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CURRENTS

The quarterly newsletter of Sound Rivers

Navigating the challenge— Oyster Roast canceled, 40th-anniversary documentary pivots to virtual premiere

Photo by Charles Thrasher

Dear friends,

Sound Rivers has spent this past summer working for your waterways, alerting the public to water quality through Swim Guide, increasing public access with ADA accessible kayak launches, advocating for stronger protections against flooding and pollution with NC leaders, and so much more. You make all this work possible, and we are so grateful for you, our clean-water community!



As I write this letter, the concerns about

COVID-19 are rising in our area yet again, and I hope you and your loved ones are safe and well. I am so thankful for you, for continuing to support Sound Rivers as we navigate this incredibly challenging time.

We at Sound Rivers are sad that we must share with you the news

that our staff and board have made the very difficult decision to cancel the Oyster Roast this year. Current information, and discussions with local health officials, led us to the

I am thrilled to announce our upcoming documentary, “A Sound River,” will be released this fall! The film, delving into the fight for your waterways over four decades, will debut at our virtual premiere on Nov. 30, followed by a conversation with your Riverkeepers, filmmaker Rain Bennett, and local experts and activists fighting for your rivers. You can find more information or RSVP at soundrivers.org/doc.

conclusion that we would not be able to ensure the safety of our volunteers, staff, and you, our amazing supporters, by continuing with the annual Oyster Roast as planned. It is hard to

put into words how difficult this decision was for our organization, and how much we will miss seeing you at our celebration of clean water.

The fall will not be without celebration, however, as we mark the incredible milestone of our 40th anniversary protecting your clean water. I am thrilled to announce our upcoming documentary, “A Sound River,” will be released this fall! The film, delving into the fight for your waterways over four decades, will debut at our virtual premiere on Nov. 30, followed by a conversation with your Riverkeepers, filmmaker Rain Bennett, and local experts and activists fighting for your rivers. You can find more information or RSVP at soundrivers.org/doc.

I hope that you have had a wonderful summer, and that this fall brings you joy and happiness. Thank you again for all that you do — you make a clean-water future possible!

Sincerely,

Weather Deck

A SOUND RIVER

40TH ANNIVERSARY DOCUMENTARY PREMIERES AT NOV. 30 VIRTUAL EVENT



“A Sound River” will premiere Nov. 30 at a live, virtual event, taking viewers on a Sound Rivers’ 40-year battle to protect the waters, and the people, of eastern North Carolina.

The film follows Sound Rivers’ history of activism, from its humble beginnings around kitchen tables to court battles against industrial polluters, as told by the voices of its founders and partners, those continuing the fight for clean water and environmental justice, and the Riverkeepers guarding the waterways that cover nearly a quarter of North Carolina.

“The organization has grown and evolved since its start, but seeing and hearing some of the stories from the people who have been there from the beginning, it’s clear that certain things remain constant: there will always be industries and facilities and regulations and interests threatening our waterways, but there will also always be those who care deeply for the river and their community, ready to stand up

to these challenges,” said Sound Rivers’ Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell.

Tranquil eastern North Carolina rivers and dramatic footage of extreme weather events triggered by climate change act as backdrop to a film that illustrates the high stakes of inaction, while offering hope for the future, according to filmmaker Rain Bennett.

“When Sound Rivers brought me on for this project, I honestly had no idea all the work they had done over the past 40 years. In my preliminary research, I’ve become so aware of the challenges they face – and that we all face – and the importance of their mission,” Bennett said.

The mission to protect the waters of eastern North Carolina started in 1980-1981 with the creation of the Neuse Riverkeeper Foundation and Pamlico-Tar River Foundation, two of the oldest conservation organizations in the state, which merged to become Sound Rivers in 2015. Storytellers from both were re-

cruited to recreate the past, while experts in climate change and environmental justice provide the science and perseverance behind global issues pared down to a local scale.

“Sometimes the issues that threaten our waterways can seem overwhelming – hurricanes, climate change, industrial polluters with deep pockets, a broken regulatory system. But I hope that seeing the work that has been done over the past 40 years, people come away knowing it does make a difference when people unite together to protect their communities and waterways, and are inspired to act,” Howell said.

Sound Rivers will premiere the 30-minute film at a virtual event on Nov. 30. A live, panel discussion including the filmmaker and those starring in the film, including Sound Rivers’ three Riverkeepers will follow. For more information about the Sound Rivers documentary and to RSVP for the virtual event, visit www.soundrivers.org/doc.



Above: Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell takes the Riverkeeper boat for a sunset ride up the Tar River during filming of “A Sound River,” Sound Rivers’ 40th-anniversary documentary film. Opposite page: Lower Neuse Riverkeeper Katy Hunt talks about what it means to be a Riverkeeper during filming on the Trent River in April.

OYSTER ROAST 2021

We are saddened to announce that Sound Rivers’ staff and board, after consulting with local health officials, have made the very difficult decision to cancel the Oyster Roast this year. While the revenue lost from the cancellation of our largest fundraising event will provide challenges for our work in 2021 and 2022, your health and wellbeing are more important to us. We cannot tell you how much we will miss gathering in person with you to celebrate our waterways.

A message from the Sound Rivers Board of Directors

Thank you for your incredible support of Sound Rivers’ critical work to protect our water. Sound Rivers’ Board would like to invite you to join us this fall, as we have all pledged to increase our support for the organization. We know you are as concerned about the health of your waterways as we are; we all need Sound Rivers’ important work to continue.

With the Oyster Roast canceled for a second year in a row, Sound

Rivers will rely more than ever on the generosity of you, our clean water community. We humbly ask that you join us in increasing your gift this year; even \$10 more can help our organization continue to protect your waterways during this uncharted time.

From all of us who serve on the board, please accept our heartfelt appreciation for all you do for your waterways.

*JoSeth Bocoock, President - Tarboro
Catherine Kastleman, Vice President - Raleigh
Ann Marie Holder, Treasurer - Greenville
Mary Davidson, Secretary - New Bern
Adrian Atkinson - Winterville
David Emmerling - Pittsboro
Betsy Hester - Rocky Mount
Emilie Kane - Greenville
Walker Knox - Raleigh
Ernie Larkin - Washington
Dr. Sid Mitra - Winterville
Stephen Smith - Raleigh
Caty Gray Urquhart - Tarboro*



SWIM GUIDE WRAPS UP A FOURTH SUCCESSFUL SEASON

On Labor Day weekend, Sound Rivers brought a fourth, successful season of Swim Guide to a close.

“It was a great year for outreach and volunteers — we had a smashing year for volunteers,” said Sound Rivers’ Environmental Projects Coordinator Clay Barber. “An increase in interest in the program was very noticeable this year, which was exciting. We definitely expanded the locations — all three offices went farther than they’ve ever sampled before.”

Water-quality interns Will Shingleton, on the Tar-Pamlico, Leah Tilson, on the Upper Neuse, and Nathalie Uriarte-Ayala, on the Lower Neuse, headed up Swim Guide in their respective regions, coordinating volunteers, collecting samples, testing samples, then sharing the results with the public, starting the week preceding Memorial Day, and ending as they headed back to school mid-August. Then, Sound Rivers’ Riverkeepers and Barber stepped in to wrap up the season through Labor Day weekend. Barber said there were a few surprises along the way.

“We did have some new sites that didn’t do too well. Smithfield Town Commons was pretty bad,” Barber said.

Smithfield Town Commons and Clayton River Walk were new additions this year: both are high recreational-use areas located near large developments — two factors likely contributing to less-than-stellar water quality along those areas of the Neuse River.

On the bright side, a site that last year consistently tested for E. coli at levels far exceeding state and federal guidelines for recreation seems to have turned around.

“Buffaloe Road, right off the Neuse in Raleigh, has been a pretty bad site, but it came back pretty good this year, which is encouraging,” Barber said. “I would suspect, the way it was coming back last year, I almost wonder if a sanitary sewer leak wasn’t repaired. Unfortunately, sewage leaks are to be expected when there’s lots of rain and high water, but this site was coming back with heavy levels of E. coli when it hadn’t rained in

weeks.”

Barber said Swim Guide results highlight how upstream runoff can impact downstream water quality.

“Rain amounts are one of the biggest factors, and you can really see it in some of the data,” Barber said. “Depending on when it rained, if it was on the day before or the day of (testing) in Raleigh, then you see a dirty Raleigh; if it rained three or four days before, you see a dirty New Bern. Water rolls downhill.”

Barber said as Sound Rivers transitions into DNA testing, Swim Guide data over the past four years may help inform where Riverkeepers sample to find out whether the cause of bad water quality is human or animal, and if so, what kind of animal.

“When we see levels like what we saw at Smithfield Town Commons this year, people want to know whose fault it is. That would be kind of where we would go in to do a DNA test to see where the main source is coming from, and a lot of times we wouldn’t know where to do that without Swim Guide,” he said.



Will Shingleton, Leah Tilson and Nathalie Uriarte-Ayala spent summer sampling, coordinating, testing and sharing Swim Guide results, but they also found time to enjoy kayaking on the Tar River.

Sound Rivers’ interns head back to class

This summer Sound Rivers welcomed aboard three new water-quality interns: Will Shingleton, a senior majoring in Environmental Health at East Carolina University; Leah Tilson, a senior double-majoring in Environmental Science and Public Policy at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; and Nathalie Uriarte-Ayala, a junior majoring in Environmental Science at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Under the leadership of Sound Rivers’ Environmental Projects Director Clay Barber, each headed up their part of the Swim Guide program this summer, coordinating volunteers to sample, transporting and testing those samples, then reporting the results — Will, on the Tar-Pamlico; Leah, on the Upper Neuse; and Nathalie, on the Lower Neuse — in addition to assist-

ing their respective Riverkeepers on a variety of projects and presenting programs about Sound Rivers’ work to several children’s groups.

Leah also took on researching how other states have handled the biogas issue legislatively, while Nathalie hunted down all the wastewater treatment plants in the Neuse River watershed and the number of times they’ve been cited for violations. Will could often be found out in the field with Clay, helping with installations at Sound Rivers’ school stormwater projects.

Each filled a valuable role at Sound Rivers this summer — ensuring the public knew every week where it’s safe to swim in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico watersheds — and we truly enjoyed working with them!

Good luck, Will, Leah and Nathalie!

“I loved participating in Swim Guide with our local water-quality volunteers. It allowed me to see how Sound Rivers engages with the public and to meet some very nice, like-minded people also interested in monitoring the watersheds!”

— Leah Tilson
Upper Neuse intern

SWIM STATS

100% PASS

TAR-PAMLICO: Bend of the River, Wildwood Park, Cypress Landing, Blount’s Bay, Swan Point, Bonner’s Point, Plum Point, Woodstock Point

UPPER NEUSE: Hickory Hill, Beaver Dam, Ledge Rock, Rolling View, Highway 50 and Barton Creek

LOWER NEUSE: Pollocksville and Spring Garden

<75%

TAR-PAMLICO: Town Common, Port Terminal (53%), Yankee Hall, Masons Landing and Havens Garden

UPPER NEUSE: Smithfield Town Commons, Buffaloe Road and Clayton River Walk

LOWER NEUSE: Rice Creek and Slocum Creek

TOP 3 DIRTIEST SITES 2021

- 1 RICE CREEK off the Bay River/Lower Neuse
- 2 SLOCUM CREEK Havelock/Lower Neuse
- 3 TOWN COMMONS Smithfield/Upper Neuse

STORMWATER CONTROL

Environmental projects coordinator tackling runoff, one campus at a time

A cistern, a constructed wetland, a rain garden — what they have in common is stormwater and ways to collect it, use it, and clean it before it runs off into local waterways.

That's part of Sound Rivers' Environmental Projects Coordinator Clay Barber's job: overseeing the construction of these projects, courtesy of the state's Environmental Enhancement Grants, at facilities with lots of impervious surfaces. And one type of facility stands out in particular.

"Schools jumped out to us for multiple reasons. They are large campuses with a lot of impervious surfaces, like roofs and parking lots. Lots of times they are located near waterways; lots of times, impaired waterways — tributaries or whole river systems that are

deemed impaired, usually due to high nutrient loads or high sediment loads. Somebody's already tested those waters and determined they are in trouble," Barber said.

"The other draw is these are places of education — high schools or middle schools — so it's an excellent opportunity to teach water quality and stormwater management to the next generation."

Barber said he approaches schools' administrations first, to gauge whether they could get on board with a water-quality project.

"When we approach schools, the response is usually a very excited

science teacher and a very concerned maintenance crew and administration. The administration is worried about cost and how it looks; the maintenance guys are worried about weed-eating," Barber laughed. "This work is kind of in contradiction to some of the old-school methods of

happens with any stormwater control measure that includes plantings — it increases biodiversity," Barber said.

At West Craven High School, a 3,000-gallon cistern was installed to collect stormwater from the roof of one of the campus' buildings. Barber called it a "pretty simple system," and relatively inexpensive, but valuable in that it has been used to irrigate a vegetable garden in raised beds and engage students.

"They did a great job in using the water for their garden, but they by far excelled in bringing in students to be part of it — they're maintaining the gardens," he said.

Barber said it was only when he began doing these types of projects that he realized his own high school had its own stormwater management project — he just didn't recognize it for what it was.

"This is one of the perks of teaching the younger generations and having obvious examples of this type of this work, because stormwater control measures are largely ignored and people don't know what they're looking at," he said. "It educates the kids on what stormwater is and why it is important but I hope it will encourage them to do this type of work in the future — it's a wide-open field."

Other projects completed this year include a cistern at Nash Community College and constructed wetlands at Havelock High School. Barber is currently working on more stormwater mitigation projects at Epiphany School and Wayne Community College.

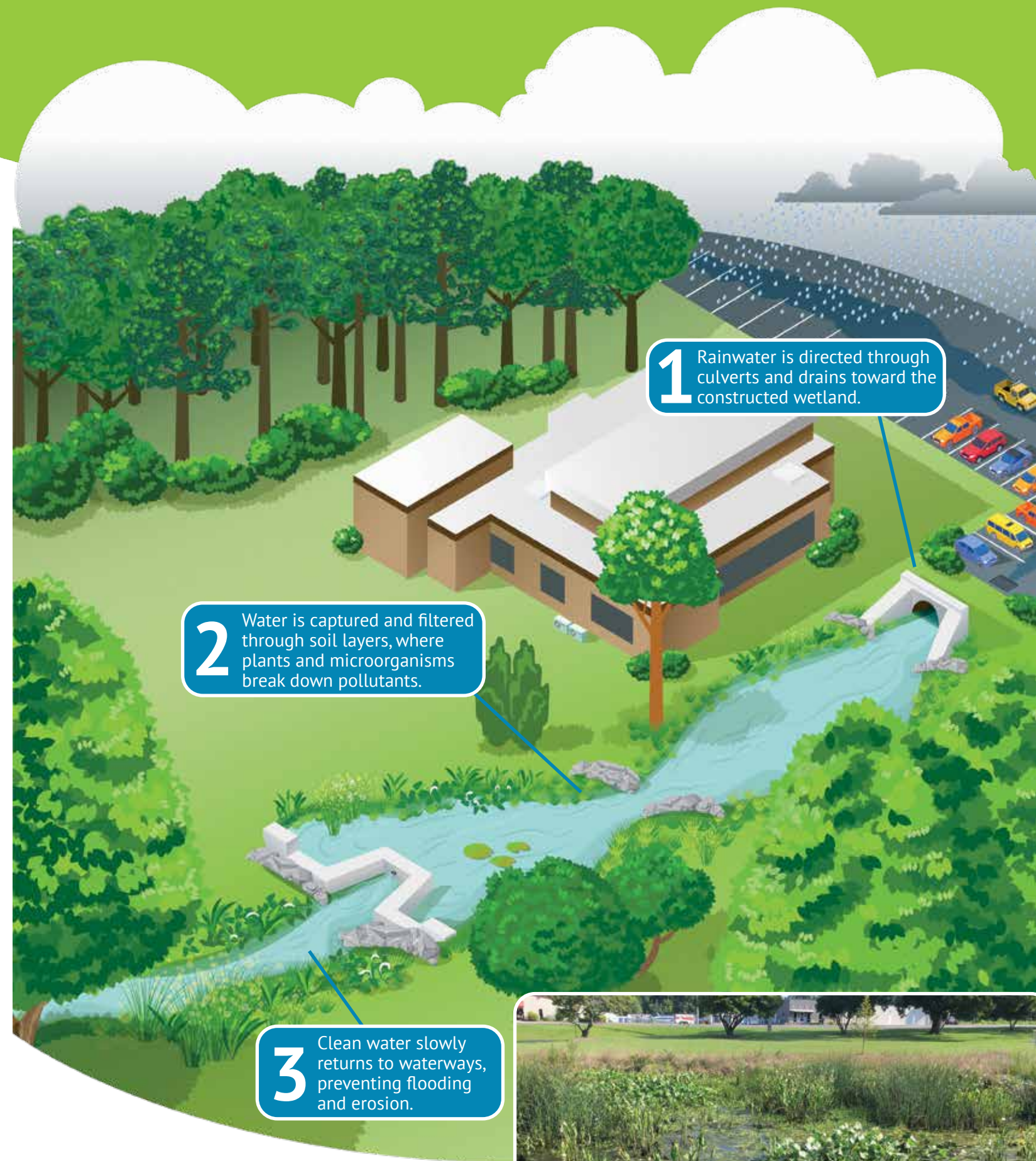


A sign at Havelock High School illustrates the purpose of the constructed wetland built at the school this year.

landscaping and construction. And not only are there better ways to do some things, but it can have some cost savings, and it can be prettier than your average landscaping."

Case in point were projects completed this year at Beaufort County Community College, in Washington, and West Craven High School, in New Bern. BCCC now has a large wetland that replaced a very bare, straight, non-biodiverse ditch cutting through campus.

"It is now a thriving, bio-diverse, water storage and treatment area. It's like a whole new eco-system, which



The graphic above illustrates how the constructed stormwater wetland completed at Beaufort County Community College cleans water and prevents flooding with the help of native plants (pictured right). Partners on the BCCC wetland include BCCC, N.C. State University Bio & Ag Engineering, ReLeaf Washington, N.C. Attorney General's Office and Backwater Environmental.

TRIENNIAL REVIEW 2021

Every three years, the Clean Water Act requires states to review their water-quality standards and classifications and make any necessary modifications to ensure the protection of our waters. During this process, called the Triennial Review, North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality reviews current EPA guidelines, scientific data and public comments and will make recommendations for changes to standards to the NC Environmental Management Commission.

This year, the EMC proposed a few changes to water quality standards, however, we believe additional updates are needed to adequately protect our waters and ensure they are fishable, swimmable and drinkable for all North Carolinians.

Read what your Riverkeepers had to say about these changes during the public comment period in late July.

JILL HOWELL Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper

"Currently, North Carolina does not have an ambient water quality standard for cyanobacteria or related cyanotoxins and the state is not proposing one during this Triennial Review despite the growing problem of nutrient pollution fueled algal growth and Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) across the state.

Excess nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus, in our lakes and rivers can produce algal blooms and in some cases, blooms can be dominated by cyanobacteria, which may pro-

"The combination of higher temperatures and increasing nutrient loads in many North Carolina waterways indicates that algal blooms will continue to increase."

— Jill Howell

duce cyanotoxins that can adversely affect drinking water and endanger humans, pets and aquatic life. These blooms are known as Harmful Algal Blooms or "HABs." Increased nutrient loading from wastewater treatment plants, urban stormwater, residential fertilizer, and runoff from agricultural operations, including concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), is compounded by elevated water temperatures due to climate

change, further fueling the growth of HABs. Warmer surface water temperatures enhance algal growth, with the heaviest growth or blooms often seen in mid-to-late summer. As climate change continues to affect average temperatures in our region, we expect to see both more intense and longer-lasting algal growth. The combination of higher temperatures and increasing nutrient loads in many North Carolina waterways indicates that algal blooms will continue to increase. With that comes the possibility of more HABs and associated toxins adversely affecting both human and environmental health.

Even without the production of toxins that are harmful to public health and aquatic life, HABs have the potential to cause catastrophic impacts on an ecosystem. HABs may keep sunlight from reaching deeper in the water and may remove dissolved oxygen from the water as they decompose, leading to hypoxia or reduced dissolved oxygen levels, which have potential to harm fish and plant life. HABs can also have significant negative impacts on local economies, with health and swim advisories resulting from HABs directly affecting recreational uses and limiting related economic activity."

KATY HUNT Lower Neuse Riverkeeper

"The proposal to include protective limits on E. coli in the westernmost 19 counties is not enough. It is foolish because bacteria does not only exist in the west."

Likewise, recreation on waterways does not only exist in the western portion of the state. Furthermore, many of our low-wealth and minority communities reside in the other 81 counties. Do they not also deserve the chance to protect themselves from E. coli bacteria? Favoring one small section of our state's population flies in the face of environmental justice — clean water, but clean water for all."

I personally have received a lot of feedback from the residents in the communities I serve who have expressed gratitude and appreciation for our sampling program. I have heard time and time again that it is important to our community to know where it is or is not safe to recreate."

The waterways of North Carolina belong to all of us — and the right to clean water belongs to all of us."

Starr returns to farming roots

Matthew Starr will be approaching water quality from a new direction.

The Upper Neuse Riverkeeper moved on from Sound Rivers on Aug. 13, to pursue a graduate degree full time at N.C. State University and conduct research on ways farmers can support soil health and protect water quality — working for clean water from an agricultural angle.

"Matt has been a pivotal part of our staff at Sound Rivers, and its predecessor organization, the Neuse Riverkeeper Foundation, for over 10 years," said Sound Rivers' Executive Director Heather Deck. "His work, expertise and passion led him to this great opportunity, and we are thrilled for him as he begins this new journey. His decade of advocacy and educational outreach has helped make important strides toward a healthy Neuse River, and he has assured us that while he is leaving Sound Rivers, he will not be going far!"

Starr's new role will be in research and development, doing lab and field trial research, as well as literature review, of how farmers can reduce input into the environment and replace harmful synthetic inputs, such as fertilizers and pesticides, with biological ones. He sees the new job as both a natural progression from his work as Riverkeeper and a return to his roots in farming — growing up, Starr's father was the superintendent of a state-run farm.

"Having studied, looked at, sampled and learned about water quality, I think it's natural to try to tackle one of the issues that affects that," Starr said. "I'd like to help Ag become a better steward of the environment."

Starr will be building on the impact he's had on urban stormwater issues as Sound Rivers' Upper Neuse Riverkeeper.

"I spent a decade doing this job, and I think Sound Rivers is head-



Matthew Starr is pictured (center) with fellow Riverkeepers Jill Howell (left) and Katy Hunt (right) at a recent staff meeting.

ing on a good trajectory. There's no more important organization out

STARR continued on Page 11

A gift of clean water to future generations

With Dave and Carole McCracken

Dave and Carole McCracken chose to retire to New Bern in 2000 after living overseas for more than 30 years, because "we were astonished by the beauty of the local waterways. So we made three very important decisions almost simultaneously: we bought a house, we bought kayaks, and we joined the only organization that was specifically and vigorously working to protect our local water," Dave explains.

"Clean water is so important," Carole adds. "It sustains life. Our bodies can't live without it — but it's also good for the soul. It's not just a matter of functionality; our rivers are life-giving in so many ways. We understood immediately that it is vital to protect the environment be-

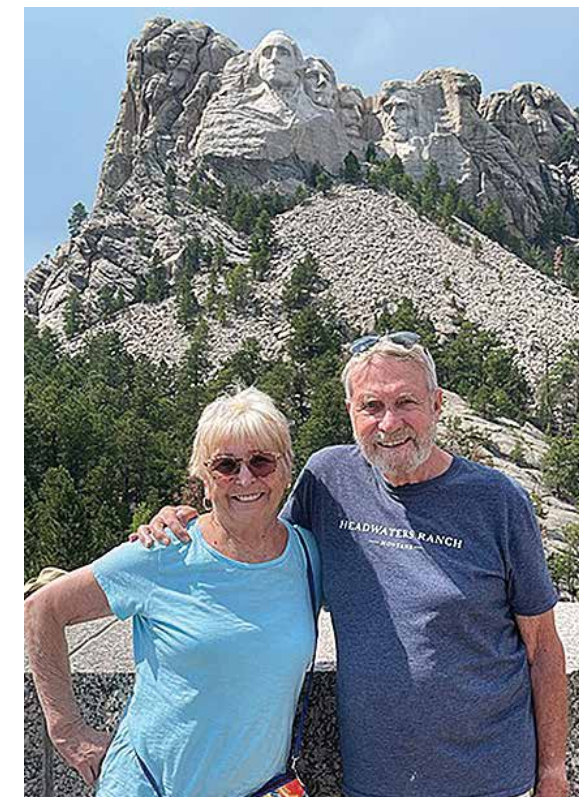
cause we are borrowing from future generations."

And after more than 20 years, the couple continues to maintain concern for the waterways and strong support of Sound Rivers: "We want our children and our grandchildren to have clean water and to experience the rivers in the way that we have.

"Most importantly, we have included Sound Rivers in our estate plans because we wanted to protect the future. We are utterly certain that to invest in Sound Rivers is putting our legacy in reliable, effective and enduring hands."

Sound Rivers is the voice for the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers, something that Dave and Carole both feel is critical to the future: "The rivers

MCCRACKEN continued on Page 10



Dave and Carole McCracken



Photo by Charles Thrasher

Dirty Water Rule overturned

The effort to protect invaluable wetlands gained momentum last month, when a federal judge struck down a Trump administration rule – known as the “Dirty Water Rule” – that significantly reduced protections under the Clean Water Act.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona judge said the rule was “too flawed to keep in place.”

“This is very, very welcome news and a big deal for the protection of North Carolina’s waters and wetlands,” Heather Deck, Sound Rivers’ executive director said. “We were already seeing impacts and loss of critical wetlands in eastern North Carolina and letting this rule remain would just have made it harder for our communities to protect themselves from future flooding.”

The Navigable Waters Protection Rule garnered immediate pushback from conservation organizations across the country even before it was published in April 2020. The rule eliminated Clean Water Act protections for the nation’s waters, including approximately half of all wetlands and potentially millions of miles of streams, in addition to allowing polluters to pave over wetlands, and dump pesticides, mining waste and other pollutants directly into those waterways.

In response, Sound Rivers joined with 12 other or-

ganizations in February 2020 to file a formal notice of intent to sue the Trump administration, then signed on with the lawsuit filed in the Northern District of California, along with Waterkeeper Alliance, Inc.; Humboldt Baykeeper – a program of Northcoast Environmental Center; Lake Worth Waterkeeper; Missouri Confluence Waterkeeper; Monterrey Coastkeeper – a Program of The Otter Project, Inc.; Rio Grande Waterkeeper – a program of Wildearth Guardians; Russian Riverkeeper; Snake River Waterkeeper, Inc.; Upper Missouri Waterkeeper, Inc.; Turtle Island Restoration Network; Wildearth Guardians; and Ecological Rights Foundation.

After the rule was published, the state of North Carolina got on board, as Attorney General Josh Stein and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality joined 16 other states challenging the EPA’s rollbacks to the Clean Water Act.

“While our case hadn’t made it through the process, we’re super-thankful this case prevailed,” Deck said.

For years, Sound Rivers has asked our supporters to take action in response to bad wetlands legislation – your action has led to this decision. **This is our victory, it is YOUR victory, and it is a CLEAN-WATER victory for ALL!**

MCCRACKEN *continued from Page 10*

can’t speak for themselves – but Sound Rivers’ three Riverkeepers can and do speak for them. That work makes clean water possible now and long into the future.”

The McCrackens insist that legacy giving is a meaningful way to affect the environment. “Every

small gift – and your legacy can be any size – makes a difference. It’s an important addition to maintaining stable and continuous funding for Sound Rivers and maintaining the breadth and quality of Riverkeeper work,” Dave said.

“And we personally can be proud of the legacy we have left behind,”

Carole added.

We at Sound Rivers are so grateful to Dave and Carole and to everyone who supports our mission. Legacy giving is an effective way to make a difference to future generations.

Contact us for more information if you would like to consider a legacy gift.

‘Splash for Trash’ makes a big splash on the Tar

On July 31, clean-water warriors gathered at Town Common in Greenville and took to the Tar for the third-annual Splash for Trash.

Hosted by Greenville Noon Rotary, and partnered by Sound Rivers, nearly 100 volunteers showed up with canoes, kayaks and boats to gather trash from the Tar River. Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell and Sound Rivers’ Executive Director Heather Deck joined the crews on the water, hauling in trash destined for the dump and not the banks and water of the Tar.

Howell said so much garbage ends up in the waterways that clean-ups are, in many ways, like putting a Band Aid on a giant wound.

“You could be out here every Saturday, and you’d never clean up all the trash,” she told the Greenville Daily Reflector.

But events like Splash for Trash



The Tar River got a clean-up on July 31, but less than two weeks later, this build-up of trash downstream from Town Common, including many plastic bottles, shows just how prevalent the problem is.

are a way to not only clean up the waterways, but promote their stewardship, drawing attention to the river and why people should want to take care of it.

“Maybe some people are in a kayak for the first time,” she said.

“They’re interacting with the river and they see its importance. You’re more likely to think about your own personal choices and stewardship of the environment, but also you’re realizing why we need to protect the place because it’s beautiful.”

STARR *continued from Page 11*

there for advocating and improving the water quality of the Neuse River Basin,” Starr said.

Current Lower Neuse Riverkeeper Katy Hunt will be taking on the Upper Neuse and Lower Neuse advocacy roles in the interim, while Sound Rivers’ staff and board are determining the best way to continue the mission of clean water, support communities’ efforts to adapt to climate change and fight for environmental justice.

“As we look at the full picture of Sound Rivers and our work, we are thinking critically about the best

position and skills needed for moving toward our collective goals for the Upper Neuse region. You can rest assured that you continue to have a strong advocate for the Upper Neuse River in the interim,” Deck said.

Starr played a central part in “A Sound River,” Sound Rivers’ upcoming 40th-anniversary project exploring a long history of activism, now focused on environmental justice and tackling the global issue of climate change on a local scale. He will make an appearance at the film’s virtual premiere on Nov. 30 and take part in the panel discussion following the film.

BLOUNTS CREEK UPDATE

The case between Sound Rivers and the Martin Marietta limestone-mining company will be heard by the North Carolina Supreme Court, but likely not until 2022.

In April, attorneys with Southern Environmental Law Center learned the Supreme Court would review the lower court’s decision that Sound Rivers and our members have legal standing.

“We are all pleased to see the case moving forward, finally,” said Sound Rivers’ Executive Director Heather Deck.

Eight years ago, Sound Rivers challenged a permit that would allow Martin Marietta to discharge up to 12 million gallons of water per day into the brackish headwaters of Blounts Creek. Sound Rivers is not challenging the construction of the 649-acre limestone mine in Vance County, but its discharge. Experts have testified that consistently dumping that much fresh water per day into the creek will change its pH, decimating a waterway designated by the state as a nursery for many saltwater species.

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Tell Me About It TUESDAYS SCIENCE SERIES

Our virtual science series continues this fall on the second Tuesday of every month! Sign up for the next episode of Tell Me About It Tuesday at soundrivers.org/events.

THANK YOU, SWIM GUIDE SPONSORS & VOLUNTEERS!

We couldn't have had another successful Swim Guide seasons without you!

UNC Pavel Molchanov Scholars | Melinda Vann & David Silberstein | Water-Quality Fund (in memory of Gene Pate) | ECU SECU Public Fellows Internship Foundation

