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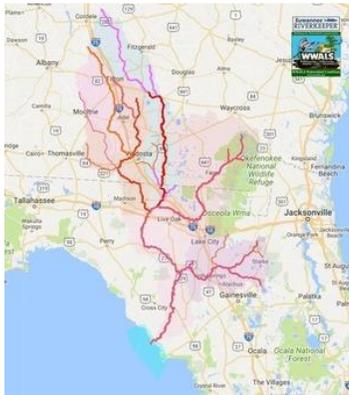
Spaces are filling up for the Ninth Annual BIG Little River Paddle Race

Adel, Georgia, April 19, 2021 — Southwell Medical of Tifton and Adel has become a sponsor of the annual WWALS and FORB race and leisurely paddle three miles down the scenic blackwater Little River in Reed Bingham State Park between Adel and Moultrie, Georgia.

“Spaces are going fast, with only four heats of ten people, so sign up soon!” said event mastermind Bret Wagenhorst, an eye doctor in Tifton, GA, and a charter board member of WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS). “First Prize is \$100, and another \$200 if the winner beats the record.”



All tickets are \$30 online in advance, and you can also rent a boat online from the park and pick it up at the start at Red Roberts Landing. For tickets, boats, and all event details, including sponsor opportunities, see: <https://wwals.net/pictures/2021-04-24--blrpr/>



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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.



Photo: Phil Hubbard, of Dan Phillips placing second in BLRPR 2018.

You could win in any of a dozen categories, or up to \$300 if you beat the previous winning record time. But you are not required to race: it’s a nice spring paddle anyway, at 8AM on Saturday, April 24, 2021.

“That’s forty people, not forty boats, so now’s the time to sign up,” said Dianne Walters of Friends of Reed Bingham (FORB).

The race will start at Red Roberts Landing, on Rountree Bridge Road, off of I-75 Exit 41 (Sparks). There you will select which of four heats, from racing to slowest, by picking one of four sign-in tables. Racers should choose the first heat of 10 paddlers.

“The vegetation is starting to green up on the Little River, so the flora and fauna should be great for the BIG Little River Paddle Race,” said Reed Bingham State Park Manager Wayne “Bud” Fuller.

Choose the fourth heat if you want to just paddle along this scenic three-mile stretch of tea-colored river on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail among cypress trees, turtles, birds, and yes, alligators. Each heat has a maximum of 10 people, with 40 people maximum for the event.





Photo: Phil Hubbard, of a family finishing BLRPR 2018.

“WWALS is looking forward to the race after missing last year,” said WWALS Executive Director Gretchen Quarterman, “With our new modified format, we are excited to welcome paddlers to the park.”

In addition to First Prize, you could win one of the many other categories, including one and two person canoe (male, female, and mixed), solo or tandem kayak (male, female, and mixed), youngest paddler, oldest paddler, paddler from furthest away, and slowest paddler. Each winners will get a BLRPR hat, which you can’t get any other way than winning, volunteering, or being on the WWALS board.



Photo: John S. Quarterman of WWALS Board and volunteers with BLRPR hats

“The park is happy to have WWALS here again!” added Park Manager Bud Fuller. “FYI, no children under 12 years of age can paddle.”

The race finishes at the west boat ramp in Colquitt County on the lake in Reed Bingham State Park. Before the start, participants must arrange their own shuttle of their vehicle to the Finish and themselves back to the start (or paddle back upstream after the race.)

After unloading all the gear you will need for your paddle (don’t forget paddles and life vest, hat, water), turn LEFT out of the Red Roberts Landing parking area. Go about 2.7 miles (you will cross four bridges) to Bill Tillman Rd on your left. Turn LEFT onto Bill Tillman Rd. This is a dirt road with deep ditches on the sides, so stay near the center if it is muddy as you may slide some. Go 0.9 miles on Bill Tillman Rd until it ends at a T-intersection with the paved Buck Creek Church Rd.

Turn LEFT on Buck Creek Church Rd and drive 0.8 miles straight into the park. After entering the Colquitt Co. entrance to the park make the first LEFT into the parking lot for the boat ramp. You should see a kiosk with kayaks right next to the lake at the far end of the parking lot. To get back to Red Roberts Landing, follow the same route back.



Photo by John S. Quarterman, of awards in 2019

Prizes will be awarded near the Finish line, preceded by a packaged lunch.

The heats will be staggered fifteen minutes apart. Distancing and masks will be required at start and finish and life jackets are required on the water.

Park Manager Bud Fuller noted, “Speaking of safety, due to warmer weather alligators will be present. We recommend that pets not participate in the race.”

“Reed Bingham State Park Lake is the only water body in the Suwannee River Basin that is already designated Recreational for water quality standards,” said Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman. “All the others are labeled with the lower standard of Fishing. We have asked the Georgia Environmental Protection Division to reclassify all the Little, Withlacoochee, Alapaha, and Suwannee Rivers to match, and Grand Bay, Banks Lake, and the Okefenokee Swamp.”

BLRPR is a fundraiser for the nonprofits WWALS and FORB.

Friends of Reed Bingham State Park (FORB) is the official nonprofit support organization for Reed Bingham State Park, a park known for its innovative programs and as a leader in resource management, particularly with rare and endangered plants and animals such as gopher tortoises, bald eagles, indigo snakes, and other native species. We are a chapter of Friends of Georgia State Parks. Join us as we work to provide a wonderful place for individuals and families to enjoy the natural beauty of South Georgia.

WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (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. Founded in June 2012, WWALS has board members from multiple counties in south Georgia and north Florida, and members from all over the Suwannee River Basin and from farther away. Since December 2016, John S. Quarterman is the **Suwannee Riverkeeper®**, which is a staff position and a project of WWALS as the member of Waterkeeper® Alliance for the Suwannee River

Basin, including the Little River.

For more WWALS outings and events as they are posted, see the [WWALS outings and events](#) web page. WWALS members also get an upcoming list in the *Tannin Times* newsletter.

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