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

WWALS Watershed Coalition WWALS advocates for conservation and stewardship of the surface waters and groundwater of the Suwannee River Basin and Estuary, in south Georgia and north Florida, among them the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds, through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.

Suwannee RIVERKEEPER® is a program and a paid staff position of WWALS.



February 27, 2024

To: Rep. James Burchett (176), james.burchett@house.ga.gov
Cc Rep. John Lahood (175), john.lahood@house.ga.gov,
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Rep. Bill Yearta (152), bill.yearta@house.ga.gov,
Rep. Noel Williams (148), noel.williams@house.ga.gov,
Rep. Patty Bentley (150), patty.bentley@house.ga.gov

Re: Navigable stream additions to HB 1397

Rep. Burchett,

You are invited to the Mayor and Chairman's Paddle on the Withlacoochee River just west of Valdosta, this Saturday, March 2, 2024. <https://wwals.net/?p=64095>

Thank you for introducing HB 1397. And thank you for including all of the reaches of the Little and Withlacoochee Rivers that are in the WWALS Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail and all the reaches of the Alapaha River that are in the WWALS Alapaha River Water Trail, as well as the Suwannee River in the WWALS Suwannee River Water Trail.

<https://wwals.net/water-trails/>

I am somewhat mystified as to why Bird Wing Run is listed in HB 1397 as the upper limit for Middle Fork Suwannee River? People paddle down the Middle Fork from Maul Hammock Canoe Shelter, after starting at Kingfisher Landing.

Could you please add to the list of navigable streams in HB 1397:

- East Fork Suwannee River downstream of Canal Run Campsite
 - This is a popular paddling path at least as far upstream as Billys Island.
- Alapahoochee River downstream of GA 376
 - The Alapahoochee River from GA 376 to the Alapaha River is part of the WWALS Alapaha River Water Trail. <https://wwals.net/maps/alapaha-water-trail/arwt-map/arwt-access/#Alapahoochee-River>
 - Paddlers went from GA 376 all the way down the Alapahoochee River to the Alapaha River in Florida, October 30 and 31, 2010, [Alapahoochee River – Kayak Trip / Canoe Trip](#), paddling.net; see <https://wwals.net/2014/01/03/alapahoochee-river/>
 - WWALS paddled from GA 135 on the Alapahoochee to the



WWALS at Billys Island, East Fork Suwannee River 2016-12-10



Alapahoochee River @ GA 135 2021-06-05



Sugar Creek Beach, 2021-07-10



WaterGoat Trash Trap on Sugar Creek on WTXL TV 2023-12-18



Valdosta Mayor Scott James Matheson and City Council Andy Gibbs on WWALS Sugar Creek and Withlacoochee River Cleanup 2023-05-07

Columbus water quality monitoring stations	2022-01-07		2022-01-08		2022-01-09		2022-01-10		2022-01-11		2022-01-12		2022-01-13		2022-01-14	
	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp	Flow	Temp
Alapahoochee River @ GA 135	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0
Sugar Creek	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0
Withlacoochee River @ GA 122	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0
Cat Creek	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0	100	18.0

Bad water quality in Cat Creek 2022-07-14

Alapaha River in 2021 <https://wwals.net/?p=57364> and 2022 <https://wwals.net/?p=60784>

- Suzanne Welander, who paddled with us in 2021, added the Alapahoochee River to the Third Edition of her *Canoeing and Kayaking Georgia*. <https://wwals.net/?p=58808>
- Sugar Creek downstream of Baytree Road
 - This is a nice urban creek with a beach and shoals. <https://wwals.net/?p=56221>
 - It has the WaterGoat trash trap paid for by the City of Valdosta and cleaned out by volunteers, and featured on WTXL TV. <https://wwals.net/?p=63876>
 - WWALS cleanups on Sugar Creek have included as participants the Valdosta Mayor and Utilities Director <https://wwals.net/?p=62674> and a Valdosta City Council member. <https://wwals.net/?p=64095>
 - Sugar Creek will be used this coming Saturday, March 2, as the early takeout for the Mayor and Chairman's Paddle. <https://wwals.net/?p=64211>
 - WWALS has invested considerable time and equipment in clearing deadfalls (fallen trees) from Sugar Creek and the Withlacoochee River in preparation for the Mayor and Chairman's Paddle. <https://wwals.net/?p=64211>
- Cat Creek downstream of GA 37
 - That would help with finding and fixing *E. coli* problems sampled at bridges on those creeks. WWALS has already started investigating those creek problems and has applied for a testing grant. <https://wwals.net/?p=58982>
- Franks Creek downstream of GA 122
 - Like Cat Creek for *E. coli* testing.

Thank you again for HB 1397. And could you please make the above additions.

For the rivers and the aquifer,

/s

John S. Quarterman

Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®

Cc: Georgia House members representing parts of the Suwannee River Basin.