



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.

June 2015

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FOG still DeKalb's #1 problem at consent decree halfway point

In January 2011, four and a half years ago, DeKalb County entered into a federal consent decree with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) in the county by 2020. The main cause of the county's SSO problem in 2011 was fats, oils, and grease or FOG that clog sewer pipes causing them rupture, break, and overflow. Today, halfway through the eight and a half year consent decree, FOG is still the number one reason for SSOs. According to the county's 2014 annual report to EPA, FOG continues to account for 66 percent of overflows.

SSOs Entering Waters of the State

Years	2010	2009	2008	2007
Total Spills	170	136	151	173
Due to FOG	61%	57%	74%	63%
Years	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Spills	139*	141	127	136
Due to FOG	69%	66%	67%	66%

*Partial year, data through July 1, 2011

Source: Data 2007-2011, GA EPD

Source: Data 2012-2014, 2014 Annual Report

The DeKalb County consent decree contains a laundry list of assessments, studies, reports, and related actions that are presumably related to the elimination of SSOs by the 2020 deadline. The county states in the consent decree that "it will take another two to four years for the benefits of its FOG Management Program to be fully realized." Four years later the county is still a long way from Clean Water Act compliance. It is time that EPA and EPD revisit DeKalb's progress with a serious eye towards requiring the county to develop and implement a plan that will significantly meet the goal of eliminating SSOs. Such a plan must include an aggressive strategy for dealing with the FOG problem.

Community education answer to eliminating FOG

We are all familiar with the adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" but its relevance for complying with DeKalb County's consent decree is profound.



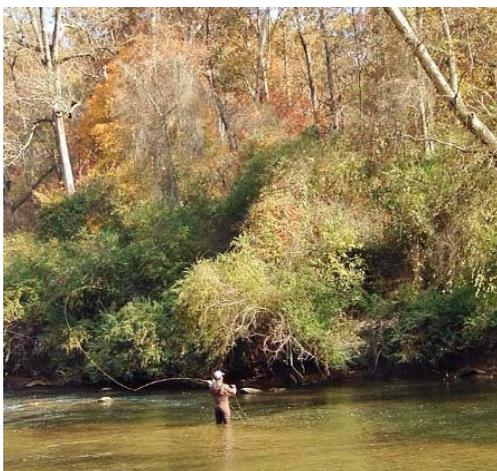
Sanitary sewer overflow (stock photo)

The county has reached the halfway point of a federal mandate to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs). With the 2020 deadline rapidly approaching, the county's data show that fats, oils, and grease or FOG continues to account for 66 percent of SSOs, confirming that FOG is still the number one problem the county must solve.

Prevention is the only permanent solution for dealing with FOG. As was the case in 2011 when the consent decree was signed, community education is still the answer to the county's FOG problem. It is also the only sustainable and most cost effective option available. Throughout the county, the main source of FOG entering the sewer system comes from businesses and citizens who incorrectly dispose of fats, oils, and grease, that clogs pipes, by pouring or washing these substances down drains.

Ongoing aggressive code enforcement and intensive community education that target problem areas such as multi-family housing are a critical part of the FOG solution. Changing behavior takes time and with half of the time available to meet the consent decree already gone, a plan that places source control and community education front and center is needed.

Give to the South River Rainy Day Fund



George Moll fly-fishing on South River in Rockdale County. (Photo: Cathy Moll)

This photo speaks volumes about how far the South River has come, but it is still in danger and need our help and financial support.

For 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 if the GA EPD removes BOD and TSS performance standards from Atlanta's 2015 clean water (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.

Upcoming Events

South River Paddle, Lorraine Park and Trailhead to Oglesby Bridge Road (Rockdale County), Saturday, June 13, 9:00 - 3:00 p.m. Cost: \$40/per person (includes lunch). Seats are limited. Questions, contact Jackie 404-285-3756. [Click here](#) to reserve seat. Kayakers are welcome; call for more information.

Paddle the Alcovy River with SRWA and the Jackson Lake Homeowners Association, Saturday, July 11, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Must provide and transport own kayak. There is no cost for this event. If interested, contact Jackie 404-285-3756.

South River Paddle, Panola Shoals to Klondike Road (DeKalb County), Saturday, July 25, 9:00 - 3:00 p.m. Cost: \$40/per person (includes lunch). Seats are limited. Questions, contact Jackie 404-285-3756. Kayakers are welcome; call for more information. [Click here](#) to reserve here.

South River Hidden Gems Paddle, Lorraine Park & Trailhead to Oglesby Bridge Road (Rockdale County), Saturday, August 22, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. This is a SRWA and Georgia River Network partnership event. See article below for more details. Register at <http://south-river.eventbrite.com>.

For information about beginner paddler scholarships call Jackie, 404-285-3756.

Davidson-Arabia Nature Center

Roaming with Ranger Robby, June 12, 8:00 a.m - 10:30 a.m. Davidson-Arabia Nature Center. 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. Free

6th Annual Monastery "Cross Country" 5K-Run/Walk, June 13, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Monastery of the Holy Spirit. Bring the whole family and join the run or fun-walk on an amazing 3.1 mile trail route through the serene monastery landscape. Visit one of Georgia's most beautiful and treasured greenspace that is part of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. Fee.

[Find out more](#)

Three chances for unforgettable South River summer

Rivers and summertime go hand-in-hand and this summer South River Watershed Alliance is offering adults and youth ages 10 - 17 that are beginners or have never paddled an opportunity to discover the South River. There is no cost to join the fun. Paddlers will be introduced to the river, the importance of river protection and stewardship, and the joys of paddling a river. See Upcoming Events for contact information.



South River DeKalb County
(Photo:SRWA)

Paddle dates are June 13, July 25, and August 22.

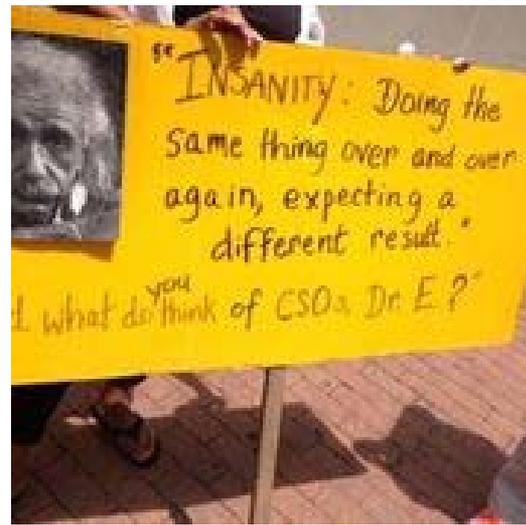
The August 22 event will feature the Georgia River Network's Hidden Gems paddle. It is part of the Hidden Gems Paddle Series sponsored by South River Watershed Alliance and Georgia River Network. This event will attract river enthusiasts from across the state and serve as the inaugural launch of the South River Watershed Alliance's campaign to designate the South River Water Trail. The day will include a picnic lunch and presentations along the route, ranging from natural history and water-quality testing to river clean-up training. Seats are limited and available on a first come first serve basis. Click here to sign up <http://south-river.eventbrite.com>.

These Arabia Mountain Park Adventures are made possible in part by a grant from the National Park Foundation through the generous support of Coca-Cola and Subaru.

'Cut the Crap' Rally in Photos

ECO-Action, Clean Streams Task Force partners, and SRWA rally in support of a strong Clean Water permit and clean streams May 29, 2015 at U.S. EPA, Region 4 headquarters in downtown Atlanta. [Click here](#) for Creative Loafing coverage of rally.





Nature Notes

Early summer is a great time to look for and listen to the Green Tree Frog. In the quiet of the warm summer evenings, listen for them in shallow waters, like small ponds, quiet grassy areas of lakes, wetlands, and rivers like the South River. Their happy but nasal "Quacks", often a whole chorus of them, will liven up the still humid air on a summer evening. The frog is gorgeous, a jade green, and clean white stripe running down their side.



Tree Frog on Musclewood (Illustration: Phil Delestrez)

Musclewood, also known as "Iron Wood" or "Blue Beech", is found in moist bottomland and flood-plain forest. It is a rather small tree, resembling a "Beech" in having smooth bark and serrated leaves. But on further inspection, the bark is striated like "muscle". Mosses and lichens love the smooth bark, forming a mosaic of texture and color on this sinewy tree.

Nature Notes contributed by Phil Delestrez <https://www.etsy.com/shop/DelestrezArts>.
