

What's new in the

Newsletter



www.soque.org

PRESERVING, RESTORING, AND ENJOYING THE SOQUE WATERSHED SINCE 1998

SRWA News Articles!

- Danny's Blog
- New SRWA Riverbank Restoration Projects
- 2025 SRWA Membership Drive
- SRWA: Honoring our Stewardship Commitment
- 2024: Photo Gallery



**THE
2025
SRWA
MEMBERSHIP
DRIVE
BEGINS
DECEMBER 16ST,
2025
ON THE SRWA
WEBSITE
[WWW.
SOQUE.ORG](http://WWW.SOQUE.ORG)**



2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

**2nd Annual
2025 SRWA Trophy Trout
Fly-Fishing Trip Auction,
Thursday,
February 6th, 2025**



**2025 SRWA
SPRING SOIREE
ALL COMMUNITY
EVENT, SATURDAY,
APRIL 12TH, 2025**

Soirée



**2nd Annual SRWA
Golf Tournament,
Tuesday,
June 17th, 2025**

Danny Taylor Blog

December 2024



The worst day on the river is better than the best day almost anywhere else. To the man or woman with a fly rod, this statement most certainly rings true.

My Dad always told me to never hire a fly-fisherman or a pipe smoker because they already have a job. If you've ever done either, you know what I'm talking about. Without a doubt, fly-fishermen are a passionate group. Catching fish, while important, is secondary to the tranquility and beauty of a stream or river. Once you experience it, you can never go back. It is a celebration of the beauty of God's creation.....a journey worth taking!

To celebrate the art and sport of fly-fishing, the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) will host their second annual fundraiser on Thursday evening, February 6th, 2025, at the North Georgia Technical College Event Center in Clarkesville, GA.

This year's event includes fine food, open bar, and a live auction for trophy trout fly-fishing trips hosted by the very best guides and outfitters in the area. I wouldn't be surprised if you even heard a few outlandish fishing stories told by some of those fly-fishermen in attendance!

So please, plan on attending this very special 2025 event where you can meet other men and women who are just as passionate about fly-fishing as I am.

Reminder: this is a fundraiser so bring your checkbook, cash, or credit card. All money raised goes toward the preservation and restoration of the Soque River Watershed and by the way....all expenditures are fully tax deductible.

I hope you agree, it is critical that we protect this precious watershed. The entire SRWA Organization is dedicated to preserving this wonderful waterway, and its wildlife habitat we all enjoy, SRWA cannot accomplish this alone, so we need your help by attending our fundraisers, your annual membership subscriptions, and of course, your private donations.

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, February 6th, 2025. Hope to see you there!



Upcoming 2025 SRWA Events

The SRWA has planned some very exciting events for 2025 that will provide a wide variety of social engagement activities for our community residents, members, and volunteers!

We begin with the **2nd Annual SRWA Trophy Trout Fly-Fishing Trip Auction on Thursday, February 6th, 2025**, which will be held at the wonderful North Georgia Technical College Event Center in Clarkesville. As a result of last year's packed-house attendance it is expected that the upcoming 2025 event will be a sell-out as well. **Tickets will be available for purchase beginning Monday, December 16th** on the SRWA website at www.soque.org. The auction will include over ten fishing trips, a bourbon raffle, and an outstanding dinner beef carving and pasta station, open bar, and other evening activities. Please make this a **"must attend"** event on your 2025 planning calendar!

The **Annual SRWA Spring Soiree, our biggest event of the year, will be held on Saturday, April 12th, 2025** at the elegant North Georgia Technical College Event Center in Clarkesville. The fundraiser has always been regarded by attendees as the most anticipated community event of the year! It is a full night of music, fine dining, open bar, silent auction items, raffle prizes, and the grand auction finale. **Tickets will be available for purchase on the SRWA website at www.soque.org beginning February 3rd, 2025.** We look forward to seeing you there!

The next big event that should be on your planning calendar is the **2nd Annual SRWA Golf Outing scheduled for Tuesday, June 17th, 2025, at the Orchard Golf & Country Club** located at 1057 Orchard Drive, Clarkesville, GA, 30523. Please plan to organize your own foursome for this exciting outdoor June 2025 event. Overall prizes include those for a hole in one, longest drive, closest to the pin, and of course, first place and runner-up team winners! Foursome and individual tickets will include a full 18 holes of golf, your golf cart, and a full catered lunch. **Tickets will be available for purchase on the SRWA website at www.soque.org beginning April 21st, 2025.** Please secure your golf outing tickets early before they sell out!

"The river moves, but it follows a path. When it tires of one journey, it rubs through some rock to forge a new way. Hard work, but that's its nature."

Kekla Magoon



New 2024 Riverbank & Riparian Buffer Project-Piedmont University: In a recent meeting with Marshall Criser, Piedmont University President, it was agreed that the SRWA would partner with his Environmental Department, led by Debra Dooley to begin a December 2024 Hazel Creek bank restoration project on campus. The restored buffer area will add immediate erosion control and the filtering of any water run-off toxins that flow from campus property into Hazel Creek.

The new project will involve a one-hundred-foot area on both sides of the creek that will be fully restored with new plant vegetation and native trees. Overall, the restoration effort will be an ongoing project for both the SRWA and the Piedmont University Environmental Department. Each year's class will continue to use the newly restored area for educational purposes and in-field training opportunities.

Based on a recent partnering agreement with the Victory Home Recovery Center, located in Tallulah Falls, the SRWA now has a new sourcing option for those riverbank projects requiring added vegetation in the form of plants, shrubs, and trees.

It is important to share with our community that the SRWA is actively engaged in doing those projects that will continue to make a difference....a task we own and will continue to do!

The SRWA wants to thank Piedmont University for their willingness to participate in this very important restoration-based project. The community thanks you!



New 2025 Riverbank & Riparian Buffer Projects Pending:

The SRWA is presently working to execute several new 2025 riverbank development projects on Goshen Creek and Highway 197 that will restore the vitally important riparian buffers to over 500+ yards of Soque riverbank area.

The value of these projects not only involve creating new root systems that will structurally reinforce riverbank areas up and down the Soque River, but will create added tree canopies that will greatly reduce water temperatures during the hot summer months.

The SRWA is working diligently with willing Soque River property owners to drive new cost-effective vegetation programs that begins a ten-to-fifteen-year effort to restore our riparian buffer zones. If we can continue to restore 500+ yards of riverbank annually over the next ten to twenty years the positive impact will be monumental. Just imagine new highly vegetative riverbanks throughout the Soque watershed. Letting nature take over the critical process of filtering water run-off, adding needed shade, and providing new root-based riverbank areas as we find viable ways to protect our water system during those periods of flooding!

SRWA: Honoring our Stewardship Commitment!

An organization's viability can be gauged by their ability to connect with community through the value they generate!! **The key question is.... are you relevant and are you making a true difference!**

The key indicators are as follows:

- A membership that represents a diverse and balanced cross-section of the community!
- A effective social media platform that connects and informs!
- Execution of local work projects and programs that are results oriented!
- The organization's ability and willingness to help and work with others!

Membership: The SRWA is quite proud of their 200+ annual membership-base of dedicated and committed volunteers that has been maintained over the last twenty-six years. A committed group of local residents from all walks of life that are driven by their love of community and where they live!

Social Media Campaign: The SRWA now has a newly enhanced social messaging effort with an elevated presence on Facebook, and a fully engaging new website at www.soque.org. This new digital focus is transforming the organization's visibility and value with not only our membership, but with the local community throughout Habersham County. The organization is also publishing a quarterly SRWA Newsletter allowing those interested to know more about the SRWA Team and their efforts. The newsletter is emailed to over 1500 people who have a strong desire to stay informed about key SRWA events, river work projects, and local community initiatives.

River Work Projects: As with most environmental work project efforts, it requires money and manpower to get them started. Overall, it has taken the organization a full twelve-months to accrue adequate funding for two new riverbank restoration projects (i.e., Hazel Creek on the Piedmont University Campus and a section of Rocky Branch Creek near the Habersham County Tax Commissioner Office). The SRWA is now able to not only fund the programs, but to resource native vegetation for both restoration projects.

Working and Helping Others: The SRWA will continue to find those community partners that we can assist or help, like those listed below:

- **Victory Home:** a male-oriented drug rehab center located in Tallulah Falls that the SRWA helps support and in return they grow the native plants, trees, and shrubs for our annual riverbank restoration and buffer projects
- **Local Schools (i.e. Habersham Middle School, Trinity Classical, and Tallulah Falls):** The SRWA can continue to provide their environmental expertise and knowledge to students throughout Habersham County. The program's focus is to better inform and educate younger citizens about the importance of keeping our environment healthy and our water clean now and into the future. Today's SRWA Outreach Educational Program is fully funded by the organization, and is provided at no charge to any local school system or group.
- **Habersham County-UGA Extension-Clarkesville Office:** Under the directorship of Steven Patrick, the SRWA has found a new and dedicated partner that is focused on the agricultural side of keeping our river water levels of E. coli low and our riverbank structure secure with new trees and vegetation.
- **Universities and College Campuses:** Currently the SRWA is actively engaged with North Georgia Technical College, and Piedmont University with the implementation of annual internships involving environmental and water testing program efforts.
- **New Stewardship Role over the Soque Greenway Trail-Clarkesville, GA:** It was this last April when the SRWA assumed the management over the Soque Greenway Nature Trail (SGT). Since that time, the trail has had a full makeover including a new welcome sign, entrance archway, rebuilt information center, refurbished walking bridge, new sitting benches, three new doggie waste cans, etc. An SRWA expenditure of over \$12,000 has given this wonderful walking trail new life and value within its community!

2025 Annual Membership Drive

The SRWA is pleased to announce the beginning of their **2025 Annual Membership Drive**. Effective **Monday, December 16th, 2024**, the organization will offer 2025 annual membership program opportunities on their website to new and renewal partners. It is the goal of the SRWA to increase their 2025 annual enrollment by over fifty people/businesses for the upcoming year!

2025 SRWA Annual Membership Program: the SRWA non-profit organization has always offered affordable and tax-deductible membership levels for both individuals and local businesses. With nearly 200+ members, the SRWA has a core-base that continues to support/fund the many needed SRWA environmental and conservation programs executed by our team annually.

The 2025 SRWA Membership program will be available during the dates of 12/16/24 to 3/31/25. **It is important to select that membership level that best addresses your level of commitment:**

- **Students and seniors: \$35.00**
- **Family Level: \$75.00**
- **Bronze Level: \$100.00**
- **New Business Level: \$150.00***
- **Silver: \$250.00**
- **Gold: \$500.00**
- **Platinum: \$1,000.00**
- **Diamond: \$5,000.00**

***New for 2025: all businesses will have the opportunity to place their logo on the SRWA website for the full year of their membership**

We invite each one of you to help support our organization in 2025. It will be your membership subscription that keeps the organization focused on the annual programs and work projects that are making a difference within our watershed and community! **Efforts like ours takes everyone's participation!** We thank you!



"A river is water in its loveliest form, rivers have life and sound and movement and infinity of variation, rivers are veins of the earth through which the lifeblood returns to the heart."

- Roderick Haig-Brown

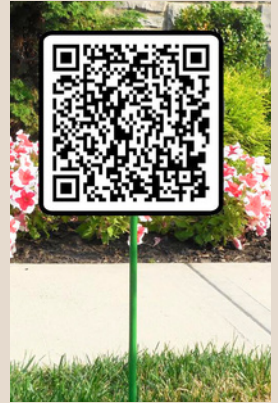
Soque Watershed Quality Testing Program



New User-friendly Soque Watershed Water Quality Testing Information Signs

In January 2025 the SRWA will be executing a new user-friendly water quality data sharing program that involves the use of QR Codes located at specific water location sites throughout Habersham County. The initial execution of the QR code sign effort will begin at Pitts Park, the Soque Greenway Trail, and other key sites to be identified in the very near future.

Once the QR code symbol is scanned by your phone you will be immediately taken to a website page where water quality data will be available for the water location you are visiting. The information provided will be directional in nature along with current E. Coli (bacterial) readings. If the E. Coli levels are high or outside of normal, please do not wade or let your dog drink from the creek or river. The effort behind the program is to **“best”** inform each of you of whether the water you are near is safe for recreation or animal consumption.



This important service offered by the SRWA Organization is to provide vital **“real time”** information to our community concerning Soque River and tributary water quality levels. Your health and the watershed’s wellbeing is very important to us!



“The river is constantly turning and bending and you never know where it's going to go and where you'll wind up. Following the bend in the river and staying on your own path means that you are on the right track. Don't let anyone deter you from that.”
- Eartha Kitt

2024 Photo Gallery: *A year in Review*



1ST ANNUAL SRWA JANUARY TROUT
FLY-FISHING
TRIP AUCTION EVENT



CELEBRATED THE SRWA'S 25TH
ANNIVERSARY AT THE
SPRING SOIREE



TOP AUCTION ITEM AT THE 2024
SRWA SPRING SOIREE
ARTIST: DANNY TAYLOR



THE SRWA HAD THREE 2024
BENEFIT CONCERTS AT FENDERS
ALLEY IN CORNELIA



1ST ANNUAL JUNE SRWA GOLF
TOURNAMENT AT THE ORCHARD
COUNTRY CLUB & GOLF COURSE



SRWA BECOMES THE NEW STEWARD
OF THE SOQUE GREENWAY TRAIL



THE SOQUE GREENWAY TRAIL GETS A WELL NEEDED MAKEOVER!



NEW "WELCOME" ARCHWAY SIGN FOR THE SOQUE GREENWAY TRAIL!



NEW SRWA SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAM AT THREE LOCAL SCHOOLS



NEW SRWA SCHOOL INTERN PROGRAM MANAGED BY DIRECTOR OF WATER MANAGER.-VEIDA STRINGFIELD



THE RETURN OF THE SRWA PLANT AND TREE SALE FALL FESTIVAL IN CLARKESVILLE



NEW SRWA EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH "FIELD TRIP" PROGRAM



NEW SOQUE RIVER RIPARIAN BUFFER
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WITH THE
ASSISTANCE OF STEVEN PATRICK-UGA EXT.



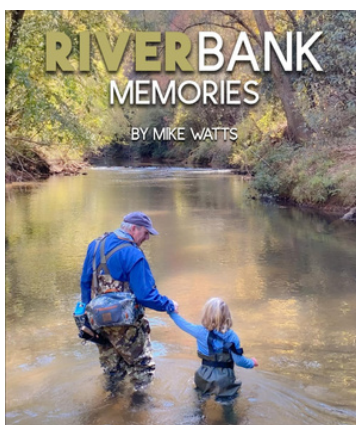
JACKSON BRIDGE PUBLIC ACCESS
SRWA SPRING CLEAN-UP PROJECT



NEW SRWA PLANT & TREE SOURCING
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VICTORY HOME REHAB
CENTER IN TALLULAH FALLS, GA



NEW SRWA PARTNERSHIP WITH
JEREMY GATTIS AND THE LOWE'S
HEROES TEAM-CORNELIA, GA



THE SRWA HAS AN AWARD WINNING
AUTHOR, MIKE WATTS



THE SRWA RECEIVED IN 2024 A NEW
WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM
FROM BOARD MEMBER, CELENA BROWN