



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.

## **February 2014**

### In This Issue

Failure to Enforce, Failure to Renew

Beyond the Bridge Returns

Upcoming Events

Website Gets Upgrade

Fishing the South River

Repeats and Reminders



**South River - Rockdale County**



South River - Rockdale County

## **Failure to Enforce, Failure to Renew** ***Unenforced permit allows pollution of South River***

Atlanta is violating the permit that is supposed to protect water quality in the South River.

The amount of pollution the City of Atlanta can discharge from its combined sewer overflow system into the South River is determined by a permit issued by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD). Commonly referred to by its acronym, NPDES, the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit is valid for 5 years.

Atlanta's NPDES permit was last issued in January 2005 and expired January 2010. During this five year period, Atlanta reported permit violations to GA EPD that resulted in degraded water quality in the South River. No decisive action was taken to stop the violations.

Rather than require that Atlanta follow procedure and develop a new draft permit, Georgia EPD administratively extended the permit. This action effectively authorized continued pollution of the South River, indefinitely.

The only way to rectify this problem is for GA EPD to first, enforce the administratively extended permit and second, order Atlanta to develop a new draft NPDES permit that is protective of water quality.

The new draft NPDES permit for Atlanta's combined sewer overflow system is four years past due.

### **A Closed Process**

All negotiations leading up to the issuance of the draft NPDES permit are exclusively in the hands of GA EPD and City of Atlanta. Until the draft permit is issued the public is shut out of the process.

Issuance of the new draft permit activates a mandatory 30-day comment period during which time the public can review, question, and challenge requirements (or lack thereof) that GA EPD and City of Atlanta have negotiated.

The 30-day comment period is the only time the public will have an opportunity to be involved in the process over the 5 years the permit is in effect. Failure to issue the draft permit effectively denies the public the opportunity to scrutinize the agreement reached between the regulator and the regulated - a process that takes place completely outside of the eye of public scrutiny.

This permit is the only safeguard the public has against returning to the past marked by a severely degraded South River or pressing forward towards the prospect of even cleaner water. For the public, the choice is not a hard one to make.

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### **Beyond the Bridge Returns**

The beginning of SRWA's 2014 *Beyond the Bridge* South River canoe outing series is only a few months away. Beyond the Bridge is all about getting to see the river from a different perspective, one which can only be seen and appreciated from the river itself. In the two years since the program began, almost 200 people have connected with the South River and we are looking



South River - DeKalb County

forward to another great year. Whether you want to get back to nature or experience it for the first time, South River is your destination.

No need to take a long road trip to a far away river, fun and adventure waits just 35 minutes east of Atlanta. While on the river enjoy bird watching or comb the riverbank for other foraging wildlife. Learn about the river's landscape and its flora (plants) and fauna (animals) from a naturalist. You can make a friend or bring a friend to share your tandem (two persons) canoe, or if you prefer a little more solitude bring your own kayak. Join us and check out what the South River has to offer - you will be glad you did.

This year we will paddle two sections of the river in DeKalb and Rockdale Counties. All trips are about five miles in length and take about four hours from put in to take out. Canoeing experience is not required but you should be physically able to paddle for an extended period without tiring. The cost of the event is \$40 per person which includes canoe rental, insurance, and lunch. Check out our new Events calendar at [www.southernriverga.org](http://www.southernriverga.org) for outing dates and to sign up. Space is limited. Email [southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com](mailto:southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com) or call Jackie (404) 285-3756 if you have questions. Kayakers should call for additional information.

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## Upcoming Events

Visit our new Events calendar [www.southernriverga.org](http://www.southernriverga.org)

**SRWA Board Meeting - Arabia-Davidson Nature Center, Saturday, February 22 - 10:00 - 12:00 p.m.** Open to the public.

**Where the Water Goes - The Headwaters - Saturday, March 22 - 9:00 - 2:00 pm (BYO Lunch)**

Location: East Point and Southeast Atlanta Neighborhoods

We will begin this very special outing at the headwaters of the South River in East Point, then follow it's traces through neighborhoods and Atlanta's South Bend Park, with our final walk along the path and boardwalk at one of DeKalb County's hidden gems - Constitution Lakes, which was an old clay quarry that is now a rich network of lakes and wetlands adjacent to the South River corridor. We'll enjoy a picnic lunch at the lakes, and SRWA president Jackie Echols will join us to share the history and importance of this significant river. This outing will involve visiting several locations with light walking, not more than 1.5 miles total. Van transportation will be available from the meeting location or bring your own vehicle. [Click here](#) to register. Meet up directions will be sent to registered participants. [SRWA](#), [EcoAddendum](#) and [Keeping It Wild](#) partnership event.

**Upcoming Events at Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve**

**Saturday Mountain Hike at Panola Mountain State Park - February 15, 10:00 - 1:00 p.m.** Find out why Panola Mountain is such an important ecosystem during a Ranger led hike to the top of the mountain. As you twist and turn on the trail, you will see different plants and wildlife. [More info](#)

**Panola Mountain Stewardship Saturday - March 1, 9:00-11:00 a.m.** Join Panola Mountain rangers and volunteers for a once-a-month work day to help maintain this unique National Natural Landmark. Each month will be a different service project. Please call the Nature Center at 770-389-7801 to register and get your parking fees waived for the day of the event. [More info](#)

SRWA January 2014 Calendar [full calendar](#)

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
»	29	30	31	Jan 1	2	3	4
»	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
»	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
»	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
»	26	27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1

## Website Gets Upgrade

It is easier than ever to keep up with SRWA events. A new online Events calendar has been added to the website homepage [www.southeriverga.org](http://www.southeriverga.org). Now with only a click you can find upcoming events and select the one(s) you don't want to miss. Don't forget to add the date(s) to your calendar. Plan to attend and/or volunteer for an SRWA event in 2014.

## Fishing the South River

To learn more about river fishing in Georgia visit [georgiariverfishing.com](http://georgiariverfishing.com). This website provides information about the South River and other rivers throughout the state. For those who enjoy fishing there is no better form of recreation. It is relaxing particularly if you don't care if you catch a fish or not. It can be a sobering experience. You may be smarter than a 5th grader but oftentimes you aren't as smart as a fish. The sound of water can be

therapeutic. A babbling stream can calm frayed nerves and relieve some of life's stress. Fishing is a great way to introduce youth of all ages to the outdoors and serve as a stepping stone to lifelong environmental stewardship. For the love of fishing.

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## Repeats & Reminders

### DeKalb County BoC

Lee May, Interim DeKalb County CEO  
404-371-2881

[Email](#)

Elaine Boyer, District 1  
404-371-2844

[Email](#)

Jeff Rader, District 2  
404-371-2863

[Email](#)

Larry Johnson, District 3  
404-371-2425

[Email](#)

Sharon Barnes Sutton, District 4  
404-371-4749

[Email](#)

Lee May, District 5  
404-371-4745

[Email](#)

Kathie Gannon, District 6  
404-371-4909

[Email](#)

Stan Watson, District 7  
404-371-3681

[Email](#)

### Septic System Grants

The Upper Ocmulgee River Resource Conservation and Development Council has funds available for cost-share grants for installation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will help improve water quality in the South River basin. BMPs may include maintenance, repair, and/or replacement of failing septic system, trash and debris cleanup, and the elimination of stream access to domestic animals.

Grant awards are reimbursement only (i.e., the property owner must pay for installation of the BMP and will be reimbursed for up to 50% of the cost). There will be a cap on the amount of money that can be reimbursed for any one project.

Areas eligible to receive these grants include any properties which drain to the South River or any of its tributaries. For additional information Bob Scott, Program Manager, 678-376-9518.



Albert Shoal



River Cane

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**BECOME A MEMBER**

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