



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.

## July 2014

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Please share this newsletter with neighbors and friends

## South River is Swimming . . . with Life

The presence of a variety of fish species is a positive indicator that the health of the river has improved and can only get better as restoration efforts progress. The North American Native Fishes Association (NANFA) is helping SRWA



### **Minnows are a major source of food for larger fish and other wildlife**

spread the word about the abundant life in the river. In a short period of time, using nets (seines) to capture fish without harming them, NANFA identified almost a dozen species during their native fish demonstration at the Arabia Mountain Park 30th Mile Celebration on June 14. Minnows are vital to the recovery of the river's ecosystem because they are a major source of food for larger fish and other wildlife. Without minnows, wildlife that depend on them could not survive.



**Ocmulgee Shiner**



**Turquoise Darter**

The Ocmulgee Shiner and Turquoise Darter (shown above) are two of the species living in the oxygen rich water near Panola Shoals. Look closely and you can see the turquoise color on the darter's under fins for which it is named. To our delight eleven species were identified, many with equally colorful names and markings - Bluefin stoneroller, Red shiner, Rosyface chub, Blueheaded shub, Redbreast sunfish, Bluegill, Turquoise darter, Blackbanded darter, Ocmulgee shiner, Spottail shiner, and Largemouth bass.

[Click here to view photo gallery.](#)



**Common Snapping Turtle**

In addition to fishes, a large snapping turtle was part of the NANFA exhibit for a brief time. Known for displaying their "testy" disposition when disturbed, our guest quickly made her way back to the safety of the river. The snapping turtle is common to freshwater streams in Georgia.

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## **South River Water Trail**

## *Simply amazing possibilities*

Today, surrounding communities are reaping the benefits of much improved water quality in the South River thanks to hundreds of millions of dollars in court mandated wastewater infrastructure improvements.

This huge investment is being made to ensure that the river is safe for recreational use and functions as suitable and useful wildlife habitat. One way to measure the return on this investment in cleaner water is greater use and enjoyment of the river and its surrounding ecosystem.



**Group photo canoe outing 2012**

How can we continue to maximize this investment and boost the value and help secure the future of the South River at the same time? We can do what other communities across the state are doing and lay the groundwork and build the organizational structure needed for the South River Water Trail.

The South River Water Trail would be the water equivalent of a hiking trail that provides access points for recreational activities such as canoeing, kayaking, paddling, picnicking, and bird watching as well as provide access to educational, scenic, cultural, and historic sites along or in close proximity to the river. These activities will bring people into the area which will in turn attract businesses, stimulating economic development.

Currently, under the water trail banner, watershed groups in partnership with communities and municipalities all across the state are touting and realizing the value of their rivers and waterways. Below are some of Georgia's established water trails.

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Altamaha River Canoe Trail                    | Augusta Canal                         |
| Broad River Water Trail                       | Chattahoochee River NRA               |
| Chattooga Wild & Scenic River                 | Etowah River Water Trail              |
| North GA Water Trail (Coosawattee Blue Trail) | Okefenokee Canoe Trail                |
| Ocmulgee River Water Trail                    | St. Mary's River Trail                |
| Toccoa Canoe Trail                            | Upper Chattahoochee River Water Trail |
| Southeast Coast Salt Water Paddling Trail     |                                       |

Source: Georgia River Network

There are several other factors that lend support for the creation of the South River Water Trail. First, Americans want access to their rivers, lakes, and streams (America's Great Outdoors Initiative, 2010). Since most people live in urban areas, this desire for access must also be concentrated in these areas. Yet, stream revitalization remains relatively lacking in urban areas where people are most concentrated (Moran, 2010). The South River Water Trail will open the



**South River - Rockdale County**

door for people to enjoy this scarce, valuable, and underutilized natural amenity located right in their own community.

Second, we all know that location is the key to higher property values. Driven by desirability, most people would like to live near water, and scarcity, the

amount of waterfront property is very limited, one of the largest influences on the value of a piece of property is its proximity to water. Whether located near an ocean, lake, or river, people pay more for waterfront property. With the amenities and other improvements that the South River Water Trail will bring, there is the potential for increased property values near the river.

Finally, communities throughout Georgia are realizing the economic benefit of promoting their rivers and waterways. The South River Water Trail would become a part of the outdoor recreation industry that provides 6.1 million American jobs, \$39.9 billion in federal tax revenue, and \$39.7 billion in state/local tax revenue. In Georgia, approximately 1 million paddlers participate in the sport. More than \$23 million dollars is spent in the state on recreation. Source: Broad River Watershed Association.

The South River Water Trail will offer recreation, education, scenic, cultural, and historic venues, economic development opportunities, and the possibility of increased property values for homeowners.

The investment in better water quality has been made and is paying dividends through increased use and support for the river. The work required to make the South River Water Trail a reality can be the catalyst that keeps this momentum going.

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## Upcoming Events

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

**SRWA Board Meeting, Friday, July 11, 10:00 - 12 noon, Davidson-Arabia Nature Center, 3787 Klondike Road, Lithonia, GA. SRWA's board meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend.**

**Where the Water Goes - Special Event Series, Trip 5 - The Confluence, Saturday & Sunday, July 19-20.. Cost \$125 includes canoe/kayak and Saturday lunch.**

After traveling almost 300 miles (river miles) from Atlanta, our small Atlanta and Decatur creeks mature to participate in building the mighty Altamaha, a river that in its lower reaches can be nearly 1000 feet across. On this two-day outing, we'll walk in two types of South Georgia forest before taking to the river for an overnight primitive camp-out. We will experience endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and gopher tortoise upland habitat as well as a riverine forest of Tupelo and Cypress trees with their classic swamp-swollen bases..

We'll then launch our canoes for a short afternoon paddle at the very end of the Ocmulgee, cook supper over a campfire and spend the night camping on a sandbar, listening to owls, probably coyotes and other assorted critters, crickets and katydids. Next morning we'll float through the Confluence where the Ocmulgee and Oconee meet and become the Altamaha. Van transportation from Atlanta available. Limit 16, van limit 12. [RSVP here.](#)

This special outing series is offered in partnership with Atlanta Keeping It Wild and the South River Watershed Alliance.

**South River Canoe Outing, Saturday, August 2, 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.**

We will paddle the DeKalb County section of the river from Panola Shoals to Klondike Road, a distance of approximately 5.5 miles. Canoeing experience is not required but participants should be physically able to paddle for an extended period without tiring. The cost is \$40 which includes canoe rental, insurance, and lunch. Space is limited. Contact Jackie (404) 285-3756 if you have questions. Kayakers are welcome and should contact Jackie for additional information. [Sign up](#).

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

#### **Trees of Arabia @ Davidson-Arabia Nature Center, July, 13, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.**

Arabia Mountain is home to a huge diversity of native trees. Join Park Ranger Robby Astrove for an interpretive hike to learn more about Arabia's trees and why they are important to humans and wildlife. For more information call the Nature Center at 770-492-5220.

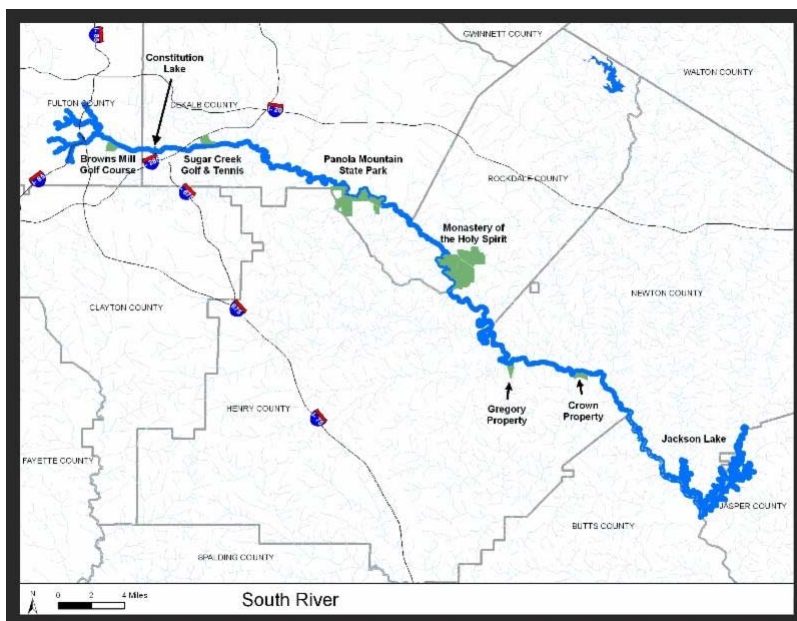
#### **Fun Friday Hike with Ranger Robby@Davidson-Arabia at Davidson Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, July 18, 8:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

Start your weekend off right with a fun hike with Ranger Robby. Explore the less-traveled areas of the Davidson-Arabia Nature Preserve and discover the wonders of flora and fauna found throughout. Ranger Robby will lead you on a moderately difficult hike, so remember your good hiking shoes, a bottle of water, and an adventurous spirit! For more information call the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center at 770-492-5220.

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### **Nominate Your Jewel of the South River**

There is still time to nominate your jewel of the South River. Whether it is a specimen native tree, breathtaking view, little known site or point of interest, or other significant feature you can help give it the fame it deserves. No one knows the special places in your community like you do, so put your special place on the map. Email your nomination(s) to [southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com](mailto:southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com) by July 31. Don't forget to include a phone number so that we can contact you.



## 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

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Larry Johnson, District 3  
404-371-2425

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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](#)

### 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



Stan Watson, District 7  
404-371-3681

[Email](#)

tributaries. For additional  
information Bob Scott, Program  
Manager, 678-376-9518.




Albert Shoals



Rivercane

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[www.southernriverga.org](http://www.southernriverga.org)

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**BECOME A MEMBER**

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