

HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reported by the SATILLA RIVERKEEPER ® August 2017 – August 2018

➤ *Member of Georgia Water Coalition (GWC)*

- Collaborated within an effective network of over 200 conservation groups across the state through the Georgia Water Coalition, participating in both the Leadership & Legislative Teams to engage legislators on critical legislation relevant to the quantity and quality of water in all Georgia rivers, including the Satilla River. Examples include...
 - HB 879- Two bills were introduced to the House for safe disposal of coal ash. Although it was never brought to the Senate floor for a vote, HB 879 which would require public notice when water is pumped from coal ash pits into public waterways, passed the House (169-3) and passed out of committee in the Senate.
 - Trust Fund Honesty- Support legislation that ensures funds collected from fee-based programs, like the scrap tire fee, is actually dedicated to the intended programs, like tire recycling programs. HR 158 passed the House during the 2018 session, receiving a near-unanimous vote (166-1), but was held up in the Senate Appropriations Committee.
- GWC received the Smith W. Bagley Advocacy Award from The Sapelo Foundation
- Engaged in Capitol Conservation Day with several Satilla Riverkeeper members and met with legislators on issues which affect the Satilla River and watershed.

➤ *Water Quality Monitoring Program*

- Co-hosted a coastal chemical water quality training workshop with DNR in Brunswick. We also assisted St. Mary's Riverkeeper in securing and training a full-time Water Quality and Outreach Coordinator.
- Bacterial and chemical monitoring at nine sites along the Satilla River at locations that are frequented by swimmers through Georgia Adopt a Stream. Swimming water quality conditions posted online at the Swim Guide App.
- Added two new monitoring sites, and two new volunteers to monitoring program, with support from Savannah Presbytery's M.K. Pentecost Ecology Fund.
- Added new microplastics sampling at three coastal sites in partnership with Georgia Sea Grant and UGA Marine Extension.

➤ *Local Planning Efforts*

- Incorporated specific language in Glynn County Comprehensive Plan to protect riparian buffers and consider a conservation corridor along the Little Satilla River.
- Introduced ideas about conservation subdivisions, preserving natural ecosystems while encouraging responsible development in rural parts of the county to the Camden County Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- Incorporated additional recommendations about the importance of wetlands and vegetated buffers for preventing flooding hazards, education about proper shoreline armoring techniques, and discouraging burning of household garbage into the revision of the Brantley County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

➤ *Dover River Restoration, Satilla River Estuary, Camden County*

- Serving as a non-federal cosponsor of the US Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study for estuarine restoration at Noyes Cut, attending regular meetings, discussing plans and relaying progress on the project.
- Hosted community engagement meeting with the US Army Corps of Engineers project team and concerned residents to discuss the proposed project plan to restore hydrology and habitat.
- Continue to advocate for matching funds for design and construction of the restoration project to close Noyes Cut and other cuts in the Dover River area of Satilla River Estuary.

➤ *Opposed Offshore Drilling*

- Submitted comment letter to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) on the 2019-2024 Draft Proposed National Oil and Gas Leasing Program in opposition to the proposed expansion of offshore leasing for oil and gas drilling in the South Atlantic. Signed on to Waterkeeper Alliance and Southern Environmental Law Center's comment letters.
- Advocated for resolutions in the Georgia House and Senate in support of coastal tourism economies and in opposition to oil and gas drilling and exploration (HR 1041 and SR 706), although neither passed.

➤ ***Trash Reduction and Management***

- Continue to encourage solid waste management policies that reduce litter and dumping and prevent pollution in Pierce and Ware Counties, where only 50% of the residents subscribe to curbside waste pickup.
- Gathered pledge signatures for a trash reduction campaign to educate and encourage students and residents to dispose of trash properly, report illegal dumping and littering, and support good solid waste management policies.
- Ensured waste reduction via the Bandalong Trash Trap in Waycross. A significant amount of litter continues to be removed from a canal to the Satilla River. 69 cubic yards of debris has been trapped and removed in the last year, and over 600 cubic yards of debris since 2010.
- Supported Friends of the Satilla River in trash clean-ups.
- Organized 98 volunteers for a Rivers Alive cleanup spanning the watershed from Douglas to Jekyll Island. More than 4,000 pounds of debris was removed from 8 cleanup sites.
- Received the Rivers Alive 2017 Coastal Cleanup Award for volunteer cleanup efforts.

➤ ***Satilla River Water Trail***

- Continued to help raise and manage funds, and facilitate meetings for the Satilla River Water Trail partnership with over 50 team members including Georgia River Network, Pierce Chamber of Commerce, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- Maintained signage at River Trail access sites, distributed informational and promotional materials.
- Continued to lead Quarterly (4) Paddle Excursions with members, exploring and educating about the unique Satilla River and introducing new paddlers to resources.
- Coordinated Spring on the Satilla paddle in partnership with Georgia River Network in April 2018 with 125 paddlers from across Georgia, and beyond.
- Co-hosted Satilla River Water Trail events, including the 3rd Annual A.J. Strickland “King of the River” Fishing Tournament in Blackshear.

➤ ***Proposed Spaceport, Camden County***

- Reviewed and submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the FAA in response to Camden County seeking a license to operate a private spaceport.
- Served on the Environmental Issues Subcommittee of the Spaceport Camden Steering Committee with other stakeholders to provide feedback to Camden County and submit comments directly to FAA, expressing concerns regarding the unlined toxic waste landfill onsite, and other unaddressed potential environmental impacts.

➤ ***Community Outreach and Education***

- Provided educational presentations at 17 civic clubs, events, festivals, meetings, etc. reaching over 1000 people.
- Participated in outreach events in 7 counties including Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glynn, Pierce, Ware, and Wayne Counties.
- Educational signs along Satilla River Walk were completed and installed in Woodbine.
- Continued social media presence, including the popular #SatillaNative campaign, showcasing native wildlife and plant life in our watershed.

➤ ***Other activities...***

- Responded to illegal dumping and littering (alerted local authorities, facilitated clean-up by volunteers.)
- Responded to major and minor sewage spills in Douglas (alerted the public, follow up with EPD and City of Douglas.)
- Signed on to multiple comment letters regarding federal regulations, including opposition to offshore drilling on the East Coast, changes to the NEPA review process, and changes to protections provided under the Clean Water Act.
- Signed on to comment letters regarding local permit applications and state water quality standards rule change.
- Participated in the Georgia Coast Collaborative, a group of coastal nonprofit organizations working toward common environmental protection goals.
- Promoted success of and assisted with DNR’s Flathead Catfish Removal program – removing 1,955 fish (2070+ lbs) this year alone. DNR is also removing blue catfish, another invasive species competing with native catfish.
- Promotion and support of Land Conservation along the Satilla River corridor and preservation of critical wildlife habitats with partners DNR, Georgia Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and NRCS.

Your donations help protect, restore, and educate about the Satilla River