



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.

March 2016

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"Education and action are the cornerstones of environmental protection".



Rivercane restoration project volunteers

Help offered to deal with South River trash

In its January-February (2016) newsletter, SWRA highlighted the trash dilemma of the Jackson Lake community in an article titled "Choking trash from South River ". During heavy rains dumpster loads of floatables - plastic bottles of every size imaginable, Styrofoam cups smashed into thousands of tiny pieces, and other debris of almost every possible description wash down the South River. A huge amount of this trash ends up in Jackson Lake. The rest is deposited on the riverbank, in the river channel, or snagged by downed trees forming trash barges along the river.

Most of the trash comes from Atlanta and DeKalb County.

Fueled by more and more upstream development, year after year the trash problem has worsened and has reached a critical point. Overwhelmed by the sheer volume, lake residents who volunteer for trash cleanups, can't keep up. In other words, trash is inundating the lake faster than the Jackson Lake



Trash in Jackson Lake after November 2015 rain

Homeowner Association

can recruit volunteers to remove it. Cleanups take place at least once a month all year long. The most recent one on February 20th collected 111 bags of trash, 5 tires, 2 coolers, 2 trash cans, and 2 pieces of large commercial Styrofoam from a relatively small area of the lake in about three hours time. There were a total of 21 volunteers "that being the biggest problem" according to Jared Godin, president of the homeowner association, "we needed at least 50."

As a result of SRWA's January-February article, inquiries and offers to help deal with the trash problem have been encouraging - but more help is needed. Technology that removes trash from stormwater is available but expensive. The greatest need now is to identify funding sources that recognize the quality of life and environmental benefits that a trash-free South River can offer. If recognizing there is a problem is the first step towards a solution then purposeful action is the second. A sincere thanks to those who have stepped up. Contact southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com for additional information if you or your organization can help.

SRWA recognized for rivercane project



L-R: Jay Jensen, NFWF; Ron Shipman, Georgia Power; Jacqueline Echols, South River Watershed Alliance; David Butler, DeKalb County (Retired); Heather McTeer Toney, EPA Region 4; Jim Giattina, EPA Region 4; Rebecca Culler, Wildlife Habitat Council.

SRWA along with eight other partnership efforts developed to protect and restore local waterways were recognized during the annual Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Plaque Recognition ceremony on Jan. 19.

SRWA was recognized for its rivercane restoration project which focuses on re-establishing healthy expanses of rivercane called canebrake along the South River corridor. Due to habitat loss, rivercane is an endangered vegetation native to the southeastern United States. Only about two percent of rivercane that existed less than 150 years ago remains today. Healthy canebrake provide enormous water quality benefits by filtering and slowing stormwater runoff. [Read the entire press release here.](#)

Rivercane restoration volunteer opportunities are available March 12th and 19th and April 9th and 16th. See the "Upcoming events" section of this newsletter for details.

NYT bestseller "The Sixth Extinction" worth reading

A vacation trip which included a long-haul international flight provided the opportunity to read Elizabeth Kolbert's, New York Times bestseller "The Sixth Extinction" An Unnatural History. It was eye-opening and hit home in light of SRWA's work to restore rivercane - our effort to help save it from extinction. This is the first time in the year's that SRWA has been publishing this newsletter that a book has been recommended for reading. The Sixth Extinction is a must read for anyone but particularly those who are unconvinced or want to learn more about the impact that human beings are having on the planet. Below is an excerpt from the book's cover.

"Over the last half-billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the

world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us. In prose that is at once frank, entertaining, and deeply informed, New Yorker writer Elizabeth Kolbert tell us why and how human beings have altered life on the planet in a way no species has before. Interweaving research in half a dozen disciplines, descriptions of the fascinating species that have already been lost, and the history of extinction as a concept, Kolbert provides a moving and comprehensive account of the disappearances occurring before our very eyes. She shows that the sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy, compelling us to rethink the fundamental question of what it means to be human."

MLK Day of Service volunteers

South River is cleaner thanks to the efforts of Girl Scout Troop 10591 (Atlanta/DeKalb) and Troop 15003 (Stockbridge) as they braved a blustery morning to remove trash from Panola Shoals in honor of the Martin Luther King holiday Day of Service on January 18.



Member of Troop 10591 and Troop 15003



Trash and debris removed by Girl Scouts

SRWA Offers Summer Camp

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant that supports the restoration of rivercane along the South River also supports environmental education for youth that attend elementary, middle, and high schools in close proximity to the river and project site. SRWA is offering two *Discovering the South River: Land-Water Stewardship Camp* for youth ages 13-17 this summer. The South River and surrounding ecosystem provide an exciting and enjoyable learning environment for youth that contribute to the development of environmental stewardship and conservation awareness and skills. See the "Upcoming events" section below for details.

Upcoming events

Rivercane Restoration Project. Improve habitat of endangered rivercane by removing invasive privet along the South River. Bring water and your favorite snack and work gloves, if you have a pair, otherwise, gloves will be provided.

Saturday, March 12 and April 9 and 16, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Volunteers will meet at the Panola Mountain State Park Nature Center, 2600 Hwy 155 SW, Stockbridge, GA.

Saturday, March 19, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Pole Bridge Wastewater Treatment Facility, 4664 Flat Bridge Road, Lithonia, GA.

Individuals and groups are welcome. To volunteer call Jackie (404) 285-3756 or email southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com.

Join SRWA for a riverbank cleanup Saturday, March 26, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Trash from the recent downpours have made a mess of the South River's bank at the Everett Property. Grab a few friends and do something great for the river. Supplies provided. To volunteer call Jackie (404) 285-3756.

Discovering the South River: Land/Water Stewardship Camp. Discovering the South River Ecosystem: SRWA's Land/Water Stewardship Camp is a free three day adventure in land and aquatic stewardship for teens ages 13-17. Participants will explore the South River watershed while learning about riparian (riverside), floodplain, and aquatic ecology and participating in water quality experiments. Have fun with peers while developing your paddling skills and learning the plants and animals that inhabit the South River corridor. Two camp dates are planned, June 15-17 and July 13-15. Application form available April 1 and will be posted on the SRWA website at www.southernriverga.org. Application must be received by April 30. Email completed form to southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com or mail to: SRWA, PO Box 1341, Decatur, GA 30031.

This program is made possible by funding from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Georgia Power. Cost: Free

Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center and Panola Mountain State Park Nature Center

Atlanta Audubon Society Bird Walk at Vaughter's Farm, March 11, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. Bring your binoculars for this gentle hike through the park's Power of Flight area OR Vaughter's Farm Meadow Loop. Basic identification techniques and common birds will be discussed. Good for all ages. Call to register in advance. FREE

Reptile Day at Panola Mountain, March 12, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Panola Mountain State Park Nature Center, 2620 Hwy 155, SW, Stockbridge, GA. Are you in love with lizards? Silly for snakes? Head-over heels for herpetofauna? Or maybe you just think they're neat. Learn about and meet fascinating reptiles from our own backyards and around the world. Meet specialists and members of the Georgia Reptile Society and Georgia Herpetological Society. FREE

Arabia Mountain Play Day, March 19, 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center, 3787 Klondike Road, Lithonia, GA. Pack a lunch and venture out to Arabia Mountain for a day of engaging outdoor play. Play in the forests, up on the mountain, bike along the 30 mile Arabia Mountain PATH, explore stone ruins, geocache, or take a laughter yoga hike. FREE