

# Riverspeak

News from WINYAH RIVERS FOUNDATION



Sponsor of the WACCAMAW RIVERKEEPER® PROGRAM

WINTER 2010/2011

Volume 10 Issue 4

## CELEBRATE OUR RIVERS!

On Saturday, November 6th, we did just that when our members and supporters came together at Ripley's Aquarium in Myrtle Beach for our annual fundraiser. Thanks to:

- Our event sponsors for making the evening possible!
- Our wonderful donors, companies and individuals too many to name, who created our best ever Silent Auction!
- Our hardworking volunteers who put a lot of effort into organizing such a wonderful event!
- Everyone who joined us to **Celebrate Our Rivers!**

Thank for your support of Celebrate Our Rivers @ Ripley's and of our mission to protect, preserve, monitor and revitalize the health of the lands and waters of the greater Winyah Bay watershed.



### *In Memory of...*

Grace Eddison, one of the early and long-time supporters of Winyah Rivers Foundation.

Mary Emily Platt Jackson and Nelson Jackson, long-time supporters of Winyah Rivers Foundation and local heroes.

Kaye King, former WRF Director, 2004 recipient of the Joy Pinson Award for Exceptional Service to the Waccamaw River along with her husband Charles, and host of the Pireway Sweep and Paddlefest on the Waccamaw River since 2004.

### **VICTORY!**

#### **Protection of a Critical Waccamaw Wetland**

The Army Corps of Engineers has reversed its decision for a large wetland near Murrells Inlet following a court challenge brought by Southern Environmental Law Center and National Wildlife Federation on behalf of Coastal Conservation League, SC Wildlife Federation and Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® Program of Winyah Rivers Foundation. Investigations by these groups indicated that the wetland is connected to the Waccamaw River and should have been protected. The Corps' revised analysis, filed in federal district court in Charleston, SC on November 1, 2010, shows that the wetland is hydrologically connected to a tributary of the Waccamaw River and that the wetland, along with other nearby wetlands, provides significant benefits, including stormwater filtration, flood storage and vital habitat.

### **RiverSpeak by Christine Ellis**

Winyah Rivers Foundation (WRF) was created in 2001 by a small group of individuals like you who were worried about the health of the rivers they loved. Their passion helped to create a volunteer driven organization focused on educating the community about threats to water quality. Ten years later WRF has matured into an effective advocate for the rivers within our watershed.

Now in our second decade, WRF, through the Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® Program, has worked with our members and volunteers to implement a volunteer water quality monitoring program, promote recreational opportunities through on-the-water events, host river cleanup events, work with stakeholders to protect critical lands within the watershed and to serve as a watchdog for activities that have the potential to impact our watershed.

Winyah Rivers Foundation is proof of the good that communities can achieve and with your financial support we will celebrate another 10 years, preserving our local rivers for future generations.

Please take a moment to contribute your year-end contribution to help ensure that we will be here, with you, protecting your source of water for drinking, recreation & enjoyment for another decade.

**And, from all of us, thank you and best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season!**

*For the Riverkeeper's 12 days of Christmas, go to [www.winyahrivers.org](http://www.winyahrivers.org).*

## COMMUNITY GATHERS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WATER QUALITY OF THE WACCAMAW RIVER

Our 5th Annual Waccamaw Water Quality Data Conference was held in September at the Waccamaw Higher Education Center in Litchfield Beach. Project administrators, Dr. Susan Libes and Mr. Ken Hayes from Coastal Carolina University's Waccamaw Watershed Academy and I, provided updates on the program, including an enhanced database for our volunteer collected data. We were fortunate to be joined that day by others, including:

- Daniel Newquist, Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments, discussed the update of the Section 208 Water Quality Plan for our area, focusing on opportunities for implementing green infrastructure locally. Most importantly, Daniel wants to hear from you about your water quality concerns and recommendations since community involvement is a large part of the update. A survey is available at: [www.wrcog.org/enviro.htm](http://www.wrcog.org/enviro.htm)
- Paul Conrads, United States Geological Survey, discussed inter-annual trends from USGS gages, how this information is used to address local water resource issues, an examination of flows, DO and temperature and discussing oxygen deficit information for our area as compared to other areas, and finally an update on salinity intrusion and climate change study underway.
- Amanda Ley, Department of Health and Environmental Control, gave us some perspective on the process used to implement water quality standards, identify impaired sites and develop TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads). She stressed the importance of the volunteer monitoring project given DHEC budget cuts and requested community-initiated projects to participate in.

Dr. Susan Libes brought it all together by discussing the impact of rainfall, time of day, temperature and season on water quality characteristics and then conducting a hands-on exercise looking at dissolved oxygen trends over the history of the project, followed by a discussion of 303(d) listed impaired sites, the DO TMDL story for our watershed and a quick review of the data on nutrients, E. coli and turbidity.

Presentations are available on the Volunteering Monitoring website at: [www.coastal.edu/wva/vm/wr/pubs.html](http://www.coastal.edu/wva/vm/wr/pubs.html)



The take home messages that day were many but the most important was that the commitment that our volunteers have made to this project is greatly appreciated by the project administrators and the local municipalities who rely on these data to meet, in part, their requirements for stormwater management under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). These water quality data are essential for our understanding of the Waccamaw River and how to protect it.

**Thank you to our volunteers for the valuable information provided to our community regarding the resources of our wonderful Waccamaw watershed.**

## North Carolinians We need you!

Do you care about the water quality of Lake Waccamaw and the Waccamaw River? Are you available twice a month on Wednesday mornings to help?

If so, we are recruiting volunteers to join our Volunteer Monitoring Project on the Waccamaw in North Carolina at:

- Hwy 904 Landing, Pireway
- Hwy 130 (Babson's) Landing
- Lake Waccamaw (4 sites)

To learn more, contact:

- Christine Ellis, Waccamaw Riverkeeper, at 843-349-4007
- or
- Jonathan Short, Lake Waccamaw State Park, at 910-646-1843



## SEWEE Joins Our Partnership with Service Over Self Youth (SOS)

SOS, SEWEE Association, and Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® have commenced a partnership project to test water quality in the PeeDee and Sampit Rivers in Georgetown County. SOS and Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® previously formed a watershed stewardship partnership, *Youth for a Healthier Sampit River*, and are expanding this project to include salinity water quality measurements and add two PeeDee River sites. These rivers join to form Winyah Bay and there is concern about the impact of salinity levels on freshwater marshes within the Refuge boundary as sea level rises or drought occurs. This project can provide needed data to the Refuge staff to help with their current and future management decisions. The project launched in November and includes about 30 students at three sites; the Carroll Ashmore Campbell Marine Complex on the Sampit River and, on the PeeDee River, the Samworth Wildlife Management Area and Waccamaw Environmental Education Center. Students will gain an understanding of the different water quality measurements and the effects changes in water quality can have on the land.

## Waccamaw River Blue Trail—Ongoing Initiatives

Join us at the Winyah Bay Heritage Festival in Georgetown January 15-16!

Waccamaw River Blue Trail partners, American Rivers, Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® and Pee Dee Land Trust will be there promoting our ongoing efforts to establish a “Blue Trail” on the Waccamaw. The Blue Trail will not only improve recreational opportunities, it will also help to educate citizens and local governments about the importance of the river as a community asset, increase community involvement in the river, and support conservation. Through our partnership, we are working with stakeholders to encourage land protection through education and incentive programs.


We're hard at work on several tools to improve the trail experience, including signage, an online interpretive guide to natural, historic and cultural resources of importance along the river and a waterproof trail map. **Have special knowledge and want to help us identify these resources?**

And we've launched a new initiative, **Adopt-A-Landing Program**. It is our wish that, with the help of local citizens who utilize the river and/or value the public access our boat landings provide to the river, we can launch our own Adopt-A-Landing Program. To that end, we invite local groups of citizens, businesses, church congregations, students, etc. to “adopt” their local landing.

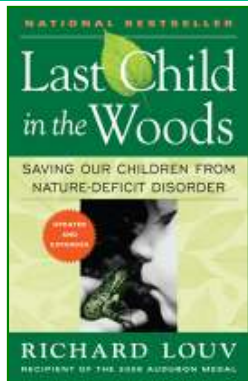
What would be expected of you? To begin with, we ask you to agree on a schedule for regular cleanups at your adopted landing. We also ask you to help identify needs for your adopted landing. Is litter a problem? Is access a problem? How could the landing be improved to provide for not only boaters but others who may wish to enjoy the river?

**We are happy to announce that the Mid Week Bass Club has signed up to adopt Enterprise Landing! Thanks to Mark Bertelsen and all club members for your interest!**

And don't forget to watch our website for upcoming “If the River Could Talk” paddle events.

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

### RIVERKEEPER® READS...



#### Last Child in the Woods

discusses the growing phenomenon in which children have become disconnected from nature and argues that we must save our children from this nature-deficit disorder. Children need nature to understand natural science. Nature needs children to be its steward.

For more information, go to <http://richardlouv.com/>.

*Thanks to Rebecca Westbrook at Southeastern Community College for introducing me to this book.*

### Watershed Wide Paddle Trail?

Upstream, we've gotten folks from Brunswick and Columbus Counties interested in promoting expansion of the paddle trail into the North Carolina portion of the Waccamaw watershed.

Informational meetings to solicit input on this initiative from North Carolina residents are being held:

- January 20, 7 pm, Lake Waccamaw State Park
- January 25, 7 pm, Old Dock Community Center
- January 27, 7 pm, Waccamaw Community Bldg
- February 1, 7 pm, Wild Life Outpost Bait & Tackle

For more information, contact Jennifer Holcomb at 910-640-2818.

### Keep Horry County Beautiful!

Horry County Parks & Open Space Board is working to establish a chapter of Keep America Beautiful. Keep Horry County Beautiful will be a litter prevention, community clean-up and beautification as well as a recycling organization serving the residents and businesses of Horry County. Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® has signed on to partner in this initiative, will attend a pre-certification workshop in January and will continue our ongoing litter cleanup efforts on the Waccamaw River and beyond.

## BUSINESS HONORARY RIVERKEEPER



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**To become a Business Member and support our work, call the Riverkeeper at 843-349-4007.**

Winyah Rivers Foundation  
 Center for Marine and Wetland Studies  
 Coastal Carolina University  
 1270 Atlantic Avenue  
 Conway, SC 29526

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

For details: [www.winyahrivers.org](http://www.winyahrivers.org)

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY**

**Winyah Bay Heritage Festival**  
 Georgetown, SC, 1/15-1/16

**NC Waccamaw River Paddle Trail  
 Informational Meetings**  
 NC Meetings 1/20, 1/25, 1/27, 2/1

And coming soon...

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19**

**Waccamaw Conference  
 & River Roast South**

Join us in the morning in Litchfield as we celebrate successes in protecting your source of water for drinking, recreation & enjoyment. Then join us in the afternoon at Hobcaw Barony for our annual oyster roast and help support our protection work.

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TO:

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*Winyah Rivers Foundation*  
 (843)349-4007  
 WRK@coastal.edu  
 www.winyahrivers.org

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*The Board*

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*Are you passionate about our rivers?  
 Apply to serve on our Board.*

*Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER®*  
 Christine Ellis



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