

REEL COOL NEWS

It's peak fishing season and that means its time for our newest shirt! This year, it's the fourth in our series of game fish shirts from artist and Coosa Riverkeeper Board member Richie Gudzan of [Paddle Out](#). This year we've got all three members of the Coosa's black bass family on one shirt! **Hook one today at CoosaRiver.org/BlackBass** and we'll send it right on over!



In other fishy news, we'll again be the beneficiary of the [Fly Fishing Film Tour](#) hosted by [Deep South Outfitters](#) at [Avondale Brewery](#) on April 19. [Catch a ticket on the web](#) and come on down!

Our sixth annual [Coosa Canoe & Kayak Fishing Tournament](#) is getting ready to start. The Lay Lake Open will be on March 11, followed by the Logan Martin Open presented by [Honda Manufacturing of Alabama](#) on April 8, and the Neely Henry Open presented by [Fish Neely Henry](#) on May 6. This year will be the first ever Alabama kayak fishing state championship on the Coosa River in Wetumpka in October. We'll send 10 of the best fishermen from our trail! **Will you be one?**

Get Registered for the 2017 Trail at CoosaKayakFishing.com!

COOSA RIVER FISH GUIDE

Surprisingly few people know that there are fish consumption advisories on the Coosa River. There are, in fact, **34** such advisories on the Coosa in Alabama as a result of **PCB and mercury contamination**. Though it is not illegal to eat fish from the areas with advisories, it is strongly discouraged. To see the full advisory list from the Alabama Department of Public Health, visit CoosaRiver.org/FishGuide/Advisories.

Background: The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is responsible for catching the fish that are tested, and the Alabama Department of Public Health calculates advisories based on those results. The fish consumption advisories aren't perfect: for example, they do not consider the seasonal migration of fish up and down individual lakes.

From 2014-2015, Coosa Riverkeeper surveyed over **125** fishermen on the Coosa River at H. Neely Henry Dam, Lay Dam, and Logan Martin Dam. We asked about their **fishing habits and their knowledge of the advisories** on the Coosa River to determine how to **best communicate to the public the health effect of the advisories** and to understand the needs of real fishermen on our river.

Survey Summary:

- 91% of respondents are male, 50% are African American
- 39% of respondents fish 1-4 times per week
- 36% have been fishing for their entire life
- 66% eat the fish they catch
- 34% eat fish from the Coosa one or more times per week
- **Only 6% of respondents know what the advisories say**
- 47% have heard of PCBs, 37% have heard of methylmercury
- **91% of respondents would heed advisories if they knew about them**

In 2016, after analyzing our data, **we developed multiple resources that won't leave you fishing for answers** about fish consumption advisories on your local waters... *in fact we hope you're hooked!*

CALL (844) 219- RISK.

We've created Alabama's first statewide fish consumption advisory hotline so you can easily hear advisories in your area without having to fish for answers.

This toll-free hotline includes fish consumption advisories for **9 major river systems in Alabama**. We hope you find this hotline useful—previously the fish consumption advisories were only found online.

CAST.

We've created [two resources](#) to make your day on the water easier. The first is an interactive map of the Coosa River- with helpful info like where to find marinas, boat launches, parks, and more! It also visually shows where advisories are located

You can also look through our [Coosa River Game Fish Guide](#) to learn about the different kinds of fish in the Coosa River.

COOK.

Did you know the way you **filet & cook your fish can reduce your exposure** to harmful contaminants?

We've created [two short videos](#) on ways to reduce your exposure to harmful contaminants in fish: **how to filet a fish** (to remove fatty tissue where PCBs build up)! Be sure to check out our short **recipe video for "Beer Battered Bass"**! This recipe was developed so that the fish can be cooked in a way that lowers your exposure to contamination while still giving you that tasty crunch you love in your fried fish!



Above: Justin, our Executive Director, surveying a fisherman

To learn more about this program & check out our resources, please visit CoosaRiver.org/FishGuide!

New *E. coli* Standards = Cleaner Water



Changes to Alabama's *E. coli* regulations will mean stricter requirements on some sewage treatment plants in the summer; **which will ultimately mean cleaner streams for fishing, swimming and paddling.**

Here's a great example: Anniston's sewage plant on Choccolocco Creek, which, on average, discharges around 10.5 million gallons of treated wastewater each day. Instead of being allowed to discharge 487 col/100mL of *E. coli* from June through September, they will be required to keep *E. coli* concentrations down to 298 col/100mL for a longer time period of May through October (that's a 38% decrease that applies for two more months than before). As more sewer plant permits come up for renewal in the next five years, they will also see tighter limits put in place.

The lowering of summer *E. coli* limits on certain streams from 487 col/100mL to 298 col/100mL is the result of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management correcting an error. The number should have been 298 col/100mL all along!

The lengthening of the summer recreational season from June through September to May through October, however, is the result of some well-warranted public pressure. May and October are both very popular

months for recreating. May is when schools let out for summer and the water temperature is just warm enough. Our neighboring states, too, had longer recreation seasons. Ultimately, the Environmental Management Commission agreed with us and made this change.

These changes will not effect how we issue alerts for our Swim Guide program for 2017. We will continue to issue moderately high *E. coli* alerts at 235 col/100mL and high *E. coli* alerts at 576 col/100mL, numbers which are based off other water quality standards and studies. At 235 col/100mL, around 8 in 1,000 swimmers may contract an illness of some kind, according to EPA studies.

These changes will have some effect our Riverkeeper Program. We are keeping a close eye on permits being renewed to make sure the appropriate modifications are made to those permit limits to comply with the new standards. We're also comparing our sampling results on creeks and at sewer plants to these new standards to see if areas that previously seemed to be okay might warrant another look. **All in a day's work for our favorite river!**

*Above: Intern Kayla Minton collects an *E. coli* sample from the popular Coldwater Creek Memorial Park in Oxford*

New Additions to Our Board & Advisory Council



current and future generations.

Welcome Hays Latimer to our Board of Directors! Hays is a Certified Financial Planner at Pearson and Associates, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc., where he helps families and organizations become better stewards of their financial resources. He & his wife Meredith live in Cahaba Heights with their daughter. Hays is an avid river and creek fisherman, and regularly participates in the [Coosa Canoe & Kayak Fishing Tournament](#) events. He is passionate about protecting the Coosa River for



freelancing in 2005 and soon founded Hunter Nichols Productions, a company that takes on all types of video and photography projects, but specializes in conservation photography and filmmaking. When he's not editing videos or photos you can find him canoeing down a river or hiking up a trail. You can learn more about Hunter's work at www.hnproductions.com.

Welcome Hunter Nichols to our Advisory Council! Hunter has always had a passion for the outdoors and nature photography. This led him to study photography and art at the University of Montevallo and that quickly progressed into a love of filmmaking so he transferred to Auburn University and received a B.A. there in Radio, TV, and Film. During his college years he received mentoring from conservation photographer Beth Maynor Young. Hunter started

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- ☐ \$50: One Swim Guide Site for One Week
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- ☐ \$1,000: One Swim Guide Site for the Year
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- ☐ \$5,000: Three Internships for Swim Guide
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Your name(s): _____

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

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