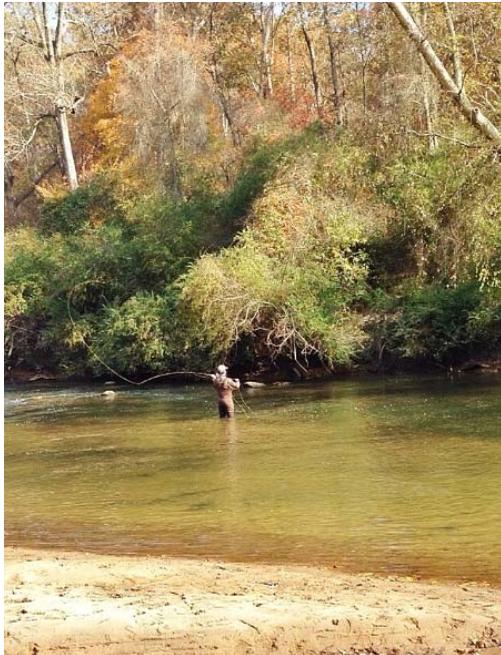
On Saturday, March 28, 2015, at 12 Noon the Clean Streams Task Force, in honor of World Water Day 2015, will hold a Cut the Crap rally at the Custer Avenue Combined Sewer Overflow Facility, 780 Custer Avenue SE, Atlanta, GA. The Custer Avenue facility is the only remaining source of combined sewer pollution affecting South River. World Water Day was officially recognized on Sunday, March 22.

Join the Clean Streams Task Force on this coming Saturday and make your voice heard. Without public outcry against pollution that poses both public health and environmental risks, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division is poised to approve the City of Atlanta's request to increase pollution dumped into Intrenchment Creek and South River.

For directions or questions please call 678-974-7927.

Give to the South River Rainy Day Fund

For



Fly-fishing in South River - Rockdale County
(photo by Cathy Moll)

the South River, rainy days are particularly awful. When it rains human poop pours into South River from the Custer Avenue combined sewer overflow facility. This situation will get even worse when the GA EPD removes BOD and TSS performance standards from Atlanta's 2015 NPDES permit.

Don't bet public health and the river's future on GA EPD doing the right thing. Without your generosity a decade of progress will be lost.

Please donate \$25, \$50, \$100 or more or whatever you can afford today via Paypal at www.southernriverga.org or mail your check to: SRWA, PO Box 1341, Decatur, GA 30031.

The South River is there for us, lets be there for the South River.

Upcoming Events

Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn at Panola Mountain State Park, Saturday, March 28, 9:00 - 1:00 p.m. Volunteer to help restore rivercane habitat by removing invasive privet and learn why rivercane is critical to the recovery of the South River. To sign up email southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com or call 404-285-3756.

South River Paddle, Panola Shoals to Klondike Road, May 2, 9:00 - 3:00 p.m. Cost: \$40/per person, includes insurance and lunch. Seats are limited. Call 404-285-3756 to RSVP.

2015 Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn, March 28; April 11 and 25; May 9. To sign up email southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com or call 404-285-3756.

Davidson-Arabia Nature Center

Arabia Mountain Backstage Tour, April 5, 8:00 - 10:30 a.m. Explore the quiet places and hidden gems that make Arabia Mountain an ecological treasure. Along the way Ranger Robby will share his knowledge of the plants and wildlife that call the Preserve home. This hike is often adjusted to fit the needs and interests of the hikers and the changing seasons. Please wear closed toe shoes and bring plenty of water.

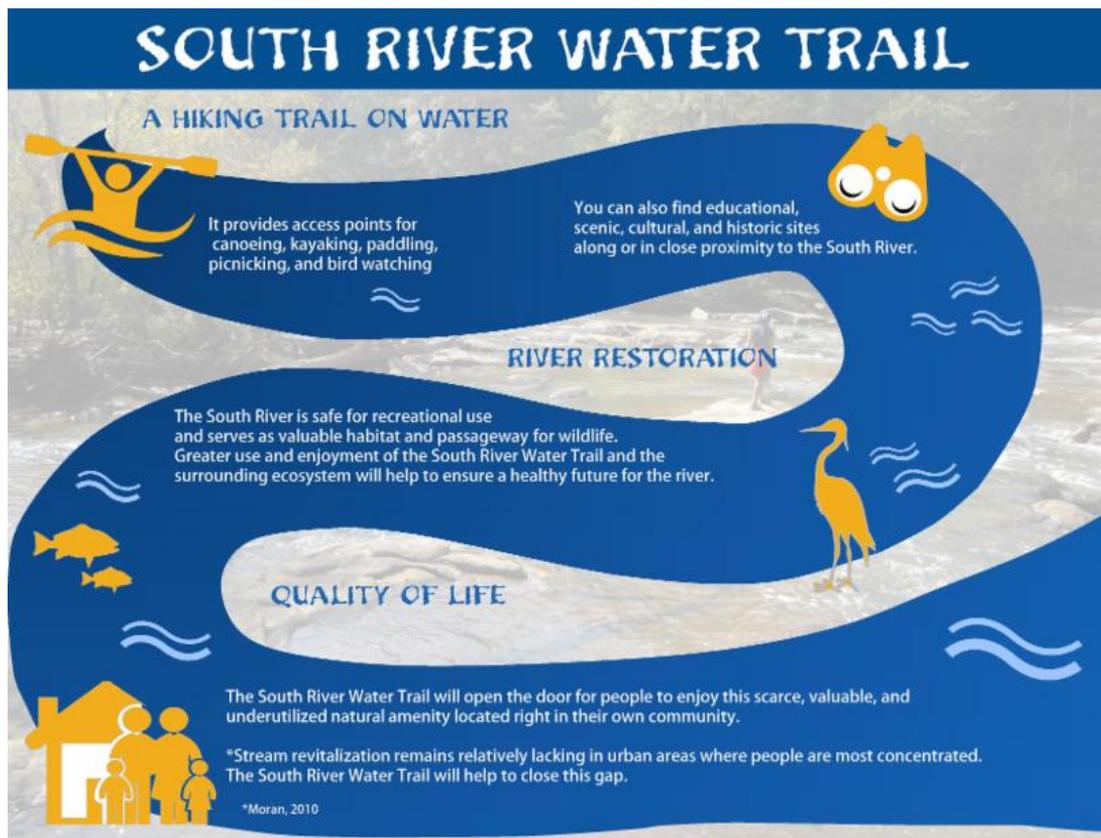
Arabia Mountain Walk: Geology and Natural Communities, April 18, 11:30 - 1:30 p.m. Bill Witherspoon and Leslie Edwards, first author of Natural Communities

of Georgia, will lead a walk at Arabia Mountain at the height of spring blooming season. You must pre-register with Atlanta Audubon for this free event as attendance will be limited to protect the fragile environment.

Roaming with Ranger Robby, April 24, 8:00 - 10:30 a.m. Never the same hike twice! See where the spring breezes take you and discover new favorite areas throughout the Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve. These guided hikes are moderately difficult and we often stop to take in our surroundings. Take time for yourself and get away from it all in this peaceful natural setting. Please wear closed toe shoes and bring plenty of water.

[Find out more](#)

Sixty Miles of South River Water Trail



South River Water Trail Fact Sheet

The South River and South River Water Trail (SRWT) are on the map! For the past year, SRWA has been working to complete a map of the river which will serve as the anchor for development of the SRWT. Jurisdictions all along the river have contributed to the project and serve as real-life examples of how different people and interests can work together for a common goal.

In addition to the map, over the past three months the SRWT work group - comprised of representatives from all county jurisdictions along the river and

community volunteers - have identified existing and proposed river access points from Moreland Avenue, at the Atlanta/DeKalb County boundary to Jackson Lake in southeast Georgia, a distance of 60.1 river miles. Places to put in and take out of the river are an essential part of a water trail.

A draft mission and vision statement as well as a logo are in the works, which will give the SRWT its own identity and serve as symbols of the collective efforts and commitment of neighbors that share the South River. Last but not least, the work group has developed a Fact Sheet which outlines at a glance the benefits of the water trail. All of this information will become part of a media and marketing packet which will be used to publicize the river, the water trail, and the enormous economic development potential that this amenity will bring to the region.

2015 South River Paddles

Whether you are a novice or have years of experience you won't be disappointed with your South River paddle. All that is required is a sense of adventure and a desire to have fun.

For the first time the Jackson Lake Homeowner Association will host Paddle the River, an excursion up the Alcovy River. Jackson Lake is where the South, Alcovy, and Yellow Rivers merge to form the Ocmulgee River.

Georgia River Network (GRN) and SRWA will once again paddle the South River as part of GRN's Hidden Gems Paddling Series on August 22.

Canoeing is great family fun! Reserve your seat today before all spaces are taken. Seats are very limited.



South River

Paddle Dates and Locations

May 2 - Panola Shoals to Klondike Road (DeKalb County)

June 13 - Lorraine Trailhead to Oglesby Bridge Road (Rockdale County)

July 11- Paddle the River with Jackson Lake Homeowners Association. We will paddle up the Alcovy River. (Newton & Jasper Counties)

July 25 - Panola Shoals to Klondike Road

August 22 - Lorraine Trailhead to Oglesby Bridge Road, Georgia River Network's Hidden Gems Paddle



Panola Shoals - DeKalb County