

Rivers Alive



2021 Annual Report



Photo: Heads Creek Reservoir Cleanup, Griffin

“This cleanup opened the eyes of many of Griffin's citizens to the problems the reservoir is facing. There was a determination that changes should be made to protect the quality of this water body.”
- Alexa Robinson, City of Griffin



Photo: University of West Georgia River Cleanup, Carrollton



Photo: Lake Oconee Water Watch, Greensboro

Our Mission:
Create awareness of,
and involvement in, the
protection of Georgia's
water resources through
waterway cleanups.



Photo: Broad River Cleanup Float, Broad



Photo: Burnt Fork Creek Cleanup, Decatur

Message from the Chair

United We Flow...

In reflecting on another challenging year, I'm thankful for our volunteers, organizers, and sponsors who continue to support maintaining healthy creeks, rivers, and shorelines. Over **9,500 people** collected nearly **346,000 pounds of trash** out of **1,062 miles of waterways**. That's something to celebrate. Your collective efforts benefit everyone in Georgia, beyond each of your local communities. During difficult times, when we are all struggling, coming together to accomplish a task and seeing the immediate impact of your work, setting aside your worries for a couple hours, gaining some control over a problem, and feeling good about your service is powerful.

The team at Rivers Alive thanks each of you for making the time to help clean up the landscape and waterways across Georgia. You are appreciated and valued. As we move forward, with purpose and commitment to do good work, we look forward to another great year on the water with you all. Indeed, United We Flow!

Jennifer McCoy
Rivers Alive Chair

Item Highlights

*Data as of February 17, 2022

6,541

Cigarette Butts

7,154

Foam Pieces

884

Tires

3,943

Plastic Grocery Bags

4,115

Food Wrappers

6,776

Beverage Cans



Photo: Great Oconee Cleanup,
Dublin



Photo: Great Lake Allatoona Cleanup,
Acworth

Unique Finds

Broken model plane

Plastic skull

Old video game cards

Antique steering wheel

Peacock feathers

Committee Reports

Education and Messaging

Rivers Alive cleanups continued to connect and educate citizens throughout Georgia on the importance of water quality. The 2021 theme, “United We Flow,” celebrated the support that Georgia communities have given to both their local waterways and to each other during the past year. Education posters were provided, which featured information about streams and water flow across Georgia's landscape, with lessons adapted from Georgia Adopt-A-Stream's Visual Survey Manual and the Georgia Project WET Urban Watershed Stormwater guide. Volunteers also received bookmarks featuring student art and poetry from GA River of Words. Quarterly e-newsletters were sent to organizers and sponsors with up-to-date news on the program and highlights.

Event Coordination and Outreach

Local organizers were provided with cleanup materials, including trash bags, field data forms, waivers, and COVID-19 safety recommendations. The 2020 Virtual Organizer Celebration was held via Zoom in lieu of the annual awards ceremony and luncheon. The virtual event recognized and celebrated cleanup groups, volunteers, and partners who contributed to Rivers Alive cleanups in 2020.

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 organizers procured food and other refreshments for their hard-working volunteers.

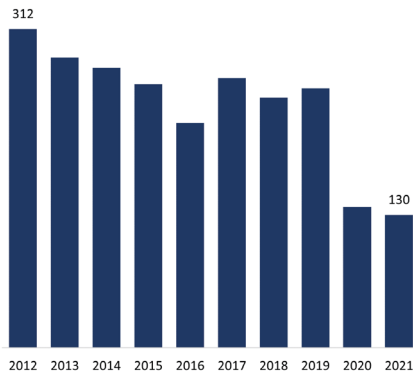
T-Shirts

The Rivers Alive t-shirt made a return this year! Rivers Alive t-shirts are our most coveted “thank you” to our volunteers. This year's design was created by Satisfactory Design in Athens, GA. Over 7,000 t-shirts were produced and distributed to volunteers.

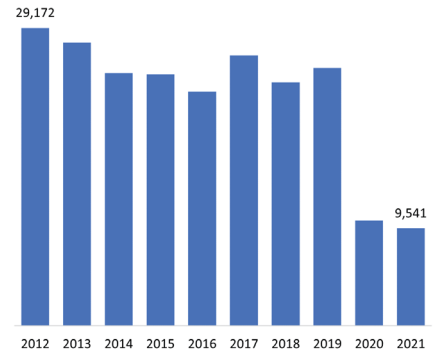
Cleanup Totals Over the Years

*Data as of April 4, 2022

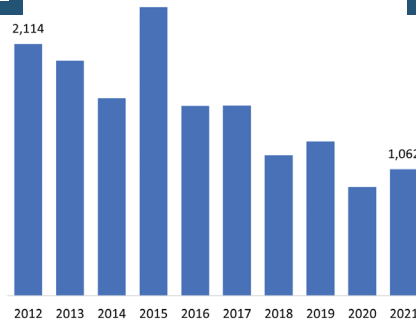
Numbers of Events



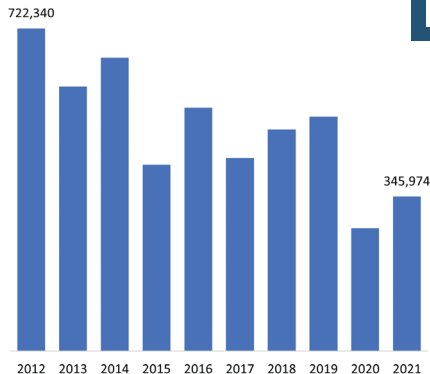
Number of Volunteers



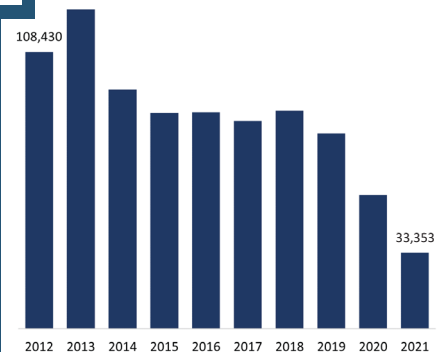
Estimated Miles Cleaned



Pounds of Debris



Volunteer Hours



Nancy Creek Cleanup

Jodi Gilfillan, City of Chamblee

In 2020 and 2021, the City of Chamblee focused its Rivers Alive clean-up efforts on a 10-acre piece of land that includes a portion of Nancy Creek, between North Peachtree Road and North Shallowford Road. Several city departments, including Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and Planning and Development, worked together with the non-profit organization, Keep Chamblee Beautiful to host the event along this stretch of the creek. By working together and using shared resources, the City of Chamblee recruited over 60 volunteers, both years, to clean up this area. The Chamblee staff shared educational materials with the volunteers to take home. Their efforts proved successful, as volunteers pulled out more than 40 tires and 115 bags of trash each year. For the future, the City of Chamblee hopes to remove invasive vines to create better access for volunteers along the creek.

Thank you to the citizens of Chamblee for helping clean and protect Georgia's waterways!



Photo: Nancy Creek Cleanup, Chamblee

United We Flow

Rivers Alive volunteers conducted a total of 33,353 hours of service in 2021, worth over \$950,000 in volunteer dollars!



Photo: Brownie Troop 19789 River Cleanup, Roswell

"In just under 4 hours, 76 volunteers were able to collect 150 bags of litter, 10 tires, a mattress, a basketball goal, scrap metal, a car battery, laptop, & other random refuse!"

- Stephanie Marquardt, Great Gwinnett Wetlands

"We spent 1 hour combing the creek bank for trash after a heavy rain. In the span of only about a quarter-mile, the scouts collected 133 pounds of trash to protect the wildlife that lives in the creek and further downstream."

- Sarah Agurkis, Brownie Troop 19789

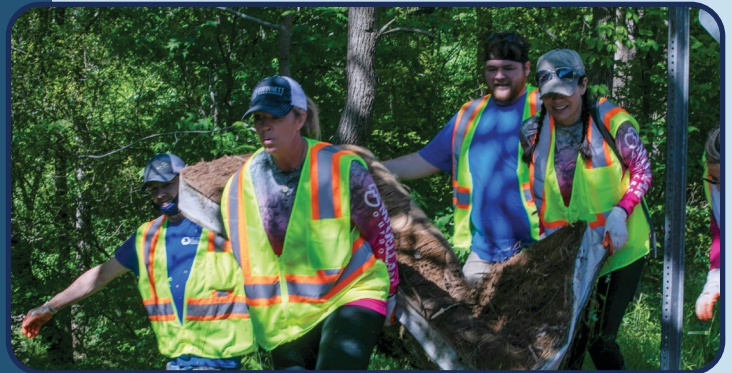


Photo: Great Gwinnett Wetlands Cleanup, Lawrenceville

Looking Ahead to 2022

River Rules



Photo: Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited

In spite of the ongoing pandemic, our wonderful organizers and volunteers came together in 2021 to make a lasting impact on our waterways! Nearly 346,000 lbs of trash and debris were collected along 1,062 miles of rivers, lakes, streams, beaches, and wetlands. These numbers reflect strong growth from the previous year, and we are so grateful for the commitment shown during these cleanup efforts.

As we jump into the 2022 cleanup season, it is important to follow the “rules of the river”, discovering new paths along the 70,150 miles of rivers and streams, making positive ripples and waves with fellow volunteers, and getting immersed in the beauty of our state. We hope you will continue to support Rivers Alive and join in on the fun this fall!

The river is calling.

Thank you to our 2021 Sponsors

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participant, or sponsor please visit
RiversAlive.Georgia.Gov



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