

WWALS is working up a grant proposal to Coca-Cola for trash traps. Coca-Cola is the number one seller of plastic bottles with drinks. It says it is [moving to 100% recyclable plastic bottles](#) (but not yet in Georgia). Coca-Cola also says it will [not stop selling single-use plastic bottles](#). So it is only appropriate that Coca-Cola should, as it has already done in Atlanta, fund some trash traps in Valdosta.

Participation by local businesses in the grant proposal would make it more likely to get funded. Further, local businesses that need to deploy trash cans have motivation for continued sponsorship of trash traps after any outside grant expires. Such sponsorship would demonstrate their commitment to clean waterways.

Cleanups

Many years of cleanups have demonstrated that they do not solve the litter problem. More plastic bottles and cans and styrofoam just show up again later. Plus, styrofoam by the time it gets to the logjam at Sugar Creek below Twomile Branch is already broken into such small pieces that no volunteers can clean it all up.

Nonetheless, cleanups are good community education exercises on the severity of the problem, and they do help collect trash that gets through. That will still be the case even with upstream enforcement and trash traps.

Cleanups also serve as evidence gathering, per the Valdosta Solid Waste Ordinance: “*whenever any litter which is dumped, deposited, thrown, or left on public or private property in violation of O.C.G.A. § 16-7-43 is discovered to contain any article, including, but not limited to, letters, bills, publications, or other writings which display the name of a person thereon in such a manner as to indicate that the article belongs or belonged to such person, it shall be a rebuttable presumption that such person has violated this section*”.

A joint City-County-WWALS cleanup is scheduled for October 9, 2021, per agreement among the PIOs of Valdosta, Lowndes County, and WWALS. That cleanup would also be a great opportunity to announce a new proactive approach.

Summary

Cleanups and trash traps will always be useful. But solving the litter problem requires a proactive solution including upstream education, enforcement, and financial participation by the businesses that need to stop litter from exiting their property. Such businesses would gain positive publicity by participating, as would the City of Valdosta, in addition to improved quality of life.