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"Rivers Alive on Lake Oconee has become a tradition in our community. Both adults and students look forward to the event, and one school had 87 volunteers this year! Teachers work with the students in advance and after the cleanup to reinforce the learning experience."

-Janet Pearson, Lake Oconee Water Watch



"We had a larger crowd this year and lots of enthusiasm. We shared information about the Ocmulgee River, our area's watershed, and explained how important keeping our rivers free and clean of debris is for everyone. Participants are looking forward to next year."

-Cathy Phillips, Lake Dow Estates Community



To find out more and to volunteer as an Organizer, Participant or Sponsor please visit:

RiversAlive.org

The publication of this document was supported by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and was financed in part through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the provisions of Section 319(h) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended. April 2015.

In 2015 our numbers count . . .

Over the years, Rivers Alive has documented phenomenal numbers for pounds of trash removed, river miles cleaned and the level of participation from hundreds of thousands of volunteers. These big picture numbers help tell the story of how Georgia citizens make a difference, removing one piece of trash at a time.

Now we want to focus on the journey trash takes in Georgia. We know that tons of tinier pieces end up in our oceans and coastal waters but where does it all come from? With your help, we can gain a better understanding of how it travels and where it starts.

So, for 2015, Rivers Alive challenges our cleanup organizers and volunteers to take count and document, as best as possible, the minutia, recording the diversity and variety of trash we remove from our rivers, lakes and coastal waters.

Stay tuned for details so you can help us paint this more precise watershed portrait in 2015. Let's get the WHOLE picture!

2014 Annual Report



Our Mission:

To create awareness of and involvement in the protection of Georgia's water resources through waterway cleanups.

From the Chair of the Rivers Alive Board

With the help of numerous volunteers and sponsors, Rivers Alive, otherwise known as Georgia's Waterway Cleanup, lived up to its mission of creating awareness of and involvement in the preservation of Georgia's water resources. During the past 15 years, over 370 thousand volunteers from all walks of life have contributed almost 1.4 million hours to remove 9.2 million pounds of trash from 26.3 thousand miles of streams, rivers, lakes, beaches and wetlands. That's a tremendous, positive impact on communities and the people who live there as well as the plant and animal life that flourish in these ecosystems. Even in these busy times, the Rivers Alive program shows no signs of slowing down. Commitment to protecting Georgia's valuable water resources grew in 2014, with more volunteers collecting even more trash than the year before.

This annual report highlights the important work done to enhance Georgia's waterways during 2014. The accomplishments made could not have been realized without the dedication of a diverse group of volunteers, including event organizers and Advisory Board members. Our generous corporate and individual sponsors have contributed to keeping this volunteer base strong and to enhancing outreach and education efforts. Throughout the year, the dedicated contributors to Rivers Alive are helping to keep our waterways healthy for today's Georgians and its citizens of tomorrow.

Doug Tulle
Rivers Alive Chair



Not only does this event help clean up our county waterways, it also gives us an opportunity to stress the importance of water conservation and clean, litter-free water."

-Elaine Oakes
Keep Walton Beautiful



The Spotlight is on Yvette Wise of the Town of Braselton

While scouting new areas to clean up, I kept noticing an area across the street from a large distribution center where employees would take breaks to smoke. I stopped to take a closer look because I noticed trash in the bushes along the right of way. I was horrified to see hundreds of cigarette butts, wrappers, and soda cans all over the roadway and right-of-way areas. What was most disturbing was the curb line inlets were practically clogged with butts. And, it drains directly to a tributary stream of Mulberry River! We cleaned up the area and estimated that over 1000 cigarette butts were removed. After the event, I contacted a corporate representative with our results and photos. Within a few weeks the company had designated a smoking/break area on their property with trash and cigarette receptacles, thus eliminating a problem site! This simple act of raising awareness within that company made a huge impact on our local watershed. The employees probably didn't realize that their cigarette butts would end up in the stream. If more people understood how connected we all are to the waterways, maybe we could change behaviors in more places.



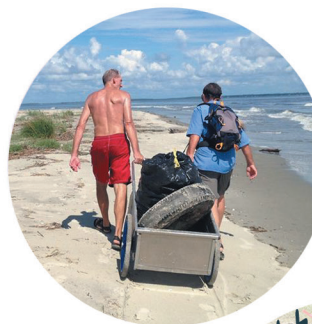
A "No
Littering"
sign!



A love letter
and marriage
proposal!



Bowling
balls?



30,792 cigarettes;
18,916 plastic bottles;
13,546 drink cans;
11,638 glass bottles;
8,162 food wrappers;
7,853 fishing lines;
6,473 plastic bags;
3,875 cups;
3,724 styrofoam blocks;
3,335 straws
3,335 bottle caps
2,507 tires

What did you find?

A Solar
panel!



A giant
twenty bird!



A plastic
dinosaur!



A horse saddle?



Rivers Alive Committee Reports

Education & Messaging

The theme for 2014, "Georgia's Rivers Connect Us," highlighted the many ways we rely on clean water from agriculture to industry and from recreation to personal consumption in our homes and offices. Georgia's environment also depends on clean water and whether it's our coastal marshes and our North Georgia mountain streams or our flora and fauna.

Resources we made available this year:

- Rivers Alive education posters highlighting the various uses of clean water with a classroom activity on the back
- Rivers Alive bookmarks featuring River of Words art and poetry from Georgia students
- Quarterly e-newsletters to keep cleanup organizers and sponsors up-to-date on news and activities

Event Coordination & Outreach

In addition to providing trash bags, Rivers Alive provided reusable gloves through a generous donation. A land and paddle guide as well as other resources, like safety information and waiver forms, were made available for local organizers. The awards ceremony continues to help celebrate the outstanding efforts of Georgia's cleanup organizers. Rivers Alive volunteers joined organized paddle trips around the state promoting cleanups and spreading awareness among other citizens about how every day trash affects our rivers.

Fundraising

100% of state level donations were distributed to support cleanup groups. Groups also rely on local sponsors to provide trash bags, gloves, insect repellent and first aid kits. Some get contributions of refreshments and food. Many find additional funding to purchase extra Rivers Alive T-shirts for their cleanup volunteers.

T-shirts

Once again, our most coveted "thank you" to our volunteers comes in the form of our Rivers Alive t-shirt. Some volunteers have collected all 16 shirts ever produced!

2005-2014 Statistics

