

# RIVERS ALIVE

## Super Volunteer

DEFENDING GEORGIA'S WATERWAYS  
ONE CLEANUP AT A TIME!



NOT ALL HEROES  
WEAR CAPES



"PEOPLE LOVED THE SUPER HERO THEMED T-SHIRTS! IT REALLY MADE THEM FEEL PROUD OF THEMSELVES FOR DOING SOMETHING GOOD FOR THEIR WATER AND THEIR COMMUNITY." - ALEXA ROBINSON, CITY OF GRIFFIN



"LOCALS AND SEVERAL STUDENTS FROM OUT OF TOWN WERE EXPOSED TO EXACTLY HOW MUCH TRASH MAKES IT ON TO OUR BEACHES." - LUKE ROBERSON, UGA MARINE EXTENSION AND GA SEA GRANT



"STUDENTS WERE EXCITED ABOUT CLEANING UP THE TRASH IN OUR WATERSHED AND WILL BE MORE LIKELY TO SPREAD THEIR AWARENESS TO THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY." - TABITHA POTTER, DISCOVERY HIGH SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB

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**GEORGIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION



# ANNUAL REPORT

2019



## OUR MISSION

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

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RIVERBANK . . .

**HOLY PLASTIC POLLUTION! OUR 2019 RIVER CLEANUPS SAVED THE DAY!**

RIVERS ALIVE ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS DID IT AGAIN. THEY CAME TOGETHER IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND CLEANED UP OVER 1,200 MILES OF GEORGIA'S WATERWAYS IN 2019. THE DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT OF OUR PARTICIPANTS CONTINUES TO INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE ME. OUR STATEWIDE RIVER CLEANUP PROGRAM IS NOW IN ITS 22ND YEAR. MANY OF OUR CURRENT ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS GREW UP HELPING WITH CLEANUPS IN THEIR HOMETOWNS AND CONTINUE TO GIVE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO PROTECTING LOCAL WATERWAYS.

THIS IMPORTANT WORK NEVER ENDS. TRASH AND DEBRIS CONTINUE TO ACCUMULATE IN OUR CREEKS AND RIVERS AND, SLOWLY OVER TIME, FLOW DOWNSTREAM TO OUR OCEANS. PLASTIC BOTTLES, BAGS, AND PACKAGING FLOAT IN THE WATER AND BREAK DOWN INTO MICROPLASTICS WHICH ARE INGESTED BY AQUATIC ANIMALS AND BECOME PART OF THE FOOD CHAIN. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE BRING OUR CHILDREN TO RIVERS ALIVE CLEANUPS SO THEY CAN LEARN TO LOVE AND PROTECT THEIR LOCAL WATERS AND CARRY ON THIS VITAL NECESSARY TRADITION. SO THEY CAN SEE WHERE TRASH ENDS UP IF NOT RECYCLED AND DISPOSED OF PROPERLY. SO THEY TOO CAN INFLUENCE OTHERS TO CHANGE BAD HABITS AND BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION, NOT THE PROBLEM.

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR ORGANIZERS, VOLUNTEERS, AND SPONSORS FOR LEADING THE WAY!**

GINA ROGERS  
RIVERS ALIVE CHAIR





# ITEMS FOUND

**2,098**

TIRES

**12,973**

BEVERAGE  
CANS

**7,879**

GLASS  
BOTTLES

**4,023**

PLASTIC  
GROCERY BAGS

**16,217**

PLASTIC  
BOTTLES

**29,033**

CIGARETTE  
BUTTS

SOME UNIQUE ITEMS INCLUDED A CAMEL POOL TOY, LAWN MOWER,  
LITTLE LEAGUE TROPHY, SATELLITE DISH, AND SCOOTERS!



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## EDUCATION & MESSAGING

FOR YEARS, RIVERS ALIVE HAS ASSEMBLED VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE STATE TO DEFEND GEORGIA'S WATERWAYS FROM DEBRIS AND OTHER POLLUTANTS. THE THEME FOR 2019, "**NOT ALL HEROES WEAR CAPES**", CELEBRATES THE VOLUNTEERS WHO SUIT UP AND ANSWER THE CALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITHIN THEIR WATERSHED. RESOURCES WE MADE AVAILABLE THIS YEAR:

- RIVERS ALIVE **EDUCATION POSTER** INCLUDED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES ADAPTED FROM **OCEAN CONSERVANCY AND NOAA'S TALKING TRASH + TAKING ACTION GUIDE** TO INCREASE STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF MARINE DEBRIS SOURCES, COMPOSITION, AND DECOMPOSITION.
- 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 NEWS AND ACTIVITIES.

## EVENT COORDINATION & OUTREACH

THIS YEAR WE PROVIDED OUR LOCAL ORGANIZERS WITH RESOURCES LIKE **TRASH BAGS** AND **FIELD DATA FORMS**, AS WELL AS **SAFETY INFORMATION** AND **WAVER FORMS**. THE ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY CONTINUES TO CELEBRATE THE OUTSTANDING EFFORTS OF CLEANUP ORGANIZERS. RIVERS ALIVE STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS JOINED ORGANIZED **PADDLE TRIPS** AROUND THE STATE **PROMOTING CLEANUPS** AND **SPREADING AWARENESS** AMONG CITIZENS ABOUT HOW TRASH AFFECTS OUR RIVERS.

## FUNDRAISING

100% OF STATE LEVEL DONATIONS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO SUPPORT CLEANUP GROUPS. HOWEVER, GROUPS STILL RELY ON **LOCAL SPONSORS** TO PROVIDE EXTRA TRASH BAGS, GLOVES, FIRST AID KITS, AND OTHER MATERIALS. ADDITIONALLY, SOME GROUPS PROCURED CONTRIBUTIONS OF FOOD AND OTHER REFRESHMENTS FOR THEIR **HARD WORKING VOLUNTEERS**. MANY ALSO FOUND ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO PURCHASE **EXTRA RIVERS ALIVE T-SHIRTS** TO ENSURE THAT ALL CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS RECEIVED A SHIRT.

## T-SHIRTS

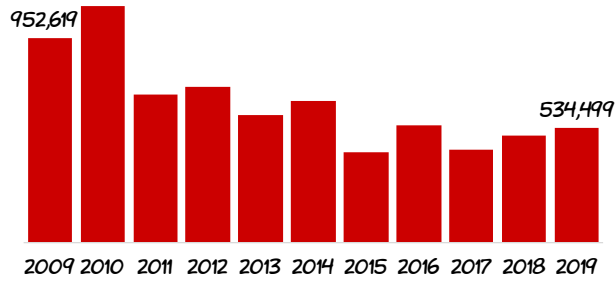
THE BEST WAY WE CAN SHOW OUR APPRECIATION TO VOLUNTEERS IS THROUGH OUR **RIVERS ALIVE T-SHIRT!** SOME OF OUR VOLUNTEERS OWN ALL **21 DESIGNS** THAT HAVE BEEN PRODUCED OVER THE YEARS. THIS YEAR'S DESIGN WAS CREATED BY ARTIST, **AMY PODONSKY**. AMY'S DESIGN WAS PRINTED ON OVER 10,000 SHIRTS!



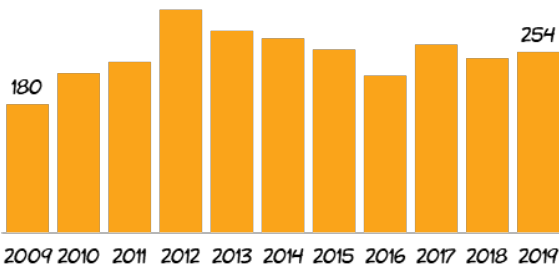
# CLEANUP STATS

## 2009 - 2019

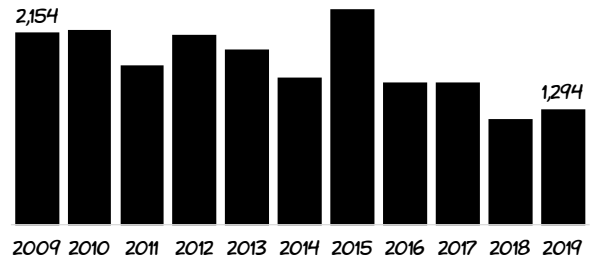
POUNDS OF DEBRIS



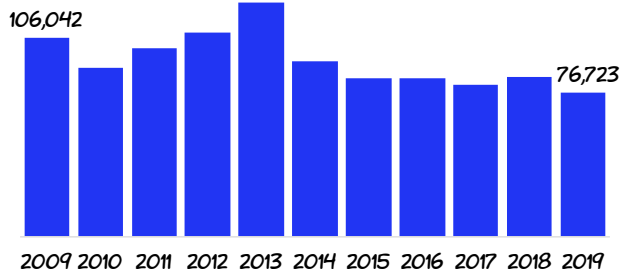
NUMBER OF EVENTS



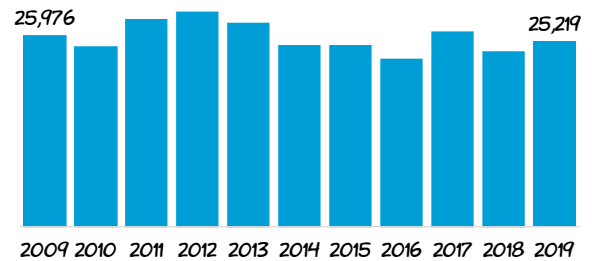
MILES CLEANED



VOLUNTEER HOURS



NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS



# **IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

## **CITY OF ALPHARETTA AND ALPHARETTA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

ON AN EARLY SEPTEMBER MORNING, THE CITY OF ALPHARETTA AND ALPHARETTA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION HOSTED THEIR 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL CLEANUP EVENT, ALPHARETTA RIVERS ALIVE. 142 VOLUNTEERS ASSEMBLED AT ROCK MILL PARK TO REMOVE LITTER AND DEBRIS. THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF FOUR HOURS, 2,000 POUNDS OF DEBRIS WERE REMOVED FROM THREE WETLAND AREAS, TWO BIORETENTION AREAS AND SIX MILES OF ROADWAYS. VOLUNTEER EFFORTS INCLUDED LITTER PICKUP, NATIVE PLANTINGS, STORM DRAIN STENCILING, AND DISTRIBUTING OUTREACH DOOR HANGERS HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF PICKING UP PET WASTE.

AS A "THANK YOU" FOR THEIR CONSERVATION EFFORTS, VOLUNTEERS RECEIVED THIS YEAR'S RIVERS ALIVE T-SHIRT, AND WITH LOCAL SUPPORT FROM DATASCAN AND THE GREAT HARVEST BREAD COMPANY, THE ORGANIZING GROUP WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE AN ASSORTMENT OF BREAKFAST PASTRIES ALONG WITH TOOLS, PLANTS, AND SIGNAGE FOR THE EVENT!

THANK YOU, CITY OF ALPHARETTA AND ALPHARETTA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP, CONTINUOUS SUPPORT, AND LOYAL STEWARDSHIP TO OUR WATERWAYS!





# ***SUPER VOLUNTEERS***



"RIVERS ALIVE IS A TRADITION IN OUR COMMUNITY. IT IS ALWAYS A WELL ATTENDED EVENT AND INSPIRES VOLUNTEERS TO DO ADDITIONAL CLEANUPS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR." - STACEE FARRELL, KEEP ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY BEAUTIFUL



"WE GOT PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT THEIR ROLE, WHERE THEY LIVE AND TRAVEL TO AND HOW FAR REACHING THE IMPACTS ARE WHEN LITTER ACCUMULATES IN OUR WATERWAYS." - MIKE KAHLE, COBB COUNTY WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP



"THE STUDENTS GOT TO SEE FIRST HAND THE IMPACT THAT THEY CAN MAKE."  
- LINDSEY SANDERS, YOUTH LEADERSHIP HENRY CLEANUP EVENT

# 2020 VISION

REFLECTING ON 2019, THE CLEANUP SEASON PROVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL ONCE AGAIN. RIVERS ALIVE SAW AN INCREASED TURNOUT OF VOLUNTEERS AND NUMBER OF CLEANUP EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. WITH MORE BOOTS ON THE GROUND, MORE TRASH AND DEBRIS WERE REMOVED FROM 1,294 MILES OF WATERWAYS - AN IMPRESSIVE 534,499 POUNDS! WE ARE CERTAIN THAT NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT THE HARD WORK AND DEDICATION OF VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANIZERS THAT PUT FORTH THIS EFFORT, AND THE SPONSORS THAT HELPED SUPPORT CLEANUPS.

USING OUR 2020 VISION FOR THE YEAR, WE WANT TO KNOW, "HOW DO YOU ENVISION A CLEANER FUTURE"? RIVERS ALIVE ENCOURAGES EVERYONE TO STRIVE FOR "HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND HEALTHY WATERSHEDS". WE HOPE TO SEE NEW AND RETURNING ORGANIZERS AND VOLUNTEERS, CONTINUED OUTREACH AND EDUCATION ABOUT OUR WATER RESOURCES, PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, AND THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF GEORGIA'S WATERWAYS. WE HOPE YOU JOIN US FOR ANOTHER YEAR OF RIVERS ALIVE!



TO LEARN MORE OR TO VOLUNTEER  
AS AN ORGANIZER, PARTICIPANT, OR  
SPONSOR PLEASE VISIT  
[RIVERSALIVE.GEORGIA.GOV](http://RIVERSALIVE.GEORGIA.GOV)

# Rivers Alive



GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION  
2 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DRIVE, SUITE 1462 EAST  
ATLANTA, GA 30334  
404-651-8514

# THANK YOU!

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