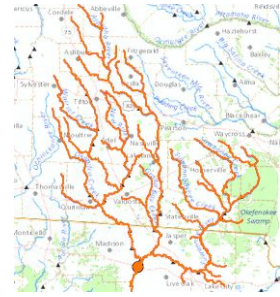


**WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.**  
the WATERKEEPER® Alliance Affiliate for the  
Suwannee, Withlacoochee, and Alapaha Rivers  
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity  
PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632  
[wwalswatershed@gmail.com](mailto:wwalswatershed@gmail.com)  
[www.wwals.net](http://www.wwals.net)



May 2016 Tannin Times

### **4th Annual BIG Little River Paddle Event May 21**

There is still time to [register for the BIG Little River Paddle Event](#). A fun event for individuals or families, co-sponsored by the Friends of Reed Bingham State Park and WWALS Watershed Coalition. This four mile downstream paddle on flatwater takes you on a winding course through pretty south Georgia forest, under towering cypress trees, past live oaks, coppices of ogeechee tupelo, and majestic pines. The tannin stained blackwaters reflect the beautiful scenery and are typical of the coastal plain. Paddle it to win or just to enjoy. Cash prize to the paddler who finishes first. Medals to top finishers in several categories: male and female solo canoe, male and female solo kayak; male 2 person canoe, female 2 person canoe, mixed 2 person canoe, male tandem kayak, female tandem kayak, mixed tandem kayak. Thirty (\$30) dollar per vessel entrance fee includes lunch at the end of the race. Fastest paddlers will complete in under an hour; slow paddlers in 1.5-2 hours. Bring your own boat or rent one from Reed Bingham State Park (advanced reservation of boats recommended).



### **Board Meeting - Executive Summary**

The **WWALS Board** had its *quarterly board meeting* on **Wednesday, April 13th** at the Farm House Restaurant in Lake Park, GA at 7:30 pm. At that meeting, a new Grants Committee was formed to try to take advantage of funding opportunities. Questions about the board or how to participate on a committee should be sent to [wwalswatershed@gmail.com](mailto:wwalswatershed@gmail.com).

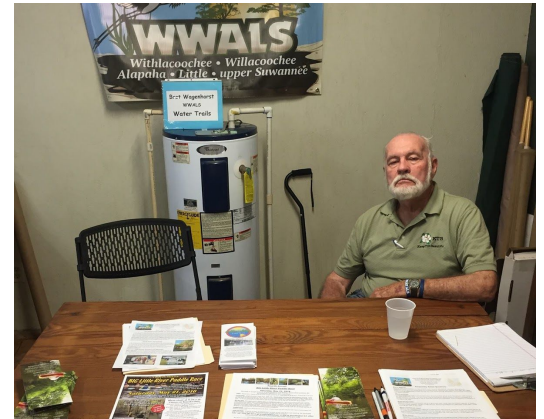
### **Outing News and Updates**

During late March and early April, the rivers were at flood stage and boating was challenging. We had an impromptu outing on April 3rd at Ray's Mill Pond due to flooding on the Withlacoochee. The Pond was beautiful with many interesting aquatic plants observed. Our April 23rd outing on the Alapaha was gorgeous! We had eight boaters and one swimmer. You can't beat the Alapaha for wild beauty. The birds were singing in the trees and the current was swift, getting us to our destination in less than 4 hours! We saw a mother wood duck who pretended distress to distract us from her nest. We saw soaring Great Egrets and unfortunately, a dead Great Egret caught in a fishing line. Much of the river was canopied by Tupelo and other trees in full leaf, reminding us that spring is in full swing. Although the river was high, glimpses of white sandbars through the tannic water held promise for summer fun.



## Community Outreach and Education

WWALS Ambassador Dave Hetzel and board member Bret Wagenhorst had an informational table at Gaskin Forest Education Center's "A Day in the Woods" on April 23rd. The day was filled with information about the local ecology. There were activities for children, hikes, native and traditional crafts and more. This was the second year for the event and our information was well received. Thank you to the Gaskin Forest Education Center for organizing this free event.



## Annual Meeting - July 13, 2016

Each year, WWALS holds an annual meeting with the presentation and review of the annual report and the election of board members at a July meeting. The meeting is scheduled this year for July 13, 2016 at 7:00pm at the IHOP in Adel GA. All WWALS members are invited to attend and those who attend are eligible to vote in the election.

## WWALS Working Hard for Your Watershed

Suwannee County, Florida joined Hamilton County in inviting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to come see for themselves the numerous springs, sinkholes, and underground caverns Sabal Trail didn't tell FERC about. Several WWALS members participated in a protest at a Sabal Trail Contractor Fair in Live Oak, FL. It was a peaceful, even amicable demonstration and the protesters provided prospective contractors with information about Sabal Trail and the risks of the pipeline to our aquifer, privately owned property, and public safety. Speaking of safety, another Spectra Energy fracked gas pipeline exploded in Pennsylvania on April 29, 2016, injuring a man in his home and damaging several other homes.

## Lowndes County joins Wastewater Spills

Lowndes County spilled approximately 225,000 gallons of untreated sewage into a drainage ditch into the Withlacoochee River on April 4th, a day after Valdosta fixed all its spills from the previous weekend. Downstream people don't make a lot of distinctions between these two local governments, since it all ends up in the Suwannee River, where people are already hopping mad because of Valdosta. WWALS continues to nudge both governments; see <http://www.wwals.net/issues/vww/>, and we're always happy to have applicants for the Watershed Issues Committee.

## Water Trail Updates

We are getting closer to having a Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail Brochure. A mock brochure has been created and just needs the finishing touches as well as some funding to go to print. Make sure to support the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail by participating in our Annual fundraiser, the Big Little Paddle Race on May 21, 2016 at Reed Bingham State Park. The first place winner gets \$100!



## Upcoming Outings and Events

May 21, 8AM	BIG Little River Paddle Event: Red Roberts to Reed Bingham Lake
June 4, 7:30AM	Withlacoochee River (Florida): Florida Camps to SRSP, 13.3 miles
July 9, 8AM	Withlacoochee River (Georgia): Nankin Road to Madison HWY, 9.1miles

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

