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CURRENTS

Sound Rivers' Quarterly Newsletter | Volume 10, No. 3 | Fall 2024

2 rivers.
928,052 acres of estuary
21,423 acres of freshwater lakes
12,210 square miles of land
5,909 miles of streams
9 staff **1** organization
SOUND RIVERS — and **YOU.**

Every week, I am truly amazed at the scope and depth of the work this Sound Rivers team is engaged in. From documenting sediment pollution from developments and landfills, to tracking the source of bacteria contamination, to removing trash from urban streams and so much more.

One of the things that makes Sound Rivers unique is the fact we have the capacity to react to problems in your watershed. We're in the field, in the air and on the water, documenting the health and harms to your rivers.

From these crucial investigations, we are able to advocate for strong and sensible solutions. Whether that is better policy, improved rule enforcement or greater investment in infrastructure, we are there to advocate for a healthier future.

And we need you! We need your eyes and ears to keep us informed. As you can see, our two great rivers cover more than 23% of North Caroli-

na! Your reports and information are crucial in our efforts to protect our waterways. Your voice matters — as it will in our continued fight to protect Blounts Creek. Your vote matters — to



ensure we're electing officials that prioritize clean water. And your volunteer service matters — as it helps us to expand our impact.

Thanks to your support, our college interns and volunteers collected more than 600 water samples from 52 locations this summer, documenting and reporting where it's safe to swim as part of our Swim Guide program. And in September, our

Litter-Free Rivers program expanded to the Town of Tarboro with the installation of our newest trash trap. Together with over 200 volunteers, Sound Rivers has removed more than 2 tons of trash from urban streams and rivers since January.

As you read this edition of our newsletter, you'll see that together, we are solving our most pressing issues and ensuring the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico rivers remain swimmable, fishable and drinkable for everyone.

Sincerely,

Executive Director, Sound Rivers



SWIM GUIDE

A 7th successful season ends with ongoing investigations



Another Swim Guide season has wrapped up for the year, marking a seventh successful season sharing water quality results throughout the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico.

“Once again, we had an amazing group of volunteers who dedicated time to take water samples and deliver them to us every week to make sure everyone knows where it’s safe to swim,” said Volunteer Coordinator Emily Fritz. “Honestly, we couldn’t run this program without our volunteers.”

Each week this summer, volunteers, with some assistance from Sound Rivers interns and staff, sampled 52 popular recreational sites from Durham to Oriental. The water samples are tested for E.coli in fresh water and enterococci in salt water, and results are released on Fridays to a variety of media outlets.

“The Swim Guide program fits in with our mission: monitoring the waterways and educating the public about the issues they’re facing – in this case, bacteria in the water,” Emily said.

Overall, the program ran seamlessly, with only one hiccup in that Tropical Storm Debby prevented

sampling the first week of August.

Over the 13 weeks tested, water quality was generally good in both watersheds, though there were two sites in the Tar-Pamlico watershed that raised some red flags among the riverkeeping team. Havens Gardens on Runyon Creek in Washington and Cotton Patch Landing on Blounts Creek failed to meet recreational water-quality standards enough times to launch investigations.

Tar-Pamlico Riverkeeper Katey Zimmerman is currently focusing on narrowing down pollution sources at both sites.

On the Neuse, Sound Rivers began an investigation after Slocum Creek in Havelock passed the Swim Guide test only 14% of times tested in 2023. The investigation continues, as the Neuse tributary failed to pass a single water-quality test this summer.

“One bit of really good news is that last summer, the Neuse River at Kinston failed so much that we began looking into it, working with the City of Kinston to identify the source of pollution,” Emily said.

“They found the source, fixed it, and Kinston passed the Swim Guide test every week this summer – so that’s success!”

TOP 3 DIRTIEST SITES 2024

1 SLOCUM CREEK
Havelock (0%)

2 HAVENS GARDENS
Washington (57%)

3 COTTON PATCH LANDING
Blounts Creek (50%)

% is pass rate for the summer



TAR-PAMLICO

100% Clubhouse Beach, Lake Royale
100% Clubhouse Boat Dock, Lake Royale
100% Moccasin Deck, Lake Royale
100% Pavilion Beach, Lake Royale
100% Pavilion Boat Side, Lake Royale
91% Tar River Reservoir, Rocky Mount
91% Sunset Park, Rocky Mount
82% River Road boat access, Tarboro
92% Town Common, Greenville
92% Wildwood Park, Greenville
92% Port Terminal, Greenville
92% Yankee Hall, Pactolus
85% Downtown waterfront, Washington
92% Mason’s Landing, Washington
38% Havens Gardens boat ramp, Washington
92% Chocowinity Bay, Cypress Landing
85% Broad Creek at Pamlico Plantation
100% Blounts Bay
46% Blounts Creek at Cotton Patch Landing
92% Dinah’s Landing at Goose Creek State Park
89% Bonner Point, Bath
100% Plum Point, Bath
100% Wright’s Creek boating access, Belhaven



UPPER NEUSE

100% Hickory Hill boat ramp, Falls Lake
100% Ledge Rock boat ramp, Falls Lake
100% Beaver Dam Lake day-use area, Falls Lake
100% Rolling View boat ramp, Falls Lake
100% Highway 50 launch/rec area, Falls Lake
100% Upper Barton Creek boat ramp, Falls Lake
100% Falls of the Neuse canoe launch, Falls Lake
91% Buffaloe Road launch, Raleigh
91% Milburnie launch, Raleigh
82% Poole Road launch, Raleigh
100% Smithfield Town Commons
91% Clayton River Walk
100% Neuse Golf Club, Clayton



LOWER NEUSE

100% Highway 11 boat ramp, Kinston
92% Maple Cypress boat ramp, Grifton
92% Cowpen Landing, Vanceboro
100% Spring Garden boat ramp, New Bern
85% Glenburnie Park, New Bern
85% Town Park, Bridgeton
69% Black Beard Sailing Club, upper Broad Creek
85% Lawson Creek Park, New Bern
100% River Bend kayak launch
100% Trent Woods
100% Brice’s Creek, James City
100% East Street boat ramp, Pollocksville
0% Slocum Creek boat ramp, Havelock
100% Rice Creek, Bay River
100% Midyette Street boat ramp, Oriental
83% Pierce Creek, Oriental



TIERNEY REARDON, East Carolina University

I learned so much about the day-to-day efforts that environmental nonprofits lead. There is constantly more work to be done, whether it be completing monitoring work, responding to reports locals call in or educating the public. Beyond that, longer term projects, often funded by grants, are always running. Ensuring that there are resources for the public to lean on and that there is funding to support those resources is an ongoing effort. I was constantly impressed by how tirelessly everyone worked.

In their own words:

There’s no clearer illustration of how quickly time passes than once again saying goodbye to our summer “Swim-terns,” as Swim Guide wraps up for the season and a new semester awaits.

Katrina Borgen, Eloise MacLean and Tierney Reardon “crushed it” this summer, according to Sound Rivers Volunteer Coordinator Emily Fritz.

“They’re all so smart and passionate about the work – I can’t wait to see where their future careers lead them,” she said.

As the trio of 2024 interns headed back for a senior year in college, we asked them to give us their takeaways from their Sound Rivers internships.



KATRINA BORGEN University of North Carolina

Sound Rivers gave me amazing experience in the nonprofit realm. Being a college student, most of my internship/experience-related opportunities have been in academia and research. Working with Sound Rivers helped open my eyes to more opportunities available to me with my degree. Everyone I worked with this summer was insanely dedicated to their work and clearly are motivated to protect and keep our environment healthy.

I now know that environmental nonprofits are a great way to make a difference in your community, and a place where the environment and community are put first.



ELOISE MACLEAN University of North Carolina

The most important thing I learned during my internship this summer is just how vital it is to be truly passionate about your work. Seeing the impact we made via Swim Guide and other conservation efforts, I learned that when you work from your heart, it not only drives your motivation but also inspires others and leads to meaningful change.

I saw this sentiment reflected all throughout the Sound Rivers team, whose passion and commitment to the work we do really make all the difference. Loving what you do just brings so much purpose and deeper fulfillment to the work itself.

Sound Rivers welcomes new Stormwater Education Coordinator

... and a new board member

The Sound Rivers staff grew in September, as Resilience Corps NC AmeriCorps member Sierra Stickney signed on as the new stormwater education coordinator.

Sierra graduated from State University of New York(SUNY)-Oneonta in December 2021 and has put her degree in biology, with concentrations in ecology and conservation, to good use since.

After a stint as an aquatic strike team member at the nonprofit Catskills Center, then leaving the field for the lab as a gas chromatography analyst, she moved to New Bern where her passion for the water led her to Sound Rivers.

"I actually discovered Sound Rivers first, because I wanted to work for a nonprofit that was closer to what I was doing at the Catskills Center, and when I saw the posting for the job, I thought it would be a good fit," Sierra said.

Sierra will be working with Program Director Clay Barber on education and outreach for Sound Rivers' Campus Stormwater Program, and in the next year, she'll be creating hands-on learning opportunities at partnering schools, creating interactive lessons in outdoor classrooms, supporting proper maintenance and inspection of green stormwater infrastructure projects and even pitching in with Sound Rivers' Litter-Free Rivers program and its growing collection of trash traps on tributaries of the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico rivers.

"I'm new to the field of stormwater management, so I'm really excited about learning more, and since I am really new to it, I know there's

a lot to learn," she said. "But I'll be building on the skills I already have."

Before she even graduated from SUNY, Sierra was doing education and outreach as a boat steward, which involved talking to people about invasive aquatic species in New York waterways — water chestnuts, Japanese knotweed, Zebra and Quagga mussels, and more. As a member of the aquatic strike team with the Catskills Center, she traveled through the Catskills and surrounding areas to survey waterbodies for native aquatic species and the aquatic invasive species impinging on them.

"I'm used to working on the water, and one of my favorite parts of my previous job was the outreach — educating people on why invasive species are bad. Educating people as to why stormwater is a problem and what we can do to fix that problem is just as important," Sierra said. "I'm looking forward working with students and inspiring others — that always feels good."

Resilience Corps NC AmeriCorps is a service program of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, funded by a grant through the North Carolina Governor's Commission on Volunteerism.

Sound Rivers' board of directors has welcomed another member to the board.

Biologist Cindy Seymour joined the board in August, bringing the number of board members to 15.

Born and raised in Craven County, Cindy spent many days of her youth in a jon boat, fishing for bream in Turkey Quarter Creek. From an early age, she learned to respect

the waters of the Neuse River and says her professional life has been an extension of this: as a biology instructor at Craven Community College, teaching Introductory Biology, Environmental Biology, and Anatomy and Physiology, she hopes to instill an appreciation of the natural world in her students.

For Cindy, becoming a member of the Sound Rivers board of directors was a natural fit.

"I've always appreciated the work that Sound Rivers does, speaking for the places and people that may otherwise get left out of the conversation," she said.

Cindy, her husband and their two children enjoy spending time at the beach, hiking, searching for salamanders and cheering on their beloved East Carolina University Pirates.



New board member Cindy Seymour.

"I'm new to the field of stormwater management, so I'm really excited about learning more and since I am really new to it, I know there's a lot to learn. But I'll be building on the skills I already have."

Sierra Stickney
Stormwater Outreach Coordinator



investigation: SOUND RIVERS

BEHIND THE SCENES

It could be an anonymous phone call or email; it could be recognizing anomalies in water-quality data. It could be a Riverkeeper just happening upon a site that's obviously being polluted by something. But all these events often lead to same thing: a Sound Rivers investigation.

"It's part of our mission — it's part of who we are as an organization. If we're alerted to a problem, we investigate it, share our results and data and urge those involved to resolve the problem," said Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop.

At any given time, Sound Rivers' Riverkeeping staff may have many investigations going on — sediment pollution in the upper parts of the watersheds, ongoing sewage spills from municipalities on the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico, industrial animal facilities inappropriately disposing of waste, are just a few examples. However, they tend to take the same form with a site visit, collecting water samples upstream, downstream and at the problem site, testing the samples for bacteria and if the results

come back with elevated bacteria levels, reporting the findings to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and/or reaching out to the entity responsible to alert them to their pollution problem.

"We've formed some great partnerships with a couple of local governments to resolve their pollution issues," Samantha said. "Kinston is one — a broken pipe was leaking sewage into the stormwater system last summer. We identified the pollution site; they found the problem in their system and fixed it. Havelock has worked with us in the same way, testing their wastewater system with smoke and CCTV to try to figure out where Slocum Creek's pollution is coming from. Well, it turns out it wasn't their system, and we've located the origin of the pollution outside city limits, so now we're working with Craven County Health Department to find a solution. We're grateful to those who work with us to find these pollution solutions. For those that won't, we use our resources to make sure they are held accountable."

LOCATION: SMALL STREAMS, PERSON COUNTY

INVESTIGATOR: Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: Dominion Energy's Moriah Energy Center

SUMMARY: Land clearing in preparation of construction of a liquified natural gas storage facility in Person County is impacting streams running through and near the construction site. Samantha, with the help of community members, began regularly monitoring several locations for sediment pollution/turbidity, relaying results to state agencies. Their work prompted NCDEQ to conduct a site visit, verifying that construction was impacting nearby surface waters.

NEXT STEPS: Samantha and the team of community members continue to sample waterways surrounding the site twice a month. Since the sediment-polluted streams flow into Deep Creek and Flat River, they are also monitoring these critical habitat areas and communicating findings to NCDEQ and the North Carolina Wildlife Commission, which have expressed concerns about long-term turbidity. Dominion Energy agreed to strengthen sediment controls in some areas because of the attention, but not nearly enough, according to Samantha.

LOCATION: CUB CREEK, ROCK FORK BRANCH, Upper Tar-Pamlico & Neuse Watersheds

INVESTIGATOR: Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Katey Zimmerman

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: Republic Services Landfill, Rougemont

SUMMARY: Clear-cutting on landfill property to make way for expansion and large areas of exposed dirt in a "borrow area," named because the dirt is borrowed to cover layers of garbage, has led to sediment runoff and turbidity in small tributaries of Cub Creek in the upper Tar-Pamlico watershed and Rock Fork Branch in the upper Neuse. Katey handed over sampling data to the state, prompting a site inspection by NCDEQ's Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources during which four regulatory violations were cited.

NEXT STEPS: Katey will be following up with DEMLR staff to make sure another inspection is conducted, considering the violations during the last inspection. If violations persist at the site, Katey will be asking DEMLR to issue notices of violation.

LOCATION: TAR RIVER, ROCKY MOUNT

INVESTIGATOR: Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Katey Zimmerman

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: City of Rocky Mount wastewater system

SUMMARY: In the last four years, more than 5 million gallons of sewage have spilled into the Tar River from one site in Rocky Mount: Riverside Drive. It's predictable — any time the area receives 1-1 1/2 inches of rain, wastewater pours from a manhole on Riverside Drive into two nearby storm drains that lead straight to the Tar River no more than 50 yards away. After a sewage spill stops, staff uses bleach to clean the area and flushes the chemicals down the storm drains.

NEXT STEPS: Katey will continue to monitor sewer spills as they occur at the Riverside Drive location and document bacteria levels in the river after spills. She will also be sending a letter to Richard Rogers, director of the Division of Water Resources, sharing her data on DWR's enforcement records, illustrating inconsistencies and advocating for more enforcement actions.

LOCATION: RUNYON CREEK, WASHINGTON

INVESTIGATOR: Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Katey Zimmerman

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: City of Washington wastewater system/Unknown

SUMMARY: Sound Rivers weekly water-quality testing program, Swim Guide, alerted Riverkeeping staff to declining water quality at this popular recreational spot on Runyon Creek. Katey took to the water via kayak and collected water samples on the Pamlico just a few yards out from where the creek joins the river, then at several locations upstream on the creek. While collecting samples, she came across a very small tributary on the west side of the creek that smelled like sewage. Results at that location showed elevated levels of bacteria.

NEXT STEPS: The City of Washington informed Sound Rivers that a sewer line had been repaired in the area that Katey believes to be the source of bacteria. At time of print, Katey had returned to collect samples from this area to see if high bacteria levels had subsided after the repairs. If they persist, more investigation will be done, but another possible source is the many geese that call the area home.

LOCATION: COTTON PATCH LANDING, BLOUNTS CREEK

INVESTIGATOR: Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Katey Zimmerman

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: Unknown

SUMMARY: This summer's Swim Guide results also pointed to a pollution problem on Blounts Creek. Water samples taken from the Cotton Patch Landing site began failing to meet recreational water-quality standards in the first week of July, and consistently failed through the rest of the season. Katey has reached out to the Blounts Creek community for their insights.

NEXT STEPS: Katey is in the process of collecting more water samples, upstream and downstream of the Swim Guide site, to narrow down the source through process of elimination. Depending on results, she will be sharing data with NCDEQ's Division of Water Resources to further find and resolve the issue.

LOCATION: SLOCUM CREEK, HAVELOCK

INVESTIGATOR: Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: Aging septic infrastructure, privately owned

SUMMARY: For the past two summers, water samples taken from the public boat ramp on Slocum Creek in Havelock have consistently failed to meet recreational water-quality standards. Samantha and Water Quality Specialist Taylor Register launched an investigation in 2023, identifying the bacteria source as human and the small tributary of Wolf Pit Branch as its entry point into the creek. The City of Havelock worked with the Riverkeeping team to rule out a city sewer infrastructure issue and reached out to the Craven County Health Department for assistance. NCDEQ's findings in July confirmed the data collected by the Sound Rivers team.

NEXT STEPS: Samantha will continue working with the county's environmental health supervisor by reviewing septic installation and repair records to see if any outdated systems can be identified. They have attempted to reach community members through mailers, with the goal of getting greater sampling access to private property to positively identify the source or — best case scenario — prompt the resident(s) with a septic issue to come forward. Funding opportunities for assistance with septic repair and/or replacement are being sought.

LOCATION: NEUSE RIVER, SMITHFIELD

INVESTIGATOR: Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop

SUSPECTED POLLUTER: Town of Smithfield wastewater system/Unknown

SUMMARY: On a trash-trap scouting trip to Smithfield, Samantha and Program Director Clay Barber came across a stormwater outfall into the Neuse River — right off the Neuse River Greenway — that was flowing at an unusually high rate during a dry period and smelled of sewage. Samantha returned to the site to take water samples, which returned showing extremely high levels of fecal bacteria. At time of print, she had alerted NCDEQ to the problem and reached out to the Town of Smithfield, but had not received a response.

NEXT STEPS: Samantha will continue to try to engage town staff and work with NCDEQ to identify possible sources and solutions to what could be a broken sewer pipe leaking sewage into a stormwater outfall.

RIVERKEEPER REPORTS

on the TAR-PAMLICO



(Above) Save Blounts Creek co-founder Bob Daw addresses a crowd of new and old faces at a community meeting held to discuss Martin Marietta Materials' application to renew a permit to discharge wastewater into the headwaters of Blounts Creek.

Permit renewal revives Save Blount Creek movement

The fight to save Blounts Creek is not over. In late August, mining company Martin Marietta Materials applied to renew its wastewater permit for a 649-acre limestone mine in Vanceboro, launching a public comment period that has revived the grassroots movement to protect the creek.

The battle is an old one for Save Blounts Creek members and Sound Rivers.

In 2011, Martin Marietta applied for the initial NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit, and what followed was heated, standing-room-only public hearings, the rise of the Save Blounts Creek movement and, when the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality issued the permit, a Sound Rivers lawsuit that bounced around the state court system for

more than a decade.

The permit issued by NCDEQ allows Martin Marietta Materials' limestone mine to discharge up to 12 million gallons of fresh water per day into the headwaters of the brackish tributary of the Pamlico River in Beaufort County. Last year, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled in favor of NCDEQ issuing the permit.

The application for renewal put Blounts Creek into the environmental spotlight again, and the number of residents concerned about the future health of the creek is growing, according to Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Katey Zimmerman.

By mid-September, 300 letters opposing the permit renewal and requesting a public hearing be held had been written and submitted to NCDEQ.

"Some of the same people still live in Blounts Creek and are fighting to keep the water-quality and

recreation from being negatively impacted by mine discharge," Katey said. "But in the last 13 years, there have also been more people moving to the area, more people that use Blounts Creek as a recreational resource, who will also be affected by the new mine's discharge. These people should have an equal opportunity to publicly comment and ask questions about the permit."

Katey wrote to the director of the Division of Water Resources in September to request an extension to the public comment period and that NCDEQ hold a public hearing.

"I think the response has been awesome. The number of letters already sent definitely constitutes significant public interest," Katey said. "I would be surprised if they do not grant a public hearing."

Stay on top of Blounts Creek news by signing up for our weekly eNews at soundrivers.org/enews-sign-up.

STORMWATER UPDATE

Campus Stormwater Program: full steam ahead

Program Director Clay Barber is inundated — with campus stormwater projects.

Across the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico watersheds, Clay has been setting the stage for new green stormwater infrastructure projects, all part of Sound Rivers' Campus Stormwater Program.

"We love the growing support of our campus stormwater program," Clay said. "The increase in green stormwater infrastructure and partnerships with schools is a fantastic opportunity to teach principles of environmental stewardship, water quality issues, and nature-based solutions."

In Nash County, plans are in the works for two rain gardens, a bioswale replacing a V-shaped ditch where water moves too quickly and causes erosion and naturalized wetlands at Northern Nash High School. At Southern Nash High School, rain gardens, a rainwater harvesting cistern supporting the school greenhouse and a bioswale are on the school's stormwater agenda, while 12 other Nash County Public Schools campuses are in line for campus stormwater assessments — in which partnering environmental engineer firms inspect existing stormwater infrastructure and determine where improvements can be made or new projects installed at each campus.

In the upper Tar-Pamlico region, Clay and environmental engineering firm Backwater Environmental are in the beginning stages of building a

"This is the goal we have with all the schools that are part of our Campus Stormwater Program: schools get assistance on stormwater management projects, we get to create solutions for clean water, and we all get a future of people that know and care a bit more about our environment, and ourselves."

regenerative stormwater conveyance system at Vance-Granville Community College in Henderson. The community college campus has experienced severe erosion from a stormwater outfall that flows downslope to a tributary of Ruin Creek. The stormwater conveyance system being built includes a series of pools to slow the water down, spread it out and give it the time and room to soak into the ground.

At West Craven High School, Clay has been putting the finishing touches on a new rainwater harvesting

cistern, a project that will ultimately supply rainwater to the school's greenhouse and the plants sold at WCHS's annual fundraising plant sale.

Farther east, Havelock High School is slated for a rainwater harvesting cistern and a bioswale.

But where Sound Rivers' Campus Stormwater Program is really making a difference is at West Craven Middle School, according to Clay.

In addition to managing installation of two rain gardens on the Vanceboro campus, Clay is currently working with Backwater Environmental to install a regenerative stormwater conveyance system, and a new grant from the Bosch Community Fund is paving the way for yet another green stormwater infrastructure project at the school — a rainwater harvesting cistern that will capture rainwater for use on the Ag program's raised beds.

"All of this together means West Craven Middle School will be one of the best green stormwater infrastructure examples at schools in eastern North Carolina," Clay said. "This is the goal we have with all the schools that are part of our Campus Stormwater Program: schools get assistance on stormwater management projects, we get to create solutions for clean water, and we all get a future of people that know and care a bit more about our environment, and ourselves."

SOUND RIVERS



Riverkeeping Tales from the Neuse & Tar-Pamlico

Find out more about Blounts Creek and the decade-long battle to save it! Listen to the Sound Rivers podcast here:



More episodes coming soon!

Litter-Free Rivers

Trash trap No. 6 adds to growing Litter-Free fleet

Sound Rivers' Litter-Free Rivers program is taking off — and taking plenty of trash out of the waterways.

Trash trap No. 6 was installed on East Tarboro Canal in Tarboro in September, courtesy of Sound Rivers' partnership with Cummins Rocky Mount Engine Plant. It adds to a growing fleet of trash traps across the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico watersheds. The first was installed on Jack's Creek in Washington in May of 2022. More trash traps have since been added on Duffyfield Canal in New Bern, Little Rock Creek on the grounds of the Walnut Creek Wetland Center in Raleigh, Adkin Branch in Kinston and Greens Mill Run in Greenville.

"We're pretty happy that peo-

ple recognize the value of the Litter-Free Rivers program," said Sound Rivers Program Director Clay Barber. "We have six in the water right now and more are coming."

The passive litter-collection devices corral and catch trash as it moves downstream, before it can get to larger waterways where it's harder to collect. They've proven effective: more than three tons of garbage have been removed from waterways by staff and a team of volunteers since the first trap was installed.

"I'm so excited about the growth of our Litter Free Rivers program," said Sound Rivers Volunteer Coordinator Emily Fritz. "In addition to removing litter from our waterways, our Adopt a Trash Trap program gives folks

a hands-on opportunity to get involved in their community and play a huge role in making our water more swimmable, fishable, and drinkable. It's a great opportunity for groups looking for ways to volunteer, and more people involved with doing something that's good for our rivers is a win for all of us."

In addition to the new trash trap in Tarboro, Sound Rivers has partnered with the City of Raleigh, North Carolina State University and The Great Raleigh Cleanup to bring two more traps to the Raleigh area. Installation of both on Marsh Creek tributaries is planned this fall. Staff from the towns of Smithfield and Clayton, on the Neuse River, have also expressed interest in the Litter-Free Rivers program.

NOV. 2

SOUND RIVERS AUCTION GOES LIVE!

Save the date! Sound Rivers' annual online auction goes live on Nov. 2, and this year's items up for bid are better than ever!

Whether you're looking for the perfect gift or to treat yourself, there are plenty of amazing options: art, home goods, gift baskets, adventures and vacation stays ... the list goes on.

If you're unable to join us for the Oyster Roast, the Sound Rivers' auction is a great way to support your Riverkeepers' work to keep your waterways fishable, drinkable and swimmable for all! Check soundrivers.org or sign up for our eNews to get auction updates.

SOUND RIVERS SWAG



(Above) Remy looking cute in her new Sound Rivers bandana (yes, Remy has heterochromia; her left eye is half blue and half brown).

Online store now open!

Those who love to shop online can add Sound Rivers' new pop-up store to their places to visit virtually.

"Many of our supporters have asked how they can get Sound Rivers-branded merchandise in the past, so starting our own online store seemed like the next step to make merchandise readily available and promote our mission to a wide audience," said Sound Rivers Executive Director Heather Deck.

Two designs dominate the catalog: the very recognizable heron, fish and oyster logo long associated with Sound Rivers and a newer, vintage-inspired design created by Sound Rivers Communications Director Vail Rumley.

"So many people know and love the illustration on our original logo, but we also wanted to offer

a design that's more in tune with current trends," Vail said. "Anyone in the market for a Sound Rivers shirt can now choose which design most resonates with them."

Both designs are available in adult short- and long-sleeve T-shirts, and in children's sizes.

"The great thing about the online store is there are so many more color and style options available," she said.

In addition to the T-shirt selection, the catalog includes a long-sleeved 40+ UV protection sun shirt, Sound Rivers car magnets in two sizes, a copper-insulated bottle, pint glass, tote bag and a bandana collar for pets.

"The pet bandana collar was a hit the moment it was delivered," Heather laughed. "One of our great volunteers, Christina Marshen, was in the office helping with our Fall mailing and had

brought along her dog, Remy. We put the bandana on Remy, and it looked so cute on her, we let her take it home!"

All proceeds from store sales will be used to support Sound Rivers' work to monitor and protect the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico watersheds.

"Ultimately, the online store is its own fundraiser — one where you get something cool in return for your donation, and feel good about shopping because it's for a really good cause," Vail said.

Visit Sound Rivers' online store at sound-rivers.printify.me or use the QR code to start shopping today!



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