



Frank Johnson, *photo page 5*, recently provided the museum archives a copy of the article, *left*, *Withlacoochee River Coral* by Betty M. James from the August 1993 issue of **Rock and Gem** magazine. This article gives scientific information but also lets one understand the protocols of organized collecting on private property. It also covers the differences, at least at that time, between Lowndes County and Brooks County considering harvesting coral. The coral is not mined as it is on the surface. Buffalo, NY residents were among the collectors.

### *Below and opposite right:* Collecting Coral

Earlier this decade we at the museum decided we would chase down the stories of “Glowing Rocks” in the Withlacoochee River. The museum would need samples to exhibit. Probably the first specific information we found in 2012 was from this forum post, *below*, it in 2011. We could not currently find it to give “David” more specific credits. The “digforcrystals” website is associated with The Mineral Gallery, 155 Mill Road, McDonough, GA 30253, it inside Peachtree Antique Center. Email to [rodney@digforcrystals.com](mailto:rodney@digforcrystals.com).

“On Thursday December 30, 2010 I was pretty ambitious and drove to Valdosta, GA to the Withlacoochee River. I've wanted to go for some time but the timing really has to be right. You need a relatively warm day, plenty of time and you need the river to be at extreme low flows for a period of time to be able to see the coral along the bottom. Usually by the end of November the river is way up but this year there has been an extended dry spell in this part of Georgia which worked well for me.

I was not expecting there to be so much coral or to be so big. I tried to pick one up off the bottom the size of a beach ball but had to let it go when I realized it was sinking my boat. I would say I needed a bigger boat but in many places there isn't enough water to float one especially with much of a load. I had planned on paddling 2.8 miles downstream but made it less than one. I came across a large sand bar covered in agatized coral and spend most of my time collecting there. I also realized that if I went below this area I wouldn't be able to get the boat back upstream without some serious effort. I had to get out and wade about 100 feet at the last section before the boat ramp so that I could pull the boat up through the shallows and current.

The coral pieces on the bar were highly polished from the sand and current. There were a large number of unbroken heads as well as in the surrounding water. Many of the specimens were of poor quality but a large number were well agatized with some having the hollow geode sections. It appears that the coral is contained in the sandy banks of the river and are released into the stream as the banks erode during high flow periods.”

**From forum post on [digforcrystals.net](http://digforcrystals.net), dated Jan. 5, 2011 by user David.**