



the river's voice

The Official Publication of The Friends of the Locust Fork River December 2017

Coming up in '18

January - Field trip to Wheeler Wildlife Refuge

February - Whitewater canoe/kayak races

March - Whitewater canoe/kayak races

April - Paddlefest & Easy Canoe Trip

May - Memorial Hike to Cornelius Falls

June - Kids' Day on the River

July - River Tube Float

August - River Tube Float

September - Blount County Fair

October - Covered Bridge Festival & River walk

November - Horton Mill Hike

December - Christmas Parade in Oneonta

Swann Bridge Clean-up - Second Saturday of every month. 9:00 - 12:00 noon. We supply the equipment. You bring the energy and enthusiasm!

300 million . . . what?

By Nancy Jackson

We river rats were very proud of our newest model of t-shirt. On the front: the FLFR logo; on the back was a map of the river and its many tributaries, and its wiggly course. And the caption "**300 Million And Counting...**" Buttercup yellow on deep blue. Beautiful!

It was a few years after the t-shirt's premiere. A gorgeous early spring race day. We were happily selling t-shirts of several designs and all was well.

Then an inquiring mind approached the booth and laid eyes on the deep blue shirt. He asked, "**300 million what?**"

All rats' eyes turned to the shirt back. It didn't say what! Holy mackerel! Didn't everyone know?

Obviously not.

We flipped it. "**What would you guess?**" "**300 million miles?**"

An innocent bystander chimed in. "**300 million gallons?**" (Minnows? Kayaks? Bends?)

"**Actually,**" we said, somewhat apologetically, "**It's 300 million years. You're so right to ask! The Locust Fork River is at least 300 million years old, but how were you supposed to know?**"

We make a big deal about that because our river is older than the Appalachian Mountains.

We didn't even think to put that on the shirt because we're all so proud of that fact. But how was anyone supposed to know?!

The Locust Fork is special because of that fact. The wiggles you see on its map here are what geologists call "entrenched meanders."



Rivers slowly meander across flat land because they don't have enough momentum to cut through hard rock. They have to wiggle around seeking the 'path of least resistance.'

Rivers flowing downhill - with more momentum - cut straighter courses.

Those wiggles tell us the river flowed in this course before the mountains arose here, over 300 million years ago.

But how was anyone supposed to know that?!

Scenic Overlook Update

Blount County's plan to transform the old AL Hwy 79/US 231 bridge over the Locust Fork River into a tourist-ready attraction is about to regain momentum.

After nearly three years of litigation over easements, an agreement among the parties has been reached and a final order will follow shortly.

The Cleveland town council anticipates more business and tax revenue coming in once the scenic overlook is completed. On this basis, the council approved up to \$25,000 toward the project. Major funding has been provided by ALDOT and USDOT.

The project includes parking access to the area, lighting and development of a park-like scenic overlook for the enjoyment of residents and tourists alike.

FLFR appreciates the County's hard work to enhance this site!



A Princess Visits

FLFR always has a booth at the Covered Bridge Festival. We have had sunny, warm days, but not this year. The chill warmed up, however, with a visit by Camille Owen, newly crowned as "Miss Blount County Outstanding Teen." Camille loves the river. If we're lucky, she'll join us for future river events!

Covered Bridge Festival and River Walk

The Fall Colors River Walk was led by Sam Howell. Drizzly, chilly weather did not deter these 13 brave hikers. By noon, all was gleaming with colorful trees, rocks and leaves, along with the music of the flowing river and lunch along side Powell Falls.

On the way back, the hikers collected lots of trash. By 1:00 p.m., they was on their way to the Covered Bridge Festival in Oneonta.



FLFR seeks volunteer data

María Brindle and Donna Matthews initiated data collection on FLFR events to find out more about how volunteers serve as well as to assess what the general public knows about the Locust Fork River and FLFR.

In FLFR's efforts toward becoming more visible, we joined the June Fling and the Christmas parade, in addition to the usual events during the year.

A major FLFR concern is becoming known in the Blount County community.

At the County Fair and the Covered Bridge Festival, we learned some local folks were unaware of the Locust Fork River while others swam, fished and floated on the River as kids and want to become more involved in FLFR.

FLFR welcomes volunteers who will promote river stewardship, help keep the river clean and help make it more accessible to the people of Blount County.

For FLFR, this is how to spread awareness of the river and pass it's stewardship on to future generations of river enthusiasts.



María, with bounty from the garden

María Brindle, before joining the FLFR board this fall, was Outings Coordinator. She loves being a volunteer and appreciates FLFR for the opportunities it gives to be outdoors with like-minded people.

(See next column)

FLFR's newest board members

Hello! I'm Ginny Humber, and I'm a native of Blount County. I grew up in Hayden, and then after high school ventured off to college and travel.

I got to know several Latin American countries, and even lived in Madrid, Spain for a bit as an English teacher. My mom thought I would never come back. However, after five years in New York City, there was nothing that I wanted more than to gaze off in any direction and see a forest of trees rather than a forest of people.

Now I'm back in the deep woods of Hayden, living in a small cabin my dad helped me build. I'm completely content that some days the only other living creatures I see are my eleven beautiful chickens.

I got involved with FLFR by chance—recruited by Maricarmen Brindle during last year's Solar Home Tour.

María served several years at Kids' Day on the River. Last year, she was the event's coordinator. In 2015, she began testing two river sites monthly for bacteria, after being certified by Alabama Water Watch (AWW). These data go to swimguide.org as well as AWW.

María and Alden Brindle live in a solar powered, strawbale house. María likes to garden, lacto-ferment veggies, cook vegetarian meals, draw with colored pencils, read books and share her views, care for chickens, ducks, goose and a cat, and take long walks with her dog, Ringo.

María delights in hiking, swimming and meditating by the water. "It is an amazing river, constantly changing, sometimes flowing like a torrent and other times flowing gently."



Ginny, with her pet snake, Rosie

I am the new coordinator of Kids' Day on the River and also am helping raise money to make the Locust Fork River more accessible to the public.

FLFR has exciting projects coming up, and I'm so glad to be a part of this passionate organization.

As a newly-minted river rat, I sometimes wonder what I've gotten myself into. The hikes, the floats, the cleanups, the events...loving and protecting a river can take up a lot of free time. Luckily, hanging out with FLFR is a total blast! See you on the river!

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How to join FLFR

To join FLFR or renew your membership online, use the **PayPal** button. Go to: **FLFR.org**

Or, mail a check to:

Friends of the Locust Fork River
P.O. Box 638
Cleveland, AL 35049

Membership Levels

Individual	\$20
Family	\$30
Friend	\$50
Patron	\$100

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

All contributions to Friends of the Locust Fork River are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law and are very much appreciated!

Thank you!

FLFR Connections

Twitter: @LFofBW
is our handle. See alerts
for upcoming river-
related activities.

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

QR cube: link your phone
to our website, FLFR.org.



Support us - donate now

Your donation protects the Locust Fork River through FLFR's educational and community outreach. Your donation of \$20, or more, constitutes a membership. Members receive monthly e-bulletins about outings and our quarterly newsletter.

To become a member or to renew your membership online, visit FLFR.org.
Or mail a downloadable Membership Form from the website with your check to:

The Friends of the Locust Fork River
P.O. Box 638
Cleveland, AL 35049

(FLFR is a 501(c)3 non-profit and your donation is tax-deductible.)

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