



For Immediate Release:

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Satilla Riverkeeper hosted the 2018 Annual A.J. Strickland “King of the River” Satilla River Fishing Tournament on Saturday, May 5th. Weigh-in was set up at Tindall Enterprises in Blackshear, GA from 12pm to 4pm.

It was a beautiful day to be out the river, and fishermen reported many boats at the public landings on the Satilla River. “We were excited about the turnout, and we saw some beautiful fish on Saturday,” said Satilla Riverkeeper, Laura Early.

Jim Page, Chad Sexton, and Ed Zmarzly from the GA DNR Wildlife Resources Division, Fisheries Management Office in Waycross manned the weigh-in station on Saturday. They were essential in the planning of the tournament. Volunteers from AJ Strickland’s Family, the Pierce County Chamber of Commerce, Satilla River Water Trail, and Satilla Riverkeeper Board of Directors also helped organize the event.

Sixty-seven participants divided up on 29 teams registered for the tournament, and over half of those teams included a youth angler. A few teams trickled in early in the afternoon with their catch, and most fisherman weighed-in in the last hour before weigh-in closed.

More than \$1,000 in cash prizes were awarded to the top catch by weight in each of five categories:

- **Red Myers’ Largest Redbreast** sponsored by *John S. Myers P.C, Attorney at Law, St. Mary’s* paid \$125 to **Colony Pools**. Ryan Clemons and Paul Smith’s winning redbreast sunfish weighed in at 0.71 lbs.
- **Largest Native Catfish** sponsored by *Brantley Telephone Company, Nahunta* paid \$100 to **Team Beverly**. The Eddie and Edwin Beverly Sr.’s winning catfish weighed in at 3.17 lbs. (Flathead catfish were not eligible.)
- **Largest Panfish** (other than Redbreast) sponsored by *Tindall Enterprises, Blackshear* paid \$100 to **Team Mojo**. The team consisted of Scott Thomas and Clint Coleman, and their winning blue gill weighed in at 1.03 lbs.

- **Largest Largemouth Bass** sponsored by Brantley Telephone Company, Nahunta paid \$100 to **Team Stump Nockers**. The father-son team of James and Justin Lee brought in a largemouth bass weighing in at 1.55 lbs.

- **Largest Bowfin (mudfish)** sponsored by the Blackshear Exchange Club, paid \$100 to **Team Stump Nockers**, weighed-in at 2.74 lbs.

'Junior Strickland' Grand Slam Prize sponsored by the A.J. Strickland Family paid \$300 to **Team Stump Nockers**. They also took home 2 rods and reels courtesy of Winge's Bait and Tackle. Their three largest fish in the prize categories above totaled 7.14 lbs.

Largest Redbreast Stringer Prize sponsored by Capt. Bert's Quality Lures, Waycross paid \$300 to **Team Stumpknockers**. Mark Williams and Glen Solomon's three largest redbreasts totaled 1.82 lbs. They also took home 2 rods and reels courtesy of Winge's Bait and Tackle.

Participants took home this year's collectible tournament t-shirt, featuring the largemouth bass. In addition, all youth participants took home a small tackle box for their next fishing adventure.

All participants also received an annual membership to Satilla Riverkeeper, whose mission is to protect, restore and educate about the Satilla River. "The Riverkeeper serves as the eyes and the ears for the river, taking action when there is a threat to the river," says Laura Early, Satilla Riverkeeper. "This isn't just the responsibility of a single organization. The best stewards of the river are those that spend countless hours on the water, know the bounty it provides, and experience the beauty that it holds. We know the value of protecting such a resource, so that our great-grandkids and generations to come, will be able to reel in a beautiful redbreast sunfish one day, too."

The tournament is named after the late and beloved Satilla Riverkeeper board member, Satilla River enthusiast, and Pierce County native, A.J. Strickland.

AJ Strickland's family was integral leading up to the event, and his daughters Shannon Bennett and Sherry Bowen attended the weigh-in on Saturday.

"'Junior Strickland' was a river hero, and a community hero, and we hope to continue to honor and celebrate his legacy through this tournament for years to come," said Laura Early.

This fishing tournament: the Waterkeeper Alliance SPLASH AJ Strickland "King of the River" Fishing Tournament to benefit the Satilla Riverkeeper, was presented nationally by Toyota, and supported locally by I-95 Toyota of Brunswick, Blackshear Exchange Club, Brantley Telephone Company, John S. Myers, P.C., Attorney at Law, Tindall Enterprises, Inc., Capt. Bert's Quality Lures, A.J.'s Girls, Winge's Bait & Tackle, Premier Designs & Consulting, Inc, Jot Em' Down True Value, Bennett, Bennett & Johnson Insurance Agency, Farmers & Builders Supply ACE, Catalyst Cleaning Service, Pierce County IDA, Satilla Feed and Outdoors, Hart Funeral Home, City of Waycross, Coca-Cola, Southeast Adventure Outfitters, Pierce County Chamber of Commerce, Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division, Satilla River Water Trail

The Satilla Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2004 whose mission is to protect, restore, and educate about the unique and beautiful, blackwater Satilla River. To learn more

about the Satilla Riverkeeper, membership opportunities, and how you can get involved with protecting YOUR Satilla River, visit www.SatillaRiverkeeper.org.

Waterkeeper Alliance is a global movement uniting more than 300 Waterkeeper Organizations and Affiliates around the world, focusing citizen action on issues that affect our waterways, from pollution to climate change. The Waterkeeper movement patrols and protects over 2.5 million square miles of rivers, lakes, and coastlines in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Asia, and Africa. For more information please visit: www.waterkeeper.org