

APALACHICOLA RIVERKEEPER®

"From the tupelo trees and their sweet honey, to the estuary's salinity threats, to the value of the hidden creeks and sloughs, to the stories held in the ancient bluff--the Apalachicola River needs us to be conscientious caretakers."

Cameron Lewis Barton, science teacher, member and volunteer

December 15, 2020

Dear Friends,

Your commitment to protecting the Apalachicola River and Bay continues to inspire us. As you well know, it's been an extremely challenging year across our region and nation as we cope with a pandemic and its distressing effects. Simultaneously, threats to environmental protections at the state and federal levels have been unprecedented. Despite these wearisome times, our important work continues because of your unwavering support. Thank you!

In fact, every day we see signs of inspiration and positive action around us. We witness it when volunteers eagerly come together to pick up debris from a river park or contact us to enlist as water quality samplers. When we're out on river patrol, residents readily stop us to share fishing reports and other notable conditions that inform us. We are inspired when we call on you for help with a project or task and your answer is a resounding "yes." ***Your steadfast support makes a genuine difference, and we hope you will renew your commitment to the work of Apalachicola Riverkeeper in 2021.***

The upcoming year is a new beginning--let's keep building on our two decades of steadfast work to protect Florida's Apalachicola River and Bay. Here are some 2020 projects we accomplished together.



Furthered our Water Quality Monitoring Program and Microplastics sampling thanks to dedicated volunteers.

Removed several tons of trash and debris from the shores and water of the Apalachicola River and Bay during the annual International Coastal Clean-Up and quarterly public boat ramps and park clean ups.



Embarked on a major multi-year Slough Restoration Project with funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Clearing these sloughs of sediment and debris will restore freshwater flow to the floodplain and bay during times of low river flows.



Boosted our River Patrol efforts and visual survey monitoring.

Strengthened advocacy forces with 13 other Florida Waterkeepers by working collaboratively to improve the state's water quality policies. We are active in the legislature with partner organizations, seeking to protect Florida's water and land from pollution.

Continued our legal challenge to the Army Corps of Engineers' Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The flawed EIS guides the Corps' updated Water Control Manual which is used to manage the freshwater flow from upstream reservoirs.



Led our 13th Annual RiverTrek public outreach and fundraising campaign. This dedicated group of kayaking volunteers spent months working in their respective communities raising both funds and awareness for the protection of the Apalachicola River. Science teacher Cameron Barton maximized RiverTrek outreach efforts by engaging her 6th grade science students in fun, hands-on learning activities. Cameron, who grew up exploring Dog Island with her family, explains "My appreciation for the coast, the barrier islands, and the mighty river that feeds this beautiful estuary started early in my youth. This special place provided a remote and unexplored, wild



environment." Let's all continue sharing our care of the Apalachicola River with our youth!

Worked with regional stakeholders and conservation allies to bring continued attention to the potential and lasting impacts of oil and gas drilling on rivers, streams and groundwater of the Apalachicola River watershed.

Led eco-educational outings throughout the Apalachicola River Basin with emphasis on ecology and regional history. Volunteers are vital to trip leadership.



Conducted numerous educational motorboat trips for community leaders, elected officials, and others to advance understanding of the connectivity of the Apalachicola River and Bay system.

Thanks to you, Apalachicola Riverkeeper remains actively committed to its mission. Please consider a year-end contribution to support our continued work. Gift memberships are also a thoughtful way to recognize a loved one. Your timely, tax-deductible gift will further our efforts to protect the Apalachicola River Basin. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 8, Apalachicola, FL 32329 or contribute online at www.apalachicolariverkeeper.org.

Again, thank you for your support. On behalf of the staff and board of directors, we wish you and yours a restorative, peace-filled holiday season.

For the River and Bay,

Georgia Ackerman
Riverkeeper and Executive Director

P.S. I hope you'll check out the link on our website from the recent Annual Meeting. It includes some terrific music recorded at Scipio Creek. Program updates can also be found there.

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