

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632
850-290-2350

wwalswatershed@gmail.com
www.wwals.net

WWALS is an IRS 501(c)(3)
nonprofit charity est. June 2012.

Mission: WWALS advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.



Earth Day Cleanup at Knights Ferry, Withlacoochee River: WWALS, Georgia Power, and Valdosta, April 18, 2020

Hahira, Georgia, March 4, 2020 — Celebrate the [fiftieth Earth Day](#) by helping clean up Knights Ferry Boat Ramp, Saturday morning, April 18, 2020. Afterwards, those who want to can paddle with us down the Withlacoochee River to Nankin Boat Ramp, cleaning up on the water and when we get to Nankin. This event is the first ever sponsored by WWALS, Georgia Power, the City of Valdosta, and Brooks County, Georgia.



Photo: John S. Quarterman for WWALS, [Knights Ferry Boat Ramp, June 16, 2019](#)

“Through this clean up effort we think we’ve found a way to create synergy around environmental stewardship with groups such as ‘Citizens of Georgia Power.’ WWALS and the City of Valdosta to make sure our waterways are clean and also make sure the public has access to the area’s wonderful natural resources such as the Withlacoochee River,” said Joe Brownlee, Southwest Regional Director for Georgia Power.

Citizens
of Georgia Power

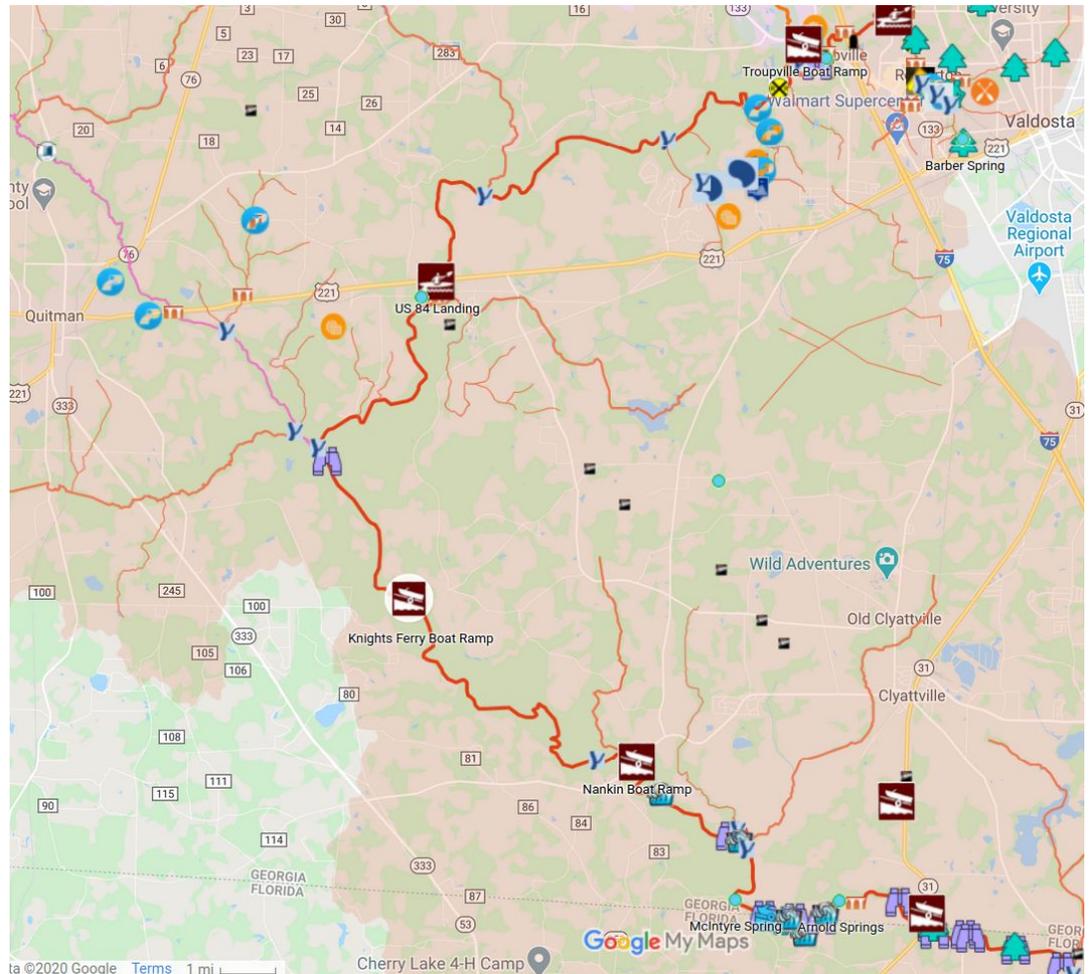


The cleanup is free and starts at 8 AM, Saturday, April 18, 2020. The site is [Knights Ferry Boat Ramp](#), 6499 Knights Ferry Rd, Valdosta, GA 31601, in Lowndes County, Georgia. From I-75 Southbound, take Exit 16, turn right onto US 84, then left onto Rocky Ford Road, then right onto Knights Ferry Road, and continue to the end of the road. From I-75 Northbound, Exit 11 is more complicated but quicker.

“We’ll bring as many participants as we can, and I’ll be promoting this event on my radio station, Talk 92.1 FM,” said Valdosta Mayor Scott James Matheson.

VALDOSTA
A City Without Limits

The paddle is free to WWALS members, and \$10 per person for non-members. At 10 AM we'll shuttle most vehicles down to Nankin Boat Ramp, with everybody piling into a few cars to return to Knights Ferry. We'll start paddling at 11 AM. The paddle is 6.6 miles, so even with dawdling to clean up, it should take about 3.5 hours, leaving plenty of time before dark to clean up at Nankin. If you don't have a boat, let us know in advance, and we may be able to provide one.

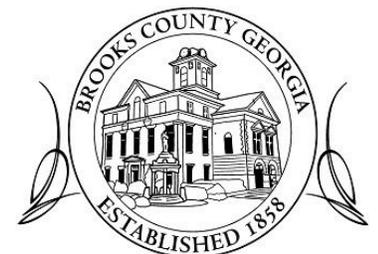


“WWALS welcomes this widespread cooperation about our rivers. Maybe we can turn this into a series, with the next cleanup and paddle in Florida,” said Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman.



If your city, county, company, or other organization would like to co-sponsor this cleanup and paddle, let us know. Co-sponsoring can mean anything from helping get the word out to financial contributions. And new co-sponsors will be a good reason for more press releases.

“We would be pleased to co-sponsor and assist with promoting the event on our Brooks County FB page, and to recruit some participation to represent us,” said Jessica J. McKinney, Brooks County Administrator.



“Like our BIG Little River Paddle Race fundraiser coming up the following Saturday, this Knights Ferry event, like all WWALS cleanups and paddles, is primarily an opportunity to get out on our rivers and leave them cleaner than we found them,” said WWALS Outings Chair Bobby McKenzie.

We will have a table of WWALS materials, including information about our advocacy, which we consider a positive thing. Our co-sponsors are aware that participation in such events does not mean that WWALS will not continue to oppose some of their policies or actions; nor does it mean that we might not pursue litigation some time in the future. We will answer questions about any topic relevant to our outings or advocacy, and you can ask questions of the co-sponsors, too. But this day is primarily for everyone to enjoy while cleaning up one of our rivers.

“We hope to be able to take down [our Caution signs for bacterial levels](#) before then. Thanks to WWALS and other testing by the city of Valdosta, Lowndes County, and three Florida agencies, now we know when our rivers are clean and when they are not. And we’re narrowing down the sources of contamination. No, the recent contamination has not been coming from Valdosta,” said WWALS Testing Committee Chair Suzy Hall.



Both Knights Ferry and Nankin Boat Ramps are on the [WWALS Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail](#), with two dozen landings on two tea-colored blackwater rivers in two states. Thanks to Lowndes County Public Works for the water trail road signs in Lowndes County.

“We will reprint and replant our [pair of metal Water Trail signs at Knights Ferry](#) before the cleanup. And maybe all this good activity at Knights Ferry will convince people to stop stealing our signs!” said WWALS Water Trails Committee Chair Dan Phillips.

Backup: In case of low or high water, weather, or (heaven forbid) bacterial contamination, we will have to cancel.

“On our website are many opportunities to sponsor

WWALS events, water trail signs, and brochures, or water quality test kits, or to become a member. Materials and advocacy and staff time cost money, and we hope our outings and advocacy benefit you, so maybe you would like to help,” said WWALS Executive Director Gretchen Quarterman.

Contact: Bobby McKenzie, 808-445-4503, chevy752001@yahoo.com

John S. Quarterman, Suwannee Riverkeeper®

WWALS Watershed Coalition

www.wwals.net

contact@suwanneeriverkeeper.org

850-290-2350

229-242-0102

PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632

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