



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.

## **May 2015**

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Zebra Swallowtail

## Coming together across the sub-continental divide

DeKalb Avenue stretches from Decatur to Atlanta along the sub-continental divide. Rain that falls on the east side of DeKalb Avenue flows to the Atlantic Ocean while rain that falls on the west side flows to the Gulf of Mexico. Citizens on both sides of the divide are coming together to rally for a common cause - rivers and creeks that are free of human poop. 'Cut the Crap' rallies feature a human toilet to make the point that the city of Atlanta should not use our waterways to dispose of human waste. This practice harms our rivers and streams and shows a total disregard for people and communities downstream.



Toney Torrence and Bill Eisenhauer at rally Northside Drive and Magnolia Street on April 11th. (Photo by Maria Saporta)



Supporters rally at the Custer Avenue combined sewer overflow facility in southeast Atlanta on March 28th.

In a recent article titled "City of Atlanta can clean up its act by adopting a green CSO approach" journalist Maria Saporta makes the case for Atlanta to stop using our rivers and creeks as sewers. Below are excerpts from her article.

"The whole point behind this investment was to have clean water in Atlanta and for the communities south of the city. After all the billions of dollars that have been spent and the multiple extensions to implement the sewer investments, what a shame it would be for us to just say we give up. Let's accept that some communities will never have clean creeks free of sewage in the central core of our city."

"Instead of trying to get out of meeting clean water standards, the city and the state should be embracing green solutions that would be a victory for all". [Click here to read entire article.](#)

The next 'Cut the Crap' rally will be held Friday, May 29, 12:00 Noon, 61 Forsyth Street in downtown Atlanta across from the Sam Nunn Federal Building, headquarters of EPA Region 4. Take MARTA to the Five Points Station.

## Draining Alexander Lakes

On Tuesday, April 21, the Georgia Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Transportation (DOT) held a meeting at Panola Mountain State Park headquarters to inform the public about plans to drain Alexander Lakes. More than 75 citizens attended the almost three hour meeting including elected and county officials from Rockdale County. The meeting primarily focused on four issues: 1) the physical condition of the dams, 2) alternatives to draining the lakes, 3) absence of a plan and timeline for repair work, and 4) inadequate public notice about the meeting.



Citizens listen to presentation about condition of dams.

Based on the information provided the upper dam/lake is owned by DNR; the lower dam/lake (closest to the South River) is owned by DOT. About a decade ago, DNR and DOT worked together to identify the funds needed to purchase the property to ensure that it would remain undeveloped. The funds contributed by DOT were provided with the understanding that the site would be used as a mitigation bank. Currently, DOT's intent is to remove the dam and create a wetland for mitigation purposes.

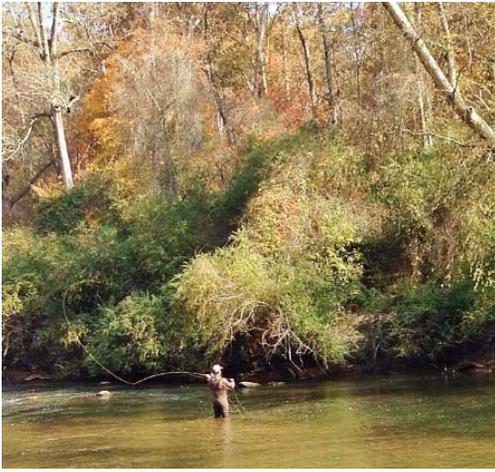
An engineering firm has evaluated the condition of the lower dam and determined that it is structurally unsound and will fail. DOT is moving ahead with securing the necessary state and federal permits to drain the lake. A decision about how to proceed with the upper dam cannot be made until both lakes are drained and a thorough assessment of the condition of the dam is completed.

Comments and questions from citizens primarily focused on whether options other than removing the lower dam and creating a mitigation bank had been considered. A suggestion that received enthusiastic applause was to swap the property for another suitable site. DNR indicated that it would take the suggestion under advisement.

Citizens also voiced concern about the absence of a plan and timeline for addressing problems with the dams as well as inadequate public notice about the meeting. DNR assured those in attendance that going forward, communication with the community regarding this issue would improve and more timely notification of future meetings would be made.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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.

**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. Registration begins May 18th. Visit [www.garivers.org](http://www.garivers.org) to register.

## Davidson-Arabia Nature Center

**Arabia Mountain Backstage Tour, May 17, 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. Please wear closed toe shoes and bring plenty of water. Free

**Mountain Milers Walking Club, May 19, 10:00 - 12 noon, Panola Mountain State Park Nature Center**, 2600 Hwy 155 SW, Stockbridge, GA. This is a Ranger-led activity and will meet rain or shine! In addition to a good time and exercise encouragement, you will receive safety tips to apply to all of your adventures. Parking fee \$5.

**Roaming with Ranger Robby, Maya 22, 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. Free.

[Find out more](#)

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## Scholarships for youth to paddle South River

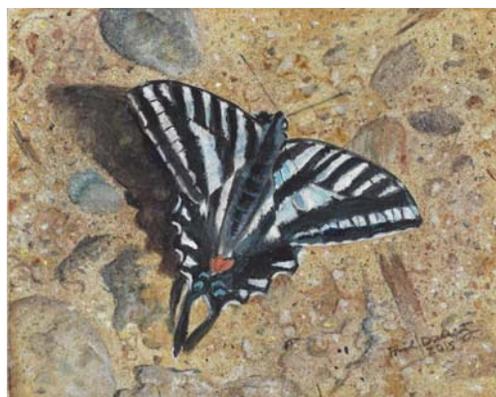
The Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance through a grant from the National Park Foundation is making it possible for youth ages 10-17 to paddle the South River. Participants must have little or no previous paddling experience. SRWA will introduce youth to the river, the importance of river protection and stewardship, and the joys of paddling a river. Each youth will be paired with an experienced paddler. Seats are limited and available on a first come first serve basis.

SRWA is also seeking volunteers to serve as mentors. If you are an intermediate or skilled paddler consider sharing your experience with one of our young novice. Paddle dates are June 13, July 25, and August 22. Call Jackie at 404-285-3756 with questions, to sign up, or volunteer. See Upcoming Events section for outing details.

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## Nature Notes

The Zebra Swallowtail can usually be seen in abundance during April and early May, and loves river corridors. It's host plant is Paw Paw (*Asimina Triloba*) which grows in the rich sediment deposits of rivers, creeks and moist ravines. Like many butterflies, the Zebra will congregate on muddy/moist sandy banks of rivers and streams, sucking rich nutrients and salts. Look for them on the sandbars and mudflats of the South River, or where its host plant, Paw Paw, occurs.



Zebra Swallowtail  
(Illustration: Phil Delestrez)

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

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