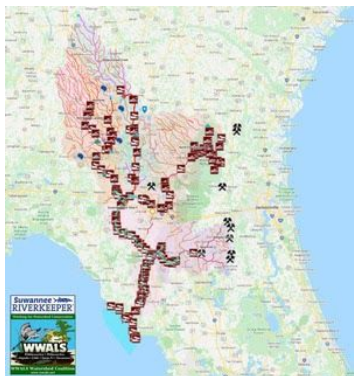


# Suwannee RIVERKEEPER® Songwriting Contest

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winners and excellent music from the judges and headliner, too, Suwannee Riverkeeper Songwriting Contest



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[www.wwals.net](http://www.wwals.net)

WWALS is an IRS 501(c)(3)  
nonprofit charity est. June 2012

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.

Suwannee RIVERKEEPER® is a  
program and a paid staff position of  
WWALS.



Brian Barker via zoom\*, accepting for him, Scott Perkins\*, Laura D'Alisera, Kathy Lou Gilman\*, John S. Quarterman, Sweet William Billy Ennis\*, Ronni Dillon (not present); \*prize winners

The winners are:

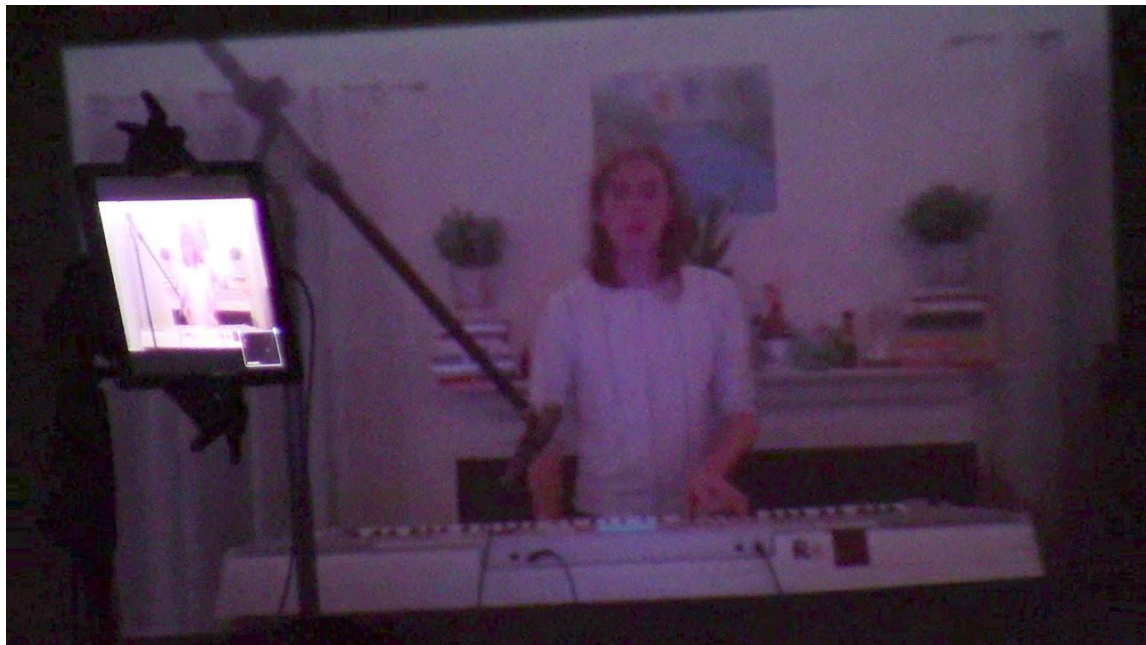
- **First Prize, Best Song from outside the Suwannee River Basin, and Best Southern Boogie:**

Scott Perkins, from Smyrna, GA, with "Hoochie-Coochie for the Withlacoochee."





- **Best Song from Inside the Suwannee River Basin, Best Folk Rock,** and appearing via zoom from Kentucky:  
Brian Barker, from Live Oak, FL, with a Folk Rock song, "The River."



- **Best Folk:**  
Sweet William Billy Ennis, from Palatka, FL, with a Folk song, "Choctaw Spirits of the Suwannee."





- **Best American Music Revival song:**  
Kathy Lou Gilman, from Kingsland, GA, with an American Music Revival song, "The River Song (My love, my Suwannee)."



- Unable to attend in-person or via zoom due to the virus pandemic:  
Ronni Dillon, from Waycross, GA, with a Folk-Alternative song, "Okefenokee Memory."

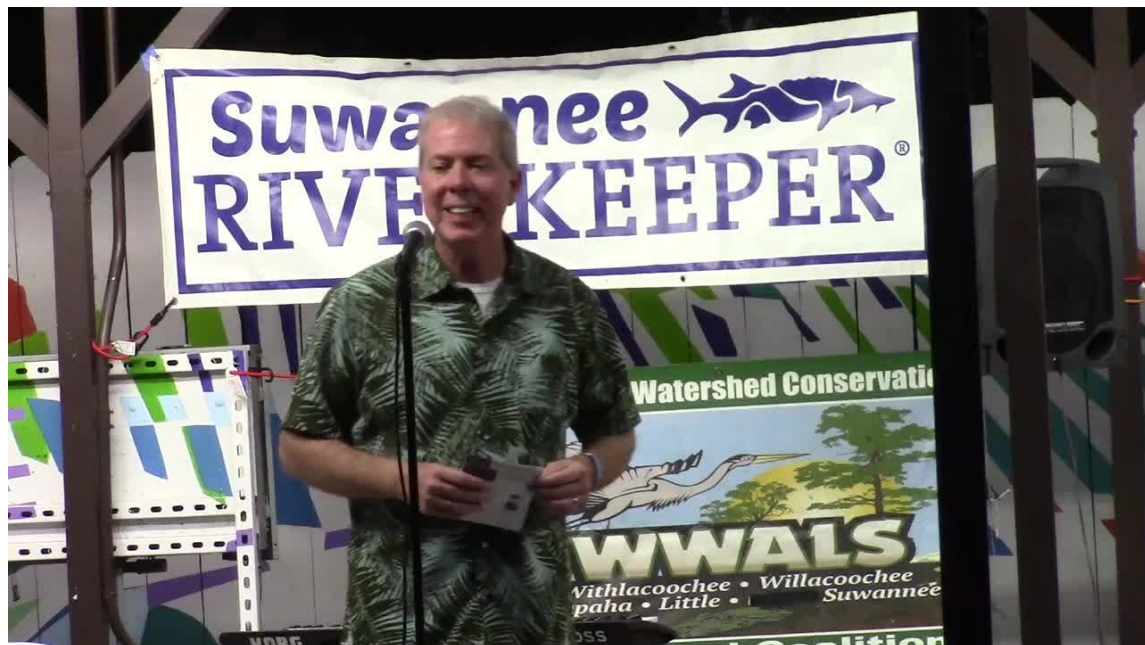




“I really enjoyed handing out the prizes,” said the first year’s First Prize winner, Laura D’Alisera, who is on the organizing Committee. “I was sorry not to be able to hand a prize to Ronni Dillon, and I hope she gets well soon.”



“Unique to the songwriters contest is the judges playing for you,” said M.C. Scott James of Talk 92.1 FM.



The organizing Committee thanks the three judges: Cindy Bear of Jacksonville, Florida,

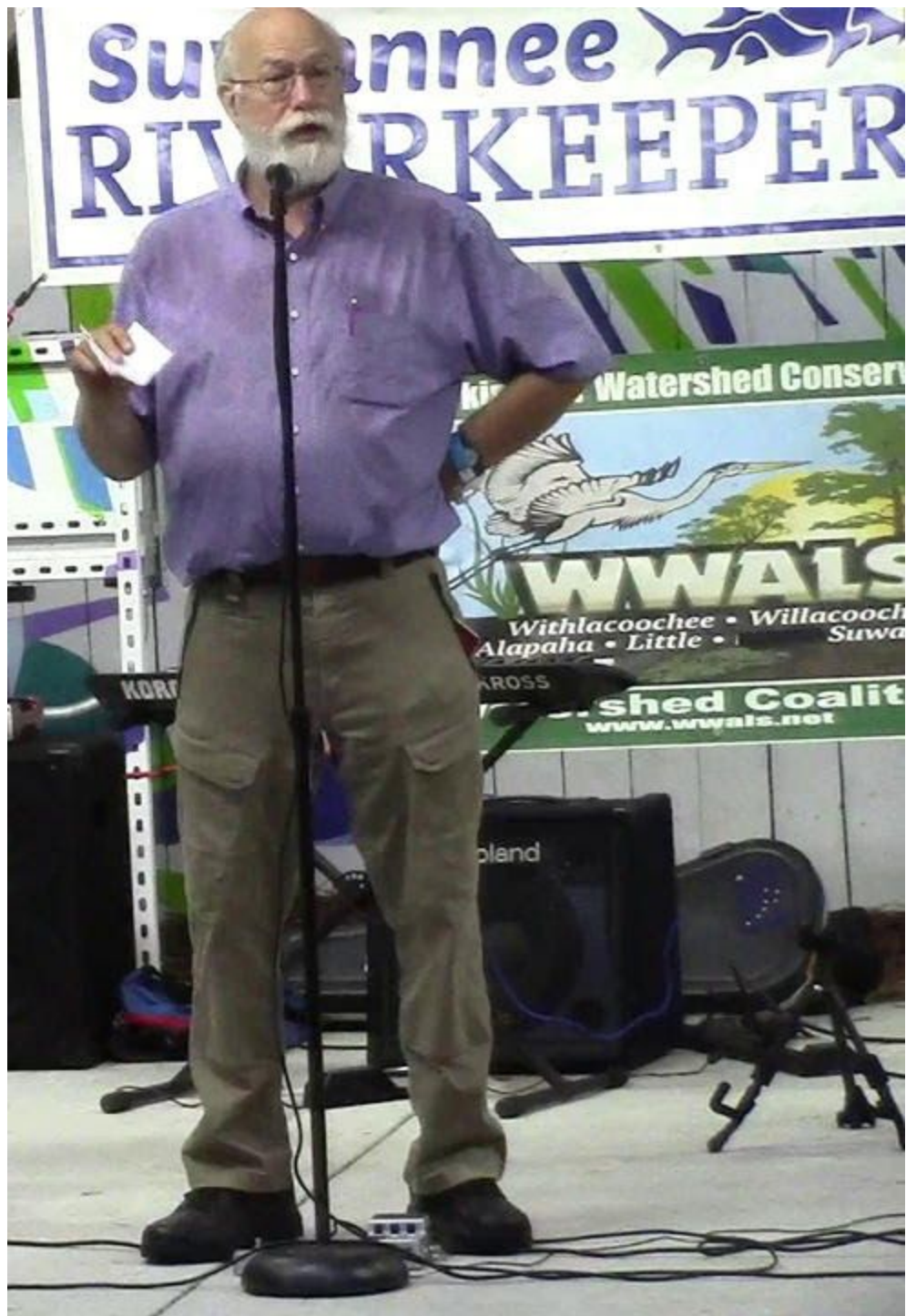


“Everybody was impressed with how good all the musicians were,” said Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman. “The headliner, Dirty Bird and the Flu, was so well received I found an excuse for them to play a couple more songs while the judges were judging.”



“I am so relieved that it all went well despite the rain earlier in the day and the virus pandemic and even the food truck breaking down,” said organizing Committee Chair Tom H. Johnson Jr., who is also the President of WWALS. “Everybody liked the pizza, and they liked the music even more!”





“Thanks to our generous sponsors such as Georgia Beer Company. And you can sign up to be a member,” said WWALS Treasurer Shelby Miller, who is also a board member and Chair of the Finance Committee. “Special thanks to the two finalists who handed their mileage payments back to WWALS, and to the Mayor for returning his honorarium as M.C.”



“And a big hand, please to our top tier sponsor, Georgia Beer Company!” said WWALS Executive Director Gretchen Quarterman. “And thanks to all who bid in the silent auction, to those who bought merchandise and kayak raffle tickets, and of course to the ticket holders.”





“Water touches us in a lot of ways. Number one, we’re in the water utilities facility Valdosta built back in the early 1900s, so we kind of started with water. Anybody who drinks beer knows that beer is 98% water. And without clean water, you don’t have good-tasting beer,” said Chris Jones, co-founder of Georgia Beer Company. “Conservation efforts to protect our waterways are really important to both us, because we enjoy those waterways,” added co-founder Jack Martin.



E.D. Gretchen Quarterman added, “We recently received a generous grant from Georgia Power Foundation to fund the WWALS volunteer water quality testing program. We have already bought more testing kits and we have a testing training coming up on September 12, 2020, mostly online, and the rest physically distanced at the river. If you’re interested in getting involved, testing once a month or once a week, please let us know.”

“Georgia Power is proud to sponsor the work of WWALS,” said Joe Brownlee, Southwest Division Executive Director of Georgia Power. “I’m proud to be a part of this, and you’ve got people working together in the Valdosta, Lowndes, and Suwannee River area: working together to make good things happen.

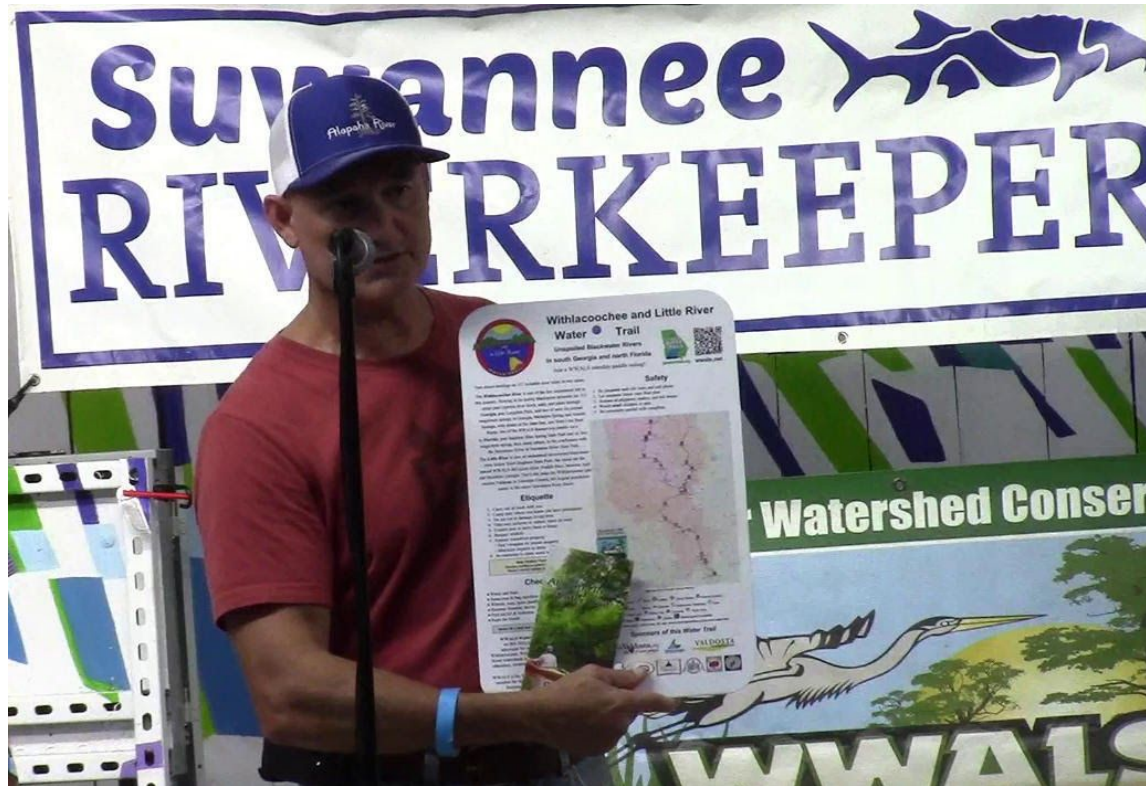




“We put on our scientist hats, our white coats, in the Science Committee, to analyze data for clean water,” said WWALS Science Committee Chair Dr. Tom Potter. “You can see some of our work products on wwals.net.” See: <http://wwals.net/issues/testing/>



“You can help WWALS design signs to go near the water at boat ramps and landings on the Little, Withlacoochee, and Alapaha Rivers, paid for by a generous grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources,” said WWALS Trails Chair and board member Dan Phillips. “That grant also enables us to print 10,000 copies each of z-fold brochures for the Alapaha River Water Trail and the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trails, to be distributed up and down I-75 and I-95 in Georgia and Florida and elsewhere.”



“Our next big event is the WWALS Boomerang paddle race, from Georgia into Florida and back, on Saturday, August 24, 2020, at State Line Boat Ramp; maybe you’d like to be a sponsor,” said WWALS Outings Chair Bobby McKenzie. “Everybody come paddle with us! We’ve got a bike and paddle on the Suwannee River this coming weekend, with a cleanup in Valdosta this same Saturday. Plus evening sunset and moonrise paddles at Banks Lake near Lakeland, Georgia, and more cleanups.” See:

<http://wwals.net/events-2/outings-events/>

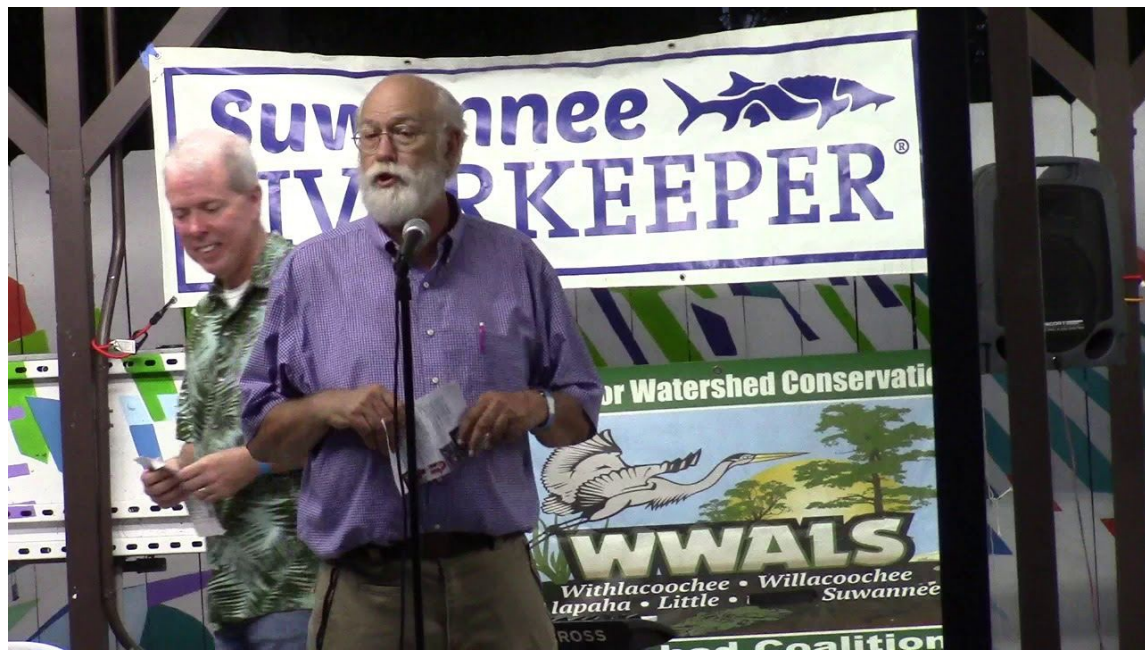




The Committee thanks Sementha Mathews and Jessica Ganas of the Turner Center for the Arts for the use of the Turner Center Art Park, 605 North Patterson Street, Valdosta, Georgia 31601.



Scott James, who is also the Mayor of Valdosta, and WWALS president Tom H. Johnson Jr. also talked about the widespread local support for the Troupville River Park project; more on that later.



Thanks to all the volunteers, too numerous to name, who made this year's Contest a success! We must mention at least Scotti Jay, who brought the screen for the zoom, Jesse Cole, who brought the tents for the judges, Trudy and Conn Cole, who took tickets at the entrance, with her foot in a cast, Dr. Bret Wagenhorst, who helped at the WWALS booth, and The Pour House for beverages. So much fun, Dr. Potter was seen dancing.



Everything else about the 2020 Suwannee Riverkeeper Songwriting Contest is here:  
<http://wwals.net/pictures/2020-08-22--songwriting/>

“Maybe you’d like to help out next year,” added Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman. Meanwhile, we’d like your feedback on the 2020 Contest, and planning for the 2021 Contest:”

<https://forms.gle/kk8TU7GpDdqHegzP8>





**About WWALS:** Founded in June 2012, WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS) 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. John S. Quarterman is the **Suwannee Riverkeeper®**, which is a staff position and a project of WWALS as the member of Waterkeeper® Alliance for the Suwannee River Basin.

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