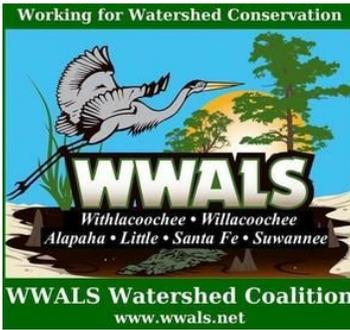


November 22, 2019



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



To: Potential member of WWALS Advisory Committee

**Re: About the WWALS Advisory Committee**

You have been suggested as an Advisor to WWALS Watershed Coalition. Before you consider joining anything, probably you would like to know what it is and what you might do.

**What is WWALS?**

WWALS Watershed Coalition (WWALS) is an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational charity. It was formed in June 2012 by charter board members from Lowndes and Tift Counties, Georgia, and currently has board members from those counties and from Harris County, Georgia, and Duval County, Florida. Most work of WWALS is done by volunteer members, by committees, and by the Board of Directors.

WWALS is the WATERKEEPER® Alliance Member for the Suwannee River Basin as [Suwannee RIVERKEEPER®](#). Currently there is one paid staff member, who is the Suwannee Riverkeeper, and an acting Executive Director.

**WWALS Vision:**

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, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.

**WWALS Goals:**

WWALS has [seven overarching goals](#), many about issues. Most of the issues listed here are addressed by the [WWALS Watershed Issues Committee](#). Testing has its own [Committee](#). The Water Trails have their own [Committee](#).

- [Water Quality Testing](#); see also [Committee](#).
- [Valdosta \(and other\) Wastewater](#)
- [Corporate agriculture](#): land purchases and land use
- [Solar power](#)
- [Liquid Natural Gas \(LNG\) export](#)
- [Sabal Trail fracked methane pipeline](#)
- [Fracking](#)
- [Coal Ash](#)
- [The Waycross Superfund mess](#)
- [Water Trails](#); see also [Committee](#).

For further detail, see <http://wwals.net/issues/>.

**What does WWALS do?**

WWALS strives to work with local landowners and counties and municipalities and other parties to promote the wise use and conservation of water resources in the region.

WWALS is perhaps best known for our frequent paddle outings on our rivers, lakes, and swamps, at least one a month, more than any other similar organization of which we are aware. We have also become known for our advocacy, such as about the ongoing Valdosta sewage situation, through our attendance at meetings, media coverage, and success in getting the state of Georgia to publish Sewage Spill Reports each business day. We also attend many festivals and put on at least three major fundraisers of our own each year.

WWALS is primarily member-supported. While most of our members reside in the Suwannee River Basin, we have quite a few from Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and Atlanta, and some from as far away as California, New York State, and Miami.

## What does a WWALS Advisor do?

Members of the WWALS Advisory Committee supply advice to the WWALS [Board of Directors](#) and staff. Unlike the WWALS Board of Directors, the [Advisory Committee](#) does not hold regular meetings, and is not responsible for making decisions. Some discussions among advisors are through an email list (a google group). There may be occasional teleconferences, and in-person meetings may have dial-in attendance.

To be advisors, we are looking for professors, deans, and scientists; doctors and lawyers; bankers and captains of industry; prominent farmers; and elected and appointed officials.

Advisors are not required to help with fundraising, but we do need advisors who will do that. We are raising money to fully fund an Executive Director and the Suwannee Riverkeeper position, as well as our other programs. For example, water trail signs cost money and water quality testing is an ongoing expense for every test.

Advisors will see occasional requests to help lobby the Georgia or Florida state legislature or agencies about specific items. Advisors who are willing, please help with that.

Frequently WWALS is called upon to advise members and the general public about water-related issues, for everything from rezonings to wastewater permits to statewide nitrate leachate problems and national firefighting foam contamination legislation. We need scientific advisors who can help. (We also have a Science Committee if you want to focus on just that.)

Water quality testing results, both from the WWALS volunteer testing program, and from the city of Valdosta and other sources, indicate there are nonpoint sources of pollution in our streams and rivers. For example, if there are horses or cattle close to a river, what are good methods to keep their manure from getting into the river, and what resources can fund any changes the landowners need to make?

Soil erosion into our rivers is also a problem. We could use advice on how best to deal with that, including how to find resources to assist the affected farmers.

In addition to at least one paddle outing a month, WWALS holds several major fundraisers each year, including the [BIG Little River Paddle Race](#) at Reed Bingham State Park in April, the [WWALS Boomerang](#) paddle race from Georgia into Florida and back in the fall, and the [Suwannee Riverkeeper Songwriting Contest](#) in August. We could use advice on how best to use those events to educate the public about WWALS issues, and what other events would be useful for that. <http://www.wwals.net/events-2/outings-events/>

In 2018 WWALS held a Wild & Scenic Film Festival, with videos selected from a nationwide prepared set. The event was successful, but many people remarked that none of the videos showed our rivers. We are considering doing it again as a local short video contest. We could use advice on how best to do that. <http://wwals.net/?p=43130>

In 2017 WWALS held a public meeting on Water, Agriculture, and Forestry, drawing from our own current and former board members; see videos. But attendance was low. We would like to do further such educational outreach, reaching more people, without duplicating what UGA, ABAC, VSU, UFL, etc. are already doing. <http://wwals.net/?p=32270> For example, we have talked about having a meeting on Natural History of the Suwannee River Basin; that would be something the Advisors could help with.

WWALS sets up its festival booth at many local festivals, and we attend many local government and other meetings. We could use advice on which other festivals and meetings would be useful to attend, and what we should take.

We write many letters to elected and appointed officials, often about scientific matters. All of those letters could use review by qualified experts.

For these and other reasons, WWALS needs Advisors. No doubt the Advisors will think of topics and things to do that we have not previously considered.

Let me know what questions you may have about the WWALS Advisory Committee.

For the rivers and the aquifer,

Gretchen Quarterman,  
Executive Director

