

# Suwannee RIVERKEEPER® WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.







# A Waterkeeper® Member

8 June 2012: WWALS incorporated

3 June 2015: Waterkeeper® Alliance Affiliate

20 Dec 2016: Waterkeeper® Alliance **Member**

Trademark

Recognition

Communications

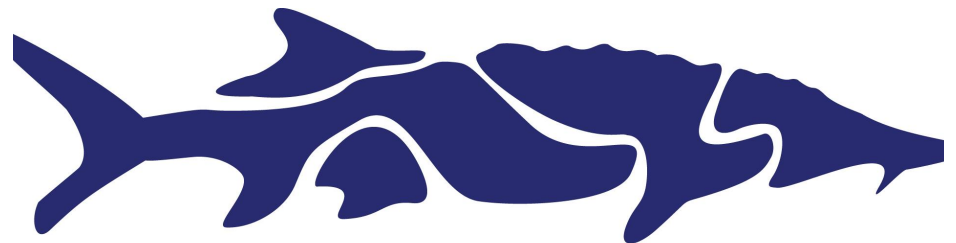
Annual conference

Territory



Now the Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®

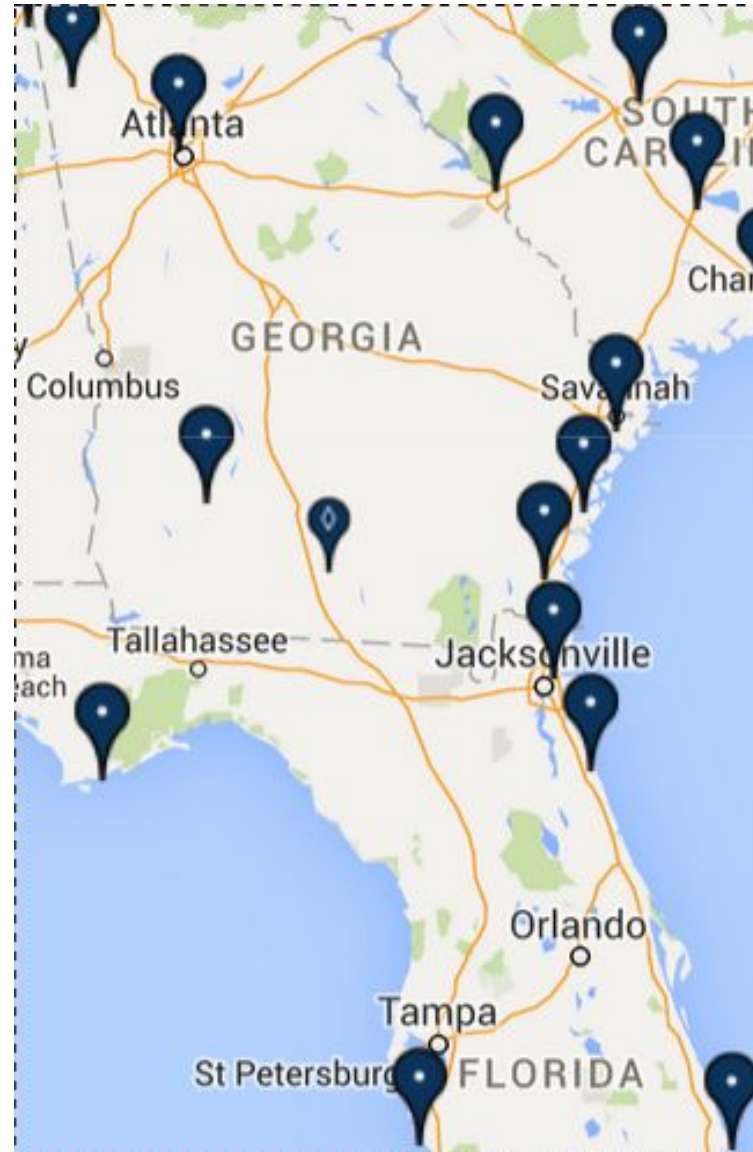
# Suwannee Riverkeeper®



WATERKEEPER® ALLIANCE  
MEMBER



# Waterkeepers

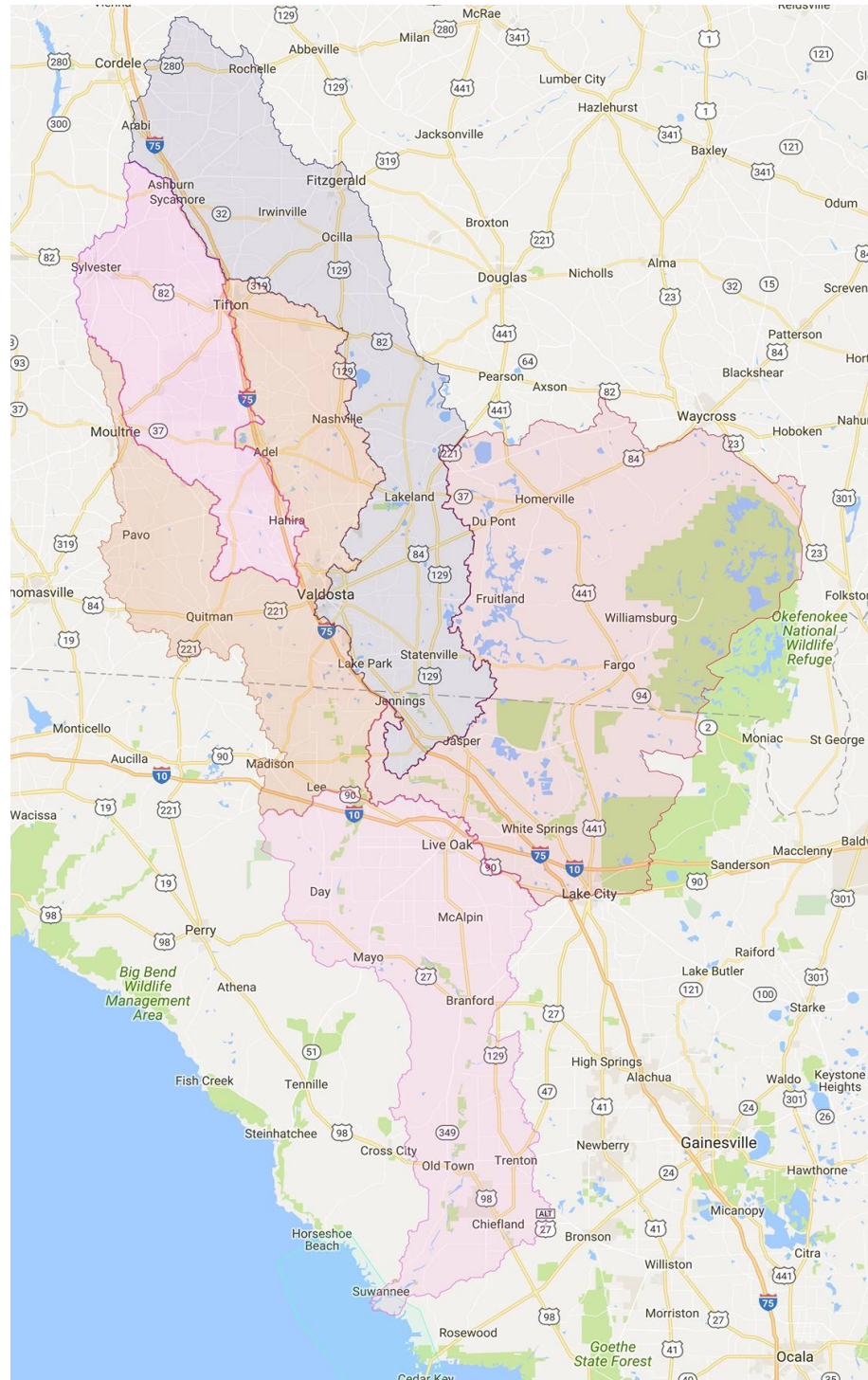


# WWALS Territory

From Cordele in the North,  
The swamp in the East,  
Moultrie and Pavo on the  
West, to the Gulf on the South.

Above the Withlacoochee  
Confluence is the “Upper  
Suwannee” and below is the  
“Lower” but all of it is the  
Suwannee Basin.

Not the Santa Fe nor the  
Ichetucknee Rivers. They  
have their own organizations.



# WWALS Vision

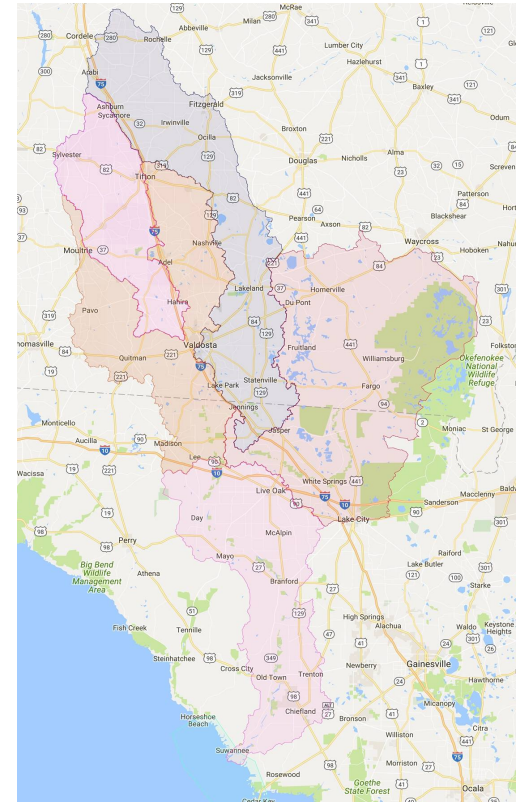
WWALS vision is for a healthy watershed with clean, swimmable, fishable, drinkable water.





# WWALS Mission

WWALS Watershed Coalition advocates for conservation and stewardship of the **Withlacoochee**, **Willacoochee**, **Alapaha**, **Little**, and **Suwannee River** watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.



# WWALS Board

Formed in June of 2012, the WWALS Board is made up of volunteers who are dedicated to our rivers.

Quarterly meetings held throughout the watershed.

Next Meeting:  
Wednesday July 12  
Valdosta, GA



June 2015 Board Meeting - Adel, Georgia

# WWALS Goals

WWALS has several goals

1. Education
2. Knowledge Resource
3. Water Quality Testing
4. Documentation
5. Identify and address threats to the watershed
6. Engage our Community Outdoors
7. Raise Funds to support 1-6





Many other organizations already promote padding, swimming, fishing, birding and other water-related activities, as does WWALS for fun and education.

WWALS exists to assist positive changes and to resist invasive problems, using strategies such as environmental monitoring, tactics such as outings and events, and public meetings.

Few big single point pollution problems

Not all preservation and protection

Conservation

- Connect our rich local history with new paddlers on our rivers, lakes, wetlands, and swamps
- Fishing, swimming and boating
- Blackwater rivers, exotic vegetation and wildlife

# Water Trails - Alapaha River



Being developed by WWALS Watershed Coalition.



## ☒ Alapaha River

- (End)
- (Start)
- Alapaha River

## ☒ WWALS-ART-Sites-2014-10-11-b...

- Lake
- Landing
- Access
- Obstacle
- Spring

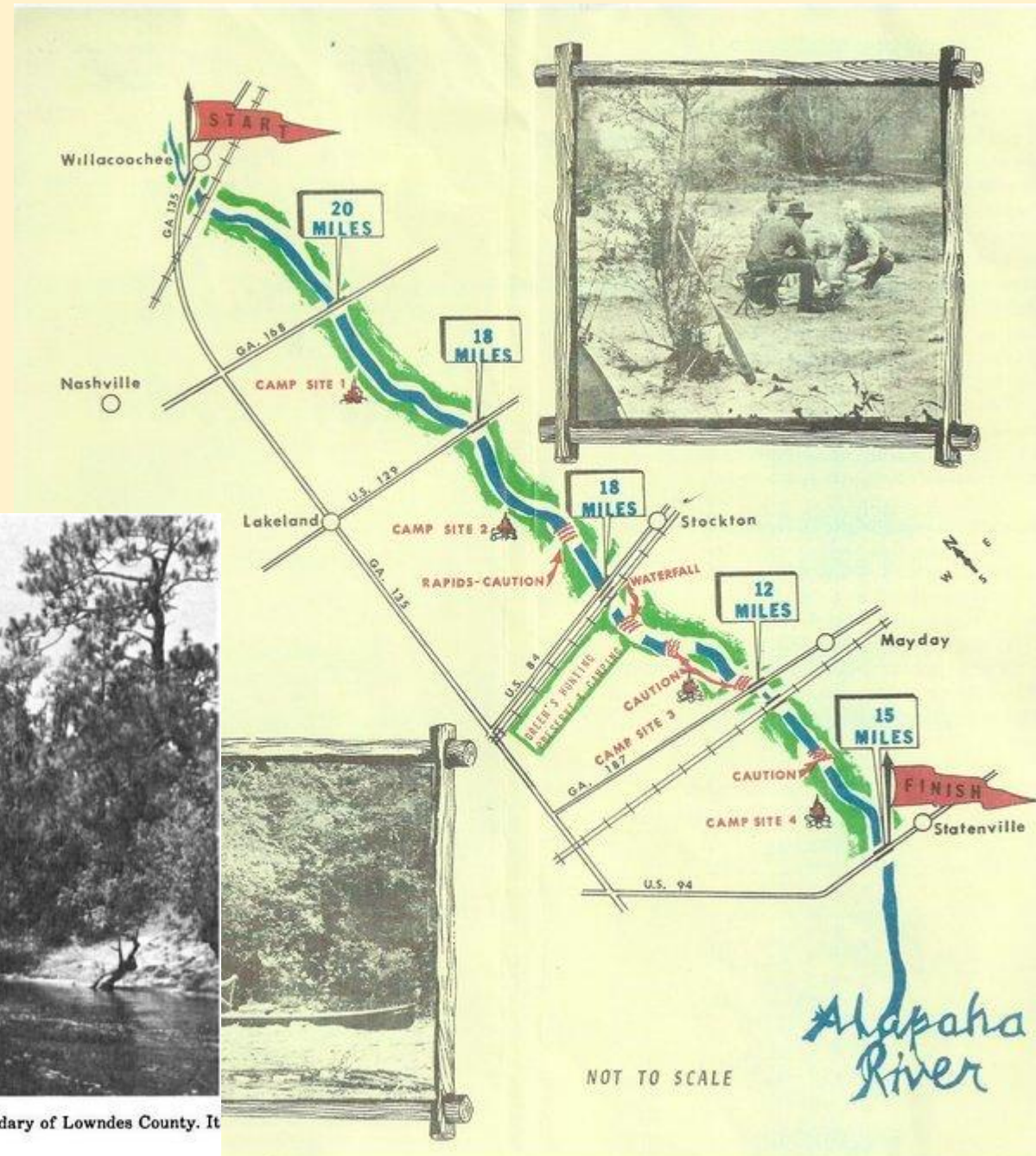




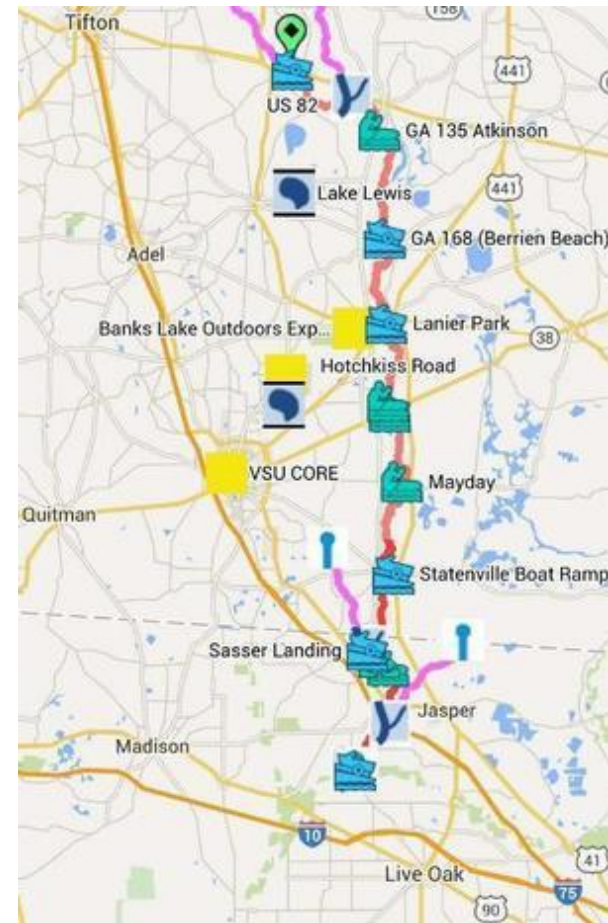
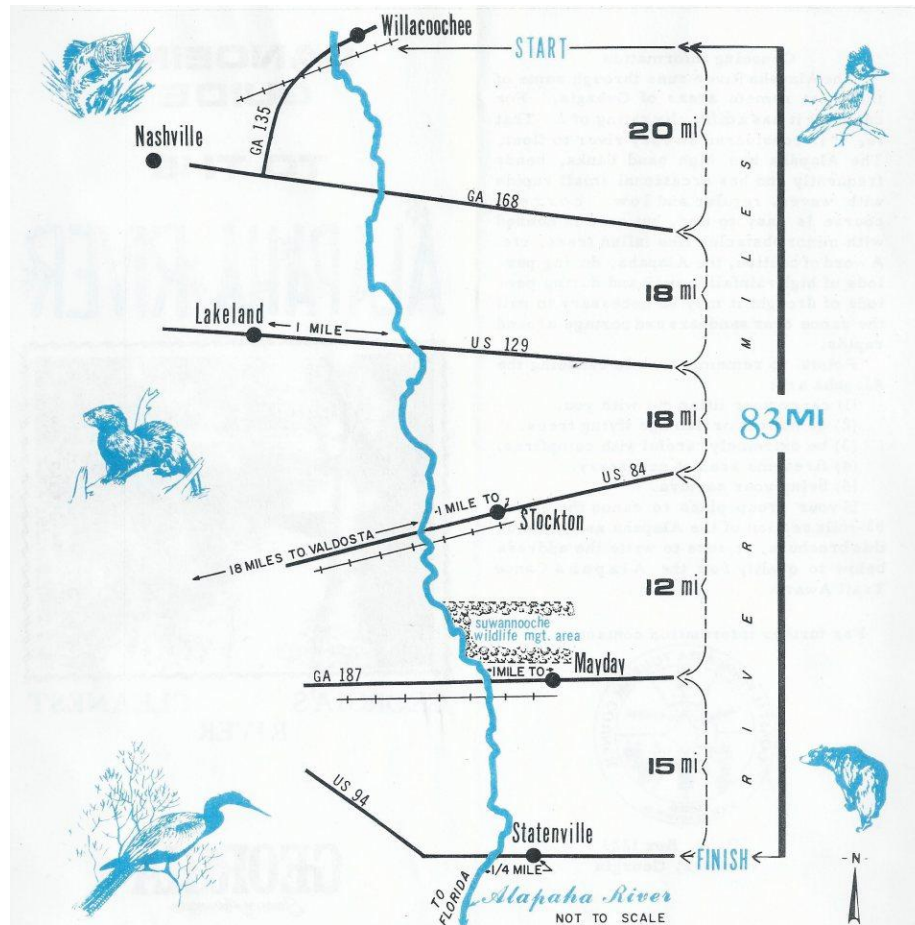
# 1970's



Figure 1.—The Alapaha River, unspoiled, wild, and scenic, forms part of the eastern boundary of Lowndes County. It provides water sports and fishing for hundreds of people.



# History and Change





# Hamilton Co. TDC

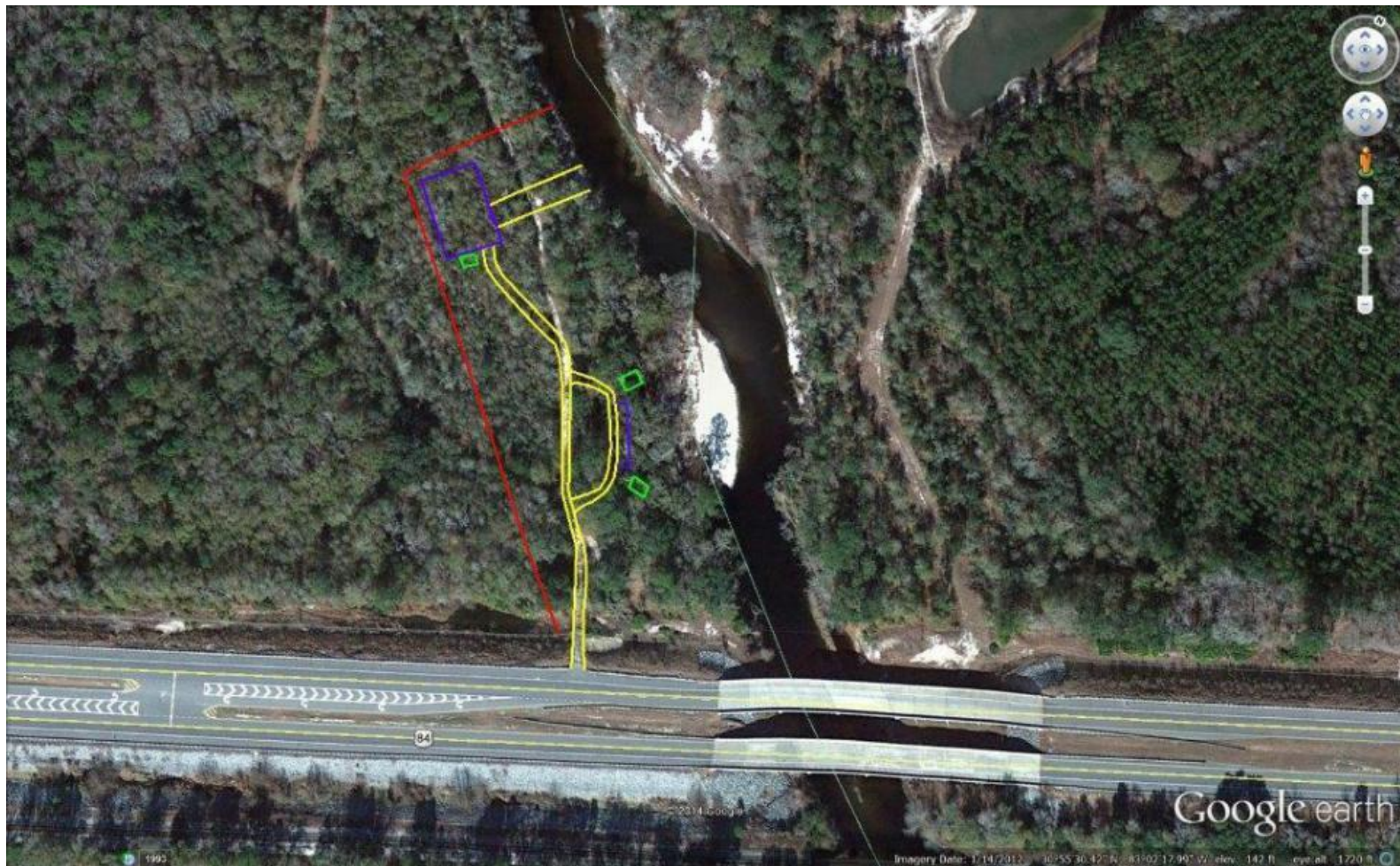
- Paid for an additional 5,000 ARWT brochures





# Naylor Boat Ramp

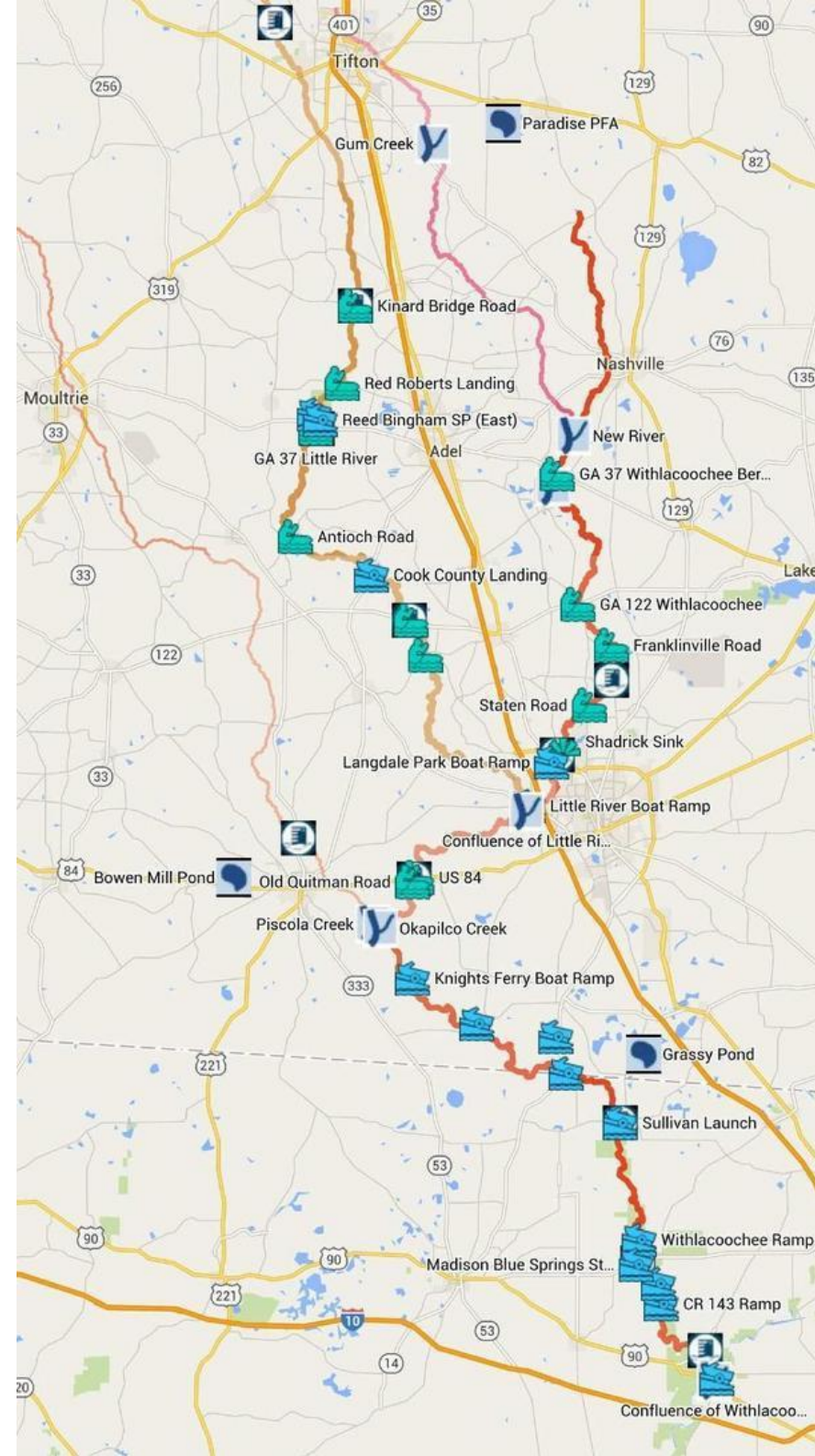
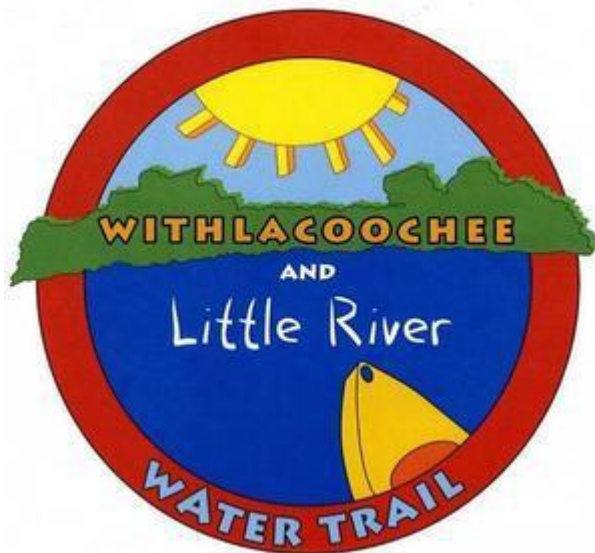
- Thanks to Lowndes County Commission for including this project on the SPLOST referendum.



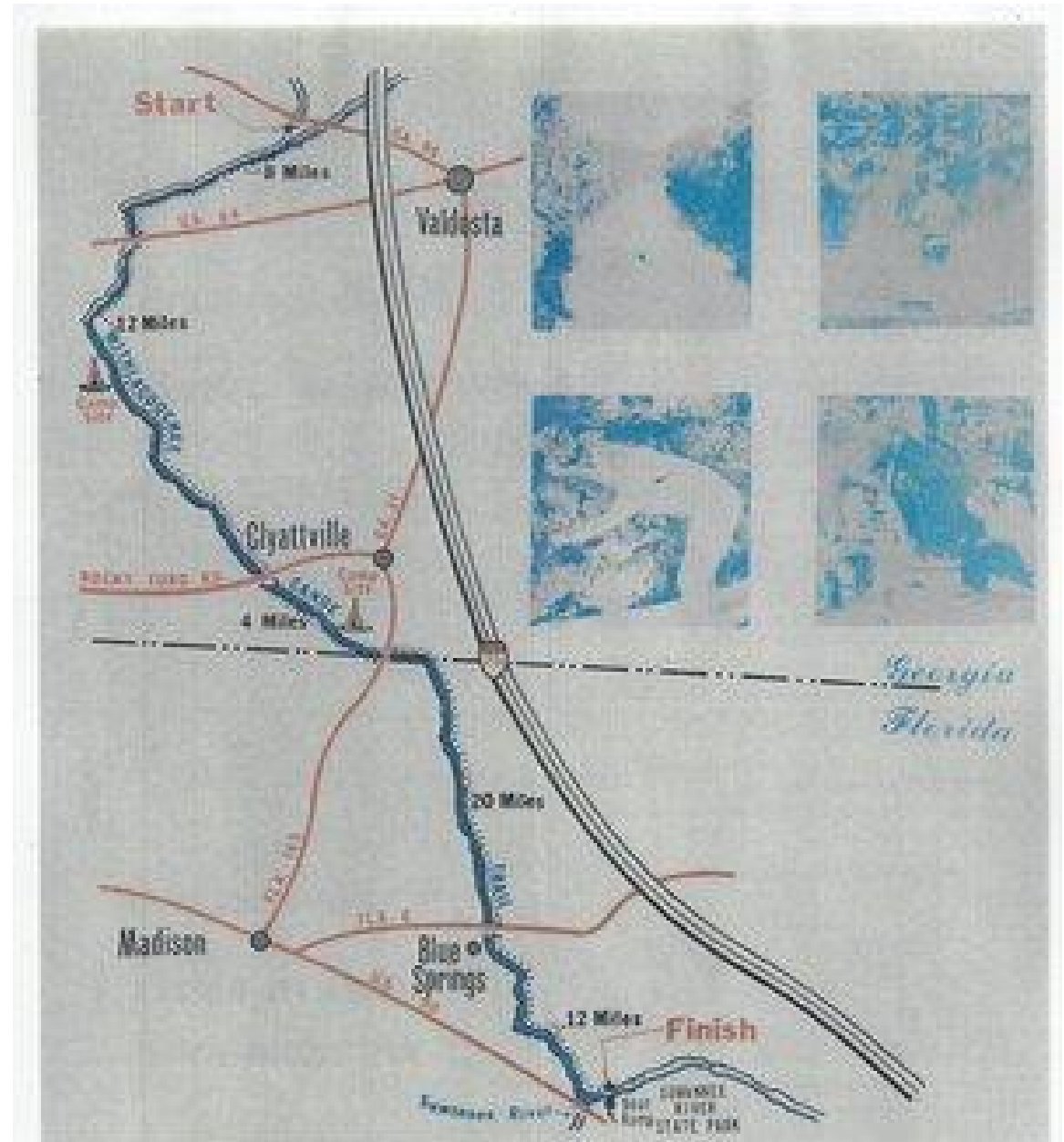
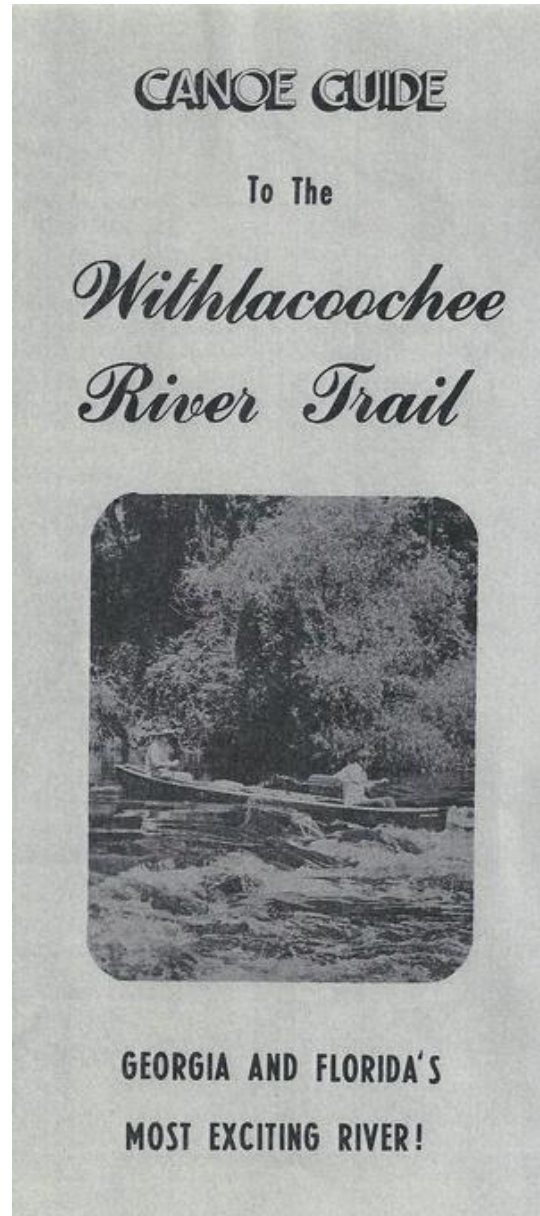


# Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail

- Two dozen access points
- VLPRA Parks and ramps
- Two rivers; many creeks
- Two states
- 911 Consistency



# Withlacoochee River Trail History



# Widespread problems

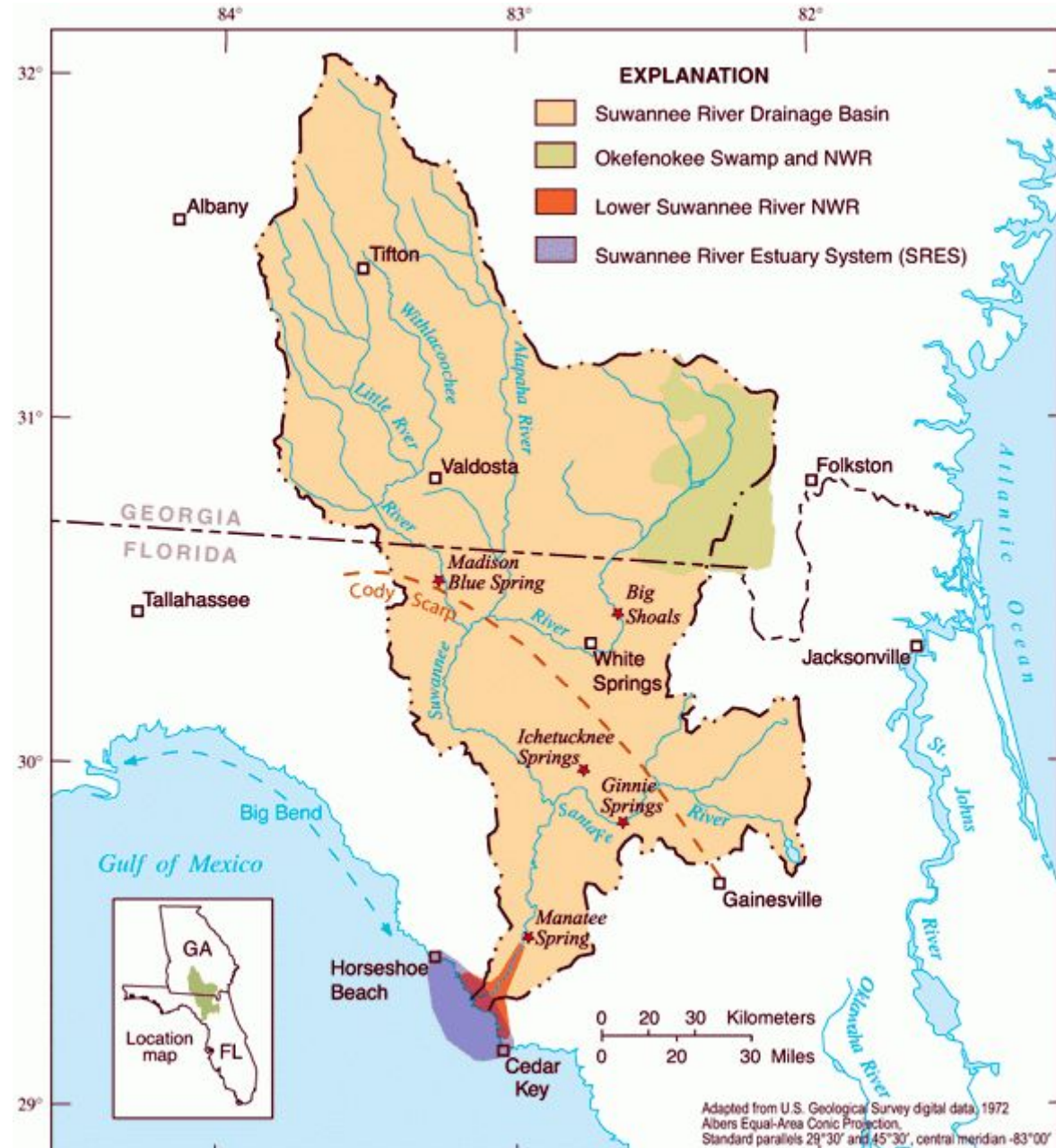
- Deadfalls
- Clearcutting
- Wetlands destruction
- Lack of buffers
- Invasive species
- Impervious surfaces
- Erosion
- Sediment
- Agrichemical runoff
- Forestry runoff
- Flooding
- Wastewater spills
- Sinkholes
- Groundwater contamination

WWALS Vision is for a healthy watershed with clean, swimmable, fishable, drinkable water.

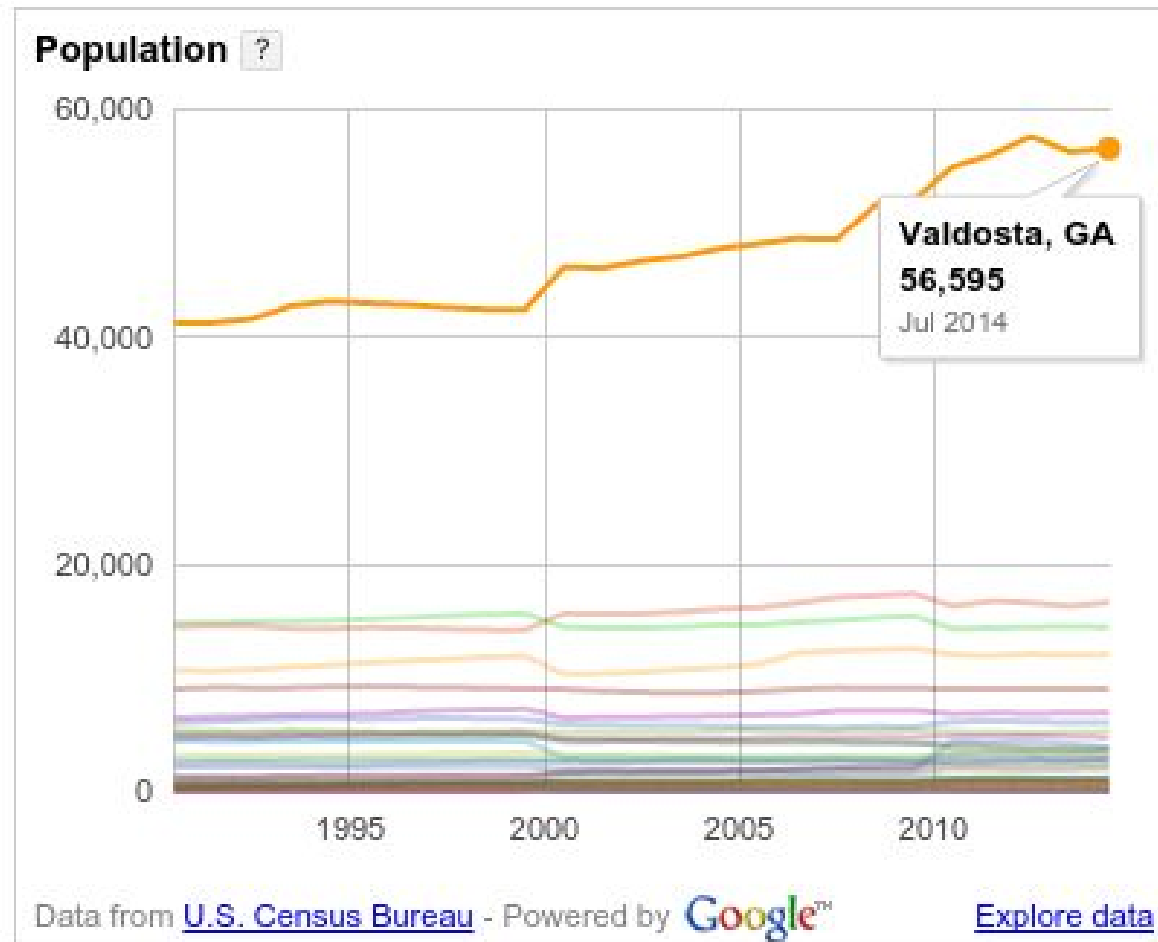


# Population center?

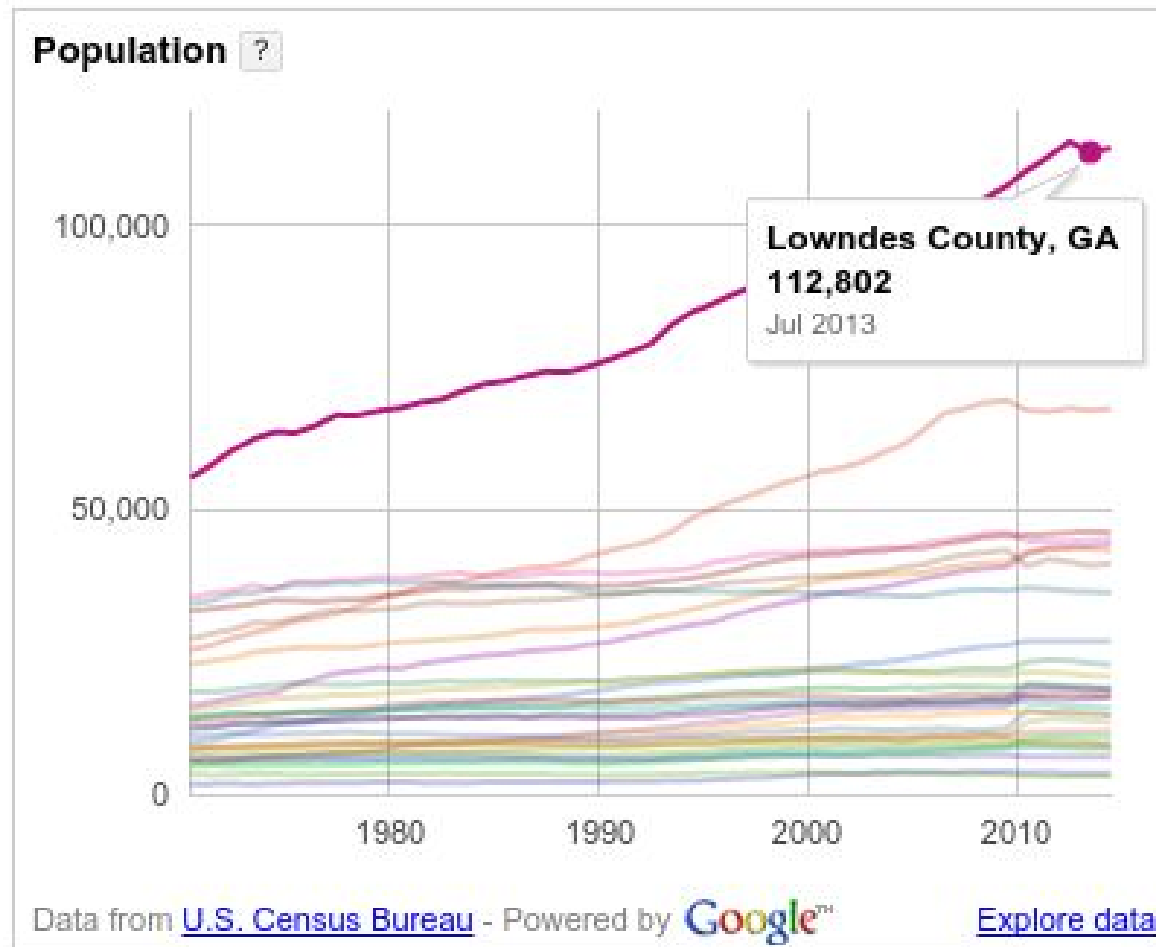
# Entire Suwannee River Basin:



# Biggest city is:



# Biggest County is:



# Pros and Cons

## Creation or restoration:

- Water trails
- Boat ramps
- Solar power
- Water Quality Testing

## Resisting invaders:

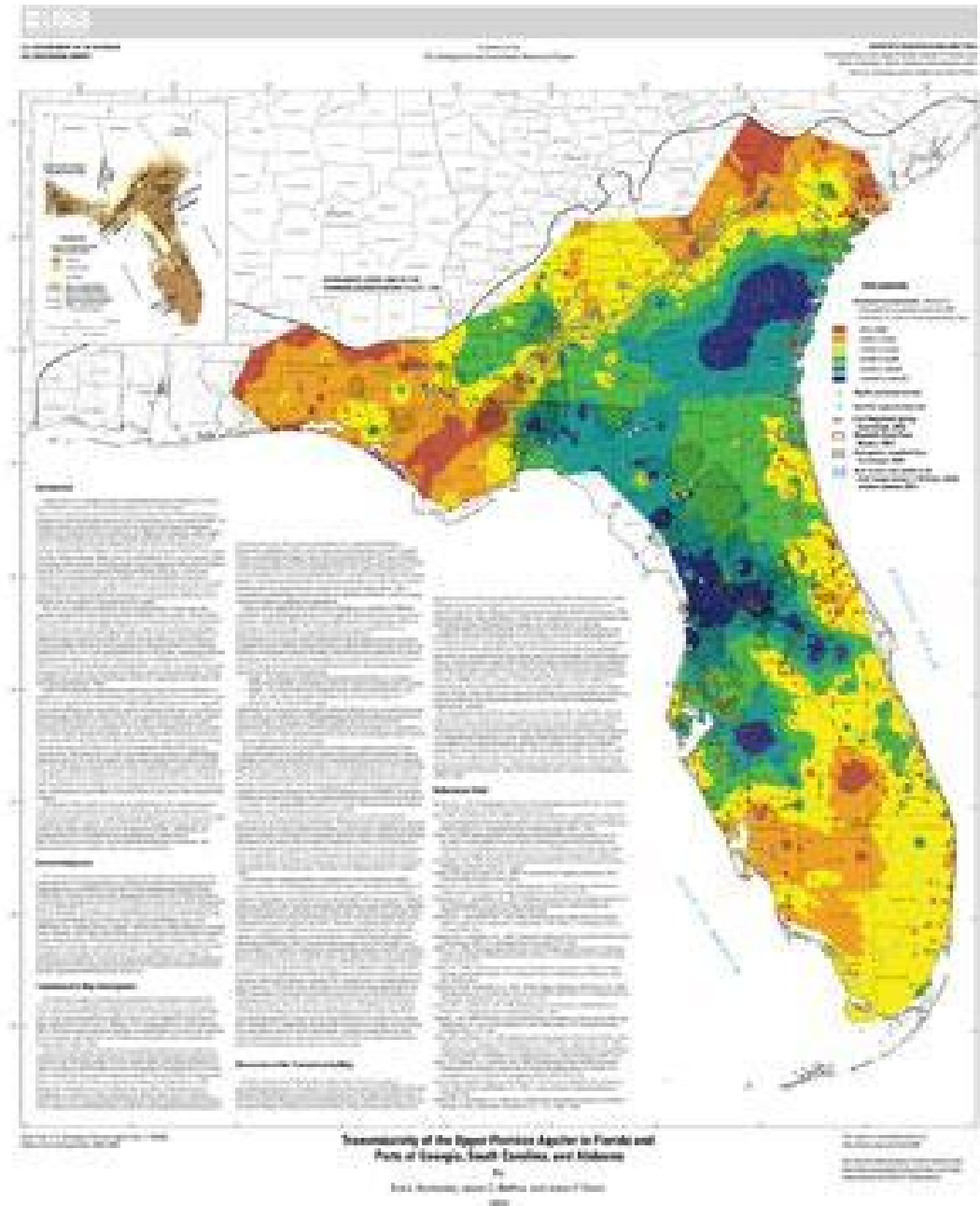
- Coal plant mercury
- New pipelines
- Agricultural runoff
- Landfill contents





# Floridan Aquifer

doesn't stop  
at state line



# Some Outstanding Issues in Suwannee Basin

- Industrial Agriculture
  - Florida BMAPs
- Chicken and Dairy CAFOs:
  - Pilgrim's Pride in Suwannee County
  - Aviagen in Brooks County
- Phosphate Mines
- Sabal Trail
- Litter
- Wastewater: Valdosta, Pilgrim's Pride, etc.
- Coal Ash
- Solar Power (instead of fossil fuels)

# Industrial Agriculture

- Water usage near springs
- Erosion
- Overuse of fertilizers
- Runoff and discharge into rivers and springs
- Destruction of sacred areas



Top: Antioch  
Cemetery 2015



Bottom: Antioch  
Cemetery 2009





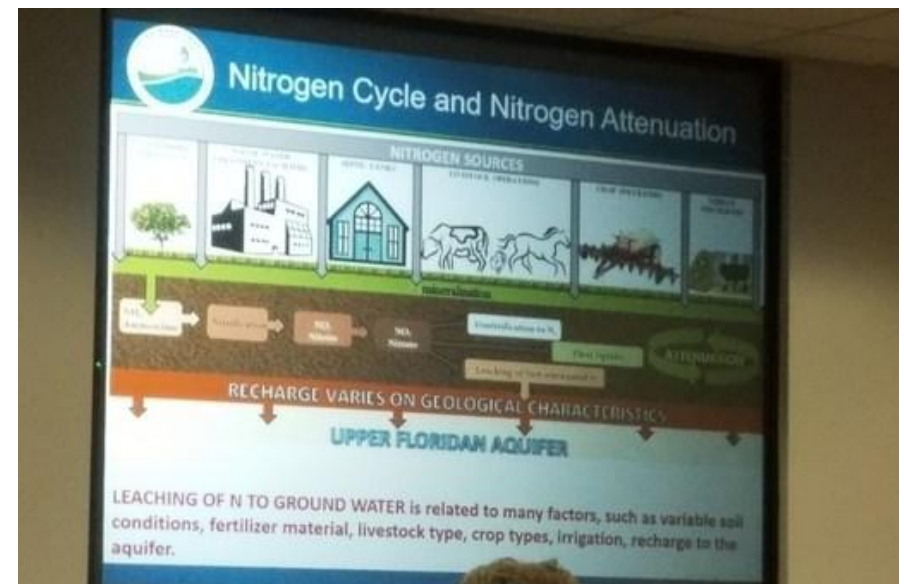
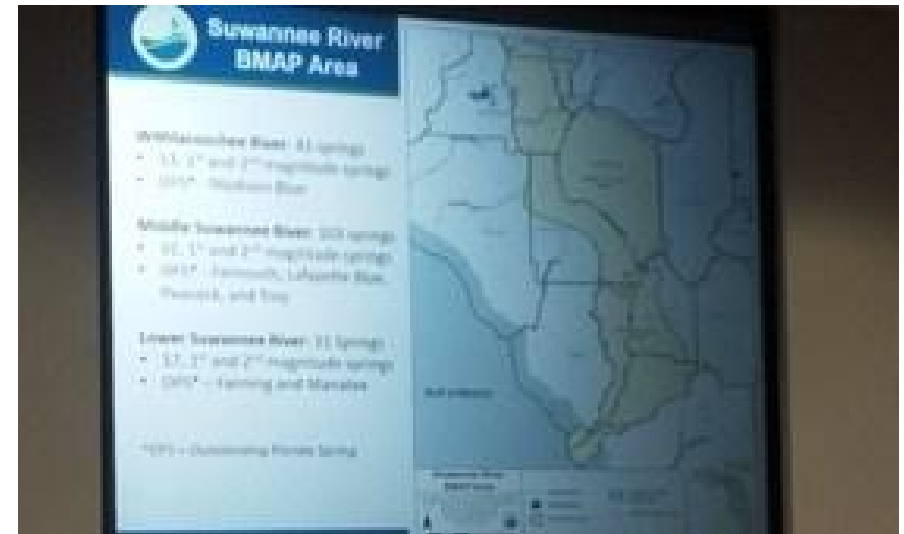
# Industrial Agriculture





# Florida BMAPs

The conclusion from FDEP in their BMAP presented to an almost-full SRWMD boardroom on April 13, 2017 was: nitrogen leaching into springs and rivers from all sources (the biggest being agriculture, dairies, and poultry) must decrease 83 to 93 percent.



# Pilgrims Pride



With the Suwannee River low, you can see the effluent coming out of the pipe west of Live Oak, FL. Pilgrim's Pride just rejected a shareholder resolution to curb water pollution from its operations.

# Phosphate Mines



The PCS Phosphate mine in Hamilton County near White Springs and Jasper spread under our Southwings plane while surveying the Sabal Trail fracked methane pipeline 22 October 2016.



# Sabal Trail Pipeline

Ms. Lauren P. Milligan  
Page 4  
March 27, 2014

□ 2015-08-15

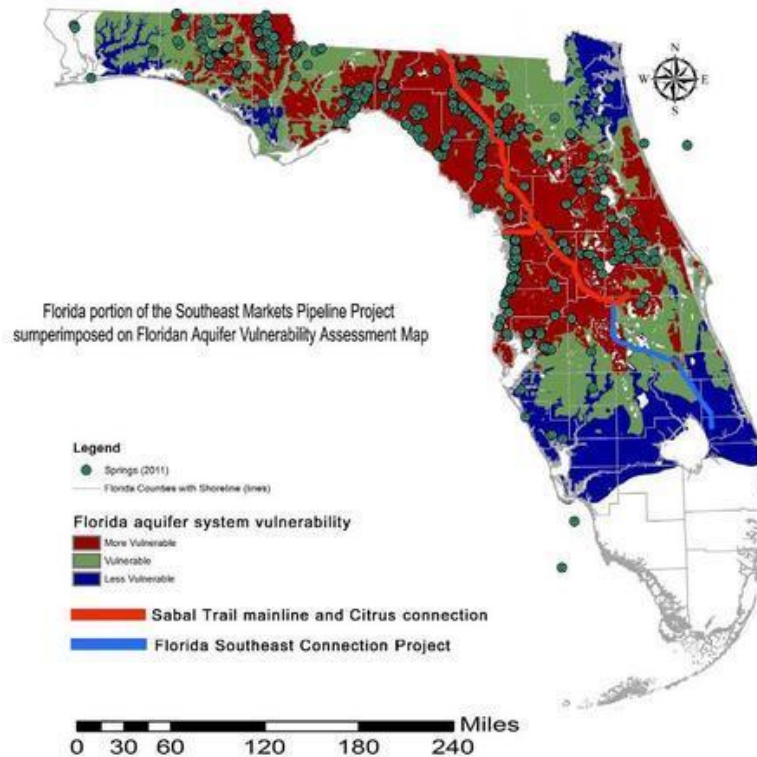


Figure 1: Florida portion of the Southeast Markets Pipeline Project superimposed on Floridan aquifer vulnerability assessment (FAVA) map.  
FAVA data from: [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/geology/programs/hydrogeology/fava\\_gis\\_data.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/geology/programs/hydrogeology/fava_gis_data.htm)



# 2015-08-28: WWALS v. Sabal Trail & FL-DEP

STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION		<b>RECEIVED</b> <u>August 28, 2015</u> Dept. of Environmental Protection Office of General Counsel
WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.,  Petitioners,  vs.  SABAL TRAIL TRANSMISSION, LLC and STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,  Respondents.		OGC Case No.: 15-0468
<hr/>		
Petition for Administrative Hearing:		
Florida Department of Environmental Protection's intent to issue Environmental Resource Permit.		
Petitioner:	WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. P.O. Box 88 Hahira, GA 31632 wwalswatershed@gmail.com	WWALS Watershed Coalition Florida Inc. Chris and Deanna Mericle (386) 938-5943 or (321) 431-3204 or (386) 855-5096 7712 SW 32 <sup>nd</sup> Lane Jasper, FL 32052 mericle.deanna@gmail.com cmericle@gmail.com
Permit applicant:	Sabal Trail Transmission, LLC  400 Colonial Center Parkway, Suite 300  Lake Mary, FL 32746	
Department Permit file number: 0128333-001		
WWALS vs FL DEP, 7 August 2015, Case no. 15-0468, file no. 0128333-001, page 1 of 14		

# Dangers to our Rivers - October 2016



Drilling mud from the Sabal Trail pipe under the Withlacoochee came into the flow of the river.



# Sabal Trail Ruins Farmer's Field - 2017

Randy Dowdy is the 2014 50-year record holder for U.S. corn production and the world record holder for soybean production. Sabal Trail gouged its pipeline through his terraces on the land he used for those soybeans in Brooks County. Despite his warnings, they left that damage unfixed until rains in January caused massive erosion, washing his topsoil into a nearby creek. Beyond immediate damage, this destruction affects Dowdy's ability to grow such record yields, and the basic productivity of his fields.



# Litter

Every bit of litter and trash has the potential of running downhill, downstream, and eventually to the ocean.

Right: Trash from river access points in Lowndes County GA





# 2015-03-17 VLD Wastewater



Facilitated a meeting among interested parties about the ongoing Valdosta wastewater spills with people from Atlanta and Florida.



# 2016-10-27

## VLD Wastewater and Stormwater Presentation

Valdosta City Staff presented information about the new WWTP and stormwater control measures.



# Coal Ash: 2017-03-01 Valdosta, GA 2017-05-04 Albany, GA

Jacksonville and Tallahassee sent coal ash to Georgia, including upstream from the Suwannee River. Now Georgia Power wants to send coal ash from their ponds to local landfills. They and GA-EPD stopped bills this year. Riverkeepers and others keep fighting.



# Education and Outreach

## Awareness:

Science in the basin

Mapping

Brochures

Outreach to Schools

## Environmental Monitoring:

Water quality

Invasive species





# Education into Action

Water Trail Seminars: 2014 & 2016  
Talks: Tom Baird, 2012 & 2016  
VSU Professors  
Valdosta City Staff about  
Stormwater

Trash pickups - Education  
could make these less  
necessary.





Recently

Fifth Annual  
BIG Little River  
Paddle Race  
at  
Reed Bingham  
State Park  
  
April 29, 2017



# Upcoming Outings

- May 20: Suwannee River: 9AM  
Wayside Park Ramp to Swift Creek Launch
- June 10: Suwannee River: 9AM  
Ft Macomb to Ivey Memorial
- June 24: Withlacoochee River: 9AM  
Sullivan Launch to Madison Blue Springs



# Finish



# Contact

Gretchen Quarterman  
Acting Executive Director  
850-290-2350  
[wwalswatershed@gmail.com](mailto:wwalswatershed@gmail.com)

John S. Quarterman  
Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®  
229-242-0102  
[contact@suwanneeriverkeeper.org](mailto:contact@suwanneeriverkeeper.org)

WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc.  
is a member of:  
National River Network  
Georgia River Network  
Georgia Water Coalition  
Florida Springs Council  
Waterkeeper Alliance International

[www.wwals.net](http://www.wwals.net)  
PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632

