

NewsStreams

Because Clean Water Can't Wait



The 2019 Wild & Scenic Film Festival Was a Hit



The film festival's special guest host JK McKnight.

Eleven. Is it a magical number? We think so because we just held our 11th Wild & Scenic Film Festival, and it was awesome. Even after more than a decade, the event continues to grow as we

had over 300 supporters in attendance and a fantastic list of sponsors and partners.

Held on Friday, April 5, the festival featured nine curated films about water and presented beautiful, thought-provoking perspectives on

In This Issue

Wild and Scenic Film Festival pg.01

Executive Director's Message pg.02

Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund Update pg.03

Protecting the Ohio pg.04

Spotlight: Caitlin Johnson pg.07

Living and Working on Harrods Creek/Cleanup pg.08

Make a Splash Festival pg.10

Spotlight: Martin Hjalm pg.10

Mother's Day Cleanup pg.12

Noe Middle School pg.14

UK Survey pg.15

the different ways rivers and oceans contribute to our world and integrate into our lives. The lead-off film, *Carpe Diem*, documented one man's quirky obsession with fly fishing for carp in the concrete environment of the Los Angeles River. Another film that launched us in an unexpected direction was *Becoming Ocean*.

continued pg. 6

A Message From Ward Wilson

Executive Director, Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Dear Friends,

It's a beautiful spring in Kentucky! Trees are green, creeks are clear (mostly), springs are flowing, and birds are singing. Here at KWA we have new team members on the staff and board and renewed energy from our projects and partners. In this issue, you can read about the great work that can be done when you work with like-minded people and organizations.

You can also get to know newer board members Martin Hjalm and Caitlin Johnson. They bring new ideas and capacity to our already-amazing board. We are looking to fill some more seats on our board, especially in Eastern and Western Kentucky so we have representatives in all watersheds. We also want diversity in perspectives on our board and staff. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice are important in our work and we want to live our principles. If you are interested or want to recommend someone, contact me and I'll send you information on how to nominate.

Now that we are in the recreation season, I hope you will all get out, in, and on the great waterways of Kentucky. Stay safe and have fun!



Ward

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Bob Johnson - Jackson Purchase
Marcia Boone - Salt River
Linda Cowan - Salt River
Martin Hjalm - Salt River
Caitlin Johnson - Salt River

Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund Update

KWA and the US Fish & Wildlife Service have been working together for 11 years to protect threatened and endangered aquatic species. Among other things, we have sponsored restoration and research projects with the Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund (KARF). This fund has made it possible to do some amazing research on the biology and ecology of endangered fish, mussels, and crayfish. This article is one example of the work that KARF supports. It was provided by Conservation Fisheries, Inc. (CFI), a nonprofit scientific group that has one goal – to restore fish populations in the southeastern US.

The Endangered Tuxedo Darter (formerly known as Duskytail Darter) is a small, relatively non-descript fish known only from the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River in Tennessee and Kentucky. While not as colorful as many of its relatives, the Tuxedo Darter is nonetheless an interesting little fish! For one thing, males excavate nests under flat rocks and guard eggs that have been laid on the under surface of the rocks by the females. Each female can lay up to 50 eggs at a time, but a single male might spawn with several females, adding those eggs to their nests. Another interesting characteristic is that the males have knobs on their dorsal fins that actually mimic eggs! When they sit under the rock, their fin rests on the under surface and looks like a small clutch of eggs. This serves as a signal to the females that this male is likely a “good father” for her eggs.



Knowing how these fish spawn and knowing the preferred rock size and shape allows researchers from Conservation Fisheries, Inc. (CFI) to snorkel in their preferred habitat and locate nests to return to their hatchery in Knoxville where they can be reared in captivity. These captively-produced fish will serve as an Ark, or a “back-up” in case something might happen in their native habitat that would place them in jeopardy.

Despite knowing how and when these darters spawn, they have proven very difficult to spawn in the hatchery, thus the need to collect nests from the wild. However, if these are to be kept as an Ark, captive spawning will ultimately need to be perfected.

In 2018, CFI brought three small nests into the hatchery. From these nests, approximately 160 Tuxedo Darters were raised to the juvenile stage (a little less than an inch). Despite some set-backs along the way, we have learned a great deal about the husbandry of these rare fish. We have also pinpointed an issue with our hatchery’s water chemistry. We feel like making several adjustments in our water may well solve the spawning difficulties we have had in past years. We are excited to try again this spring and are hopeful that we can successfully spawn, rear and maintain this rare darter in captivity, insuring their continued existence in the wild!



Protecting the Ohio River

In 1669, French explorer La Salle called the Ohio "la belle rivière" or "the beautiful river." It is still beautiful. And worth protecting.

In 1948, the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) was formed. A key part of that compact agreement was the signatories' pledge for "... faithful cooperation in the control of future pollution in and abatement of existing pollution from the rivers, streams and water in the Ohio River Basin...."

In 2018, ORSANCO proposed to eliminate pollution control standards (PCS) and asked for comments. We believe that setting baseline standards for the river is essential. We believe that it is critical that we continue to clean the source of our drinking water and assure a safe environment in which to fish, swim, and boat.

KWA joined our friends at the National Wildlife Federation and other organizations in the river basin to voice our concerns. Many of our members and supporters in groups all across the basin



submitted comments as well. In the October 2018 ORSANCO meeting, the Commission deferred action. Public comment certainly prompted this decision to reconsider. The committee developed an alternative approach that would preserve the river standards, but makes adoption by member states voluntary. KWA commented on this proposal with the following statement and extensive technical comments to support it.

"We maintain our position that all member states should be required to adopt the ORSANCO PCS standards into their state water quality standards. These standards represent the best available science that take into account the entire river system. Moreover, Article VI of the Compact authorizes the Commission 'to adopt, prescribe and promulgate rules, regulations and standards for administering and enforcing the provisions of this article'. We expect the Commission to uphold its role in maintaining the health of the Ohio River and prescribe as rule the PCS to enforce the standards or requirements of the Compact throughout the river system."

In June, ORSANCO will meet again to approve or reject the current proposal. KWA and our members will be represented and will advocate for protecting the Ohio River. We will let you know in future emails, social media, and newsletters how this turns out. Thank you for your support of KWA and your personal comments. They make a difference.



Wild and Scenic Film Festival

continued from pg. 1

This deeply personal documentary of a journalist with a fatal kidney disease, where the body is flooded with water, parallels the effects of climate change and how rising sea temperatures threaten our planet.

The venue for the festival was the Gheens Foundation Lodge at the Parklands of Floyds Fork. This stunning facility helped set the mood for the festival's amazing films. Its expansive windows, open spaces and proximity to Floyds Fork made the perfect environment for films about our environment.

JK McKnight was the festival's guest host, and we were overjoyed to have him. JK has made protecting and preserving endangered environments his focus after having launched Louisville's most notable music festival, Forecastle, which combines art, activism and music into a three-day concert that currently attracts over 40,000 fans. His new venture, Man of the Land, applies his unique entrepreneurial spirit to conservation and environmental stewardship.

The 11th year of The Wild & Scenic Film Festival succeeded thanks to the support of those who attended, our members and the festival's sponsors and partners. The Gheens Foundation Lodge at the Parklands of Floyds Fork and C&H Audio could not have been more generous with their talented staff and resources. We also have to send a giant shout out to the Sweet Water Brewing Company for donating beer, Wiltshire at the Speed for the tasty hors d'oeuvres, Heine Brothers for the variety of stimulating coffee drinks as well as Quest Outdoors, Republic Bank and River City Distributing for their on-going support.

If you missed the 11th incarnation of the festival, worry not. The magic will be back for number 12 in 2020.

Board Member Spotlight: Caitlin Johnson

Caitlin Johnson has a long history with KWA. She was a senior in high school when her environmental science class, taught by Mrs. Angela Page, began volunteering with KWA to help with cleanups on Beargrass Creek. She attended her first Wild & Scenic Film Festival in 2010 where Caitlin and her classmates presented their work on Beargrass Creek to the audience. Caitlin continues her connection with KWA through her service on our Board of Directors.

Not only does Caitlin's passion for water show in her volunteer interests, she also works in the water field as a Water Resources Engineer with Stantec. Caitlin has her bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Louisville. When contemplating her next step, she knew the master's program in Water Resources would allow her to achieve her lifelong goal of pursuing a career in environmental conservation. Caitlin deals with water every day. Whether it's through FEMA floodplain modeling and mapping, or water quality testing, her hands are constantly getting wet. One of Caitlin's favorite parts of her job are the community outreach events, where her company goes into schools and talks to students about what floodplains are by using a floodplain simulator.

When asked about her favorite Kentucky water body, Caitlin had to pause, explaining that through her job she works with a variety of large streams, but doesn't get to visit them as much as she'd like. Harrods Creek is the water body that lies closest to her heart. Caitlin's family lives on the river and she has spent time paddling there, admitting she's not an expert, but enjoys the family time together on the water. Caitlin enjoys all aspects of water: her favorite way to enjoy water is simply being near it.

Caitlin's favorite part of KWA's work is the direct impact we have on our community through outreach events, especially when students are engaged in cleanups and learning the importance of keeping waterways clean. Caitlin emphasizes the power of an individual's voice: "People can be very powerful when they speak up together. That's the best way to have an impact. It takes a passionate staff and supportive board that share the same vision to bring about change. I definitely think that people are always going to be your greatest resource."

Caitlin wants to encourage our readers to get involved with KWA, no matter what their age or what stage of career: "I know that I'm a younger board member, but I think that it's important to have different voices in a room when decisions are being made, because you're going to get different opinions and outlooks and perspectives. In order to choose the best path forward and make a decision that's going to be long-lasting, you need to have people in the room and around the table that are collaborative and come from all points of view and have different levels of experience and new ideas."



Living and Working on Harrods Creek



Steve Rauh lives and works on Harrods Creek.

Steve Rauh doesn't like it. The whole idea of rolling back standards that protect our waterways is wrong. He thinks regulations should be strengthened, not relaxed. Steve is in fact quite passionate about Kentucky's waterways and especially Harrods Creek. Not only does he live on the creek, but his business is linked to it, as Steve and his family have owned and operated Creekside Landing Marina for over fifty years. They started with one rental slip in 1968 and now rent 50 slips, so water quality and the environment around the creek are important to Steve and his livelihood.

Living and working at the marina has given Steve the opportunity to see how recreational boaters – including paddlers -- use Harrods Creek and the Ohio River. People come out to the river to relax, fish and take in the natural setting.

If you have ever visited the Creekside Landing Marina, you can see that Steve welcomes boaters of all kinds – not just power boaters. Kayaks and canoes are racked on the property for easy access to the creek. Plus the marina is host to the Louisville Rowing Club's east-end boathouse, where the Louisville Collegiate School girls' rowing team stores its shells and puts into the creek from the adjacent docks. Although the boathouse looks remarkably ordinary, it has been engineered and built to float in the event of fast rising flood waters that might threaten the building.



The boathouse was a gift to the Louisville rowing community by Barry Bingham, Jr. in 1991. If you would like to learn more about the Louisville Rowing Club, visit the club's website (louisvillerowingclub.org). The club offers rowing lessons, too, if you would like to see Harrods Creek and the Ohio River from a different perspective ... and get some serious exercise.

Another dimension to Steve's concern for clean water is the wildlife that lives near Harrods Creek. Steve says he frequently sees blue heron, beaver, coyote and that there is a bald eagle's nest down the road.

Steve is not shy about pitching in to help keep the locals waters clean. On March 2, 2019, Steve along with West Sixth Brewery, Odeon and KWA put together a cleanup on Harrods Creek. Over 20 volunteers arrived at Creekside Landing Marina in the early morning and braved the cold weather in an effort to pull trash from the creek. By mid-morning an entire dumpster was filled with all manner of discarded items found along the creek.

Harrods Creek Cleanup at Creekside Marina

It wasn't a bitter cold morning at the first cleanup of 2019. Just biting cold. It was Saturday, March 3 and technically still winter. The sky was gray. The ground was muddy. And, yes it was a bit early in the year for a cleanup...unless you are really dedicated. And this KWA cleanup was organized by a truly dedicated group of supporters including Steve Rauh of Creekside Marina, Liz Vail of West Sixth Brewery, Adam Sabin of Odeon, and KWA. Hosted by Steve Rauh at his Creekside Marina, which is located where River Road crosses over Harrods Creek, the twenty or so volunteers had easy access to the water and shelter. Plus Steve generously donated his dumpster for all the trash and large



items that our volunteers pulled from the creek.

After a brief safety meeting, the cleanup started.

We had a variety of canoes and kayaks shuttling to and from the dock to drop off their loads of trash and debris. As the morning wore on, an unofficial contest started among the paddlers about who could collect the oddest item.

Unfortunately far too many discarded tires were brought dockside to be



considered rare. The oddest retrieval, however, was a toilet.

The low temperature in no way inhibited the group. We had two big pots of chili on hand, a vegan and a turkey version, made respectively by West Sixth's Liz Vail and KWA's Charlotte Caldwell. Red Hot Roasters donated a large container of coffee for those who wanted something warm to drink between trash drop-offs. So even though it was a cold day with a bleak sky, spirits were high, the job was fun and everyone stayed well fed.



Afterwards, in the evening, Odeon and West Sixth hosted a get together at the Odeon in Louisville's historic Butchertown where we celebrated the day's haul with brews and friends. A big "thank-you" to all who participated.



Make a Splash Water Festival

Over 100 Wolfe County 6th graders attended the fun and educational 2nd Annual Make a Splash Water Festival on Monday, April 15 at Campton City Park. Students broke into seven groups and visited seven water-related learning stations including interactive games, demonstrations, and activities taught by experts in the field. The kids had a ton of fun and learned about the critters and people that rely on and influence clean water, and why clean water is so important to everything and everyone.

This event is a partnership of Red River Watershed Restoration Project (Kentucky Waterways Alliance), Wolfe County 4H, Family Resources, and our amazing presenters. Ollie the Otter from the Kentucky Division of Water even made an appearance! Jack and Theresa Stickney were very generous to get all the students the gift of a Red Bud tree to take with them and plant at home. Students also received a reusable KWA drawstring bag.

We are looking at moving the event to the fall semester to avoid the unpredictable spring weather. Please contact us if you are interested in leading a lesson/demonstration at the event!

Topics and Presenters:

- Wastewater Treatment game - Martha Yount, Ag Extension Specialist for food and nutrition
- Macro mayhem game - Laura Dye and Allan Shingletown, Kentucky Department of Water
- Incredible Journey- Carmen Agouridis, UK Extension Professor Biosystems Engineering
- Macroinvertebrate - Malissa McAlister, KDOW, UK, Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute and Jenny Howard Owen
- Water chemistry - Tricia Coakley, UK College of Agriculture and Kentucky River Watershed Watch President
- Red River Native Fish Aquarium - Josh Blaylock, NANFA
- Enviroscape and Water quality/watershed lesson and tree giveaway - Jack Stickney, technical assistant, Kentucky Rural Water Association

Board Member Spotlight: Martin Hjalm



Water is in Martin Hjalm's blood. Martin grew up in a shipping harbor on the coast of Sweden, and has fond memories of his childhood summers spent on the ocean in a small Swedish fishing village with his grandparents. This innate connection to water has been passed down to Martin's children, who love to play as a family in South Fork, a tributary to Beargrass Creek, searching for turtles and fish.

While sailing is Martin's favorite activity on the water, he has recently gotten into stand up paddle boarding, and is looking forward to exploring Kentucky's waterways with his family this summer.

Martin first got involved with KWA through Leadership Louisville's Ignite Program, where the participants teamed up with an area nonprofit to help them build capacity for the organization. Martin's expertise in digital marketing allowed him to play a large role in reimagining our Every Drop program, and helped develop the Every Drop website and create a sustainable plan for the program moving forward.

Martin's favorite aspect of KWA is the welcoming culture but also the passion for water that is shared by the staff, board, and members alike. He speaks highly of KWA's executive director, Ward Wilson. Martin admires Ward's passion, knowledge, and commitment to water, and recognizes Ward's willingness to step up to the plate and take on a new project.

The one action item that Martin requests of our members is to "become ambassadors KWA. become knowledgeable about what we do and why it's important, and then spread the word to friends, family and neighbors. The more people we can get involved and more people we can get to care, the more successful we're going to be." Martin is optimistic for the future of KWA, and looks forward to playing a role in organization's work moving forward.

23rd Annual Mother's Day Upper Red River Cleanup



The Upper Red River is a gorgeous and a nationally designated Wild & Scenic river. It runs through Clifty Wilderness, is surrounded by cliffs and beautiful undercut boulders. Unfortunately, it is still subject to careless, discarded garbage. For 23 years Russ Miller has organized an Upper Red cleanup on Mother's Day weekend. It is a cleanup for the zaniest volunteers and it has inspired the newest iteration of Friends of Red River.

Between Big Branch Canoe Launch and Copperas Creek Canoe Launch there is no access to the river. At over nine

miles in length, the section is too far for a one-day cleanup. So we lowered the boats from the cliffline on Russ' property, between Twin Branch and Big Calaboose Creek, to make the cleanup more manageable.

We met at 8am at Concrete Bridge (Copperas Launch), then shuttled to Russ' property and hauled the kayaks, canoes, duckies and other gear to the cliff. Once at the cliff, we lowered everything as carefully as possible to get it within walking distance to the river. Once we pumped up three of the eight duckies to tow and fill with garbage along the paddle, we were ready to go.

Russ left little to chance for this cleanup. He advance-scouted the river to note any new dangers and to dislodge and pile tires to facilitate pick up. As we paddled down the river, we picked up random plastic, metal, fabric, and more tires along the way. The temperature stayed in the low to mid-60s and a misty rain came and went. Thankfully, we were dressed for the weather and charged on, as rescheduling was not something the group wanted to do.

The Red River has a number of small rapids along the route where we had to portage the boats and walk them through shallow waters. Sometimes the duckies were attached to our boats and sometimes we sent them ahead through the rapids, hoping that the tires and trash would not tip out before we caught up with them and regained control.

Then there was a quarter mile portage around the Dog Drowning Hole Rapids where we hauled canoes and all the garbage (we had 35 tires at the portage this year) up the bank, around the rapids, and back down the hill. Back and forth, back and forth, two tires at a time. We then inflated

more of the duckies, re-packed the boats and navigated the rest of the way, trying not to stop, just so we could make it to the boat launch before dark... which we barely did.

This year we had nine people paddle downriver: eight were Friends of Red River and one was from the Bluegrass Wildwater Association. Five Friends of Red River paddled up-river from Concrete Bridge filling duckies along the way. More friends showed up to help unload the garbage, as well as clean and carry the boats up the tricky steps. By the end of the day we had removed 45 tires and too many bags of trash to count; the collection filled an entire dumpster. We celebrated at Miguel's Pizza afterward (courtesy of BWA), happy with fatigue from our ridiculously exhausting day and the good deeds we did for the community, the Red River and for those who live downstream.

Land and Water Wear

You can show your support for your state's waterways and look outstandingly cool in Kentucky Waterways Alliance clothing.



The t-shirts' front graphics are geographically accurate and depict the large and influential role rivers and streams have in the Commonwealth. The KWA logo is printed on the back.

You can be both proud and comfortable in these shirts. All are woven with a silky soft cotton blend – the staff totally loves them, as do our friends and members who have included them in their wardrobes. The fact is, these t-shirts are so desirable we are constantly reordering them to have enough on hand.

The crew neck tees are unisex and the v-neck tees are cut for women.

We also have onesies for ages 6 months, 12 months, 18 months and 24 months.

You can top it all off with a stylish trucker's cap that has an embroidered KWA logo on the front and a mesh panel with an adjustable strap on the back. One size fits all. Yes, it's perfect for your next downstream adventure.

FYI, any proceeds from the sale of KWA gear go to help protect, restore and celebrate Kentucky's fabulous waterways. To purchase KWA gear, go to our website and click on the "What's Flowin'?" menu button and then the "Merchandise" tab.

Noe Middle School Art and the Environment



Avery Hammond, Natalie Miller, and Riona Whaten

and parents to share their projects with the community. Several students also helped facilitate conversations around various topics regarding community engagement and advocacy, and probed the students and community to discuss these topics together in small roundtable discussions. The final products were gifted to KWA at the end of the Forum and can now be seen on display at the KWA office.

8th grade Visual Arts students from Noe Middle School worked with Kentucky Waterways Alliance this spring to develop artwork based around a cause that was important to the students. Avery Hammond, Natalie Miller, and Riona Whaten approached KWA with an idea that eventually flourished into a multi-faceted project. Together the three students created a life-size sculpture of a human body made out of plastic and aluminum cans to bring awareness to the pollution of our waterways. Individually they each created a piece that reflected on their own views of local water resources issues.

As a culmination of their work, the entire class hosted a Community Forum where they invited nonprofit representatives



Avery Hammond

Avery Hammond



Riona Whaten



Natalie Miller



Gunpowder Creek photo by Mark Jacobs

Make a Statement About our Waterways

Do you have opinions about Kentucky's waterways? Share them.

Two University of Kentucky professors have developed a statewide survey to determine Kentuckians' values, attitudes and knowledge about water resources in the state. The effort is funded by the Kentucky Water Resource Research Institute with the end goal of helping develop training materials for professionals who work with water or work to protect our water resources.

If you'd like to take the survey, you must be 18 or older, and a resident of the state.

To access the survey, go to this address <http://go.uky.edu/3CY>.



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