

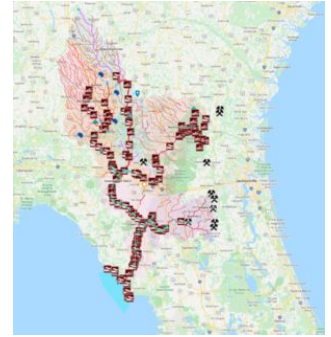
WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.

the WATERKEEPER® Alliance Member
for the Suwannee River Basin as



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November 2020 Tannin Times

WWALS Biota November 2020: Remembering biota past

In both Mesoamerican indigenous cultures and European Christian traditions, late autumn is a time when the dead are remembered, as seen in the Dia de los Muertos in Mexico and All Souls Day in many other western countries. It seems fitting, then, as November comes in and autumn is felt across the coastal plain, that we consider biota past.

Limestone underlies much of the WWALS watersheds and is visible as karst banks along many of the region's rivers. This rock is formed from skeletal fragments and waste products of ancient marine organisms, such as corals and mollusks, that accumulated over eons at the bottom of the shallow seas that covered much of the area for millennia. Pressure converted this debris to stone, comprised largely of calcium carbonate. Acidic water has dissolved channels in this soft stone, creating the incredible, Swiss cheese embankments along the lower Alapaha, Withlacoochee and middle Suwannee Rivers.



Mollusk shell imprint in karst formation along Withlacoochee River—photo by Bret Wagenhorst

If you look closely at the karst, you may find fossilized mollusks or imprints of their shells exposed on the surface—remembrances of past marine biota. As you paddle the WWALS rivers this November, remember the dead organisms that contributed to the stone wonders you see around you and count your blessings that in these COVID times, you are still alive to see them. —Bret Wagenhorst

3rd Annual Boomerang Winner is Jackson Buttery from Tallahassee: 1hr. 16 min. 42 secs.

We had [26 paddlers in 17 boats and at least 40 people in attendance this year, with](#) lots of new faces. The winner drove up from Tallahassee. Plus the number of vendors has grown, and we had a fourth outfitter join us at the ramp, along with more donations and sponsors this year from Olympia Bend and Life Outdoors and SBMS CrossFit. Considering the coronavirus and all, the Boomerang had a stronger showing this year, plus more vendors and a fourth outfitter, Madison Outdoor Adventures, along with Banks Lake Outdoors, NWXpeditions, and VSU Core. New sponsors included Olympia Bend, Life Outdoors and SBMS CrossFit. Thanks to those who cleaned up before, and for safety duties to Dan Phillips at the final turnaround and to Nathan Carter at the shoals.

Kayak Raffle Tickets Available

Just in time for holiday giving, [win a kayak by getting a raffle ticket](#) for \$5 or five tickets for \$20. Drawing is December 12, 2020, for an Emotion Stealth 11 sit-on-top kayak with paddle (\$600 value). It would be exceptionally helpful if everyone would get a ticket to support WWALS' education and advocacy, and you could win the kayak!



Kayak Raffle
Drawing - December 12, 2020
Emotion Stealth 11 Sit-On-Top Kayak with Carlsle Paddle
\$600.00 value
Suggested Donation \$5.00 for one ticket, \$20.00 for five tickets

#GeorgiaGives - December 1, 2020

November is our month of thankful reflection. We are thankful for all of you who give generously of your time and money. 2020 has been a challenging year, and we appreciate you all. It is also "Georgia Gives" Month, and we hope that you all will make a donation to either our general fund or one of our special projects at <https://www.gagives.org/organization/Wwals-Watershed-Coalition>. We need you all year round, and making a small monthly donation will make a big difference to our ability to be an advocate for the Suwannee Basin.

December Silent Auction

Recent events, including the Boomerang and Songwriting contest, had associated silent auctions. WWALS will have a silent auction in December, and we have paintings by both Julie Bowland and Eileen Box available. If you have items you'd like to donate, let us know. Otherwise, keep your eyes peeled for an upcoming auction at <https://www.betterunite.com/WWALS>

WWALS Working Hard for Your Watershed

Vote Yes on Georgia Amendment 1, [dedicating state fees and taxes to their intended purposes](#), as requested by resolutions of six of our counties and cities.

Outings Committee. In addition to the successful Boomerang, we also had [a dozen Full Moon paddlers on October 1](#), and thirty in costume on Banks Lake for the [rare Blue Moon](#) on Halloween (not to be seen again until 2039). More than 100 people cleaned up six sites for “Love Your Rivers” with Valdosta and Lowndes County, removing nearly 2,000 pounds of debris from the Little, Withlacoochee, and Alapaha Rivers. —Bobby McKenzie, Outings Committee Chair, who passed the paddle to Bret Miller.



Don't forget [the real trash problem is the companies that make it](#).

Sewage Spills. Quitman, GA, [spilled 87,000 gallons of raw sewage on April 24, 2020](#), which correlates exactly with sky-high Fecal coliform and *E. coli* results on Okapilco Creek and the Withlacoochee River, and discolored water several days later at Running Springs on the Suwannee River. It may have continued all the way to the Gulf. It didn't appear in GA-EPD's Sewage Spills Report until April 29. **Adel, GA**, spilled [multiple times](#), with [7,500 gallons](#) on October 10, in GA-EPD's Report ten days later. **Ashburn, GA**, spilled [210,000 gallons of raw sewage](#) in September, in GA-EPD's Report four weeks after the first spill. Nobody is checking Reed Bingham State Park Lake for *E. coli*. Ashburn also spilled 300,000 gallons on February 6, and twice more into the Alapaha Basin, where there is too little testing to tell effects downstream. **Rochelle, GA**, had much smaller spills into the Alapaha basin. **Tifton, GA**, spilled into the New River on June 18, and **Moody AFB** on August 17 into Beatty Branch, both upstream of the Withlacoochee River. Only Quitman appears to have had detectable effects at Valdosta or downstream. But we'd prefer fewer spills and faster reporting.

Water Quality Testing. Madison and Hamilton Health issued a water quality advisory in early October, but lifted it quickly. According to Valdosta, Florida, and WWALS testing, the most likely sources were agricultural. Thanks to Jonah Ventures for some DNA test kits, which may help resolve the sources. Everyone, [please vote for clean water](#).

Springs. At [their October board meeting](#), Suwannee Riverkeeper again asked SRWMD to reject Nestle's Ginnie Springs Santa Fe River permit application and to re-examine its permit at Madison Blue Spring on the Withlacoochee River..

Wood Pellet Plant, Adel, GA. They [don't have a Georgia air quality permit](#), and you can ask GA-EPD and the governor to stop that.

Titanium mine close to the Okefenokee Swamp. The Army Corps [abdicated its responsibility](#). Please [help ask](#) the Georgia governor and statehouse members to reject the miners' state permit applications. And the miners are [linked to a failed biomass plant](#).

LNG Export. FERC confused Miami with Puerto Rico, and still hasn't answered our FOIA request. <https://wwals.net/?p=53926>

Moody AFB. Public [comments are accepted through November 24, 2020](#), on the Comprehensive Airspace Initiative DEIS.

No Roads to Ruin. In response to Suwannee Riverkeeper pointing out that at least the [broke-from-the-start Texas SH 130](#) had traffic estimates that seemed to support it, while the Florida toll roads do not, [FDOT says it will look for toll road financial need after](#) the “Final” reports that found no need, and after No Roads to Ruin revealed that 93% of the public comments were against the roads.

You can vote for people who will stop this environmentally destructive boondoggle.

PR Committee. The WWALS website is now <https://wwals.net>, with the coveted black padlock symbol, meaning more secure. Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman was on the [Scott James](#) and [Steve Nichols](#) radio shows about the WWALS Boomerang. In the [Suwannee Springs paddle for Visit Suwannee County](#), the WWALS movie extras paddled up Sugar Creek (next to GA 129).

Upcoming Outings and Events

Friday, November 6, 12-2 PM	Lunch and drive by mine site near Okefenokee Swamp, SRWT
Sat.-Sun., November 7-8, 10 AM	Floyd's Island paddle and camp , Okefenokee Swamp, SRWT
Monday, November 30, 5 PM	Full Beaver Moon Paddle, Banks Lake, Lakeland, GA ARWT
Saturday, Dec. 12, 3 PM	Kayak Raffle Drawing - get your tickets now!
Saturday, Dec. 19, 3 PM	Second Annual Solstice Light Parade , Banks Lake, Lakeland, GA ARWT
Tuesday, December 29, 4:45 PM	Full Cold Moon Paddle, Banks Lake, Lakeland, GA, ARWT
Saturday, January 2, 9 AM	New Year Paddle, Ichetucknee and Santa Fe Rivers, Fort White FL, SRWT
TBD February 2021, 9 AM	2nd Annual Mayor's Paddle , Troupville Boat Ramp, Valdosta, Little, Withlacoochee Rivers

Check out the [WWALS Calendar](#) or [Outings and Events](#) for more details.

