ENGAGING PEOPLE ON GEORGIA’S RIVERS

**Paddle Georgia** – GRN led over 272 people on the 14th annual Paddle Georgia canoe and kayak adventure on 84 miles of the Ocmulgee River in June. The 2018 Paddle Georgia Youth Group from Camp Horizon in Atlanta, most of whom had never paddled a canoe on a river, successfully navigated the river and returned home excited to paddle more of Georgia’s rivers. The event raised $30,000 to help Georgia River Network, the Yellow River Water Trail and the Ocmulgee River Water Trail.

**Brews, Boats, & BBQ for Better Rivers** – Over 180 people came together at SweetWater Brewery for GRN’s pre-season paddle party and fundraiser. Paddlers and river lovers from all over Georgia enjoyed the opportunity to network, meet GRN staff members, and learn about our mission and upcoming events. $10,000 was raised for river protection and engagement.

**Spring on the Satilla** – This annual trip on the Satilla was a huge success. 127 people spent two nights tent camping atop Long Bluff at rustic Satilla Lodge overlooking the river and paddling 16 miles of this blackwater gem. The trip included, educational programs, catered meals, campfires and camaraderie, paddling and first-rate camping. $8,500 was raised for river conservation work by GRN and Satilla Riverkeeper.

**Soque River Hidden Gem** – Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) and GRN partnered for a special event that included Georgia grown farm raised food prepared by local chefs, a cooking class focusing on seasonal produce, a riverside yoga session, a fly fishing workshop and paddle on the Soque river. $3400 was raised for river conservation work by GRN and SRWA.
Fall Float on the Flint – One hundred people joined us for a three day paddle enjoying the Flint’s natural beauty and crystal clear spring pools. Participants learned about the river’s cultural and natural heritage, and current issues facing the river. $6,000 was raised to help Georgia River Network and Flint Riverkeeper protect our rivers year round.

Cumberland Island GA Gem – GRN partnered with local community group St. Mary’s Riverkeeper (SMRK) for our 2nd annual Hidden Gem trip on the St. Mary’s River Water Trail. Fifty participants learned about the development of this up-and-coming water trail and ways to get involved in river conservation and protection. Over $7,000 was raised for river conservation work by GRN and SMRK.

Exploring the Woods Together – GRN members enjoyed a hiking trip to the Gold LEED certified Len Foote Hike Inn located in North Georgia’s Appalachian Mountains.


**GRN served on the statewide advisory board for RiversAlive** for the 17th year. RiversAlive provides an active role in galvanizing citizen led river cleanups in communities throughout Georgia.

Creating the Next Generation of Leaders - 17 interns provided 2,691 hours work

Promoted River Events From Groups Around the State - 113

Educating People About Rivers - Reached over 68,000 individuals reached through our Website, Social media, Newsletters

**EMPOWERING WATERSHED GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE STATE**

Convened Weekend for Rivers Annual Conference - GRN convened our annual Weekend for Rivers Conference at the Alcovy Conservation Center in Covington. There were multiple networking and training opportunities for our partners and water advocates as well as a paddle on the Alcovy.

**Assistance to Watershed Groups** – GRN provided ongoing assistance to 30+ river organizations via consultation, Weekend for Rivers annual Conference, monthly newsletter and other resources.
Serve as a Leader With the Georgia Trails Alliance – GRN serves on the board of the Georgia Trails Alliance.

Water Trail Resources – Director of Programs & Outreach, Gwyneth Moody continued to provide resources and guidance throughout the year to water trails groups across the state. In addition to publishing the quarterly Georgia Water Trails Newsletter, GRN continued to maintain the Georgia Water Trails Clearinghouse, Toolkit and Georgia Water Trails Network, a statewide network of 16 established water trails. We provided technical assistance to 22 water trail groups. GRN also continued developing illustrative maps for water trails throughout the state.

Started development of a mobile Water Trails app – This mobile app will be released in 2019.

ADVOCATING FOR CLEAN RIVERS

Kept citizen advocates and Georgia’s river groups informed – Stayed up to date on and involved in important policy issues and provided ways for people to engage in river issues.

Leader in the Georgia Water Coalition – Served a leadership role in the Georgia Water Coalition, a coalition of more than 250 groups. GRN serves on the leadership team, legislative team, communications team (committee chair) and coal ash team. We serve as the fiscal sponsor of the coalition and chair the budget committee. GRN manages the GWC website and social media. GRN staff, board and members attended Capitol Conservation Day in March. Through a grant from Patagonia, GRN funded a campaign to keep Coal Ash out of waterways. 1997 activists sent messages to their legislators on this issue.

Added 74 new members to the Protect GA alert system to take action on river issues.

Joined the GA Outdoor Stewardship Coalition which helped to pass the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Amendment to conserve lands in 2018.

2018 Staff – Dana Skelton, Executive Director; Gwyneth Moody, Director of Programs and Outreach; Joe Cook, Paddle Georgia Coordinator and River Guide Book Author

2018 Board – Kit Carson, Steve Cousins, Mickey Desai, Alicia Evans, Jim Fountain, Tammy Griffin, Victor Johnson, Tami Morris, Keith Parsons, Terry Pate, Vincent Payne, Bonny Putney, Tim Voss, Don Wright