



## Swim Guide Returns for Summer 2019

By Katy Hunt, Lower Neuse Riverkeeper

Summer has started and it's time for fun on the water! One of our priorities is keeping you aware of the quality of the Neuse and Pamlico-Tar Rivers so that you can boat, fish, and swim safely. 2019 marks the second summer of our Swim Guide program and we are happy to announce that we have been able to expand to Falls Lake and the Upper Neuse River in Raleigh. With the added bonus of two new sites in Kinston, made possible by sponsorships, there are now a grand total of 33 sites between the two basins being sampled weekly for the bacteria, E. coli.

Our Swim Guide program is a great way to raise community awareness and involvement. It is through the help of our Swim Guide volunteers, who collect the samples each week, that we are able to report on the health of our rivers. We can show where it is or is not safe to swim and the public is able to see the importance of water quality as it directly affects them and their recreation plans. When your favorite fishing spot is coming back time and time again with high levels of bacteria, you want to know why you're missing out on valuable fishing days and what you can do about it.

Swim Guide can also be used as a tool for advocacy. Since the mid-1980's the EPA has recommended an E. coli or enterococci bacteria standard for recreational water use. Unfortunately, the state of North Carolina is well

**GET SWIM GUIDE ALERTS!**  
VISIT [soundrivers.org/swimguide](http://soundrivers.org/swimguide)  
FOLLOW [facebook.com/soundriversnc](https://www.facebook.com/soundriversnc)  
TEXT "SWIM" to 33222

over 30 years behind the science and still relies on fecal coliform as a standard used to protect public health. As a science-based advocacy organization, we've chosen to use the best science available to inform you about the health of our rivers. E. coli can be very harmful to human health causing gastrointestinal illness. Previous studies have found that E. coli is a better predictor of recreation related health risk than fecal coliform. This is why the state should adopt the EPA's standard. This is something we are fighting for, and until that happens, we will continue to sample and caution against recreating in areas with high bacteria levels.



"Small streams like this one in the Upper Neuse, showing illegal sediment plume, may lose protections if rule changes go forward"

Our Swim Guide program is designed to be a tool you can use to have a wonderful summer on the water. Be sure to check our website and social media each week for the latest results. We also send out a text alert every Friday afternoon to help you plan for your weekend on the water, and we will use this system to inform you of any fish kills or other issues that may affect your recreation as well. So jump on in after checking out Swim Guide!

## Greetings from Leadership

### You Spoke and You Were Heard



The past seven months has been an intense time at Sound Rivers, and for all in North Carolina's environmental advocacy community. Several high-profile attacks on clean water protections are threatening the health of our waterways and communities. If you follow us on

Facebook or receive our weekly e-news to your inbox, you have seen the action alert opportunities: chances to speak up about why clean water matters to you.

One of our Riverkeepers' most important jobs is keeping you informed of the current state of your rivers; we regularly work to let you know when opportunities exist to help form or defend policies, laws, and protections that safeguard clean water today and for future generations. Matthew, Katy and Forrest have been working persistently since November on a range of issues, including industrial agriculture, rollback of clean water rules, and arsenic pollution from Duke Energy's HF Lee coal ash facility in Goldsboro. Over that time, they have encouraged our members and the public to take action. You did, and this time our environmental agency listened.

- Hundreds of individuals sent comments to EPA and to North Carolina regarding Clean Water Act rollbacks. In response, both the Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Michael Regan and Attorney General Josh Stein sent very strong comment letters to EPA condemning the rollbacks and vowing to take action to protect NC's waters.
- 148 people submitted comments to DEQ asking for a strong industrial swine permit. The agency listened to the comments and made some positive changes to the permit. While there is still work to be done to protect your environment from the negative impacts of industrial animal agriculture, these permit changes were positive steps.

Hundreds also took action to protest weakening rules meant to reduce nutrient pollution in our rivers, and to ask the state to hold a public hearing before giving Duke Energy a permit to dump arsenic into the Neuse River at Goldsboro.

For this collective action we thank you! It is when you, your friends, and community members speak up and speak out that positive change happens. If the last seven months have revealed anything, it is that your voices do matter and together we can protect and improve our waterways.

*Heather Beck*

### Welcome Swim Guide Interns!

Join us in welcoming Sound Rivers' two summer Water Quality Interns, April Turner and Laurel Holloman! April and Laurel will be assisting our summer Swim Guide program on the Neuse & Tar-Pamlico; April is based in Washington and New Bern, and Laurel will work in the Raleigh area, which is new to Swim Guide this year!

April is currently a student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, pursuing a degree in Public Policy with minors in Chemistry and Spanish for the Professions. She is passionate about public health and ensuring that the health and well-being of the environment is protected and preserved, along with the individuals that interact with the environment.

Laurel is a student at Eckerd College in Saint Petersburg, Florida. She is majoring in Environmental Studies with minors in political science and Spanish and she is passionate about facilitating communication between scientists, policymakers, and the public. She hopes to build her career around improving public understanding of science in order to work toward public policy that protects the health of both people and the environment.

Check out April and Laurel's work by following their weekly Swim Guide results at [soundrivers.org/swimguide](http://soundrivers.org/swimguide), or text "SWIM" to 33222!

### Upcoming Events

Visit [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org) for more info

**June 26, 2019 - Neuse Documentary Screening**  
New Village Brewery, Oriental, NC

**July 13, 2019 - Tar River Cleanup**  
Rocky Mount Mills, Rocky Mount, NC

**August 11, 2019 - Loose on the Neuse**  
Anderson Point Park, Raleigh, NC

## Sound Rivers Happenings

### Restoration to Education



Craven County Students Learn About Stormwater

Over eight years ago, a simple question, "how can we protect our wetlands on campuses?", led to a new program for Sound Rivers. In 2011, a staffer from Edgecombe Community College asked that great question and the conversation led Sound Rivers to initiate a new campus stormwater restoration and education program. To date, 26 campuses across the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico watersheds are participating. In coordination with NC State University,

we have completed stormwater assessments and reports for 14 campuses and have built created wetlands and other installations at two campuses. The remaining ten will be completed this summer. With funding from sources like the Bosch Community Foundation for Craven County we will be able to implement these plans and construct rain gardens, artificial wetlands, and install rainwater harvesting systems. The first cistern is scheduled to be installed at New Bern High School this summer.

Not only is this program providing infrastructure that will help control and treat polluted stormwater runoff, it also creates an excellent learning opportunity for grade school and college students. At New Bern High School alone, more than 100 students have engaged in learning experiences through the project so far, and the school will soon have an outdoor classroom for students to experience.

At Sound Rivers, we love how simple conversations lead to great community actions and engagement. So don't be shy; ask a question and let's start a conversation!

**We would like to thank the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation for their continued support of Sound Rivers and our mission to protect the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers.**

### Welcome Jill!



Help us welcome Jillian Howell! Jill is joining us in June. She grew up in Saugus, Massachusetts, just outside of Boston. She received a B.A. in environmental studies and global studies from Colby College in 2012 before returning to Boston to work for an environmental consult-

ing firm, ATC Group Services. She spent five years as a project scientist for ATC, performing site assessments and environmental due diligence, overseeing hazardous material remediation, and conducting environmental sampling programs at properties throughout New England. Jill spent the last two years in New Haven, Connecticut at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She graduated this past May with a Masters of Environmental Management, with her coursework focused on environmental justice. She interned last summer with the Spokane Riverkeeper, working mostly on salmon related issues in the upper Columbia River Basin. Jill is looking forward to leaving behind New England winters, taking on the role of Environmental Project Manager with Sound Rivers, and exploring the rivers and coast of eastern North

### Kayak Launch Project Moves Forward

Kayak launches are coming soon to Greenville and Washington. The permitting process is underway and we hope to complete 3 ADA compliant kayak launches this year. One will be located at the WRC boat ramp at Port Terminal in Greenville. The other two will be located in the City of Washington at Mason's Landing boat ramp and Havens Gardens ramp. The increased public access is part of improvements to the Tar-Pamlico Water Trail, which

now includes 11 camping platforms along the River. An additional 3 camping platforms will also be constructed this year along the Tar River.



### Blounts Creek Community Members Attend NC Court of Appeals Hearing



Blounts Creek citizens wait on courthouse steps

Over twenty community members from Blounts Creek traveled to Raleigh on Wednesday, May 22nd to hear oral arguments on the longstanding case of Sound Rivers vs. NC Department of Environmental Quality and Martin Marietta Materials.

In late December 2017, a state court vacated a permit that would have allowed a proposed Martin Marietta Materials limestone mine to discharge millions of gallons of wastewater a day into Blounts Creek, a popular fishing creek in eastern North Carolina. In January, 2018, Martin Marietta Materials appealed the Superior Court decision to the NC Court of Appeals.

The hearing included an hour of questioning by the three judge panel and oral arguments from attorneys representing the state and company and Sound Rivers' attorneys from the Southern Environmental Law Center, also representing the NC Coastal Federation. A decision from the court will likely take up to several months.

### Atlantic Coast Pipeline - Still Mired in Court and Over Budget

The proposed 600-mile pipeline that would pass through North Carolina to export gas overseas from South Carolina continues to be mired in legal issues and ever increasing cost overruns due to industry's attempt to rush the process. Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP) remains shut down, other than erosion control efforts, and unless the US Supreme Court decides to hear the case and rules in favor of ACP, pipeline proponents currently have no legal path forward.

The federal administration is, however, putting

their thumb on the scales of justice, with the US Solicitor General joining an appeal and being granted additional time by the US Supreme Court. ACP welcomed the news that the administration is joining their efforts to overturn a 4th Circuit Court decision that the US Forest Service did not have the authority to grant permission to cross the Appalachian Trail.

In April, 22 members of the NC legislature sent the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) a letter urging them to issue an official stop work order for the ACP and suspend FERC's Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity until ACP has all the required authorizations in hand. In the meantime, ACP is able to use that Certificate for eminent domain proceedings against landowners and to argue for the resumption of construction activities without other required authorizations.

### Update on the EPA's Efforts to Cripple the Clean Water Act

As covered in our Spring newsletter, as well as receiving headlines around the nation, the EPA has now wrapped up a public comment period on a proposal to gut regulations that protect clean water. The EPA and Army Corps of Engineers detailed a plan to strip protections for smaller streams, and numerous types of wetlands that would result in 49,000 miles of streams and millions of acres of wetlands *just in North Carolina* no longer being protected by the Clean Water Act. While the impacts would be dramatic in the south, some western states would lose protections on the overwhelming majority of waterways in their states.

Thanks to everyone who sent in comments opposing the rule (the EPA received over 600,000 comments) and also for urging Governor Cooper and our state agencies to fight it. In part due to your efforts, North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Justice submitted strong comments opposing the administration's rollbacks, detailing the adverse impacts that such actions would have on the people and ecosystems of our state.

The agencies are now in the process of reviewing extensive comments opposing the proposed rollbacks, including the comments North Carolina and from our friends at the Southern Environmental Law Center and Waterkeeper Alliance before making a final decision. Stay tuned!

### CAFO Hide and Seek



Fishing for Facts is rather hard to do if those facts and their documents are hidden from public view, which is exactly what OUR elected officials are trying to do with basic documents for industrial swine facilities through the North Carolina Farm Act of 2019. The Farm Act, Senate Bill 315, would also exempt some industrial swine facilities from existing odor rules, and change the rules for new and modified facilities. This is all being done on behalf of a rich international mega-polluter; our elected officials should be putting the people of North Carolina first instead of selling us out. The Farm Act is currently in the Senate and will go from there to the House. Please be on the lookout for action alerts asking you to contact your elected officials to remove the above sections from the bill.

The Farm Act is not the only place where you can find government handouts to these polluters. The budgets from both the House and the Senate have provisions that will protect this wealthy industry while further degrading our environment and communities. Unlike the Farm Act, we are unsure what provisions from both budgets will be included in the final version to be sent to Governor Cooper later this month.

The most alarming section is contained in the Senate Budget which would delay the newly issued state Swine General Permit simply because the industry would rather subvert democracy than play by the rules. The new permit went through a lengthy public process with hearings, work sessions, and public comment all of which the industry participated in. The NC Department of Environmental Quality did not bow to industry's demands and so in response swine industry corporations went running to those that have been paid off for years. We will keep you updated with this process and will need your help once again to try and stop our elected officials from rolling out the red carpet to those with deep pockets responsible for decades of pollution.

*Note: The information above was written on June 5. For more recent updates on the Farm Act, please visit [www.soundrivers.org/fishing-for-facts/](http://www.soundrivers.org/fishing-for-facts/)*

### Species Recommended for Protection - Your Voice Needed

Recently the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced that two very important species found in our river basins deserve further protection. Your Upper Neuse Riverkeeper teamed up with the Center for Biological Diversity to bring a suit against FWS to force them to act. The Carolina Madtom (small Catfish) and Neuse River Waterdog (aquatic salamander) are proposed to be listed as endangered and threatened, respectively. These two species along with over 10 rare and endangered species are found in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River basins, including Swift Creek, which is currently under attack from a mega road project, Complete 540.

Protecting these species is vital, especially in light of the United Nations Environment Programme report that details the threat of losing one million species if action is not taken quickly. Sir Robert Watson notes in the release of the report: "The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide." Sound Rivers and your Riverkeepers will continue to fight pollution that puts our communities and environment at risk, so that our children can experience these species in their natural habitat.

Please join us as we fight polluters, bad projects, and legislative rollbacks by contacting decision makers when asked; without you, we are just one voice and these species and our waterways need the voices of thousands. Please visit [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org) to support the Fish and Wildlife's recommendation. The public comment deadline is July 22, 2019.



## Member Minute

### Why I Give, with JoSeth Bocook

By Corinne Everett Belch

JoSeth Bocook has strong roots in Eastern North Carolina; he grew up in Tarboro, attended East Carolina University, and currently works in Land-Use planning at the City of Rocky Mount. JoSeth says he always had a strong interest in the outdoors and nature, an interest that he now passes on to his eight-year-old son.

JoSeth discovered Sound Rivers by chance, on Twitter. He said after he dove a little deeper and became interested in the organization, he was introduced to former Executive Director Harrison Marks through a mutual friend. The two met for coffee, spoke about the work of the organization, and Harrison eventually asked JoSeth to consider joining Sound Rivers' Board of Directors. JoSeth accepted, and was elected to the Board in 2017.

When I asked what motivated him to support Sound Rivers after that first tweet, JoSeth replied, "Just having knowledge that there are advocates trying to protect our water and trying to keep it clean, and being in tune with the importance of that, I felt it was a worthy organization to give to. Whether that be financially or through my time, I continue my support because the challenges that face our waterways are ongoing. It's never-ending; you resolve one threat and there are others out there. We need to keep doing this important work."

"What has been most enlightening and inspiring to me as I continue to learn more about Sound Rivers is the advocacy work the organization does. Holding polluters' feet to the fire, so to speak. Water is essential to our survival, it is a basic need, and these two river basins where I live being our main source of water, we have to protect them. Sound Rivers is the voice for the rivers and the people who value them."

JoSeth said he'd tell someone considering becoming more involved with Sound Rivers, "From what I've observed, the board and staff are made up of people who are passionate and capable leaders. Sound Rivers is a good steward of the gifts they receive, ensuring contributions are put to work protecting the rivers we all love. And, most importantly, the work they do is worth supporting - clean water, clean rivers, are critical to the health of the region."

### 2019 Annual Meeting & Awardees



Steve Camp accepts Grady-White award from Lorrie Basnight

Sound Rivers held our 2019 Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 27, at Uptown Brewing Company in Greenville NC. Sound Rivers' Executive Director and three Riverkeepers gave reports on the organization and the State of the Rivers, and an awards presentation included recognition of area residents and businesses. A sustainably-raised pork BBQ fundraiser during the event also raised over \$1200.

**Volunteers of the Year:** Outstanding volunteer within each of the three Riverkeeper areas for the past year.  
**Upper Neuse – Graham Jackson (Orvis), Raleigh**  
**Lower Neuse – Mike Sagaser, New Bern**  
**Tar-Pamlico – Lib Haubenreiser, Washington**

**River Friendly Businesses:** Recognizing businesses' active support for Sound Rivers' mission of protecting the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico waterways.  
**Edward Jones Investments, Rod Cantrell – Washington**  
**Croakertown Coffee – Oriental**  
**Frog Hollow Outdoors – Raleigh**  
**Grady-White Boats – Greenville**

**Public Officials:** Awarded for actions taken to protect and support our rivers and natural resources.  
**Raleigh Mayor, Nancy McFarlane**  
**Rep. Grier Martin (Wake County)**

**Great Blue Heron Awards:** Given in recognition of long term contributions to the protection of the Neuse and/or Tar-Pamlico and/or to the success of the Sound Rivers.  
**Alex Manda, Greenville**  
**Jake Jacobson, New Bern**

### Why I Give, Continued

Thanks so much to JoSeth for all you do, and to all our supporters! We hope you have a wonderful summer on your waterways!

## Riffles & Runs

### Successful 2019 Kids River Fest



The 2019 Kids River Fest was a great success! 1500 people attended the annual free, family-friendly fun day, and more than 500 kids enjoyed the outdoor educational activities on a very hot day. Thanks so much to our partners at River Park North, all our volunteers (special shoutouts to Love A Sea Turtle and Down East Fishing Club groups!), and our sponsors Grady-White Boats, Albemarle Pamlico National Estuary Partnership, Greenville Utilities Commission, and Vidant Health!

### Neuse & Tar-Pamlico Get Spring Cleaning



Your Lower Neuse and Pamlico-Tar Riverkeepers hosted cleanups this spring, in New Bern, Greenville, and Washington. Dozens of volunteers (including a dog!) joined Sound Rivers staff on land and in the water, working together to remove over one ton of debris from your waterways. Objects pulled out of the water included several tires, a full tub of auto lubricant, and one large jar of pickled eggs.

Cleanups are a great way to get involved in our work, and give back to the rivers you love! Keep up to date on our upcoming cleanup opportunities by visiting [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org) or follow us at [Facebook.com/soundriversnc](https://www.facebook.com/soundriversnc)!

### Loose on the Neuse is Back in August

August 11, 2019

Anderson Point Park, Raleigh, NC

Time to celebrate the upper Neuse River, a source of natural beauty in the midst of urban development in the Triangle! What better way to do that than picking up trash and then enjoying cold Sweetwater beer at a fantastic after clean-up party?

The cleanup will last from 10 AM to noon and then the party starts! Check-in will begin at 9 AM at Anderson Point Park where you can leave your car, and transportation to the put in on the river will be provided. If you want to float the Neuse from Millburnie Dam to Anderson Point Park, bring your own kayak or canoe and drop it at Millburnie Dam before coming to Anderson Point Park. A limited number of kayaks and canoes are being provided by Paddle Creek and Frog Hollow free of charge on a first-come first-served basis, so arrive early at Anderson Point Park if you want to borrow one of their boats. You can also clean-up along the banks from shore-side, walking along the Neuse from Millburnie Dam to Anderson Point Park.

Once off the river we will be getting down with music, fly fishing lessons, games, and a Sweetwater tap truck! The party ends at 3pm, so clean the river quick! Last year was a great time, and this year promises to be even better thanks to all our sponsors.

# THANK YOU!

Thanks to your generous support, our  
April Matching Campaign raised:

## \$42,814

Including a generous \$16,500 match!

Your generosity in April means your  
Riverkeepers can keep fighting for your  
waterways in the coming months - we are  
so grateful!

Sound Rivers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1854  
Washington, NC 27889

Address Service Requested

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
WASHINGTON, NC  
PERMIT NO. 68



**Support Your RIVERKEEPER<sup>®</sup>s!**

**SOUND  
RIVERS**

All April Donations Matched Dollar-for-Dollar  
up to a total of \$16,500!

**Help us meet our match - give today at  
[soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org)!**