

## River Talk

By: Christine Ellis

Almost everyone recognizes the value of a clean and ample supply of water. In our area, this is especially important since our communities rely in large part on the Waccamaw River and Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway for our drinking water. But we know that is not the only value of the waterways in our communities.

There is value in the recreational opportunities our waterways afford, swimming, boating, and fishing, for example. There is value in the biological diversity that this area

supports. In fact, we live in a hot spot for biodiversity, where the number and type of plant and animal species is high and where species can be found that are rare or non-existent elsewhere. Some of these values are fairly easy to quantify. They are tangible and we can apply dollar values to quantify their economic benefit. Some are not. These are the intangible values, the values of scenic and aesthetic beauty, the value of high biodiversity and a complex and healthy ecosystem. These values are not easy to calculate but all contribute to our quality of life and to our local economy. Through our bountiful natural resources, we enjoy a high quality of life and opportunities for a strong local economy, recognizing their value and promoting their protection for current and future generations.



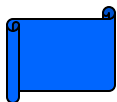
Christine helping unload another boat load of trash at May cleanup!

**EARLY BIRD  
TICKETS  
AVAILABLE  
FOR OUR  
ANNUAL  
FUNDRAISER  
"RIVER ROAST @  
RIPLEYS"  
NOVEMBER 8  
5:30 P.M.**

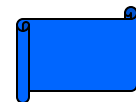
See insert for details

*For more information  
[www.WinyahRivers.org](http://www.WinyahRivers.org)*

## Issues



*Our local waterways are impaired...mercury in our fish, bacteria in our waters, trash everywhere...and every time it rains, the potential exists for more pollution entering our rivers, lakes and beaches. Where are these pollutants coming from and what does it mean to us?*



### Mercury:

The major source is from coal-fired power plants, both near and far. This year the courts ruled that the US Environmental Protection Agency must regulate the emissions of hazardous air pollutants, including mercury, from power plants. We are working with other groups to ensure that the highest standards of protection from mercury emissions are implemented for all new and expanded power plants in the Carolinas. We have fish advisories that restrict the type and amount of local fish that we can eat. Earlier this year, notices were posted at all public landings informing citizens of the type of fish affected and the amounts acceptable to eat, in some cases, none. Does this go far enough? *No, but it's a start.*

### Bacteria:

Bacteria finds its way into our rivers from both human and non-human sources, including agricultural runoff, stormwater runoff, faulty septic tanks, leaking sewers, etc. Swimming advisories are posted along the oceanfront, although not in the river, to warn of the dangers of contact causing illness. In SC, public notification of sewage spills are not required; however, efforts are underway to pass the Sewage Overflow Community Right-to-Know Act, that, if enacted, will require utilities to report sewage spills to the public within 24 hours. While this will help, other efforts are needed to protect the public and eliminate other sources of bacteria inputs to our waterways.

*That's only the beginning...for more information on the issues that may affect you and your communities, go to [www.winyahrivers.org](http://www.winyahrivers.org) and click on Waccamaw Riverkeeper.*

**Trash:** Some of it is a direct result of intentional littering, people too lazy to find a trash can, picnickers and fishermen who fail to clean up after themselves, smokers who toss their cigarette ends, etc. Some occurs from unintentional littering such as from overflowing trashcans and unsecured trash in vehicles. Much of this trash finds its way into our waterways where it not only spoils their beauty but also introduces pollutants into our waters. Take a moment to reflect on your behavior. Are you a litterbug? Educate family and friends about non-littering. Participate in events to help clean up your community.

September 20th is a good time to start...volunteers will be cleaning up the Waccamaw River in Conway that morning, beginning at 9 am.

## Invasive Species – A Major Threat to the Waccamaw River Watershed

BY Randy G. Westbrooks and Rebecca M. Westbrooks.  
Southeastern Community College, Whiteville, North Carolina.

As watersheds go, the Waccamaw River Watershed is certainly special. It is the native home of endemic species such as the Venus flytrap and the Waccamaw Silverside minnow. But for the most part, the Waccamaw is a typical black-water river that winds down through the Coastal Plain on its journey to the sea. A canoe trip down the Waccamaw is a nerve tonic that is surely unsurpassed. However, the river is also notable for something else – a *minimum of invasive species*. An early spring day-trip down the river will reveal occasional infestations of

**Chinese Wisteria** high in the trees along the river. A bit later in the season, you will see rafts of **Alligatorweed** behind logs and stumps. As you drift by sand bars, look for **Chinese Privet**, an introduced shrub with small leaves and purple berries. Privet, a favorite yard plant 100 years ago, is now being 'planted' along woods margins throughout Eastern America by birds. It's too bad the folks that planted privet long ago are not here to see their handiwork.

Fortunately, the Waccamaw has not been invaded by some of the species that are such a problem elsewhere. **Hydrilla**, which was introduced from Sri Lanka in the late 1940s as a pond plant, is a good example. Hydrilla is a serious problem in Lake Marion, South Carolina.

So far, the Waccamaw is also free from **Giant Salvinia**, a small free floating fern from Brazil that forms thick mats that totally cover quiet backwaters. A small patch of Giant Salvinia is being eradicated from the River Bend Swamp near Burgaw, N.C. Hydrilla and Giant Salvinia could easily be introduced to the Waccamaw River on boats and trailers. Invasive Species pose a serious threat to the native plants and animals of the Waccamaw River Watershed. It's up to people to protect the river from this increasing threat. **Forewarned is forearmed!**



Becky is on the Board of Directors of Winyah Rivers Foundation and an Instructor at Southeastern Community College in Whiteville, N.C. Randy is an Invasive Species Prevention Specialist with the United States Geological Survey, also in Whiteville, NC.



### FROM THE RIVER

BY Hal Vivian

**You are the Eyes and Ears** for our Riverkeeper. Recently there was a problem with a "floating deck" anchored at Richmond Island across from Wacca Wache Marina. A resident of Wachesaw Plantation reported to a volunteer water monitor that a party and shooting of fireworks had taken place, posing a risk of fire to the island. A photograph and e-mail was sent to our Riverkeeper who promptly contacted the marina and local Government agencies to obtain information. Following these inquiries, the floating deck was moved. The fact that we all spend time on or at the river allows us to give eyes and ears to the cause. In most cases a little reminder to the people responsible is all that is needed and they will do the right thing. We need for them to know that we are **watching**.

Note from Christine: It is sad to report that our rivers serve as a dump for some who abandon docks, boats and other large objects there. Maintenance and proper disposal is the owner's responsibility.



"Bluegrass Festival Along The Waccamaw"  
Category People 2nd Place  
by Bill Gobbel

Bill Gobbel second place winning photo

### Winyah Rivers Foundation First Photo Contest Great Success!

Bill Gobbel of Conway took Best of Show, First and Second Place in the categories of People and Landscape/Scenic and Second Place in Wildlife. Alan Adams took First Place in Wildlife. Jessica Durant took Third Place in People. Mary Baker took Third Place in Landscape/Scenic.

#### Congratulations to all!

To view all the winning photos, go to [www.WinyahRivers.org](http://www.WinyahRivers.org).

We would like to thank all who entered our first photo contest. It was a pure pleasure to see the beauty that was captured in your photos and to see the excitement in your faces as you told us how you just happened to be in the right place at the right time!

A very special thank you goes out to our sponsors: The Horry Independent, a long-time supporter of Winyah Rivers Foundation that provided publicity and published the winning photos, and 803 Labs of Myrtle Beach, a new sponsor for 2008 that created the beautiful enlargements of the winning photos (these will be auctioned off at our November 8th fundraiser, River Roast @ Ripley's). Thanks also to Fatz Café of Conway for the wonderful array of goodies they provided for the awards ceremonies and to Conway Library for allowing us to use its facility.

We are planning a even bigger and better contest for 2009...*stay tuned*.

# BACKPACKING THROUGH LIFE

*Essays on the Earth, by David Scott B.S. Wildlife Biology, NCSU*

Backpacking is both a science and an art. It's a science in that there is a very large body of facts regarding the subject that has to be sifted through and digested before a trip can be successful. It's an art in that a person's style and preference influences the decisions to be made.

The equipment chosen is of extreme importance: boots that are comfortable and durable; a well-engineered pack that carries its load and conforms to your back; sleeping bag, tent, utensils, tools, and food that fulfill their intended purposes.

The overriding consideration in packing a backpack is weight. If you carry too much gear, the pack becomes a burden that limits your trip.



Instead of enabling you to live independently while enjoying your natural setting, it becomes a millstone and a negative distraction. Instead of giving you the freedom of movement to go where you want, too much weight makes you focus solely on getting to your destination.

Backpacking is symbolic of life itself. Most of us, with the best intentions, carry around a pack that is jammed with extraneous baggage. As we have been brainwashed to believe, we have surrounded ourselves with objects and obligations that do nothing but make our pack heavy and hard to lift. We have all purchased things that we didn't really need. We have taken on debt in order to finance cars and houses that we could have done without. We have bought things simply to bolster our egos and to impress our friends. We have accepted our society's tyranny of luxury. We have been all too willing to become victimized by advertising and the status game. The price we are paying is a pack that many of us can hardly lift, much less carry with a smile on our face.

Successful backpackers carry only what they need and a few candy bars to look forward to at the end of a long hike. Their light pack frees them to stop and visit with their fellow hikers, to stoop to enjoy a wildflower, and to pause and drink in the scenery. Instead of being an enemy of the hiker, an artfully packed backpack actually becomes his friend, allowing its owner to see and experience the world that otherwise would have been missed.

Are we hiking through life with a backpack full of bricks—items that serve no useful purpose except to weigh us down and make us hurry to the end of the trail? Or have we, as a seasoned backpacker, chosen only those things that make our trip possible, pleasurable, and memorable? A light pack as a life lived lightly, gives voyagers both a bounce in their step and enthusiasm for the trail ahead.

*David has a BS in Wildlife Biology. He is a retired business owner and a lifelong environmentalist, sailor, paddler, and camper. He is interested in spiritualism as it relates to the religion / environment interface. David is cofounder, with wife Donna, of the Lumber River Basin Committee, a local environmental group that succeeded in getting the Lumber River designated National Wild and Scenic and later established a NC State Park. The group is a past recipient of the NC Wildlife Federation and Mid-Atlantic Country Magazine's Conservation Group of the Year awards. David currently serves on the Board of Directors for Winyah Rivers Foundation.*

*What would the world be, once bereft  
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,  
O let them be left, wildness and wet;  
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.  
'Inversnaid'  
Gerard Manley Hopkins*

**"If the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go though the day with the satisfaction of knowing that that is probable the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long"** Mark Twain



**WACCAMAW**  
Community Foundation

*Legacies for Changing Lives*

**THANK YOU TO  
OUR BUSINESS  
MEMBERS!**

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**WANTED!**

Volunteer Coordinator  
(part-time),  
Georgetown County.

**"RIVER ROAST @  
RIPLEYS "**

**November 8th  
Menu**

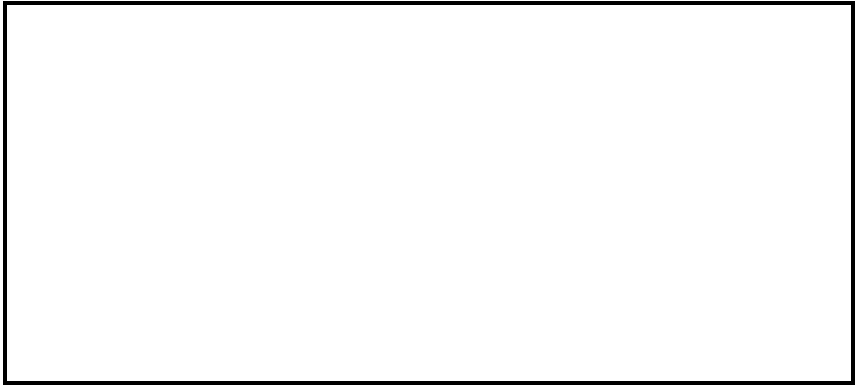
Hors d'oeuvres  
Oysters  
Shrimp Jambalaya  
Roast Beef  
Turkey  
Green Beans  
And more!  
NO FROGS  
(See below)

Winyah Rivers Foundation  
 Center for Marine and Wetland Studies  
 Coastal Carolina University  
 1270 Atlantic Avenue  
 Conway, SC 29526

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TO



**Upcoming Events**

SEPTEMBER 15—OCTOBER 20  
 RIVER WATCH TRAINING

September 20  
 RIVER SWEEP—CONWAY

SEPTEMBER 24  
 VOLUNTEER MONITORING  
 CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 17  
 RECYCLE ART SHOW

NOVEMBER 8  
 RIVER ROAST @ RIPLEY'S

*Join us!*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian through Champion categories will earn rewards.

- Champion \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_
- Defender \$ 500 \_\_\_\_\_
- Advocate \$ 250 \_\_\_\_\_
- Guardian \$ 100 \_\_\_\_\_
- Protector \$ 50 \_\_\_\_\_
- Introductory (Year 1) \$ 35 \_\_\_\_\_
- Student (full time) \$ 10 \_\_\_\_\_

**Business Categories**

- Business Champion \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Framed certificate of membership, recognition in all newsletters  
 and on website with your logo, 1/4 page ad in one newsletter)
- Business Defender \$500 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Certificate, recognition with your logo in each newsletter and on website)
- Business Advocate \$250 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Certificate, recognition in each newsletter)
- Business Guardian \$100 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Certificate, recognition in one newsletter)

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Winyah Rivers Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

*Winyah Rivers Foundation*

(843)349-4007  
 WRK@coastal.edu  
 www.WinyahRivers.org

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*Waccamaw Riverkeeper®*

Christine Ellis

*Assistant to Waccamaw Riverkeeper®*

And Editor of RIVERSPEAK  
 Crystal Caschera

