



NOVEMBER 2012

Upcoming Events

- Saturday, November 17 - [South River "River Walk"](#)

Along Came the Spider

For several weeks before the event Dave Butler, Greenspace Environment Manager, Department of Watershed Management (DWM) and I discussed how his office could help with SRWA's South River Tire Round Up. At a minimum, DWM would provide equipment, likely an ATV with a winch, to



help with getting tires across the wide sandbar and up the hill to the parking lot for pick up as well as a crew of workers to generally help out. We talked briefly about the "spider" a piece of equipment that could actually pluck tires from the riverbed, but availability for Saturday's event was uncertain.

Anticipating how many people will actually show up for an all volunteer event is tough; even folks who sign up oftentimes don't show up for one reason or another. The Tire Round Up was one of those tough events. There were not a large number of volunteers to sign up and too many of them did not show. Understandably, I was very concerned about the success of the event.

The DeKalb County crew was already at the river when I turned the corner from Snapfinger Road onto Panola Road at 8:40 a.m. There sat a piece of equipment which could only be the “spider.” I watched with fascination as the skillful operator maneuvered the equipment, which actually did resemble and move like a spider, across the sandbar and into the river channel. Even more gratifying, **two and a half hours later 83 tires had been plucked from the river.** The tires were removed from a very short distance, less than 200 feet. A short time later, the tires were loaded into a Bobcat front-end loader and carried to a pick-up site near Panola Road. By the end of the event, the crew of workers from DeKalb County and a small number of volunteers had removed 16 bags of trash and rubble from the Panola Shoals sandbar.

Removing tires that have become water-logged and filled with sand is no easy task. It is my hope that DeKalb County continues to be a good partner, making the “spider” available when practical. But in the end, it is the fruit of our collective labor, a cleaner South River, and the shared camaraderie that comes from a job well done that makes volunteering worthwhile.

As SRWA’s outdoor activities come to a close for 2012, **please make a commitment now to volunteer for at least one and hopefully more events in 2013.** Regardless of the activities you choose, river clean up, water quality monitoring, canoe outing, community workshop, SRWA’s community-wide annual meeting, or other educational event, your commitment to volunteer and participate is very much needed.

Let's Talk Trash



Trash flows into Jackson Lake from South River after heavy rain Oct 1-2, 2012.
Photo by Roger Fenton

The 16 bags of trash picked from the sand and vegetation during the South River Tire Round up will not get caught in low-hanging branches along the river creating trash piles along the bank or end up as a debris barge that washes into Jackson Lake with the next heavy rain.

People create trash and people have the most control over where it ends up, in the trash or in South River as pollution. Most of the trash that makes its way to South

River comes from stormwater runoff that carries trash from streets, roads, bus stops, and parking lots into stormwater drains that lead to creeks and streams that flow into South River.

Below is eye opening information about the lifespan of commonly discarded litter:

Glass Bottle ----- Approximately 1 Million Years

Plastic 6-Pack Collar ----- 450 Years

Aluminum Can ----- 200 – 500 Years

Plastic Jug ----- 70 Years

Rubber Boot Sole ----- 50 – 80 Years

Degradable Plastic Bag ----- 10 – 20 Years

Disposable Diapers ----- 10 – 20 Years

Orange Peel/Banana Peel ----- Two – Five Weeks

Piece Of Paper ----- Two – Four Weeks

Source: [Pennsylvania Department of Transportation](#)

You can also check out [this site](#) for the lifespan of Styrofoam and other common litter.

Preventing trash from reaching South River is the best cure for trash pollution. Here is how you can help:

- Adopt a mile of road in your community.
- Pick up trash along streets in your neighborhood.
- Adopt the floodplain area around a creek or South River bridge crossing and organize a cleanup.
- Adopt a MARTA bus stop in your community. Visit [this site](#) for insight on bus stop trash.

Litter is a major problem in DeKalb County and it will not get better on its own.

Raising South River

Saturday, October 20th
was the last South River
Watershed Alliance
Beyond the Bridge canoe
outing on South River for
2012. I had the pleasure
of canoeing with a group
of 20 river enthusiasts
from Georgia Interfaith

Power & Light and
Episcopal Diocese of
Atlanta's Creation
Keepers. The vast



majority of the group experienced South River for the very first time. From the beginning of the trip to its end it is hard for them to believe all that the river has to offer.

This was my fourth trip down the river. The weather was perfect. I always take this as a sign that Mother Nature knew we were there to help so she did her best to help us.

South River is more noted for its troubles than its potential. It has endured decades of wastewater pollution and general neglect with the grace that only Mother Nature could muster. Without exception, all who have experienced the river – young and old, river aficionados and novice, local residents and those traveling from a distance – are inspired by its resilience and splendor.

South River is many things.

It is a natural tapestry, woven throughout are the manifestations of its urban existence. It is a work in progress. It is forever changing, shaped and reshaped by natural phenomena and often challenged by the forces of humanity.

South River Watershed Alliance began the [Beyond the Bridge](#) project in April of this year with one goal in mind, Raising South River. As a result, more than 135 individuals have come to know the river. No turning back now.

South River's most defining feature is no longer its past but its promise. The transition has begun. What a difference a year can make!

(Taken from a blog posting written by Jacqueline Echols, President of SRWA for Georgia Interfaith Power & Light and Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta's Creation Keepers and is being reprinted here).

Why You Should Contribute to SRWA

There must be awareness before there can be sustained action. South River Watershed Alliance has significantly raised community awareness about South River since launching South River 2020, our eight year educational outreach campaign launched in 2010.

Through canoe outings, river cleanups, community workshops, community partnerships, and other outreach opportunities more people are aware of South River than ever before. Your investment in SRWA is an investment in South River and communities up and down the river.

As South DeKalb County's most important natural resource, raising the status of South River is good for the communities that it touches and south DeKalb County generally. Our work in support of South River is not nearly done but to continue and grow, SRWA needs your financial support.

Donate securely online at www.southernriverga.org or mail to South River Watershed Alliance, PO Box 1341, Decatur, GA 30031. Please make a generous, tax-deductible contribution to SRWA today.

Event Details

November 17 - South River "River Walk"

We will explore a section of South River that flows through the City of Atlanta upstream of Browns Mills Golf Course. The river walk promises to be educational and fun. It will be an opportunity for DeKalb County residents to meet upstream neighbors and City of Atlanta residents to meet downstream neighbors. We will meet at the PATH Southtowne Trail parking lot at 9:45AM for a 10:00AM start time. The walk should cover approximately one-plus mile and take approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours depending on pace and number of stops. Boots or sturdy closed-toe shoes that are comfortable and can get wet are a must.

This event may be cancelled due to weather. Register for this event [here](#) or email your name and phone number to southernriverwatershedalliance@gmail.com. See you there!

