



WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.
the WATERKEEPER® Alliance Affiliate for the
Suwannee, Withlacoochee, and Alapaha Rivers
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity
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WWALS Biota. Anyone who has paddled any of the rivers in the WWALS watersheds has encountered *Nyssa ogeche*, or Ogeechee Tupelo, as it is a very common deciduous tree in and along the upper and middle reaches of our rivers. It is a medium sized tree that is often seen in clumps or coppices with multiple arching trunks on banks or islands of the rivers. I often refer to them as “baggy pants” trees as the trunks of mature trees are often broad at the base and have a lumpy, sagging appearance. Their oval leaves provide a dense shade for summer paddlers. Ogeechee tupelos are sometimes accompanied by cypress trees, which in stark contrast, tend to be straight, single trunked and tall, with wispy foliage.



The Ogeechee tupelo tree was first mentioned in the literature by botanist William Bartram, who noticed it growing along a river in central Georgia that is named for the tree, the Ogeechee River. The scientific name for the tree genus, *Nyssa*, aptly refers to the nymphs in Greek mythology who were fond of water. The tree likes to grow where its base is inundated for a portion of the year.

The tree is covered with inconspicuous greenish-yellow flowers in springtime. You can usually tell when the tree is in bloom by the buzz created by the numerous honeybees feeding on the nectar. Tupelo honey, a light, delicious honey is produced from these trees. Interestingly, there are separate male and female trees, with different looking flowers. Only the female trees bear the fruit. The fruit are green when immature, ripening to bright red in the fall. They have a sour flesh that the early settlers in this region reportedly used as a lime substitute. They contain a flattish, winged seed. Numerous mammals and birds are reported to relish the fruit.



So look for these “baggy pants” trees next time you are paddling. And if you want to try the limes, now is the season to harvest some. *By Bret Wagenhorst.*

WWALS Working Hard for Your Watershed

Sabal Trail Protests WWALS boated below and walked the bluff at the proposed Sabal Trail pipeline crossing of the Suwannee River in Florida September 13th, live on the WCTV 6 o'clock news, and WWALS stood at the Withlacoochee River US 84 bridge in Georgia September 17th, covered by the Valdosta Daily Times. Those events, with participants from Mitchell County, GA to Gainesville, FL, helped promote widespread protests from Tallahassee to Orlando against Sabal Trail, which has already commenced construction in at least five places. The protesters stood in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux of North Dakota as they fight the Dakota Access Petroleum pipeline (DAPL) that is being constructed on tribal lands and under the Missouri River.



WWALS made a video as a followup to the Waterkeeper letter in support of the Standing Rock Sioux, on which WWALS was one of 93 co-signers. Waterkeeper retweeted the video. #NoDAPL, #NoSabalTrail, #WaterIsLife.

Valdosta Wastewater Spills...Again. With the rain received from Hurricane Hermine, wastewater overflows occurred into several creeks and the Withlacoochee River early in September, but they were tiny compared to previous spills before Valdosta turned on its new, uphill Withlacoochee River Wastewater Treatment Plant and its new Force Main. WWALS has arranged a public meeting with Valdosta Assistant Director of Engineering,

Emily Davenport and Utilities Director Henry Hicks, 6PM October 27th, 2016 at Valdosta City Hall Annex, 300 N. Lee Street, Valdosta, GA 31601, to discuss the \$60 million in fixes already applied, further work to prevent future spills, and flood prediction and prevention: LiDAR, interactive online flooding map, and why a levee would be a bad idea. Everyone is invited!

Sabal Trail River Lawsuits and Letter to Congress. Sierra Club, Flint Riverkeeper, and other groups in September sued both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission about Sabal Trail. WWALS collaborated with Maya van Rossum, Delaware Riverkeeper, in inserting language about Sabal Trail into [a September 21st letter to Congress asking for review of FERC, to "Demand Reform of Rogue Agency"](#). WWALS was among the 180 organizations in 35 states that signed the letter.

Community Outreach and Education



Trash Clean Up at Berrien Beach. A lively group of WWALS members and friends (three members of VSU's Students Against Violating the Environment pictured on the right here) picked up trash at the GA168 Boat Ramp on the Alapaha and at Berrien Beach on September 10th, in our annual Rivers-Alive cleanup organized by WWALS board member Bret Wagenhorst. We collected several hundred pounds of trash that filled two



pick up truck beds. This was also part of the annual Great Suwannee River Cleanup organized by Current Problems of Gainesville, FL.

Outings Redoux. The August Roline to Cypress Creek Suwannee River outing was so popular we did it again on September 3rd. The day before, during Hurricane Hermine, John S. Quarterman talked about outings on the Chris Beckham radio show, although it's not clear who could hear, because most of Black Crow's stations were down.

Water Trails. Discussions continue with county 911 centers and sheriff's offices about names and addresses for all the landings on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail (WLRWT) and the Alapaha River Water Trail (ARWT). WWALS president John S. Quarterman spoke before the Valdosta-Lowndes Development Authority on Sept. 20th and asked for a letter of support for the WLRWT like the one they did for the ARWT.

Upcoming Outings and Events

October 2, 2PM	WWALS Board Strategy Meeting
October 9, 10AM	Withlacoochee River: (FL) Madison Hwy to Sullivan launch 5.3 miles
October 12, 7:30pm	WWALS Board Quarterly Business Meeting
November 6, 10AM	Alapaha River: (FL) Dead River Sink Hike
November 12	Alapaha Station Celebration Festival Booth: Willacoochee GA
December 10, 10AM	Okefenokee Swamp, Suwannee River (GA)

Check out the [WWALS Calendar](#) for more details.

