

A stylized landscape illustration on a light blue background. In the top left, a dark blue abstract shape represents a cloud or land. Below it, a yellow circle represents the sun. In the center, two brown lines form two overlapping mountain peaks. Below the mountains, two dark blue wavy lines represent a river. The text 'RIVERS ALIVE' is centered below the river, and '2023 Annual Report' is centered further down. In the bottom right, there are more dark blue abstract shapes representing land or clouds.

RIVERS ALIVE

**2023**  
**Annual Report**



## OUR MISSION:

Create awareness of and involvement in the protection of Georgia's water resources through water way cleanups.

"The girls love helping their community. We know how important it is to keep the waterways clean. If we don't do our part, who will help the wildlife & provide clean water that we need to live?"

-Karen Bell, "Girl Scouts Troop 30002" Cleanup with Keep Liberty Beautiful



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

“Rivers Alive celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 2023 as Georgia’s annual volunteer waterway cleanup program! Our 25th year resulted in 165 cleanup events, 9,851 volunteers, 30,890 volunteer hours, 5,537 bags collected containing 331,705 pounds of trash and debris, and 1,212 miles cleaned! We even ushered in a brand-new look for Rivers Alive in the form of a logo update thanks to the creative minds at Frederick Swanston, with feedback from the Rivers Alive staff and advisory board!

It’s our organizers, volunteers, and sponsors who have made the last 25 years so successful. On behalf of the board and staff, we want to thank you for your continued support and “boots on the ground” commitment to keeping our waterways clean and healthy for this generation and the next. You are so very much appreciated.

Be sure to join us for our 2024 season as we explore the “ABC’s” of waterway cleanups. We’ll see you on the river!”

Sincerely,

Meagan Whitehead  
Rivers Alive Chair

# 2023 DATA

## Legend

0-49 Volunteers



50-99 Volunteers



100-199 Volunteers



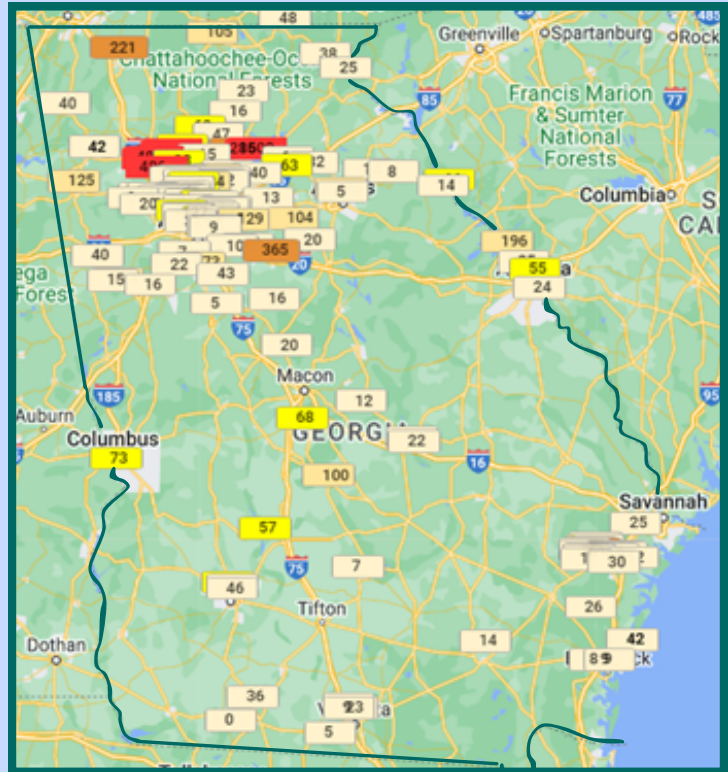
200-299 Volunteers



300+ Volunteers

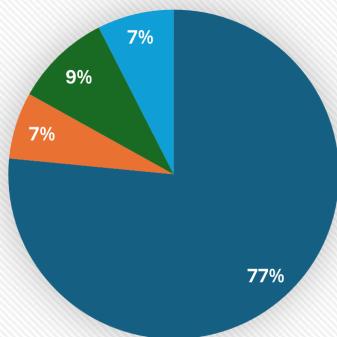


## Map of 2023 Cleanup Locations



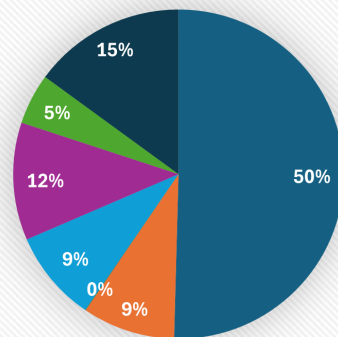
Single-use is defined as materials produced for only one usage. **77% of trash collected in 2023 was single-use.** Multi-use materials are produced for multiple uses, while mixed-use can be either/or.

## 2023 Trash Collected by Usage



■ Single-Use ■ Multi-Use ■ Mixed-Use ■ Unknown

## 2023 Trash by Material



■ Plastic ■ Foam ■ Wood ■ Glass ■ Metals ■ Paper/Cardboard ■ Mixed/Other

# ITEM HIGHLIGHTS



2,166 Plastic Caps

5,701 Food Wrappers

2,822 Plastic Grocery Bags

5,259 Cigarette Butts

5,525 Beverage Cans

5,056 Glass Bottles

8,567 Plastic Bottles



## UNIQUE FINDS

- Toilet
- Vacuum
- Cowboy Boot
- Creepy Doll Head
- Suitcase Full of Clothes
- Bench Seat from a Car
- 10 Rupees (Indian Currency)
- Oversized Ceremonial Check
- BIRD Scooter from Metro ATL



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## EDUCATION & MESSAGING

A major focus in 2023 was developing a new brand identity for Rivers Alive that celebrates the fun, energy and purpose community members bring their waterway cleanup efforts. Guided by experts from Frederick Swanston, a new logo was designed. The team also explored logo placement and usage for the vibrant new look by featuring the logo on the volunteer t-shirt and education materials. Thanks again to the amazing folks at Frederick Swanston for donating their time and skills! We LOVE our new look and learned a lot from working with them on this project.

## EVENT COORDINATION & OUTREACH

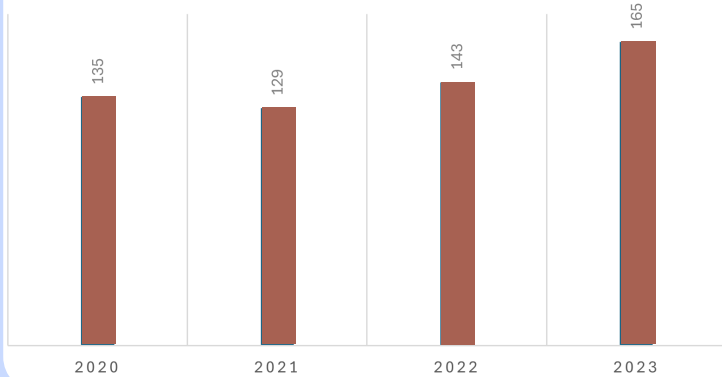
Organizers from around Georgia were impressed with the redesigned Rivers Alive website introduced in 2023. The website was more user-friendly and provided all the information to have a successful cleanup. Organizers were provided with cleanup materials including: sign-in sheets, volunteer waiver forms, promotional materials, field data forms, t-shirts, and COVID-19 cleanup guidelines. The 2023 Annual Awards Ceremony Luncheon was held in person at Park Tavern. This event recognized and celebrated cleanup groups, volunteers and partners who contributed to Rivers Alive cleanups in 2023.

## FUNDRAISING

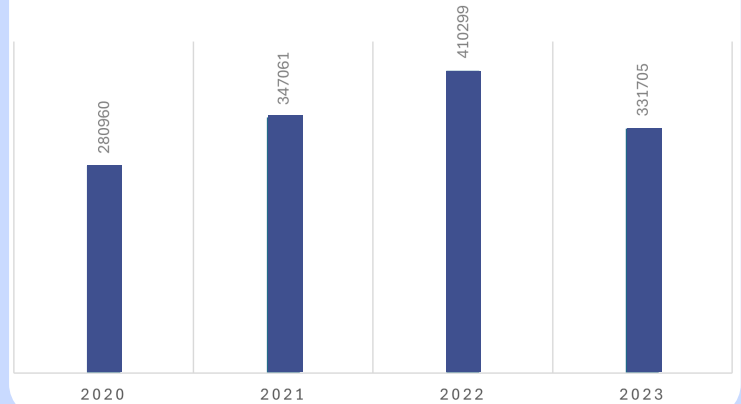
100% of state level donations were distributed to support cleanup groups. Local sponsors also provided extra trash bags, gloves, first aid kits and other materials. Additionally, some groups procured contributions of food and other refreshments for their hard working volunteers. Many also found additional funding to purchase extra Rivers Alive t-shirts to ensure that all cleanup volunteers received a shirt.

# THROUGH THE YEARS

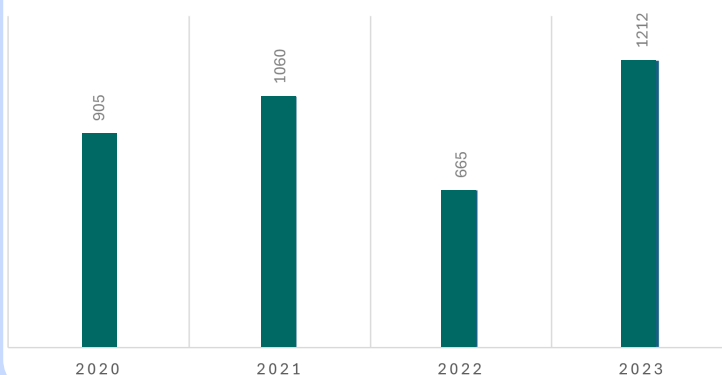
# OF EVENTS HELD



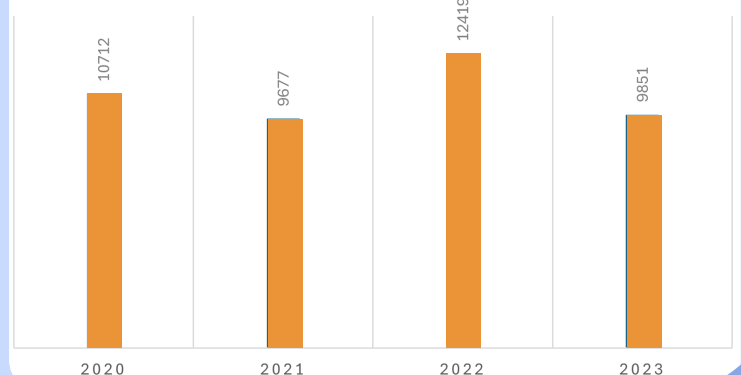
LBS. OF TRASH



# OF MILES CLEANED



# OF VOLUNTEERS



# MASTER NATURALISTS MT. TABOR PARK CLEANUP

Under the organization of Mary Carol Sheffield, Master Naturalists from Cobb, Douglas and Paulding counties gathered at Mt. Tabor Park in Paulding County to conduct a river cleanup and Adopt-A-Stream training event.

“We used our event to help train Master Naturalists and share an effective tool for water quality that they could replicate with their groups. Included were instructors from Georgia Highlands College, active master gardener volunteers from several counties, Parks and Recreations employees from two counties, a Chattahoochee Nature Center employee, and Scouting volunteers. We paired the Rivers Alive cleanup with our day training in certifying volunteers in Adopt-A-Stream Macroinvertebrate Monitoring, giving them the tools to monitor their local waterways.



Our event was a success in multiple ways! We were able to be visible as a cleanup in Mt. Tabor Park as other park users were there. We chatted with them about the goals of Rivers Alive, and it was a very visible activity within the park. We cleaned a multitude of areas, and our participants learned about how litter lands in waterways!” - Mary Carol Sheffield

# RIVER RULES

“Students gave up a free period in their school day to come and spend time clearing trash from the creek. They willingly crawled along the banks trying to collect any piece of trash they saw. They were happy and enthusiastic to be working to make their creek a cleaner place.”

-Kelly Mandy, “Environment Club Cleanup” with Marist High School



**River Alive volunteers conducted a total of 30,890 hours of service in 2023, worth over \$982,300 in volunteer dollars!**



“Everyone enjoyed being in the creek on a pretty Sunday afternoon and were very happy to fill their bags. Having a new group attend continues to spread the word in the community about Rivers Alive and the importance of looking after our creeks and rivers in our neighborhoods.”

-Gavin MacDonald, “Burnt Fork Creek at Pangborn P&T Club” with Boy Scout Troop 103

# FLOWING INTO 2024!

The 25th year of Rivers Alive proved to be another success as our volunteers, organizers and sponsors rose to the occasion - holding more cleanup events and cleaning more miles in 2023 than in the previous 3 years! This accumulated in **166 TONS** of trash and debris removed from our waterways across the state.

While we celebrate the accomplishments made in our silver jubilee year, we look towards the future of Rivers Alive - as we recognize this important work is never finished. Trash and debris will continue to accumulate in our waterways and riparian zones, breaking down into microplastics, releasing chemical toxins, physically degrading wildlife habitat, impairing our drinking water and overall community and ecological health. This year, we're getting back to the basics and exploring "the ABC's of waterway cleanups."

We encourage you to not only stay involved in actively helping restore and protect the beauty of our 70,150 miles of rivers and streams, but to **spread awareness!** Invite your family, friends, neighbors and children to participate in environmental stewardship, education and community building in the spirit of loving and protecting our water resources.

Thank you to our volunteers, organizers and sponsors. Your hard work, dedication and enthusiasm are what makes Rivers Alive a success for 25 years and counting! -Rivers Alive Staff

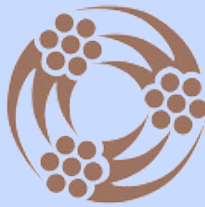
# THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 SPONSORS



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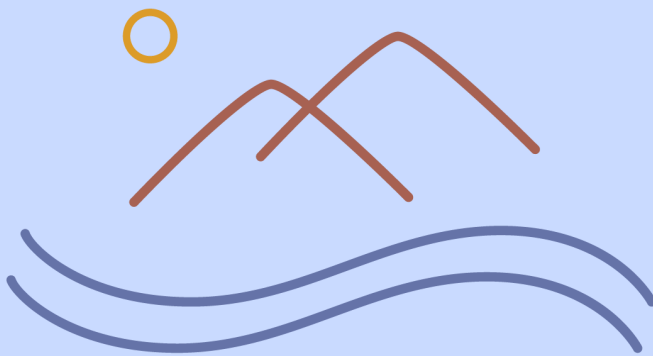
American Water Works Association

**Additional Support From:**

Engineering 303 LLC / Frito-Lay / Nutter & Associates



To learn more or to volunteer as an organizer,  
participant or sponsor - please visit  
[RiverAlive.Georgia.Gov](http://RiverAlive.Georgia.Gov)



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ALIVE

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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 Sections 319(b) of the Federal Water Pollution Act, as amended.