

Newsletter
Issue 8: Winter 2015



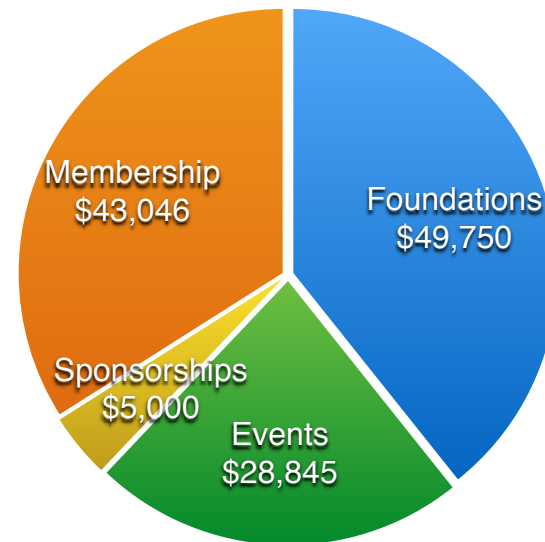
The Kiser family gets ready to fish in our Coosa Canoe & Kayak Fishing Tournament!

2014: BY THE NUMBERS

Last year we hosted **21** in **10**
EVENTS CITIES

We took **63** on **29** covering **220**
GUESTS PATROLS RIVER MILES

2014 Donations:



We acquired:

BOAT
22' Deck Boat

TRUCK
Chevy Silverado 1500

GEAR
Sampling equipment,
laptop, cameras

80 and **4** worked **499**
VOLUNTEERS INTERNS HOURS

Their time was worth **\$11,241.18**

TOXIC WASTE IN THE COOSA RIVER

The State of Alabama ranked 4th nationally in the amount of toxic chemicals released to rivers in 2012 at 12.5 million pounds. Furthermore, the Lower Coosa River Basin (Lay Lake, Lake Mitchell, and Lake Jordan) ranked 27th in the nation for releases of developmental toxics to rivers in 2012. The data is self-reported by industry to the [Toxics Release Inventory](#) (TRI) which is available to the public.

Our intern Lauren Kinsey from Birmingham Southern College delved further into the data and compared all 28 facilities in the Middle and Lower Coosa Basins that released toxic chemicals in 2012. She calculated how many pounds each facility released of total toxics, and then broke those numbers down further to see how many pounds were released at each facility of cancer-causing chemicals, developmental toxics, and reproductive toxics.

Of the 1.5 million pounds of total toxics released to the Middle and Lower Coosa in 2012, 3,927 pounds were cancer-causing chemicals, 2,590 pounds were developmental toxics, and 1,023 pounds were reproductive toxics.



Koch Foods in Gadsden on Lake Neely Henry. One of Gadsden Water Works's sewage plants is also visible in the image.

Two chicken processing facilities owned by Koch Foods ranked 1st and 2nd for total toxic releases and **collectively released 90% of all toxic chemicals reported to the TRI in the Middle and Lower Coosa**. Koch Foods of Gadsden, discharging to Neely Henry Lake, and Cagle's in Collinsville, discharging to Big Wills Creek discharged enormous quantities of ammonia and nitrate compounds, both of which are toxic to aquatic life.



Gaston Steam Plant on Lay Lake. Flight provided by Southwings.

When looking at the most potent toxicants released, those which cause cancer or developmental and reproductive problems, **the story was quite different**. In 2012, the Gaston Steam Plant, a coal-fired power plant in Wilsonville co-owned by Alabama Power and Georgia Power, ranked 1st for cancer-causing chemical released, 1st for developmental toxics released and 1st for reproductive toxics released compared to the other facilities on the Coosa River. The plant had also ranked second in the nation for toxic mercury air emissions in 2011. For more, [visit the TRI database online](#).

The Dirty Top 3 in each category:

Total Toxics:

1. Koch Foods Gadsden: 692,664 lbs
2. Cagle's, Collinsville: 664,967 lbs
3. Abibow Coosa Pines*: 151,728 lbs

Developmental Toxics:

1. Gaston Steam Plant: 2,491 lbs
2. Union Foundry: 29 lbs
3. Goodyear Tire & Rubber: 23 lbs

Cancer-Causing Chemicals:

1. Gaston Steam Plant: 3,031 lbs
2. Abibow Coosa Pines*: 767 lbs
3. Union Foundry: 29 lbs

Reproductive Toxics:

1. Gaston Steam Plant: 790 lbs
2. Abibow Coosa Pines*: 134 lbs
3. Union Foundry: 29 lbs

**The Coosa Pines paper mill is now owned by Resolute Forest Products*

Coosa Canoe & Kayak Fishing Tournament

The third year of the [Coosa Canoe & Kayak Fishing Tournament](#) is in the books! **Five fun stages of conservation-focused fishing** took us from Lay Lake, Neely Henry and the Coosa River Whitewater Festival in the spring to Logan Martin and the Coosa Classic in the fall. 65 anglers competed for \$10,000 worth of prizes, but most came out just to have a good time and support Coosa Riverkeeper!

Bryan Laney took the first ever Lay Lake Open, which also saw long-time competitor Aaron Hanlin catch **the Best Bass ever in our series at 24.5"**! Following up on that great start was the **trail record 59.5" 3-fish stringer by Joseph Wayne Harris** at the Coosa River Whitewater Festival. Corey Galloway then took Best Angler and Best Bass at the Neely Henry Open. Following the summer break, Hays Latimer posted 53.25" for Best Angler on Logan Martin. In the two-day Coosa Classic Lanny Watkins was the only angler able to fill his stringer on a tough Day 1 on Lake Jordan and finished the weekend with 6 fish totaling 104.25".



A beautiful redeye bass from the Neely Henry Open hooked and photographed by Paul Freeman

In the [Big Wills Outfitters](#) Angler of the Year competition, **Josh Tidwell completed the year with a total of 236.25"** to repeat his title from last year. Josh, being a great competitor, sponsor, and supporter of Coosa Riverkeeper, won a new Jackson Kayak Coosa fishing kayak and turned around on the spot to auction off his used kayak for \$600 which was donated directly to Coosa Riverkeeper!

A strong showing at the Coosa Classic secured Lanny Watkins 1st runner up in the Angler of the Year competition, pushing past Corey Galloway who claimed 2nd runner up. Young Jack managed 4th overall for the year and was crowned the Best Young Angler of the Year.

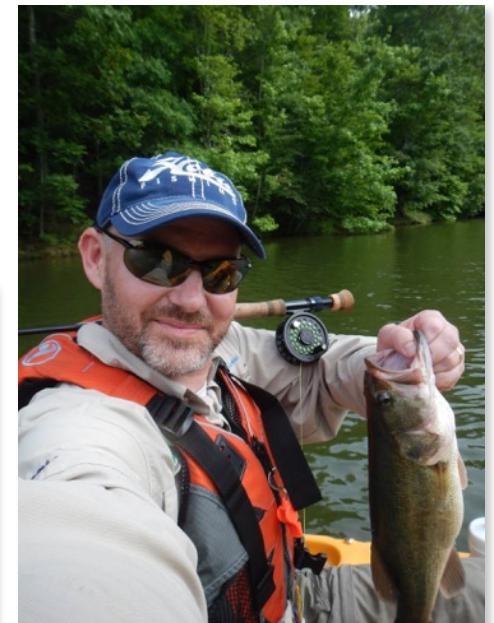
Next year competitors are in for a treat! For the first time ever we'll be adding Lake Mitchell to the trail - and just in time to see the Cahaba lilies in bloom on Hatchet Creek while catching spotted bass! The 2015 trail will also feature a rule change that should make it easier for folks to attend: if you can't make it to the check-in and Captain's Meeting Friday night, you'll be able to skip it with a \$10 donation to Coosa Riverkeeper.

2015 Trail:

Logan Martin Open: March 28th
Neely Henry Open: May 2nd
Lake Mitchell Open: June 6th
Lay Lake Open: September 12th
Coosa Classic: October 10th



Say Cheese!



Aaron Rubel hoists a nice bass caught on the fly rod!

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



Kathleen Kirkpatrick is founder and principal of Blue Horizon Enterprises, a sustainable business and green building consultancy, as well as Executive Director of the U.S. Green Building Council Alabama Chapter. [Kathleen](#) lives in Wetumpka and is an active volunteer and community organizer for a number of Alabama arts and environmental non-profits.



Beth Maynor Young is an accomplished conservation photographer known for capturing the natural beauty and remnant wild places of the contemporary South. She sells rural land with [Cyprus Partners](#), blending her passion for exploring land and desire to see a good outcome for parcels for sale as well as her photography skills. Beth was awarded the Alabama Rivers Alliance's lifetime achievement River Hero award in 2011.

Become a member of COOSA RIVERKEEPER today!

using this form or online at coosariver.org

Select a level of membership that matches your commitment:
Your membership is 100% tax-deductible

- ☐ **\$10-Coldwater Darter:** a vulnerable fish that is found only in the Coosa.
- ☐ **\$25-Blue Shiner:** a threatened fish found on the Little River, Choccolocco and Weogufka Creeks of the Coosa.
- ☐ **\$50-Pygmy Sculpin:** a threatened fish found only in Coldwater Spring.
- ☐ **\$100: Lacy Elimia:** a threatened snail found only in the Cheaha, Emauhee and Wewoka Creeks of the Coosa.
- ☐ **\$250: Southern Clubshell:** an endangered mussel found in the Coosa, Cahaba and Tallapoosa Rivers.
- ☐ **\$500: Green Pitcher Plant:** a critically endangered, carnivorous plant found mostly in Alabama near the Coosa.
- ☐ **\$1,000: Coosa River Spotted Bass:** hands down the meanest fighting bass in the nation.
- ☐ **Other Amount:** \$_____
- ☐ **I Can Contribute Goods or Services:** _____
- ☐ **I'd Like to Volunteer**

Tell Us About Yourself:

Your name(s): _____

Your e-mail: _____

Your address: _____

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Please make checks payable to "Coosa Riverkeeper" and mail to:

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