



WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632

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Thank you for a Successful 2015!

As we begin 2016, we are grateful for the support of our members and friends as we advocate for conservation and stewardship of the beautiful blackwater rivers of south Georgia and North Florida. Thank you all for helping us do what we do. If you missed our year end wrap-up, you can find it at: <http://www.wwals.net/2015/12/15/end-of-the-year-membership-donations-to-wwals>

Outing News and Updates

We could not have asked for more perfect weather for our hike at Grand Bay Wildlife Refuge near Lakeland, GA on December 12th. We got plenty of exercise in the fresh air along the boardwalk and climbing the viewing tower. It is a breathtaking 360 degree vista and worth the climb. The Bay is a beautiful marsh with a mix of pond and bald cypress trees, blackgum trees, lily pads, and a variety of other plant species. WWALS board member, Bret Wagenhorst, who is knowledgeable about many plant species, was able to point out some unique examples. There is also a canoe trail at Grand Bay which we plan to explore in a future outing.



Community Outreach and Education

Two WWALS board members and many members spoke at two recent Suwannee Board of County Commissioners Meetings. We didn't have any other speaking engagements or festival booths in December but members were actively inviting friends and family to give gifts of memberships or making donations. Volunteers are always welcome to help out when we have a booth (for example at the Azalea Festival in Valdosta in March) or let us know if you'd like someone from WWALS to address your group. We have added new members in the past few months to the Outings Committee, the Public Relations Committee, the Pipeline Committee, and the Withlacoochee & Little River Water Trail (WLRWT) Committee. We're always looking for more committee members! See: <http://www.wwals.net/about/committees/>.



WWALS Working Hard for Your Watershed

Good news and bad news about the Sabal Trail Pipeline:

Bad news first. The judge's Proposed Recommended Order filed December 11th was totally in favor of DEP and Sabal Trail. A different office of the US EPA recanted most of the original EPA points of opposition to the pipeline in a letter to the Army Corp of Engineers. The Suwannee County Board of County Commissioners backed down and decided not to pass a resolution against the pipeline in Suwannee County. The good news: Suwannee County did pass a resolution to move the location of the compressor station. See <http://www.wwals.net/issues/stt/>.



WWALS and other organizations have not given up! WWALS' attorneys are researching the feasibility of an appeal, and they already filed 25 exceptions to the judge's order, documenting numerous ways the DEP and DOAH processes do not seem to have followed Florida state law. Sierra Club, Gulf Restoration Network, Spectrabusters, and various Riverkeepers are organizing a more united opposition among citizens in Georgia and Florida. See <http://www.wwals.net/about/news/> for increasing state and national media coverage. Please ask your local, state, and federal government officials to oppose Sabal Trail, fracking, and LNG export.

Water Trail News



Good News! After more than two years of planning, the Lowndes County Board of Commissioners finally voted on December 8th to purchase 4.35 acres on the Alapaha River for the Boat Ramp at US 84. They said they used the WWALS Alapaha River Water Trail map to determine that there are no boat ramps on the Alapaha River in Lowndes County. No word yet on how long it will take to actually build the boat ramp but getting the property is a step in the right direction. We are also in process of placing the first Alapaha River Water Trail access signs at US 82.

Mark your calendars for February 27th for the Withlacoochee Water Trail Workshop at Valdosta State University (**VSU**). The WLRWT Committee is actively working on the logo contest, a **"River Art" Exhibit and silent auction**, and more for the workshop, plus a January outing on the Little River!

Upcoming Outings and Events

January 16 10AM	Little River: GA 122 to Lawson Millpond Rd, 4.25mi
February 20 8AM	Alapaha River: GA 135 to Berrien Beach, 18.25mi
February 27 1:30PM	Withlacoochee Water Trail Workshop at VSU
March 12-13 all day	Azalea Festival, Drexel Park, Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia
March 20 9AM	Withlacoochee River: Staten Road Bridge to Langdale Park , 5 miles

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

