

Riverspeak

News from WINYAH RIVERS FOUNDATION



Sponsor of the WACCAMAW RIVERKEEPER® PROGRAM

FALL 2011

Volume 11 Issue 3



From your Riverkeeper

We are honored to be selected by Georgetown County Chamber of Commerce as

"Outstanding Non Profit".

Thank you to the Chamber and all our supporters!

Geales Sands' gave this presentation speech at the Annual Meeting:

"In 1966, the Beatles assured us that we all live in a yellow submarine. This may or may not be true. What I can tell you with certitude is that here in Georgetown County, we all live in a watershed – an area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off it goes to the same place and our individual actions affect it. From its birthplace in the wetlands up in North Carolina, the Waccamaw River meanders more than 140 miles to the Atlantic Ocean. So what starts up in North Carolina all dumps out here in the Winyah Bay.

The Winyah Rivers Foundation, our winner tonight of the Outstanding Non Profit award, was established in 2001, and is the home of the Waccamaw Riverkeeper. What is a Riverkeeper? A Riverkeeper is a full time advocate for a body of water and its surrounding community. They are skilled environmentalists who are equal parts scientist, lawyer, investigator, educator and advocate.

Christine Ellis, our Waccamaw Riverkeeper since 2006, is all of those things. Christine and her assistant Carolyn Ross are passionate advocates for our river. They act as watchdog protectors of our local rivers, they lead water quality monitoring on the Waccamaw, they try to protect our waters from polluters, save important local wetland habitats and host youth programs for river education and stewardship; they encourage community involvement through river clean-ups and paddling events and they promote ecotourism and natural heritage conservation...2

Bring your family for an afternoon by the River in Conway...

Inaugural Bridge to Bridge Kayak/Canoe Race
(\$25pp race fee includes T shirt, goodie bag, prizes—sign up online)

Scenic River Trip (\$5pp) by Captain Jim of River Memories

Free Live Entertainment, Food Vendors, Local Crafts & Wares

Then enjoy an elegant evening at the Lower River Warehouse...

Heavy hors d'oeuvres (*Murrells Inlet Seafood*)

Live entertainment (*by Lola & by Sarah*)

Silent auction fun

(*Awesome Art, Bountiful Baskets, Striking Sculpture, Gorgeous Gems, Extraordinary Events*)

Tickets available online (www.winyahivers.org) or by calling 843-349-4007.

Support our community's most valuable asset...our water!



Welcome Carolyn!

We are very pleased to announce a new addition to our staff, Carolyn Ross, joining us part-time to support our education and advocacy programs. Carolyn brings a great deal of environmental experience to our cause, also working part-time as the Executive Director of Keep Georgetown Beautiful. She is a welcome addition as we work to fulfill our mission of protection of our local rivers. Welcome Carolyn!

My Precious Jacquelyn—by Curtis Leonard

On the warm and sunny first day of April, I was swimming and quacking with my daughter Jacquelyn. We were in search of a meal in the Waccamaw Watershed; Jacquelyn went down for a fish, but never came back up. She swallowed some plastic pollution mistaking it for fish; it clogged her esophagus, eventually suffocating her.

I decided to bury my precious daughter under an overgrown crepe myrtle. Eventually, I left Jacquelyn's grave knowing that I had to try and stop future occurrences of this atrocity so that no other animal would ever have to die like she did. I decided to just walk along the waterline of the Collins Creek Tributary which is part of the watershed. I saw a trail of litter, and I followed it until I reached the ugly source. There was a man dumping waste straight from his truck into a tributary. I was in such a state of disgust because I could not do anything about his criminal actions.

The next day, I walked in search of pollution in the watershed along the divide because it was the highest place around. Suddenly, I stepped in a puddle of surface water; it caught me off guard causing me to lose my balance. I slipped and fell to the forest floor landing five feet away from a large rusty discharge pipe that was pumping an unknown substance into the drainage basin. It was a slimy, black liquid with the appalling odor of eggs. I tried my best to plug the pipe and remove all of the substance that I could from the water, but I didn't know how long the plug would hold. Just as I was leaving the drainage basin, a shimmering object caught my eye. I went underwater to bring it to the surface. It was a dead fish, partially decayed. It looked like it was a host for decomposers and other micro-organisms. It was covered in the same black substance that was coming out of the discharge pipe. I buried the fish right next to Jacquelyn so they could rest in peace together.

Just a week later, I noticed a teenage couple having a picnic at Brookgreen Gardens along the banks of the Waccamaw River, an integral part of our local watershed. When they finished their meal, they just tossed their trash straight into the river. This time I could not stop myself. I went berserk, I ran and ran like there was no tomorrow; I bit the young teens with my bill, I quacked, and I chased them away.

Sometime after my daughter died, I saw two kids in their twenties camping near highway 31. One boy lit a match, and it slipped out of his hand causing a fire. Being in a heavily forested area of the watershed, it spread quickly. Before long the fire was out of control. It took weeks for the fire to die down; it eventually rained, and I was so glad to finally see precipitation. Sadly, while the rain was a welcome sight, it was extremely acidic due to its pH being below 5.6. It was polluting the ground and water as a result.

I was walking along after my last toxic incident when yet another one occurred. I noticed a bridge that was passing right over one of the tributaries. I saw a multi-colored, shiny substance flowing off the bridge, down a hill, and into the water. When I sniffed it, a weird stench crept up into my nostrils. I later came to the conclusion that it was oil. I decided to dig a make-shift moat to try to contain the oil. I was so relieved when I saw the Waccamaw River Keeper coming my way. What an unbelievable coincidence! Christine Ellis collected the oily substance and brought it to her truck to keep it from further contaminating the watershed.

As I walked through Carolina Forest, I witnessed humans wasting this phenomenal natural resource. The first thing that I noticed was a father and son using a very sudsy liquid to wash their car. The soapy water seeped down the driveway and into the sewer grate. I walked on further to find something I wish I had not seen. I saw this man using a hose to wash his dog's droppings out of his lawn and into a retention pond. That was a double kill. He was not just wasting water, he was polluting it. I quickly walked away from that dilemma. Sadly, in the midst of trying to escape the horror, I witnessed people using the water in wasteful ways. They were washing their cars, watering their lawns daily and running the faucet while they brushed their teeth.

Their abuse of water left me in such a state of abhorrence I left the neighborhood and looked for shelter. I found a bush that I fit into like a key fits into a lock. I looked out into the beautiful world showing me a new perspective on life. The South Carolinian breeze was in my face; the aroma of fresh flowers was reaching its way up my beak. I saw other ducks swimming as were other animals such as fish, frogs and turtles. I saw birds flying and feeding their young. I also saw a minimal amount of pollution; there was crystal-clear water, no trash on the ground nor were discharge pipes running, and the rain was setting the watershed into perfect motion. My mission was complete; I have made my promise for my precious Jacquelyn.

Curtis Leonard of St. James Middle School is the 2011 7th Grade District winner in the Horry County Soil and Water Conservation District Contest sponsored by Horry County Stormwater. Congratulations Curtis!

GOOD NEWS ON THE UPPER WACCAMAW!

Water quality monitoring: At long last, we're launching this program and training new volunteers this fall. Contact the Riverkeeper or Lake Waccamaw State Park for details.

Fish restocking: Thanks to NC Board Member George "Doug" Smith, NC Wildlife Resources Commission will restock several native fish species in 2012. Per Keith Ashley, Fisheries Biologist, the river had not been stocked for 10 years. Precipitated by concerns raised by locals about the lack of fish, we thank WRC and are happy to support the local community and its native fish populations.

Continued from Page 1...

The Waccamaw River has played a major role in the history of the region through which it flows. It supports recreational fishing and other water sports, provides drinking water, is avenue for tourism and camping, supplies power plant cooling water, and enhances the lives of those who touch it through its beauty and serenity. We all enjoy it, count on it and sometimes take it for granted. We rely on Christine Ellis to be our watchdog for our river. She and her hardworking board and volunteers encourage us to invest in our river. They need us to support their efforts on behalf of fishable, swimmable, drinkable water for our families and our future." Geales Sands, July 28, 2011



Fishable, swimmable, drinkable.

WATERKEEPER®s around the world are working locally to protect our water and our rights. Winyah Rivers Foundation and the Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® have been working for a decade to protect our local rivers! Join our cause.

Waccamaw River Blue Trail—Come paddle with us!

Join the Blue Trail partners and the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge on Saturday, October 1st at Cox Ferry Lake Recreation Area. We're celebrating the official release of the Waccamaw River Blue Trail map in conjunction with the Refuge's boardwalk dedication and acquisition of the Long Tract. More details will be available soon.

With our abundant water resources, paddling is just one aspect of an ecotouristic future that we think is a path to sustainability for our area's natural heritage and economy. To encourage you to enjoy this resource, we offer a quarterly paddling event, entitled "If the river could talk". In June, we partnered with Black River Outdoors Center to paddle the Waccamaw's tidal creeks in the Pawley's Island area. In August, we partnered with Conway Kayak Company to paddle a Conway section. **Our next paddle is scheduled for Saturday, November 12th** when we will again partner with Black River Outdoors Center to paddle around Sandy Island. More information is available at our website or by calling 843-349-4007. Come join us, enjoy the beautiful Waccamaw River and support a local outfitter and our mission.

Our Adopt-a-Landing Program is up and running with several groups stepping up to adopt their local boat landing. Adopters will help to clean up their landing and surrounding areas, address safety issues and work to beautify these public lands. We still need groups to adopt landings. Interested groups can find information and an application on our website. Thanks to those who have already committed to the program and scheduled cleanups!

Note: Efforts continue in North Carolina to expand the Blue Trail upstream. Call 843-349-4007 to get involved.



A partnership project between American Rivers, Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® Program of Winyah Rivers Foundation and Pee Dee Land Trust. Become a fan on Facebook!



Litter Contribution to Dissolved Organic Matter in Coastal Black-water Rivers: Implications of Drinking Water Quality (Part 2)

by Alex Chow, Ph.D.

Tea-colored like dissolved organic matter (DOM) leached from fresh and decomposed litter materials in forested watersheds and wetlands are one of the major sources of carcinogenic disinfection byproduct (DBP) precursors in source water. DBP such as chloroform is a health concern since it can be easily absorbed into our body through dermal contact (e.g., showering, bathing, and dishwashing). In general, the deeper the color filtered water is, the greater the amount of DBPs formed during water chlorination. Water engineers and scientists use color of water as a surrogate to estimate DBP precursors in source waters. To minimize DBP formation, coagulants such as Fe(III) or Al(III) are added to remove DOM and DBP precursors prior to chlorination of water.



Fig 1: A typical coagulation tank in a drinking water treatment facility.



Fig 2: DOM binds with Fe(III) forming large particles removed by sedimentation or flotation.

Dr. Alex Chow, faculty at Clemson's Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology & Forest Science, studies the chemical characteristics of DOM leached from foliar litters to determine potential impacts on drinking water quality. Contact him at (843) 546-1013, ext 232 or achow@clemson.edu.

These businesses support our community's most valuable asset

OUR WATER

To become a Business Member, call 843-349-4007.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SC Beach Sweep/River Sweep
Various locations, including Conway
September 17

River Celebration
A benefit for the Waccamaw Riverkeeper
Conway
September 24

NC Big Sweep
October 1

Waccamaw River Blue Trail Event
Conway
October 1

Wooden Boat Show
Georgetown
October 15

“If the River could talk” Paddle
November 12

Check out our calendar for more info.
www.winyahivers.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

TO:

Your contribution supports our most important asset—WATER!

INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Introductory (1st Year Only) | \$ 35 _____ |
| Protector of the River | \$ 50 _____ |
| Guardian of the River | \$ 100 _____ |
| Advocate of the River | \$ 250 _____ |
| Defender of the River | \$ 500 _____ |
| Champion of the River | \$ 1000 _____ |

Rewards for members Guardian to Champion
 (monogrammed items, e.g., tee, hat, poster)

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Business Guardian of the River | \$ 100 _____ |
| Business Advocate of the River | \$ 250 _____ |
| Business Defender of the River | \$ 500 _____ |
| Business Champion of the River | \$ 1000 _____ |

All business members receive a certificate & newsletter, website recognition

Event sponsors receive recognition at the event and in all publicity.

Yes, I want to support your efforts for our rivers to be fishable, swimmable and drinkable!

Name _____ *We accept Visa and Master Card*
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 Phone _____ Signature _____

Winyah Rivers Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Winyah Rivers Foundation
 (843)349-4007; www.winyahivers.org

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- Reggie Daves, President, Conway, SC
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- Bob Mimms, Pawley’s Island, SC
- Mark Ousley, Myrtle Beach, SC
- Doug Smith, Whiteville, NC
- Becky Westbrooks, Chadbourn, NC

The Staff

- Waccamaw Riverkeeper—**Christine Ellis**
Riverkeeper@winyahivers.org
- Assistant Riverkeeper—**Carolyn Ross**
Carolyn@winyahivers.org

In Memory of Jobie Dixon
 We mourn the passing of Board member and friend, Jobie Dixon. He had an illustrious marketing career, authored a book on innovation and hosted a talk show on Voice America. He was a true friend to our cause and will be missed.