



the river's voice

The Official Publication of The Friends of the Locust Fork River

Summer 2022



FLFR's premier outdoor activities are back

Spring on the River

As March days saw the river swelling and Covid receding, canoe and kayak enthusiasts registered for the *Alabama Cup Whitewater Classic*, April 2 & 3, on the Locust Fork River, with FLFR volunteers doing the behind-the-scenes work and looking forward to the evening campfire.

FLFR's first kayak trip of the season, led by Tammy Mason and Brian Dean, brought out 32 boaters on a perfect April Saturday. Another kayak trip is planned for mid-July. (Thereafter, just grab your flotation device for a lazy, low-water floats.)

Restoration Nursery

In late winter, a team of volunteers met twice a week, Monday mornings and Friday afternoons, to start and nurture native plant seedlings in the Restoration Nursery. FLFR not only distributed the young plants at the *Daffodil Festival*, *June Fling* and *Kids' Day on the River*, but also planted them at the Grand Staircase of the King's Bend Scenic Overlook to nurture pollinators, including Monarch butterflies.

Science, education & fun

Activities for children filled FLFR's June calendar. FLFR's gift to Blount County kids, *Kids' Day on the River*, was Saturday, June 4. The event brought together more than 200 participants, including kids with their families, community members, environmental educators, and many volunteers, for a memorable day at the river.

In coordination with the Blount County Education Foundation's summer programs, FLFR invited more than 400 children from three elementary schools—the Cleveland Pathfinders, the Blountsville Explorers and the Susan Moore Dreamcatchers—to experience river activities, such as kayaking and critter catching (each group on a separate day) under beautiful June skies.

Reading about water

FLFR contributed 200 copies of the book *Hello, Puddle* to be given, one per family, to families enrolled in the Oneonta and Blountsville Public Libraries' summer reading program, which was water-themed: *Oceans of Possibilities*.

FLFR Wins \$250

Every April, FLFR takes part in the Blount County PALS Clean Up, helping to keep Blount County *Awesome by Nature!* This year, the **Blount-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce** held a drawing for all the groups participating this year in the PALS Clean Up and the lucky winner of the draw was FLFR! Congratulations!

Join FLFR as a new member or renew your membership.

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

Or mail us a check:

FLFR

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

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

All donations to Friends of the Locust Fork River are tax-deductible and appreciated.



Sam Howell, FLFR Co-Founder and Conservation Chair

Sam Howell, FLFR's Conservation Chair, writes in *The Blount Countian* (05/18/22) that the first phase of The Nature Conservancy's streambank restoration work on the Calvert Prong of the Locust Fork is now complete. The work involved stabilizing streambanks to reduce build-up of sedimentation, improving river health and therefore, the natural habitat of the aquatic creatures that make up the rich biodiversity for which Alabama is known.

Locust Fork River Chapter of ASRT formed

The *Alabama Scenic River Trail* (ASRT) was established in 2008 to enhance community development in areas of recreation and tourism with an emphasis on opportunities throughout Alabama's more than 5,000 miles of rivers and streams, the longest historic water trail in the USA.

ASRT encourages formation of community-based chapters for local paddlers to host paddling events, improve state waterways, and support creek cleanups on the ASRT. Chapter members are the eyes and ears identifying opportunities and problems that arise on the river trail system. Chapters become eligible for funding for community projects to improve river safety.

Locust Fork River Streambank Restoration Update

The Locust Fork watershed and the watersheds of the Paint Rock River and Big Canoe Creek are the three biologically significant North Alabama watersheds that are targeted in *The Streambank Restoration Initiative*. This five-year program is intended to help farmers protect their lands from streambank erosion, thus preventing sedimentation and, at the same time, improving water quality of rivers.



At its April meeting, the FLFR board approved the formation of the *Locust Fork River Chapter of ASRT*.

The Chapter's initial officers are:

President - Stephen Guesman
Vice President - Lori Jepson
Treasurer - Cindy Braden

Alabama Water Watch awards FLFR the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award



From left: Sharon and Steve Cook, FLFR volunteers; Sergio Ruiz Cordova, AWW Data Coordinator; Debra Gordon-Helman, FLFR Water Monitor Coordinator; and Bill Deutsch, AWW Research Fellow, Emeritus

Alabama Water Watch (AWW) is dedicated to the protection and restoration of watersheds through water monitoring and education. AWW provides monitor training and compiles sample and test data that monitors contribute monthly.

At its annual meeting, on June 11, AWW presented FLFR with the *2022 Lifetime Achievement Award*. FLFR was recognized for its outstanding service and accomplishment related to the protection and restoration of watersheds through water monitoring and education. FLFR is one of the 2022 top 10 AWW water monitoring groups in Alabama, having submitted 1,188 water data records.



María Brindle, FLFR President

Blount-Oneonta Chamber of Commerce Charles Carr Volunteer of the Year

We are proud of the well-deserved recognition received by María Brindle for her volunteer work not only with FLFR, but also with the Oneonta and Blountsville public libraries. *The Blount Countian* (06/22/22) reported at length on her acceptance speech emphasizing the rewards of supporting civic groups that safeguard the precious biodiversity and natural beauty around us and promote beautiful natural places in the county to tourists looking for river access, nature trails and more.

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Nature Awareness Murals in Blount County

This mural, featuring a Blue Heron and a glimpse of Swann Covered Bridge is at the corner of Covered Bridge Rd. and Hwy. 79 in Cleveland. FLFR, through its Murals Project, beautifies formerly blank walls and delivers messages of natural beauty and care for the natural environment.

The mural tells a story of our river by alluding to Blount County's past as seen in the covered bridge, its rich wildlife as seen in the Blue Heron, and its bright future where all spread love, not litter.

The Blountsville Fire Station is site of a mural in progress, a scene with a Broad-winged Hawk at beautiful Mardis Mill Falls.