



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.

December 2014

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South River in Fall - Rockdale County
(Photo courtesy of Tonya Bechtler 2014)

Unleashing the Power of Rivercane

Absolutely gratifying is the feeling you get with each hedge of privet that is cut and added to the pile. Overtime the empty areas where privet once stood will be filled by native rivercane now that it no longer has to compete for space to grow. Invasive privet has overtaken the habitat of rivercane along the South River at Panola Mountain State Park pushing this valuable ally in the restoration of the South River to the brink. Volunteer for one or several of SRWA's privet removal workdays and give native rivercane a fighting chance.

Privet removal workdays in December are the 6th and 13th. See the Upcoming Events section below for details.



Dawning loppers, hand saws, and a tool specifically used to pull it up at the root volunteers remove privet from rivercane habitat.



Unleashed stems of rivercane emerge from the dismembered tangle of a large privet hedge.



Pile of cut privet. The only solution to the privet problem is to cut and destroy.

Arabia Mountain High School Environmental Science teacher Agenette Planter (left) and student volunteers.

South River Water Trail Work Begins January 2015

The new year will bring yet another exciting opportunity to strengthen efforts to restore the South River. In January 2015, SRWA will begin work to establish the South River Water Trail.

A water trail is like a land trail except instead of dirt the trail is water. For those who have had the good fortune to canoe or kayak the South River, the promise that it holds is unmistakable. But the South River Water Trail will not only focus on canoeing and kayaking, it will showcase the river's potential in many other ways including fishing, birding, exploring, hiking, camping, local history and culture, and yes, economic development.

Over the next year a group of upstream and downstream stakeholders will volunteer their time to make the South River Water Trail a reality. Technical assistance will be provided by Georgia River Network and National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. Look for reports on our progress in future e-newsletters.



On a beautiful chilly day in November of this year, Heritage High School senior George Moll Jr. fly-fish on the South River north of Hwy 138 in Rockdale County. (Photo courtesy of Cathy Moll 2014)

Upcoming Events

Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn at Panola Mountain State Park, Saturday, December 6 and 13, 9:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Volunteer and help restore rivercane habitat by removing invasive Chinese privet and learn why rivercane is critical to the recovery of the South River. To sign up [click here](#) or email southriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com.

Signup for 2015 Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn dates.
[Click here.](#)

Upcoming Event at Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve

Sunset/Full Moon Night Hike, December 6, 5:00 - 7:30 p.m., Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center.

Join Ranger Robby for an enchanting sunset on Arabia Mountain. As dusk approaches we'll hike back to the Nature Center under the canopy of trees and moonlight. FREE. [More info.](#)

For more information and additional events visit www.arabiaalliance.org.

A SRWA Holiday Tradition

Lessons of the Rushing River

There's a reason why the sound of a river or a creek calms your soul. Even the sight of it calms you. It is because the river has come to teach us all one of the most powerful lessons on earth: No one's words or thoughts can derail us from our goals. No demon above nor below can stop you from attaining the heights you seek.

The river is a great teacher.

Round up every high school bully, every negative person who sincerely wants the worst for others and have them congregate around the river. Then, have them look downward into its clear moving water. As they look down they can see their faces looking back up at them. They begin chanting at the river with every fiber of their mind and spirit."

"You're not good enough." "You'll never amount to anything; have you proven yourself before?" "You're wasting your time, you'll never make it." "You're an idiot for thinking you can." What other negative things might they be saying?

Yet, even while all of this profound negativity is being channeled toward the river, it continues to flow. The river moves no matter what the atmosphere. If it's raining, lightning or grey - it moves. The river channels all of its mind, body and spirit into the direction of its dreams.

When the river goes through a break up with its beloved - it doesn't stop moving. It flows. It's relentless. It's wise. Since the river is always flowing and moving - do you think it's never in a bad mood? Wrong again - of course it gets in bad moods. It just moves in spite of them. It moves. It moves. It moves.

The river also doesn't take pleasure and often feels pain when others project their negative viewpoint on it. When this occurs, however, the trademark sound of babbling, rushing water continues, unimpeded.

It's hard to believe, but the river worries sometimes too, just like you and me. Except you would never know by looking at it, as it never allows itself to become stagnant; it's a rushing river my friend! It opts to run on the wisdom of its inner being and not be handicapped by some toxic emotion that would have it flow differently.

Also - the river blames no one. It takes full responsibility for its shortcomings in the past. It realized long ago that meditating on what it believes made it fail to live up to its potential has only led to its turning into musty canal water where slimy, green algae grows.

One thing you can be certain of about the river is that it never dwells on the past. Ever. Do you hear the sound of the water rushing over the rocks? Tell me . . . when you hear the babbling water, when are you hearing it; in the past or the future? Neither. It's only possible to hear this precious sound in the now.

Since the river channels all of its mind, body and spirit into the present, it has no room to dwell on the past. The river understands by letting go of the past entirely, allows for its potential in the present to reach its absolute zenith. If the river was to dwell on the past, it would lack the energy to flow and create its beautiful music.

It should be mentioned that I was sitting by the river a few weeks ago and sparked a chat with it. I said, "Tell me, River, how do you do it?"

It responded:

"No matter what obstacle comes my way, be it mental, be it physical, I'm going to direct my flow in the direction I want it to go"

We all can take away great wisdom from the river. It personifies the truth that moving while challenged is at the core of what wisdom really is.

By Bamboo Forest

Happy Holidays