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Water Should Be Clean

by Jackie Echols

I have engaged in an ongoing conversation with myself—I know treading on shaky ground but have been told it is OK as long as I don't answer myself--about what to say in this the last newsletter of 2012 that would cause you to include SRWA and South River in your holiday giving. Should I talk about SRWA's accomplishments, our commitment, or our plans for the future? Heck, maybe I should talk about them all.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth Doyle

As president of SRWA, I spend a lot of time asking people for money though it's not the part of my job that I enjoy most. I am much more the outdoor type – canoe outings; river walks; and other outside stuff are more my thing, but I recognize that fundraising is the most important part of what I do. Truth is, without money to support programs and pay operating costs there could be no SRWA.

There is one unshakeable reality that drives all giving – We give to organizations and causes that we care about.

Many of you have heard me say that South River is DeKalb County's most valuable natural resource. Singlehandedly, South River connects people to nature, provides recreational opportunities, enhances our quality of life, provides a safe haven and major passageway for wildlife, provides critical habitat for fish and other aquatic life, adds value to the county's greenspaces, adds value to personal property and communities, and has the potential to spur economic development along its corridor. No other resource, natural or manmade, is more versatile.

Notwithstanding its unquestionable value, there is a more basic reason to care about South River – **WATER SHOULD BE CLEAN**. South River's value as a natural resource is totally dependent upon our ability to achieve and sustain clean water.

Over this past year, SRWA worked tirelessly to raise South River in the hearts and minds of citizens throughout the watershed and we have been successful. Through activities that educate and build local community awareness and support; forge relationships with upstream and downstream neighbors and stakeholders; and most importantly engage the community in activities that allow people to experience and develop a personal connection to the river, SRWA is charting a new future for South River, one that is based on CLEAN WATER.

I sincerely believe SRWA has earned your support and for this reason I am asking you to [make a tax-deductible contribution to SRWA today!](#) Your support is critical to our success. Any amount you give will make a difference.

You may designate that your contribution be used where it is most needed or support one of three projects selected for special fundraising emphasis:

1. **Map South River** – will enable visitors to more easily locate the river's access points, landmarks, historical sites, and other features.
2. **South River Brochure** – will serve as information, fundraising and marketing tool.
3. **Water Trail** – achieving water trail status for South River will provide social, economic, and environmental benefits to communities.

The most prolific lesson learned from 50+ years of polluting South River is that water pollution only serves to justify one thing – more pollution. Including SRWA and South River in your holiday giving will ensure that we continue to move forward toward a clean South River.

WATER SHOULD BE CLEAN. **Give the Gift of Clean Water** Please give to SRWA today! Mail your check today to: SRWA, PO Box 1341, Decatur, GA 30031 or securely contribute online at www.southriverga.org.

SRWA Receives Federal Tax Exempt Status

After nine months of waiting, SRWA's application for 501 (c)(3) federal tax-exempt status has been approved by the IRS and is retroactive to February 2012. We have been fortunate to have the assistance of a fiscal sponsor since 2010 which means that contributions have always been tax-deductible but having this status will further strengthen our fundraising efforts in support of South River.

South River Walk Recon Report



Photo courtesy of Tracy Ray

- South River - Southtowne PATH trail bridge (opposite Sunridge Ave. SE) downstream to Browns Mill Rd.
- November 17, 2012
- Approx. distance: 0.45 miles, easterly
- Weather: clear and cold; no rainfall within the previous 72 hours
- All directional references facing downstream

General Observations - The cool, blue sky fall morning was a near perfect opportunity to take in the headwaters of the South River. Our group of intrepid river explorers waded the channel of the South River upstream of Browns Mill Road for about an hour and a half, exploring this

highly urbanized stream and exchanging thoughts. While suffering so many insults so common to headwater streams in urban settings and contradicting the opinion that this is a dead stream, the South River revealed an attitude of potential and resilience.

A soft shell turtle, small fishes and a compliment of macro invertebrates were observed in the short reach of the river we explored. Riffles, runs, rock outcrops, deep pools, woody snags, the river has it all. **The opportunity to polish a tarnished gem is the message the South River has given us.**

[READ MORE](#)

The Year in Pictures

2012 has been a busy year! SRWA's community outreach activities started with the first SRWA led canoe outing in April. Additional canoe outings followed in July, September, and October. SRWA organized river clean ups, a tire round up, and an environmental justice workshop with featured speaker, Dr. Sharon Moran, a nationally recognized expert on urban stream restoration.



Photo courtesy of Kenneth Doyle

We can point to many more accomplishments, but [these photos](#) will illustrate just how many people got to know South River and inevitably develop a sense of stewardship for this hidden gem.

Holiday List for the South River Enthusiast

- Hip-length boots or waders (a must for river walks)
- Walking stick (river channels have obstacles)
- Waterproof gloves (for those with tender hands)
- Kayak (everyone will know you are a true South River enthusiast)
- Tandem Canoe (for you and that special someone)
- Light weight/quick drying outerwear
- Dry bag (for those who insist on carrying cell phone on river outing)
- Foosh Energy Mints (1=1 coffee in caffeine content)
- Picture frame (for that prized South River photo)
- Gift certificate (always comes in handy)

Donate Today!

The title of a recent article in the Augusta Chronicle speaks for itself "As government budgets shrink, Riverkeepers become watchdogs and whistleblowers."

Many people did not know South River exists and now more people than ever are aware of the river and its potential as a result of our community outreach programs. For personal testimonials in support of our work visit our website at www.southernriverga.org.

Your financial support is vital to our success and a sustained brighter future for South River. Please make a generous tax-deductible contribution to SRWA today!

SRWA Wishes You and Yours, Happy Holidays!