

## HIGHLIGHTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Reported by the SATILLA RIVERKEEPER ® August 2018 – August 2019

### ➤ ***Member of Georgia Water Coalition (GWC)***

- Collaborated within an effective network of over 250 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...
  - SB123 - The host fee for household garbage was raised to \$2.50/ton, while the rate for coal ash is only \$1/ton, incentivizing out-of-state ash be dumped in Georgia landfills. SB 123 fixes that loophole by raising the host fee to \$2.50/ton. We will continue to advocate for this legislation in the upcoming session.
  - 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 164 is still moving in the upcoming session.
  - HB 545 – “Right to Harm” bill alters the Right to Farm Act to prevent neighbors from protecting their property rights through nuisance claims. HB 545 was successfully stalled in the Senate, but more work will be needed to prevent fundamental changes to Georgia’s Right to Farm Act.
- Hosted a coal ash community meeting in Douglas to connect activists and share information to empower communities to prevent negative environmental and health impacts from coal ash disposal.

### ➤ ***Water Quality Monitoring Program***

- Co-hosted 2 coastal chemical water quality training workshop with Glynn Environmental Coalition and College of Coastal Georgia in Brunswick. We also held 2 bacteria water quality training workshops in Nahunta.
- Bacterial and chemical monitoring through Georgia Adopt a Stream at nine sites along the Satilla River at locations frequented by swimmers. Swimming water quality conditions posted online at the Swim Guide App.
- Added three new volunteers to monitoring program, including an intern who conducted weekly bacteria monitoring this summer.
- Continued microplastics sampling at three coastal sites in partnership with Georgia Sea Grant and UGA Marine Extension.

### ➤ ***Georgia’s Water Quality Standards Triennial Review Process***

- Petitioned the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to upgrade the designated use of the Satilla River to “Recreation,” which is more protective than the river’s current designated use.
- Compiled water quality data to demonstrate the Satilla River is currently meeting the higher standards.
- Generated multiple letters of support from local governments and local businesses.

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

- Continue to serve as liaison between the US Army Corps of Engineers and the community in regards to the estuary restoration project.
- Helped secure partial matching funds from Georgia Department of Natural Resources for the design of the Noyes Cut closure project.
- Continue to advocate for matching funds for design and implementation of the restoration project to close Noyes Cut and other cuts in the Dover River area of Satilla River Estuary.

### ➤ ***Opposed Offshore Drilling***

- Collaborated with a coalition in opposition to offshore drilling and exploration.
- 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, resulting in a letter from the coastal delegation to Congressman Buddy Carter. Carter then made a request to the Secretary of the Interior that Georgia’s coast be excluded from offshore drilling plans.

➤ ***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.
- 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, and other local groups in trash clean-ups.
- Organized 70 volunteers for a Rivers Alive cleanup spanning the watershed. More than 3,000 pounds of debris was removed from 9 cleanup sites.

➤ ***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 2019 with over 100 paddlers from across Georgia, and beyond, resulting in a feature article in the Golden Isles Magazine.
- Co-hosted Satilla River Water Trail events, including the 4<sup>rd</sup> Annual A.J. Strickland “King of the River” Fishing Tournament in Blackshear.

➤ ***Mining in Southeast Georgia***

- Continue to be vigilant to ongoing mining activities in the Satilla River watershed.
- Reviewing and commenting on permit applications for proposed mining near the Okefenokee. Supporting efforts to protect groundwater and surface water resources and the hydrology of the area.

➤ ***Community Outreach and Education***

- Provided educational presentations at civic clubs, events, festivals, meetings, etc. reaching over 1000 people.
- Participated in outreach events in 7 counties including Brantley, Camden, Coffee, Glynn, Pierce, Ware, and Wayne Counties.
- Trained Glynn County educators in watershed and pollution concepts.
- Continued social media presence, reaching over 4,000 followers on Facebook.

➤ ***Other activities...***

- Responded to illegal dumping and littering (alerted local authorities, facilitated clean-up by volunteers.)
- Signed on to multiple comment letters regarding federal regulations, including opposition to offshore drilling on the East Coast and changes to protections provided under the Clean Water Act.
- Signed on to comment letters regarding local permit applications and coal ash disposal permitting.
- 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 4,393 fish (7,652+ lbs) this year alone. DNR is also removing blue catfish, another invasive species competing with native catfish.
- Connecting with and learning from environmental leaders across the state through the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL).
- Held stakeholder engagement meeting in Brunswick to gather input for the revision of Satilla Riverkeeper’s 5-year strategic plan.
- 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***