



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.

October 2015

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Photo by Brother Callistus (Monastery of the Holy Spirit)

South River Rockdale County

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

South River Water Trail ready for prime time

Arabia Mountain Park has dirt hiking trails and paved walking, running, and bicycle trails - and soon, the watery trail of the South River. Georgia has 15 established water trails and 17 more under development. The state is hardly a lone voice when it comes to water trails. Rather, it is riding a wave that's sweeping the nation.

Water trails have become so popular in the United States that there are more than 600 of them. Generally speaking, water trails are a network of landing and launching sites.

The South River Water Trail (SRWT) is a regional collaboration to draw attention to the South River and make water recreation more popular by giving people better water access.

Over the past 10 months, SRWT partners - South River Watershed Alliance, Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, Panola Mountain State Park, Jackson Lake Homeowners Association, and DeKalb, Rockdale, Henry, and Newton Counties have developed plans for SRWT. Technical assistance has been provided by Georgia River Network and National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance program.

Initially, eight planned river access points have been identified. When complete, canoeist, kayakers, and paddle board enthusiasts can paddle the river from DeKalb County to Jackson Lake. The yearlong planning phase ends December 2015.

Adding to the potential of SRWT is the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. Nationwide, there are only 49 national heritage areas; only two are located in Georgia. Combined, the ecotourism draw offered by Arabia Mountain and SRWT could be massive.

This year, the theme of South River Watershed Alliance's annual South River Jamboree is "Celebrating *Five Years, One River, and You*" and will feature the first preview of SRWT. Be among the first to get a sneak peak at planned launch and landing sites and participate in conversation about why SRWT is the future of the South River. See the Upcoming Events section in this newsletter for more details.



Nature note

by Phil Delestrez

One of the most common birds along the South River corridor all year long is the Red Bellied Woodpecker. With their black and white zebra back, and splash of red on their head, these birds are always fun to spot.

Listen in the river bottom lands for their loud "Querrr, Querrr", and as the trees lose their leaves, watch for their silhouettes as they work their way up the trunks of trees, to the upper branches, searching for insects and grubs that burrow into the wood.



Red Bellied Woodpecker by Phil Delestrez

Original acrylic paintings and prints available at <https://www.etsy.com/shop/DelestrezArts> and www.ArtPal.com/DelestrezArt

Ebbing the tide of trash

by Jackie Echols

I spend a lot of time promoting the South River, talking to groups about this wonderful natural resource, the progress the river has made over the last decade, and how we can all help take care of it. Most often these conversations focus on big problems like the need for the Environmental Protection Agency and Georgia Environmental Protection Division to crackdown on sewage discharge violations by the City of Atlanta and DeKalb County.



Trash covers river at Panola Shoals after heavy rain on Oct 3. Photo: Jackie Echols

Early this past Saturday (Oct.3) morning, I arrived at Panola Shoals Trailhead to meet

Hands on Atlanta Day volunteers. The "first-flush", as it is called, of trash washed into the river by the early morning heavy rain was just flowing over the granite

shoals. I gazed at the sea of plastic bottles and containers, Styrofoam cups, aluminum cans, basketballs, bottles, and other domestic litter that covered the surface of the water. The river pushed waves of trash towards the shore. When the water recedes, large amounts of litter will cover the sand at Panola, but the vast majority of this pollution will end up at the doorsteps of our neighbors at Jackson Lake.

As I watched, I was reminded that as pressing as the big problems are, the most onerous source of pollution in the South River is household trash. Much of this litter



In background trash washes towards Panola Shoals.
Photo: Jackie Echols (Oct.3, 2015)

is left in parking lots and along roads, then is washed into creeks and the river by heavy rains.

But, regardless of the source, litter begets litter.

Whether the source is parking lots, exit and entrance ramps to interstate highways or bus stops, people are more likely to litter if they see litter.

The first line of defense against trash pollution is for individuals to put litter in its place. It is time for stronger

and more effective partnerships between government, business, and community to stop trash pollution at its source, before it ends up in our creeks and river.

And no matter how we feel about how it got there, the trash that mars the South River's beauty will not go away on its own. Until the day comes when the river and downstream communities are no longer trashed, the responsibility for cleaning up falls on citizens like you and me, and non-profit organizations like SRWA. See the Upcoming Events section of this newsletter for the next Panola Shoals cleanup.

Upcoming Events

South River Watershed Alliance's South River Jamboree, "Celebrating Five Years, One River, and You", will feature the first preview of the South River Water Trail. Join us Saturday, November 21, Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance, 3350 Klondike Road, Lithonia, GA, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Be among the first to get a sneak peak at planned launch and landing sites and participate in conversation about why the South River Water Trail is the future of the South River. Look for your EventBrite invitation soon.

Rivercane Restoration Project, October 17 and 24, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Panola Mountain State Park. Join SRWA for the second year of removing privet from rivercane at Panola Mountain State Park. Volunteers meet at Alexander Lake

parking area, intersection of Flatbridge Road SW and Alexander Lake Road, Stockbridge, GA. Check SRWA's events calendar at www.southernriverga.org for additional volunteer dates. Questions and to volunteer call Jackie (404) 285-3756 or email www.southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com.

Panola Shoals Trash Cleanup, Friday, October 23, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Join SRWA for a special Friday cleanup to remove trash left behind by the recent heavy rain. Volunteering for a cleanup is a rewarding experience. It not only has aesthetic and environmental benefits but connects volunteers to the South River. All materials provided.

Davidson-Arabia Nature Center

Geocaching 101 for Families, October 17, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m., Vaughters Farmhouse Trailhead, 3366 Klondike Road, Lithonia, GA. Explore how to find hidden treasure boxes in the National Heritage Area and around the world using your smart phone. Free.

Splendid Sunday Hike, October 25, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m., Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center, 3787 Klondike Road, Lithonia, GA. Never the same hike twice! See where the breeze 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. Free.

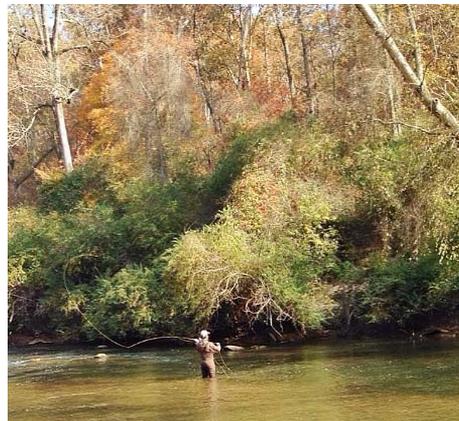
[Find out more](#)

Give to South River Rainy Day Fund

It would be great if we could depend on EPA and Georgia EPD to protect the South River but the truth is, we can't.

Another truth is that SRWA cannot protect the South River alone. We need your help!

Please donate \$25, \$50, \$100 or more or whatever you can afford via Paypal at www.southernriverga.org or mail your check to: SRWA, PO Box 1341, Decatur, GA 30031.



Fly-fishing on South River in Rockdale County. Photo: Cathy Moll

Donate to South River Watershed Alliance via Paypal [Click here](#)
