



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.

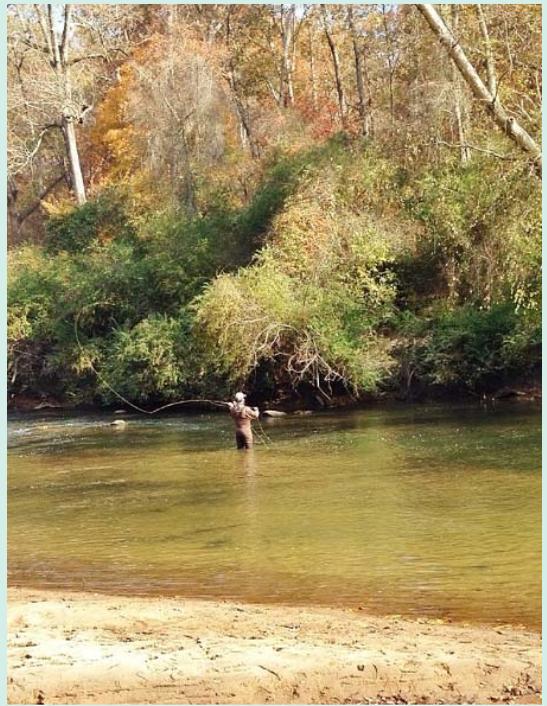
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In This Issue

Message for the New Year

A Glimpse Into the Year Ahead

2015 Spring/Summer Events



Fall fly-fishing on the South River (Photo courtesy of Cathy Moll, 2014)

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Message for the New Year:

The beginning of a new year is usually the occasion when we take time to reflect on yesterday's accomplishments and make preparations for tomorrow's promise.

Beginning in 2011, and with every year since, SRWA's work to raise awareness about the South River has paid off in a big way. Communities have rediscovered their river. A focus on revival is well under way.

Championed by an ever growing number of community members and partners who recognize the value and virtue of restoration and protection, a rare opportunity to not only repair past damage but minimize new injury to the river is at hand.

In 2015, we will continue our existing programs and projects that connect communities and the river through restoration and recreation experiences as well as hands-on environmental outreach opportunities that educate and build stewardship.



Additionally, in the coming year SRWA will work to increase the capacity and sustainability of the organization.

To this end, we have set our sights on three priorities - affiliate with a national water organization, establish an administrative office in the watershed, and develop plans for the South River Water Trail. Achieving these milestones will help to secure SRWA's future by strengthening our ability to better support restoration of the river and more effectively connect with the river's communities. Ambitious, yes, achievable, yes, and we will need your help more than ever before.

SRWA is four years into its *South River 2020* promise*. Making good on this commitment requires that we all lend a hand and actively support the programs and priorities that will make the South River great and 2015 our best year yet. It is my hope for the new year that SRWA and the South River can depend on you!

Jackie Echols
President

*In 2011, SRWA launched *South River 2020*, an eight and a half year promise to build community awareness and long-term support for the river.

A Glimpse Into the Year Ahead

Combined Sewer System Draft Permit Issued

After a 60-month delay the long-awaited pollution control draft permit for the City of Atlanta (City/Atlanta) combined sewer system was issued in early December 2014. The new draft permit was written by the City and reviewed by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (Georgia EPD).

Under the federal Clean Water Act, issuance of the draft permit triggers a 30-day period during which the public has the opportunity to comment on how Atlanta proposes to protect water quality in Intrenchment Creek and the South River from pollution from combined sewer overflows.

This comment period is the only time the public is allowed to participate in the development of the new 5-year permit. The urgency of this comment period is underscored by Atlanta's ongoing violation of its existing permit which was issued in January 2005 and officially expired in 2010. The Georgia EPD has administratively extended the existing permit to the present day - an additional five years.

This Clean Water Act permit, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is the official name, is the primary source of protection for surface waters like Intrenchment Creek and the South River.

SRWA is working with environmental attorneys, GreenLaw, to develop responses to Atlanta's proposal. The Georgia EPD will hold a public hearing on the proposed permit, Thursday, February 5, 7:30 p.m., EPD Tradeport Training Room, 4244 International Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30354.

South River Water Trail Planning Group

Stakeholders from DeKalb, Rockdale, and Newton Counties, Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, Panola Mountain State Park, Jackson Lake Homeowners Association, SRWA and community members will meet on Friday, January 9th to begin planning the South River Water Trail. The work of the planning group should take about a year. Meetings will be held the second Friday of each month from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. at the Decatur Recreation Center, 231 Sycamore Street in downtown Decatur.

South River Interactive Map

SRWA is creating a user-friendly interactive map of the South River. From headwaters to terminus, the map will identify the river's natural features and points of interest. When complete, interactive capability will enable visitors to the SRWA website to browse specific sites in more detail. Printed copies will also be available at locations throughout the watershed. Visit www.southernriverga.org for a map preview.

South River Rivercane Reintroduction Project

From January to early May volunteers will remove Chinese privet from the banks of the South River. This project pays big dividends - fresh air, exercise, teamwork, streambank and habitat restoration, conservation, erosion control, invasive species removal and native species revival - are just some of the benefits. Choose a date and volunteer.

The First Two Miles

Located in the headwaters of the South River is the "Tift Site" a Class I hazardous waste site. Class I sites are considered by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to be the most dangerous. The Tift Site was added to the states Hazardous Site Inventory 15 years ago. Even though people live close by, to date the contamination has not been remediated . The First Two Miles project will focus on raising the visibility of this problem particularly among residents who live within two miles of the site.

Spring/Summer Events

Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn at Panola Mountain State Park, Saturday, January 10, 9:00 - 1:00 p.m. Volunteer and help restore rivercane habitat by removing invasive privet and learn why rivercane is critical to the recovery of the South River. [Sign up](#) or email southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com.

2015 Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn dates. [Sign up](#).

Special Event: MLK Jr. Day of Service, Rivercane Reintroduction Project, Service and Learn at Panola Mountain State Park, Tuesday, January 19, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. [Sign up](#) or email southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com.

South River Youth Stewardship Summer Weekend - One weekend in **June, and July**. More information to come.

South River Canoe/Kayak Paddle - One weekend in **May, June, August and September**. More information to come.

Georgia River Network/SRWA South River Hidden Gems Paddle - **August 22, Lorraine Trailhead to Oglesby Bridge Road (Rockdale County)**.
