A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

2019 was another eventful and action-packed year for Alabama Water Watch! I hope you’ll enjoy reading about a few of the year’s highlights and seeing the faces of our AWWesome volunteers and students in action.

Volunteer monitors spent thousands of hours at their stream, creek, lake, and coastal monitoring sites collecting credible water data (thank you!!). As a result, there are well over 3,000 new data records in the AWW database that are already being used to protect and restore watershed health. The total number of AWW data records surpassed 95,000 and we hope to see that number reach 100,000 soon. Stay tuned for more on that...

In case you haven’t noticed, there are new features available through the AWW Water Data Tools that can help everyone use data more effectively. If you don’t know about these tools, let us know and we will point you in the right direction.

A major theme for 2019 was thinking and doing, outside of the box. Staff, volunteers, and the AWW Association found innovative and interesting ways to promote community-based watershed stewardship; in some cases, with new partners and to new audiences.

I hope that you will continue to support, volunteer, and partner with AWW in 2020. Together we can keep the core of AWW strong and build on the initiatives started in 2019 to grow the impact and reach of AWW.

Mona Dominguez
AWW Program Director
ABOUT AWW...

Alabama Water Watch (AWW) is a citizen volunteer, water quality monitoring program covering all of the major river basins of the state. The mission of AWW is to improve water quality and water policy through citizen monitoring and action. With a "data-to-action" focus, AWW helps volunteers collect, analyze, and understand their water monitoring data to make positive impacts.

Established in 1992, AWW is a national model for citizen involvement in watershed stewardship, largely because of its three interrelated components: citizen monitoring groups, a university-based program, and a non-profit association.

AWW follows EPA-approved quality assurance monitoring plans with a community-based, science-based approach to train citizens to monitor water quality conditions and trends of their local waterbodies.

THE AWW VISION:
TO HAVE A CITIZEN MONITOR ON EVERY STREAM, RIVER, LAKE, AND COAST IN ALABAMA.

The AWW Program is part of the Auburn University Water Resources Center (AUWRC) in the Alabama Agriculture Experiment Station (AAES) and receives support from AAES, Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES), and external funding.
IN 2019, AWW VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED >15,933 HOURS, COLLECTIVELY, AS WATER MONITORS, WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS, AND VOLUNTEER TRAINERS, WHICH IS VALUED AT $349,251!
CITIZEN TRAINING & DATA

AWW VOLUNTEERS TRAINERS WHO CONDUCTED WORKSHOPS:
- Marshall Carter
- Bill Deutsch
- Mimi Fearn
- Michael Mullen
- Hana Berres
- Mike Shelton
- Taylor Steele
- Isabella Trussell
- Susan Weber
- Jim Woodrow
- Homer Singleton
- Omar Romagnoli
- Judy Palfrey
- Jason Kudulis
- Stephen Morros
- Florence Peters
- Cade Kistler
- Whitney Flynn
- Ryan Ahrendt
- Dana Herren
- Jacqueline McGonigal
- Jackie Wilson
- Linda Ruethemann

DATA SUBMISSIONS:
- 3,291 TOTAL RECORDS
  - 2,505 Water Chemistry
  - 786 Bacteriological

NEW GROUPS
- 4-H AWW Colbert County
- 4-H AWW Walker County
- City of Foley Env. Dept. GCNP
- Locust Fork Water Watch
- T.C. Black Warrior Feeders

618 CERTIFICATIONS
- 257 Water Chemistry
- 117 Alabama Rivers
- 80 Stream Biomonitoring
- 193 Bacteriological
- 98 Recertifications
- 23 Exploring Our Living Streams

IN 2019, WE REACHED
95,000 CUMULATIVE DATA RECORDS!

VOLUNTEER TRAINERS CONDUCTED OVER 60% OF 2019 WORKSHOPS

WHO CONDUCTED WORKSHOPS:
- Marshall Carter
- Bill Deutsch
- Mimi Fearn
- Michael Mullen
- Hana Berres
- Mike Shelton
- Taylor Steele
- Isabella Trussell
- Susan Weber
- Jim Woodrow
- Homer Singleton
- Omar Romagnoli
- Judy Palfrey
- Jason Kudulis
- Stephen Morros
- Florence Peters
- Cade Kistler
- Whitney Flynn
- Ryan Ahrendt
- Dana Herren
- Jacqueline McGonigal
- Jackie Wilson
- Linda Ruethemann
4-H Alabama Water Watch (4-H AWW) is the statewide youth water quality monitoring program created through a partnership between Alabama Water Watch and Alabama 4-H, the youth development program of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES).

4-H AWW increases environmental literacy by building capacity in volunteer trainers and educators to provide youth with awareness and understanding of watershed issues and tools that cultivate the critical thinking skills students need to identify and solve problems related to water quality.

7,661
4-H AWW Youth Participants

46% of students were familiar with the term "watershed" and knew the name of the watershed in which they live prior to 4-H AWW

COMPAORED TO
81% of students following 4-H AWW participation

"Alabama Water Watch has changed my view on what I can do for the environment around me. Now, I feel like I have a way to truly make an impact on the health of my community’s ecosystem."
-Senior from Ardmore High School

44 New 4-H AWW Monitors Certified

56 4-H Data Records Submitted

120 Teachers Certified

7 Educator Workshops Conducted
Beginning in 2016, the Alabama Water Watch Association has sponsored a fishing tournament at Wind Creek State Park on Lake Martin, led and coordinated by Michael Freeman, the current AWWA President. The event was co-sponsored by Alabama Rivers Alliance.

The 2019 AWWA Bass Tournament was the most successful yet with 27 boaters competing in the tournament!

AWW Association secured grant funding from the Alabama Bicentennial Commission and Legacy, Inc. to support special AWW Projects in 2019 that are detailed in the coming pages.

Donations and memberships are the main source of funding for AWWA. Please consider making a contribution to the AWWA to ensure that they are able to provide support to the AWW Program for many years to come! Visit the Support AWW page on the AWW website for giving options.

Thank you!
ALABAMA RIVERS EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS

Project funded by the Alabama Bicentennial Commission (AL 200) resulted in development of An Educator’s Guide to Alabama Rivers which is a companion curriculum to the book, Alabama Rivers: A Celebration & Challenge by Dr. Bill Deutsch. Supported facilitation of seven workshops through which 117 educators were trained to use the Guide to teach students about Alabama Rivers.

7 EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS

117 EDUCATORS

1. Camp McDowell in Nauvoo
2. Five Rivers Delta in Spanish Fort
3. Mountains to the Gulf Expedition
4. Pioneer Park in Loachapoka
5. Bellinger Hill in Montgomery
6. Turtle Point Science Center in Flomaton
7. Cheaha State Park in Delta

In the FIRST 4 MONTHS after launching the curriculum, 1000 STUDENTS WERE REACHED!
4-H Alabama Water Watch received an Environmental Education Grant from Legacy, Inc. Partners in Environmental Education for $1,125 to support the project: Helping 4-Hers Watch Our Waters.

This project provided 4-H AWW groups in eight counties including Chambers, Colbert, Etowah, Lee, Marion, Walker, Washington, and Winston with water monitoring materials. Materials included water chemistry kit reagent refills, thermometers, and replacement hardware.

Muscle Shoals Middle Schoolers conduct a turbidity test.

Fifth graders at LaFayette Lanier Elementary testing water chemistry.

Muscle Shoals Middle Schoolers pose in front of the Tennessee River after conducting water chemistry tests.

4-H AWW Monitors with the Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship check on water quality in Tuskegee National Forest every month!
The 2019 AWW Annual Meeting was held at the Wehle Center at Blakeley State Park in Spanish Fort from June 21-22.

Our 2019 Keynote was environmental journalist and filmmaker, Ben Raines. AWW Volunteer monitor presentations included Jason Kudulis, Dr. Mimi Fearn, and Dr. Joe Scanlan.

2019 AWARD WINNERS

TRAINER OF THE YEAR
Mimi Fearn

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Homer Singleton

CONFLUENCE AWARD
Mobile Bay National Estuary Program & Coastal AWW Monitoring Groups

4-H WATER WATCHER OF THE YEAR
Madison Younge

MULLEN AWARD MONITOR OF THE YEAR
Janne Debes

SCHULMAN BIODIVERSITY GUARDIAN AWARD
Dr. Joe Scanlan

Prior to the 2019 AWW Annual Meeting, around 30 people attended a Mobile-Tensaw Delta boat tour. This osprey next (left) was one of many wildlife sightings during the tour.
OUTREACH & RELATED PROJECTS
AWW partnered with Alabama Cooperative Extension System to facilitate the project, Pescando y Explorando Protegemos Nuestras Aguas (By Fishing and Exploring We Protect Our Waters), which focused on promoting awareness and education related to recreational fishing and watershed stewardship to Hispanic community members.

Carolina Ruiz teaches youth about sources of water pollution in our communities using an Enviroscape model watershed.

Rod and reel fishing at the Lee County Public Lake.

Youth kayaking at Lee County Public Lake. For the vast majority of the kids, it was their first time kayaking.

EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATIONS TRANSLATED TO SPANISH
- Basic Guide to Fishing and Exploring Rivers and Lakes of Alabama (Guía Básica de Pesca y de la Exploración de Ríos y Lagos de Alabama)
- America’s Amazon (El Amazones de Norteamérica)
- Materials Explaining How to Acquire a Fishing License
MISSISSIPPI WATER STEWARDS

Global Water Watch (GWW) is working with Mississippi State University Extension Service to develop a statewide water monitoring program for Mississippi in the model of AWW.

ALABAMA WATERSHED STEWARDS

Partnered with ACES Office of Water Resources to develop the Alabama Watershed Stewards handbook and to conduct two 1-Day Alabama Watershed Stewards Workshops in Auburn and Opelika.

The long-term goal of this project is to improve public knowledge and stewardship at regional, state and local levels in Gulf of Mexico watersheds to protect and restore water resources and to increase transparency and public participation toward sustainable water management in support of EPA’s strategic goals.

FUNDED BY: EPA GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM OFFICE
Alabama Water Watch played an important role in the Pepperell Branch Watershed Partnership Project led by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Auburn University. Through the project, partners and stakeholders developed a watershed management plan for the Pepperell Branch Watershed in Opelika, Alabama. The Plan identifies implementable best management practices that are based on the goals of water quality improvement and watershed protection. Other project partners included the City of Opelika, Keep Opelika Beautiful, Save Our Saugahatchee, and Creekline Trails of Opelika. The project was funded by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

AWW's Role included:

- Participation with the Executive Planning and Steering Committees
- Certification of stakeholders as Bacteriological and Water Chemistry Monitors
- Assistance with water data management and analysis
- Establishing 4-H AWW Programs at three local schools; Opelika High School, Opelika Middle School, and Northside Elementary.

A 4-H AWW Group was established at Opelika High School where students were certified as 4-H AWW Water Chemistry Monitors.

7 4-H AWW activities were conducted with students at Opelika Middle School as part of "Project Grow".
GLOBAL WATER WATCH

GWW fosters and supports community-based, science-based watershed stewardship through the advance of long-term water monitoring of surface waters for the improvement of both water quality and public health in locations beyond Alabama. Many GWW activities occurred in 2019 the states of Mississippi and Washington, as well as in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Kenya, Mexico and Peru.

SNO-KING WATER WATCHERS (SKWW)

SKWW is an all-volunteer, community based water monitoring program started by the Sno-King Watershed Council, with the support of GWW. SKWW promotes stewardship, education, and action, and operates in Snohomish and King Counties, including Seattle, WA and 2019 was their fourth full year of action and significant expansion. SKWW goals are to have safe water for recreation, and good water quality for fish and wildlife.

GWW-ARGENTINA

Sprung in 2019, GWW-Argentina has been active in the northern Patagonian region. Monitoring has begun in the FutaleufúRiver, one of the premier whitewater rivers in the world, and one of only two rivers to cross the 5,308 kilometer Chile-Argentina border. Their mission is to improve citizen awareness and engagement in the protection of Patagonia’s water resources.

Since 2015 SKWW have collected over 1,700 water chemistry, bacteria and biomonitoring records from 50 monitoring sites (see map).
USDA FOREST SERVICE CITSCI FUND

The USDA Forest Service and AWW are supporting volunteer monitors as they collect water chemistry and bacteriological water data from priority watersheds in the Bankhead National Forests, Coneuch National Forest, and Tuskegee National Forest.

The resulting data will be used to evaluate and inform management decisions. This project is funded in part by the Citizen Science Competitive Funding Program (CitSci Fund).

RC&D ALABAMA RIVERS EDUCATOR WORKSHOPS

MidSouth RC&D and other partners are making it possible for AWW to facilitate a series of three Alabama Rivers educator workshops in Loachapoka, AL that will highlight lessons that correlate to the Alabama Course of Study (ALCOS) for Social Studies, Science, and Visual Arts Standards, respectively.

EXPLORING PATHOGEN POLLUTION IN OUR WATERS

NOAA BWET (BAY WATERSHED and EDUCATION TRAINING)

This project is building capacity within 4-H AWW to provide educators with training, materials, and support needed to engage students in coastal counties of Alabama with Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) focused on understanding, detecting, and mitigating pathogen pollution in local waters.
PROGRAM STAFF

Mona Dominguez
AWW Director
Mona’s favorite things to do are play in the creek, catch award winning bream, and chase around her two wild daughters while drinking good coffee with friends! She also enjoys participating in the AWW edition of carpool karaoke during work trips.

Sergio Ruiz Cordova
Data Coordinator
On Saturdays when Sergio is not doing AWW, he is running. His reasons for running are to provides time for himself, connect with nature, feel the wind, observe the surroundings, and to feel the sense of freedom and happiness that makes running worth fighting for. Plus, it means he can eat and drink anything he wants. He has run over 50 marathons and is currently in a pursuit to complete one in each US state.

Sydney Smith
Volunteer Monitor Coordinator
Sydney is the go-to weather informant in the AWW office. Sydney broke her elbow when she was run over by a giant snowball in the 9th grade. Sydney is obsessed with turtles and lives her life by Broadway musical lyrics and Disney movies. She is insanely good Disney-Pixar Trivia. If she could be any aquatic critter she would be a net-spinning caddisfly.
CAROLINA RUIZ
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Carolina also helps around the office by keeping most of the plants and fish alive. She enjoys spending time outdoors with her plants and her pets. She has visited 10 different countries and hopes to visit many more in the future!

RACHEL MCGUIRE
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
Rachel enjoys hiking, paddling, and searching for outdoor treasures (old bottles, fossils, wildlife skulls, etc.). She likes to spend as much time with her three dogs as possible and is on a quest to finally earn her "green thumb".

DR. BILL DEUTSCH
CO-FOUNDER (RETIRED)
Bill is an aquatic ecologist who directed the AWW program for 20 years. In 2018, he published, Alabama Rivers: A Celebration & Challenge, and traveled Alabama for over 50 book talks at conferences, public libraries, AWW groups, and other nonprofits. He continued part-time work for AWW through 2019, assisting with workshops and the curriculum, an Educators Guide to Alabama Rivers. Bill is active in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Auburn University and teaches two courses: Rivers of Alabama and Birding Basics. He also enjoys hiking, birding and float trips on Alabama streams.
The Alabama Water Watch Association (AWWA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that exists to support and strengthen the efforts of the AWW Program. Volunteer training workshops and the production of associated publications is supported in part by AWWA.

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See you in