



# the river's voice

The Official Publication of The Friends of the Locust Fork River December 2018

## Coming up soon!

Check FLFR.org for more details and to register for events: FLFR.org.

### Sat, January 12

2nd Saturday Cleanups  
Swann Bridge - 9:00 am  
Mardis Mill - 10:00 am  
Taylor Ford - 10:30 am

### Mon, January 21

Helping Unite Blount  
County - MLK Day  
For details of FLFR 's  
project, check FLFR.org.

### Wed. Jan. 23, noon

"Alabama Rivers: A  
Celebration & Challenge"  
with author Bill Deutsch.  
Chamber of Commerce  
lunch meeting. Register at  
FLFR.org.

### Sat, February 9

2nd Saturday Cleanups  
Swann Bridge - 9:00 am  
Mardis Mill - 10:00 am  
Taylor Ford - 10:30 am

### Sat, February 16

Hike in Palisades Park.  
New: Fire Tower is open.  
Details and registration at  
FLFR.org.

### Sat, March 9

2nd Saturday Cleanups  
Swann Bridge - 9:00 am  
Mardis Mill - 10:00 am  
Taylor Ford - 10:30 am

## Brian Dean, FLFR Volunteer

Interviewed by Nancy Jackson

What he loves most is to explore the river, its beauty, and its surroundings, often in his imagination "reconstructing what this topography was like hundreds and even thousands of years ago....I like pondering the ancientness of this river."

Climbing to a second terrace above the river where there's a rock shelter, he can picture in his mind "probably a settlement here." Where the river makes a big bend in one of its many "entrenched meanders" (in geology-speak) Brian imagines settlements too because the river ran on all three sides for drinking, washing, fishing and hunting - so much for survival.

### AN OLD FRIEND

He's been coming up on weekends from native Birmingham for 20 years to explore this river and its tributaries. He also loves the Choctahatchee and Pea Rivers in southeast Alabama because he spent time with family there as a kid. The formative years of a River Rat!

For 2 years now Brian has lived near the Locust Fork and fishes about once a week, catching and releasing "almost exclusively bass."

He may watch the sunset from the Grand Staircase while his laundry is churning in Blountsville.

He has canoed and kayaked much of the river and its tributaries. Not in high, turbid water - "that's not interesting to me. I like it clear where I can fish." He and daughter Ariel,

age 13, love to fish together, too. "She loves it out here!" As a proud dad, he is glad for this area and the river to be positive influences for Ariel.

While he is an avid paddler, he's not race-course calibre, by his estimation. He does enjoy judging the races, which he's done for years.

### NEW VOLUNTEER ROLES

He says he never volunteered much in his life but volunteering for FLFR is a "great introduction to stewardship. It's a wonderful thing!" He truly enjoys the Saturday morning Swann Bridge clean ups. "You get to explore the river, enjoy all that beauty, and clean up litter, too. It's really like just walking the river."

*Continued on page 2*



## News & Notes

### Art and Photo Contest Winners

A traveling exhibit of the winning entries will be displayed in the following locations:

**Dec. 2 - Jan. 15**  
Blountsville Library

**Jan. 16 - Feb. 15**  
Locust Fork High School

### "Out and About" By Sam Howell

FLFR's co-founder emeritus is now contributing a monthly column to the Blount Countian. Don't miss Sam's insights and anecdotes about the Locust Fork River and its watershed.

### Alabama Cup Races

Coming up in the new year are the local white-water racing events, as follows:

**March 2 & 3**  
Mulberry Fork Canoe & Kayak Races

**April 6 & 7**  
Locust Fork Races  
[alabamacupraces.com](http://alabamacupraces.com)

## Brian Dean, FLFR Volunteer

*Continued from page 1*

"I think we're having an impact" on the litter, he says. While each Swann Bridge clean up nets about five large garbage bags, the trash seems to be a little more gathered in one place. (He believes the beer cans and bottles stay at the river because the driver doesn't want those in the car if stopped by police.)

His wish is that more people would:

### "PACK OUT WHAT YOU BRING IN."

His suggestion: always take a bag for trash when you go to the river - pack out what you packed in - and maybe somebody else's. For those beer empties: bag 'em and place near the road for clean up.

### GOOD IDEAS

Brian has some juicy, new ideas. An idea for a new float route. Maybe some new trails to walk along the river. He will definitely want to help next year with the Dream Catchers day for a school kids' summer program. (This year's event was a smash hit presented in partnership with River Beach Outfitters. Kids got to paddle kayaks, scoop for creepies and splash a lot! Brian loved watching those kids taste the river's magic - some for their first time.)

### READY AND WILLING

This new FLFR volunteer is ready to help almost whenever and however. He brings deep reverence for and experience with this river, and rich imagination too. Welcome, Brian. You are a huge asset to our team.



## FLFR wins Second Place in Parade

Again this year, FLFR's entry in the Blount County Christmas Parade was a winner! Last year, we garnered Third Place. This year, FLFR not only won Second Place, but also a check for \$250.00! One of the volunteers summed it up, saying, "We had sooo much fun, we were sooo cold and we woooo!" Thanks to all who helped: Rick, Pat, Lakshmi, Jan, Desiree, Sara, Jared, Lilith, Jasper, Hunter and August.



## Art and Photo Contest Winners - 2018

*Theme: Celebrating Life In and Around the Locust Fork River*

This year, FLFR held its first Art and Photo Contest. Adults, teens and kids were encouraged to submit artwork or photographs on the theme.

The 177 entries were judged on quality, originality, composition, technique and the story told.

Twelve winners received cash prizes.

**Adult Art** winners:

Joan Babcock, 1st  
Gary Zimmerman, 2nd  
Sebum Johnson, 3rd

**Adult Photo** winners:

Lindsey Mullen, 1st  
Chris Verdi, 2nd  
Sebum Johnson, 3rd

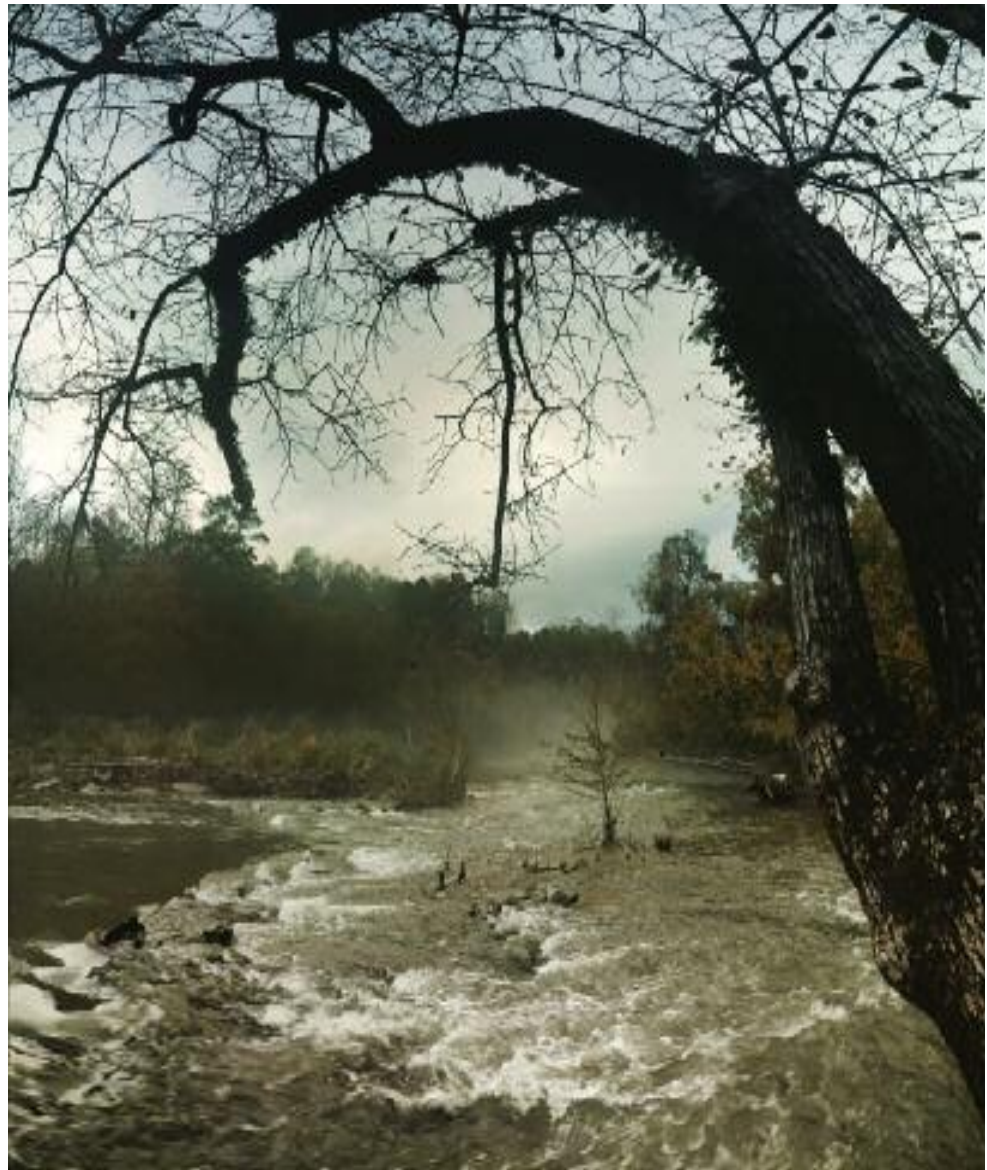
**Teen Photo** winners:

Albany Bullard, 1st  
Scott Nelson, 2nd  
Albany Bullard, 3rd

**Child Art** winners:

Kylie Lynn Berry, 1st  
Cole Gamble, 2nd  
Riley Gamble, 3rd

Thank you to all the participants!



*Lindsey Mullen, Blountsville - 1st place, Adult Photo*

This contest was made possible by generous contributions from: Regions Bank, Blount County Economic Development Council, King, Green & Dobson, LLC, Hometown Bank, Zaxby's, Locust Fork Pharmacy, Blount County Memorial Museum, and many anonymous donors.



*Art and Photo Contest winners - Awards Ceremony on September 12, 2018*

## *FLFR: What we do . . .*

*By Nancy Jackson*

FLFR has been protecting our river since 1991 with projects like:

- \* keeping the river **free-flowing**
- \* raising awareness of the need for **water management**
- \* educating Blount County children (our future)
- \* presenting at schools on environmental and river issues
- \* encouraging all to enjoy the river through monthly hikes and float trips
- \* teaching water safety in canoes & kayaks
- \* conducting monthly scientific water monitoring at several sites with **Alabama Water Watch, Auburn University, and swimguide.org**
- \* picking up trash along the river
- \* recycling
- \* sponsoring annual movies & talks
- \* playing an integral role in the **Alabama Cup Canoe & Kayak Races** for 20 years.

Our star project is ***Kids' Day on the River*** on the 3rd Saturday in June. About 120 elementary-age children with their parents, siblings and grandparents rotate through 10-12 stations at the river's edge. Kids and families spend the day having fun, learning and doing with select environmental educators. It's all free, including lunch. The event began in 2000, and received the **Best Educational Program award** from the Environmental Education Association of Alabama in 2008. Over the years, *Kids' Day on the River* has reached 3,600 people.

We accomplish a lot on a limited budget - thanks to our volunteers who put in over 2,000 hours per year, plus overwhelming support from the local community.

The Blount County/Oneonta Chamber of Commerce named us **Community Organization of the Year** in 2015.

For more information go to [www.flfr.org](http://www.flfr.org) and follow us on **Facebook**.



## FLFR: Looking ahead . . .

By Nancy Jackson

New projects on our drawing board include:

- \* a county-wide **Art and Photo Contest** focusing on celebrating life in and around the Locust Fork River for the second year in 2019.
- \* The **River Access Project**, to create and improve the public's access to the Locust Fork River, principally in Blount County. The Locust Fork River is already a regional destination, especially for boaters. The project aims to expand and improve the public's access to the river, and to increase the environmental educational experience with interpretive signage, nature trails & conservation messaging.
- \* The **Scenic River Overlook** project on US 231/AL 79 in collaboration with county government, to install seating, lighting and signage on a former bridge as a tourist destination, and to improve boater access at that site.

FLFR continues to work toward improving the quality of life of all Blount Countians through:

- \* conservation of our beautiful surroundings,
- \* collaboration with other community groups on various projects,
- \* building a new generation of stewards and
- \* promoting environmental tourism as an economic boost.

### SOME STATISTICS

Number of Board members:	- 7 -
Number of FLFR Advisors:	- 7 -
Number of regular volunteers:	- 21 -
Kids' Day on the River volunteers:	- 61 -
Dreamcatchers volunteers:	- 14 -
Hours volunteered in 2018:	- 2,663 -

### Water testing sites:

CGC, Blackburn Fork, Blalock Bridge, Mardis Mill, Hamilton Mountain Bridge, Taylor Ford, Bridge at CR 26 and Crooked Shoals.



Chris Verdi, Birmingham - 2nd place, Adult Photo

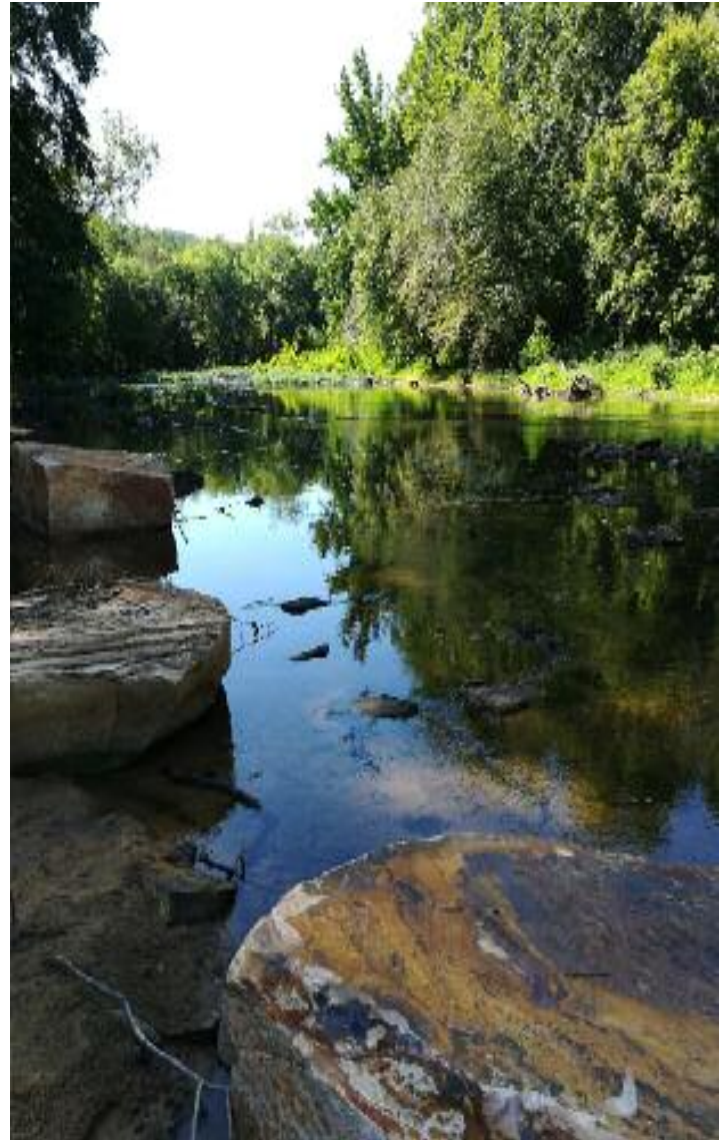
## *Art and Photo Contest 2019*

*FLFR looks forward to holding this contest again in 2019.*

*It's not too early for you to start making your entries now, to better reflect the Locust Fork River as seasons change throughout the year.*



*Steve Cook - Honorable Mention*



*Susan Finley - 3rd place, Adult Photo*

### *Art & Photo Contest: New for 2019*

Businesses are invited to be a part of the contest by donating \$200 for a "Business Choice Award." Up to 12 businesses may participate. In return for a donation to the contest, a business will receive promotion in FLFR media, their winning photo will be labeled with the business's name and the photo with label will be part of the traveling exhibit at various locations in Blount County.



## FLFR's Beautification Program growing!

By Donna Matthews

Imagine 120 heavy-duty garbage bags filled with litter, each bag weighing 35 pounds. You've got over two tons of litter. That's how much trash 20+ cleanup volunteers collected this year! They donated an estimated 138 hours, up from some 105 volunteer hours last year.

The Locust Fork River Beautification Program began in May 2017 at Swann Bridge. Cleanup activity soon expanded to Mardis Mill and Taylor Ford. Since good ideas spread faster than gossip, new cleanup groups began popping up along the river near the Highway 160 bridge in Nectar and at the Horton Mill Bridge.



At Swann Bridge, we partner with the statewide Alabama PALS anti-litter program. Even with our substantial help, more volunteers are needed. Anyone can do this and we hope everyone will. Find a spot and commit to keeping it clean. By all means, take before and after pics. Send them to us to post on our Facebook page. Your Sunday school class, civic group or study club can also partner with PALS and have a sign erected to show your dedication. Or you can ease into cleanup by registering at FLFR.org and join with others who relish a task offering the rewards of immediate gratification and civic accomplishment.

Two years ago, FLFR conducted an informal survey to see if people are bothered by roadside and river trash. Most were (88%). So go forth to beautify the Locust Fork's banks.

### A few of the FLFR volunteer openings

~ Take part in **River Clean-ups**. FLFR participates in the PALS "Adopt-a-Stream" program. Second Saturday cleanups are at Swann Bridge, Mardis Mill and Taylor Ford.

~ Lead **Outings**. Do you have a favorite hike, tube float or canoe trail? How about leading next time?

~ Promote FLFR at local events. **Table at a booth** at the June Fling, Blount County Fair and Covered Bridge Festival.

~ Be a **Canoe & Kayak Race** volunteer for set-up, registration, gate-judging, score tallying or cleanup March 2 & 3.

~ Be a **Kids' Day on the River** volunteer with set-up, registration, shepherding groups, serving lunch, assisting at a station or cleaning up, Saturday, June 15.

~ Be a **river educator**, teaching adults and kids about the river, its ecosystem and the watershed at local libraries and schools.

### FLFR Contacts

#### President

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#### Join or Renew

Your donation constitutes a membership. To become a FLFR member or to renew your membership online, go to **FLFR.org**.

Or mail a check to:

**FLFR**  
P.O. Box 638  
Cleveland, AL 35049

*FLFR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*

*All contributions to Friends of the Locust Fork River are tax-deductible and appreciated!*

*Thank you!*

## FLFR Connections

**Facebook:** at *Friends of the Locust Fork River*. Like us, and get updates, see photos, etc.

**QR cube:** link your phone to our website, [FLFR.org](http://FLFR.org).



*From the pages of  
The Locust Fork Yacht Club's Creek Bankin' Recipes*

## **Dutch Oven Chicken 'n' Rice**

8	Chicken thighs (from two 4-legged, free-range chickens)
2 - 3 Tbsp.	Cooking oil
1 Cup	Rice
1 Cup	Carrots, sliced
1/3 Cup, each	Diced onion, green pepper, celery
5 Cups	Chicken stock
	Black pepper and salt

Sprinkle black pepper on chicken thighs. Heat the oil in the bottom of a 10 - 12" dutch oven (with feet) to brown the chicken. When browned, drain on paper towel. Wipe excess oil from dutch oven. Put remaining ingredients in, stir, and set chicken on top.

Put about 8-10 pieces of charcoal under the oven and cover the lid with hot coals in a single layer. Let it cook for about an hour. Add more coals when necessary to maintain a medium heat. Make sure you stir the pot from time to time. Add some water if it starts to dry out before it's cooked. Taste, and adjust pepper and salt. Serve the Chicken 'n' Rice with grilled asparagus and biscuits.

EVERGREEN-ER  
Our newsletter is  
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