



RIVERS ALIVE

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



"THIS YEAR'S EVENT WAS A SUCCESS BECAUSE WE MADE IT HAPPEN DURING THE PANDEMIC. WITH CAREFUL PLANNING AND SAFE AND CREATIVE PROTOCOLS, WE MANAGED TO COLLECT MORE TRASH IN POUNDAGE THAN LAST YEAR, AND PEOPLE WERE SMILING BEHIND THEIR MASKS. WE'RE HAPPY WE COULD INVIGORATE THE COMMUNITY WITH SOMETHING POSITIVE!"

- NIKKI BELMONTE, CITY OF ROSWELL



OUR MISSION



CREATE AWARENESS OF, AND INVOLVEMENT IN, THE
PROTECTION OF GEORGIA'S WATER RESOURCES
THROUGH WATERWAY CLEANUPS.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you to our sponsors, organizers, and volunteers for continuing to make Rivers Alive a priority during this challenging period.

This year over 10,000 people participated in events, donating over 50,000 hours toward waterway cleanup efforts across Georgia. Your ongoing collective efforts to adapt thru the unprecedented challenges that emerged in 2020, and continue to impact our daily lives, ensure that community members can safely continue to come together and implement proactive measures to keep our waterways healthy.

For cleanups in Fall 2020, Rivers Alive modified our volunteer sponsorship from a t-shirt to a neck gaiter, providing an added safety measure while working outdoors with others. This change also simplified the distribution logistics for organizers, reducing handling and close contact time. On behalf of the Rivers Alive Board, I want to thank our sponsors for their flexibility and understanding. Your contributions ensure we can maintain routine efforts throughout the pandemic.

As we continue to adapt to the changing conditions, I'd like to share some words of wisdom from one of our founding mothers, 1st Second Lady and 2nd First Lady Abigail Adams, "Great difficulties may be surmounted by patience and perseverance."

Your good work is very appreciated!

- Jennifer McCoy
Rivers Alive Chair

ITEM HIGHLIGHTS

5,800

PLASTIC BOTTLES

1,688

GROCERY BAGS

4,314

CIGARETTE BUTTS

1,191

TIRES

3,083

PLASTIC BOTTLE CAPS

3,618

BEVERAGE CANS

UNIQUE FINDS

TIKI LAMP

A ROAD SIGN

CROCK POT

POSTAL MAIL TUB

LOST PUPPY

BOOGIE BOARD



COMMITTEE REPORTS

EDUCATION AND MESSAGING

Rivers Alive cleanup events continued to educate volunteers on Water quality issues in Georgia. The 2020 Theme, “Healthy communities, healthy watersheds,” spread awareness about the connection between human and environmental health. Resources we made available this year:

- Rivers Alive education posters featuring classroom activities adapted from Ocean Conservancy and NOAA’s “Talking Trash & Taking Action” guide to increase student understanding of marine debris.
- Rivers Alive bookmarks featuring River of Words art and poetry from Georgia students.
- Quarterly e-newsletters to keep organizers and sponsors up-to-date on program news and activities.

EVENT COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

This year we provided our local organizers with resources like trash bags, field data forms, waivers, and COVID-19 safety recommendations. Due to the pandemic, the annual awards ceremony was held virtually. The event recognized the outstanding efforts of 2019’s organizers and included acceptance videos from the award winners.

FUNDRAISING

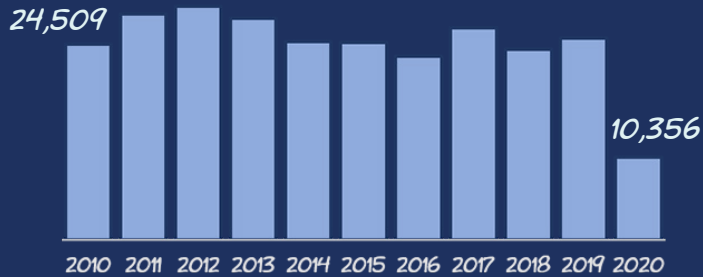
100% of state-level donations were distributed to support cleanup groups. Local sponsors also provided extra trash bags, gloves, first aid kits, and other materials to groups in their community. Additionally, some groups procured contributions of food and other refreshments for their hard-working volunteers.

NECK BUFFS

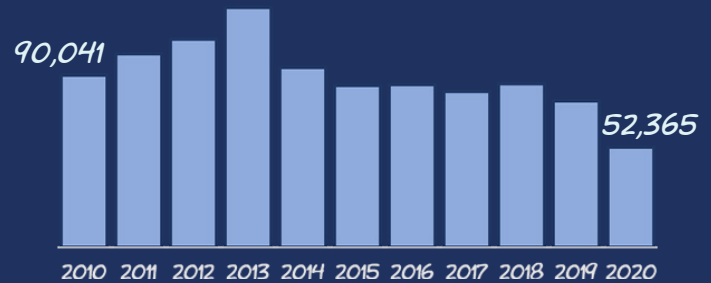
Rivers Alive distributed full neck buffs instead of t-shirts to volunteers. The neck buffs were given as a token of appreciation and worn as a face covering by some volunteers.

CLEANUP STATISTICS

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS



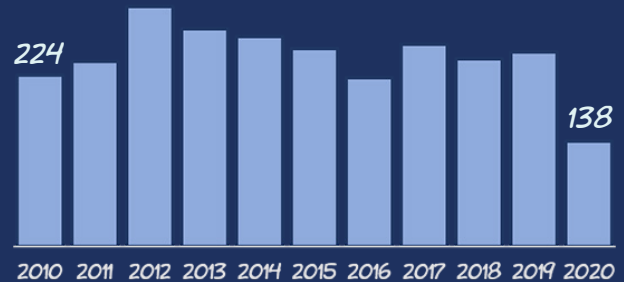
VOLUNTEER HOURS



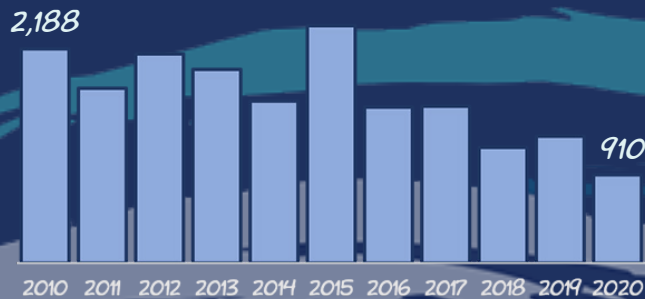
POUNDS OF DEBRIS



NUMBER OF EVENTS



MILES CLEANED



ADAPTING TO CHALLENGES

The 2020 cleanup season was unlike any other. Due to health and safety concerns stemming from the pandemic, large-scale cleanup events could not occur as they usually would. Instead, many events were scaled-down, and organizers created new approaches to continue their cleanup.

Many organizers kept their cleanup effort small and local, recruiting their neighbors or housemates to remove litter from nearby parks. To ensure cleanups met social distancing requirements, some organizers extended their event over the course of a few weeks, held cleanups in multiple locations, and used contactless pickups to distribute cleanup materials. One organizing group even provided volunteers with a gift card instead of an appreciation picnic! Groups who were unable to meet in person held virtual challenges that spread the message of waterway stewardship.

Even when faced with challenges, Rivers Alive organizers are committed to keeping Georgia's waterways clean!



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, HEALTHY WATERSHEDS



"DESPITE SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER ATTENDANCE NUMBERS, THE VOLUNTEERS THAT SHOWED UP TO WORK THE 8 CLEANUP LOCATIONS PULLED OUT AS MUCH TRASH AS THE LAST YEAR'S GROUP." - ALEXA ROBINSON, CITY OF GRIFFIN



TURNING THE TIDE, UNITED WE FLOW

We could not be more appreciative of organizers' and volunteers' commitment to clean waters in 2020! Individuals and groups of volunteers removed nearly 270,800 pounds of debris from 899 miles of waterways! We are proud of the enthusiasm shared by organizers, volunteers, and sponsors who are eager to get outside and care for Georgia's waters.

While 2020 was a challenging year, it taught us valuable lessons on community support that we can carry into 2021. As we flow into a new cleanup season, we anticipate another successful turnout of Rivers Alive events! We are excited to welcome back returning organizers and volunteers and introduce new members to the Rivers Alive community. Although we are uncertain how the upcoming season will look, we are sure that Rivers Alive organizers, volunteers, and partners will continue to care for Georgia's waterways!



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