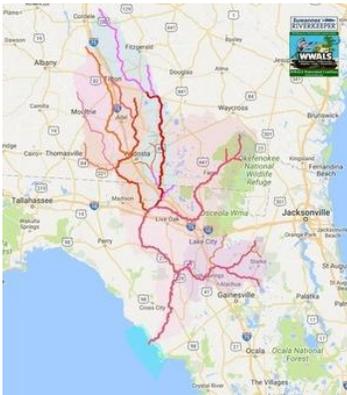


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fun race or paddle for the whole family: the Ninth Annual BIG Little River Paddle Race

Adel, Georgia, March 22, 2021 — You could win in any of a dozen categories, or up to \$300 if you beat the previous winning record time. But you are not required to race: it’s a nice spring paddle anyway! On Saturday, April 24, 2021, in Reed Bingham State Park, between Adel and Moultrie, Georgia, it’s the ninth annual BIG Little River Paddle Race. There will be lunch and a kayak raffle. You can just paddle along this scenic three-mile stretch of tea-colored river on the Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail among cypress trees, turtles, birds, and yes, alligators. (Don’t pet the alligators and they aren’t likely to bother you.) This race also has fierce competitors, with one past winner finishing in barely more than half an hour.



BLRPR mastermind Bret Wagenhorst, an eye doctor in Tifton, GA, and a charter board member of WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS), said, “After having to cancel last year’s event due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we found a way this year, with staggered heats and limited boats, to try to keep the event within Covid guidelines for outdoor activities. This is a great opportunity to learn about the joys of paddling canoes and kayaks, to see the natural beauty of our region’s blackwater rivers, and to have fun while getting some outdoor exercise with family and friends.”

There are several categories in which you could win, from fastest paddler, one and two person canoe (male and female), solo or tandem kayak (male and female), youngest paddler, oldest paddler, paddler from furthest away, and slowest paddler.

PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632
850-290-2350
wwalswatershed@gmail.com
www.wwals.net

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

Mission: 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.



Photo by Bret Wagenhorst of 2019 First female tandem kayak winners: [Megan Robinson & Lily Robinson](#), of Tifton, GA.

Dianne Walters, president of Friends of Reed Bingham State Park (FORB), said, “This is a great community event, with volunteers from all around helping paddlers from everywhere.”

Wagenhorst added, “in 2019, the first woman across the finish in a solo kayak was Nikki York, of Adel, GA. And for the first time, a canoe finished first to win the \$100 cash prize. It was a two-person canoe of gentlemen from Gray, GA: Wayne Hale and Terry Donahue.”



Photo by Bret Wagenhorst, of the 2019 race start.

Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman said, “Terry Donahue was also the Oldest winner, and Youngest was JRee Bush, at the minimum park age of 12. This year due to the Covid pandemic we will be limiting the event to maximum of 40 boats, with ten boats per heat, staggered 15 minutes apart. This will be fewer than the last race in 2019 when we had 55 paddlers (57% female) in 46 canoes and kayaks, from Georgia, Florida, and Mexico.”

Nobody beat the previous year’s winning time, so this year if somebody does, they will get an

additional \$200 prize. Winners in other categories each get a BLRPR hat, which you can't get any other way than winning, volunteering, or being on the WWALS board.



Photo: John S. Quarterman of WWALS Board and volunteers with BLRPR hats

Registration is ONLY available on-line at wwals.net (\$20 until April 1; \$30 thereafter) up to Thursday, April 22 at 5 pm, while slots last. See <https://wwals.net/pictures/2021-04-24--blrpr/>

The race will start at Red Roberts Landing, on Rountree Bridge Road, off of I-75 Exit 41 (Sparks). You can rent boats from Reed Bingham State Park (reservations must be arranged in advance when you buy your BLRPR ticket), and there is a park entrance fee of \$5.00 per vehicle. The race finishes at the Colquitt County side boat ramp in the park. Participants must arrange their own shuttle back to the start (or paddle back upstream after the race.) Distancing and masks will be required at start and finish and life jackets are required on the water.

Be sure to register early as this year's event will have just four heats of up to ten boats each starting 15 minutes apart beginning at 9 a.m. It can take two hours for everybody to paddle down to Reed Bingham State Park Boat Ramp (West), after which we will have lunch, followed by the awards. There is a cash prize of \$100 and a trophy for First Place, plus another \$200 if you beat the record time, and caps for all the other winners. Plus you can get stickers, buttons, and pictures taken by Gretchen Quarterman on many of our rivers and lakes and swamps in the 10,000 square mile Suwannee River Basin



Photo by John S. Quarterman, of awards in 2019

BLRPR is a fundraiser for the nonprofits WWALS and FORB.

Friends of Reed Bingham State Park (FORB) is the official nonprofit support organization for Reed Bingham State Park, a park known for its innovative programs and as a leader in resource

management, particularly with rare and endangered plants and animals such as gopher tortoises, bald eagles, indigo snakes, and other native species. We are a chapter of Friends of Georgia State Parks. Join us as we work to provide a wonderful place for individuals and families to enjoy the natural beauty of South Georgia.

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. Founded in June 2012, WWALS has board members from multiple counties in south Georgia and north Florida, and members from all over the Suwannee River Basin and from farther away. Since December 2016, 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, including the Little River.

For more WWALS outings and events as they are posted, see the [WWALS outings and events](#) web page. WWALS members also get an upcoming list in the *Tannin Times* newsletter.

Contact: Bret Wagenhorst, 229-392-5513

John S. Quarterman, Suwannee Riverkeeper®
WWALS Watershed Coalition
www.wwals.net
contact@suwanneeriverkeeper.org
850-290-2350
229-242-0102
PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632

===