

Vol. 22 | November 2025

# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

The Annual Newsletter & Impact Report of WaterWays





**Our mission** is to lead community action to restore waterways and protect the local ecosystems *on which we all depend.*



**WaterWays**  
PO Box 4437  
Chattanooga, TN 37405

[mywaterways.org](http://mywaterways.org)  
(423) 413-3298  
[info@mywaterways.org](mailto:info@mywaterways.org)

 [mywaterways](https://www.facebook.com/mywaterways)  
 [mywaterways](https://www.instagram.com/mywaterways)

# WHO WE ARE

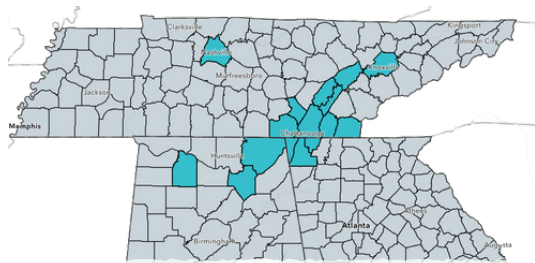


At **WaterWays**, we are dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of our natural environment through innovative programs and services aimed at engaging children, families, and communities. **Our mission is to lead community action to restore waterways and protect the local ecosystems on which we all depend.** We envision a future where every child knows the beauty of their natural surroundings, every community takes part in stewardship, and every waterway thrives.

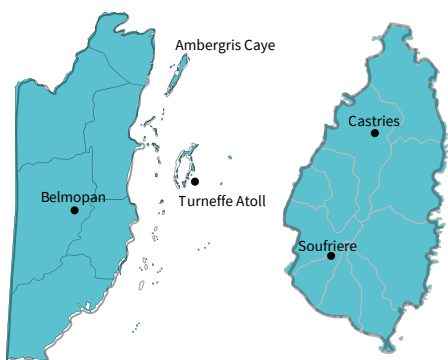
**Together, we can protect our environment and ensure a sustainable future.**

## WHERE WE WORK

While we have worked in many Caribbean countries and United States over the last 21 years, our current work is focused in **St. Lucia, Belize,** and the **Southeastern U.S.** *The areas highlighted in blue below represent our active area of work.*



Tennessee, Georgia, & Alabama



Belize

St. Lucia

### THE 2025 NEWSLETTER COVER PHOTO



This year's cover photo features a stunning drone image of the Soufrière River as it flows into the Caribbean Sea. This image was captured for the Flowing Clean grant, highlighted on **page 5**.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board is comprised of dedicated individuals who provide support and guidance in pursuing our mission.

**President:** Adam Pierce, Huntington, VT

**Treasurer:** Connie Hill, Chattanooga, TN

**Secretary:** Jenny Miller-Garmendia, Monterey, CA

### Members at Large:

Margaret Monplaisir, Castries, St. Lucia

Amy Katcher, Chattanooga, TN

Gillian Charles Gollop, St. Michael, Barbados

Robert Blenker, Palmetto, FL

Stacy Goodwin Lightfoot, Chattanooga, TN

Rob Robinson, Chattanooga, TN

### Emeritus Members:

Mark Curran, Boston, MA

Andy Novobilski, Cleveland, MS

## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS:



Stacy Goodwin Lightfoot is the Vice Chancellor for Access and Engagement at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. With over 25 years of leadership experience, she manages the Office of Equal Opportunity and Accessibility and the Center for Community Career Education, benefiting thousands of students and families in Tennessee annually.

Rob Robinson is a long time Chattanoogaan whose past work has included development and planned giving at Baylor School and the Chattanooga Food Bank. He is officially retired, but is busy with the Vestry at St. Timothy's Episcopal and is excited to share his talents with WaterWays.





# A NOTE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

MARY BETH SUTTON | Founder & Executive Director



In Loving Memory of John Verity, an invaluable supporter of WaterWays and dear friend.  
*John and his wife Judith pictured above.*

21 years ago I had the great honor of teaching a group of students and teachers from **Cicero Secondary School** in St Lucia on a two week watershed evaluation and protection workshop, “from Ridge to Reef”. Fast forward to 2025 and WaterWays signs a contract for a strategic **UN Development Program** and ProCaribe+ grant to engage the

Soufrière community in protecting and restoring the Soufrière River. Led by our **Programme Director, Nadia** and our **Education & Communications Specialist, Colleen**, it is a huge undertaking. We are so very proud of our team and the work that led to this moment!

We are also saddened because we have lost one of our greatest supporters of our work in St. Lucia. **John Verity** died in September, leaving a hole in our hearts. I first met John and Judith on the ferry going across Marigot Bay during that first program. Judith told me to look them up when I came back, and for the rest of the time they lived in St Lucia, they always had a place for me to stay. The Verity family has become my extended family, and a huge part of why WaterWays was effective in St Lucia. **While John gave Judith all the credit for the care and generosity for the Marigot kids and their families, it was really a team effort.** I would have a pile of kids trailing after me whenever I was on island, but they made sure the efforts continued when I wasn’t around by hosting all sorts of kids’ activities from Christmas parties to swim club.

John and Judith also ensured that Marigot community members were part of their hotel and restaurant. Dwight, one of the ferry drivers, once told me that he had been watching us over the years and he noticed that the kids who stuck with us, with our programs, they did alright. These kids who grew up with us are now doctors and bankers, teachers and business folks, and even a Chevening Scholar whose goal is to give back to her community. I do hope our work has had some impact on their success. They deserve it. These kids are from Marigot, whom much of the country looks down on. These kids are successful. That’s thanks also to John and Judith who could see the promise in them all. **Here’s to you, John! We are going to miss you.**

With Gratitude,  
*Mary Beth Sutton*  
**MARY BETH SUTTON**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Thanks to the unwavering support of our donors and volunteers, we continue to make an impact in our local communities.



- 21% Donations
- 11% Program Grants
- 13% Restoration Grants
- 14% Consulting
- 16% Gear Closet
- 10% Events
- 3% Program Fees
- 2% Interest
- 10% Caribbean



- 14% Programs
- 4% Restoration
- 14% Caribbean
- 7% Gear Closet
- 3% Management & General
- 4% Fundraising
- 54% Staff Compensation



"I GIVE THIS FIELD TRIP A 10/10"

-MICHIGAN AVENUE ELEMENTARY STUDENT



## PARK FIELD TRIPS

Spring is a perfect time for students to don muck boots and explore a wetland. We are so grateful to **Enterprise South Nature Park, Volkswagen (VW), the CEK Foundation, and Hamilton County Parks** for giving us the opportunity to let students experience the wonders of an often under-appreciated ecosystem. This spring, we welcomed over **1,000 students to the Summit Knob Wetland**, located within the VW conservation easement of Enterprise South Nature Park.

**"This will become our annual field trip. Thanks for everything!"**- Soddy Middle School teacher

Lessons range from **water quality and ecosystem services to life cycles, adaptations, food webs (aquatic and terrestrial), and the importance of riparian ecosystems.** Dragonfly nymphs, crawfish, tadpoles, and minnows are just a few of the species often observed. Students are amazed to learn that terrestrial food webs rely on healthy and biodiverse wetlands. Did you know that dragonfly nymphs spend three to five years as nymphs/juveniles in our local creeks and wetlands but typically only live as adults for one to two months? Amazing! **We are so excited to continue working with our partners to provide opportunities to get students out of the classroom and into the wetland!**

## STREAM TEAMS

**"Stream Team is one of the best kept secrets in stream stewardship for our young people. WaterWays has mastered the art of experiential learning and teaching the next generation how to take care of God's Creation."** - Al Rogers, Director of SOAR program, Silverdale Baptist Academy

**Our Stream Team program** allows us to connect students to their local waterways throughout the school year. This series is adaptable to any grade level! Participating students learn about their local watershed, water quality (& quantity!), aquatic biodiversity, and stewardship. During the 2024/25 school year we had the privilege of working with **Silverdale Baptist Academy and Red Bank Elementary.** In the 2025/26 school year we are excited to add Stream Teams at **Hardy Elementary and Bess T. Shepherd Elementary** thanks to a generous donation from **Mueller Water Products.**

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS PARTNERS AND SPONSORS!







## CHATTANOOGA CHARTER SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE LEARNS OUTDOORS!

How does water quality affect our community? Thanks to the support of the **American Water Charitable Foundation**, STEM and Environmental Science students at **Chattanooga Charter School of Excellence (CCSE)** explored this question. Throughout the year, students engaged in conservation efforts, beginning with a campus trash collection and analysis. They discovered plastic bottles and food wrappers were the most common litter. The students visited the litter boom on **Chattanooga Creek**, installed by WaterWays in 2023, and then created their own model boom and litter traps, emphasizing the importance of innovative solutions to the litter crisis. STEM students also crafted video public service announcements to promote stream stewardship. To better connect students to their local waterways, CCSE students received a field trip to **Reflection Riding** to paddle on Lookout Creek! In addition to that field experience, Environmental Science students observed Earth's natural filtration in action at the **Enterprise South** wetland, exploring the diverse ecosystem it supports. After their field experiences the students designed advocacy posters to bring awareness to water quality issues and propose actionable solutions. These experiences not only educated students about water quality and filtration but also introduced them to potential career opportunities and local action groups, demonstrating that **community involvement can lead to meaningful change**.



### COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Parks are a spot for connection! We are happy to partner with **Hamilton County Parks and Recreation** to invite the community to explore them and learn about the animal and plant communities that benefit from these valued green spaces. Follow our social media to learn about the next event.

@mywaterways



2,177

students participated in  
school-based programming,  
24/25 school year



9,514

outreach and program  
participants this year!

**For more information on  
WaterWays program offerings**

contact [perianne@mywaterways.org](mailto:perianne@mywaterways.org)  
or check out our education page!







## ST. LUCIA - FLOWING CLEAN

The Flowing Clean project, launched on World Environment Day, has made significant strides in community action and environmental stewardship. WaterWays was awarded EC \$710,000 to restore the Soufrière River through community involvement, citizen science, and advocacy. **“For the people of Soufrière, this isn’t just a conservation project—it’s an investment and a pledge to protect the river that sustains our culture, livelihoods, and way of life,”** says Nadia Cazaubon, Programme Director.

Soufrière, a World Heritage Site, faces threats from human activities affecting its aquatic resources. The project addresses these impacts and educates residents to foster pride and stewardship. A key achievement is the establishment of the Soufrière River Systems Management Committee (SRSMC), a collaborative body of 12 agencies, chaired by the **Soufrière Regional Development Foundation (SRDF)**, to align scientific data, community voices, and government policies for watershed protection. The SRSMC will continue to operate beyond the project's end in December 2026.

Our project developed a Charter for managing the Soufrière River, launched after consultations across seven communities. This Charter acknowledges the river's value and the community's commitment to its restoration.

Additionally, the project procured a multispectral drone to map waterways and detect ecological changes, enhancing data-driven decision-making. Training resulted in six community members now certified as drone pilots, forming the Flowing Clean Drone Monitoring Team.



Upcoming initiatives include a perception survey on community attitudes towards the river and a cancer survey to explore potential health linkages with water pollution. Water quality testing will follow to assess contaminants in local water sources. The community's positive response to the Charter and active participation in the Adopt-A-River program highlight the collective hope and commitment to reviving the river. The Flowing Clean project exemplifies grassroots-led watershed management, integrating community engagement, science, technology, and governance to tackle the critical challenge of protecting freshwater resources in small island nations.

Mary Beth Sutton, WaterWays' Executive Director, accepts grant funds





## BELIZE - PROJECT MANGROVE

We are thrilled to share the exciting developments of Project Mangrove's second year of workshops in Belize, made possible by the **CEK Foundation's** generous support! This summer, our project has not only deepened connections but also expanded its reach and impact, thanks to the collaboration of local champions like the **World Wildlife Fund, Galen University's Environmental Science and Education programs, the Belize Department of Forestry, Freshwater Ecologist Dr. Ed Boles, and the University of Belize's Environmental Research Institute.**

Starting on August 4th, teachers from across eight communities and eleven schools, including Mopan Technical High School and Saint Catherine Academy, gathered at the picturesque Monkey Bay Conference Center for a dynamic workshop experience. **These 15 enthusiastic educators** delved into the ridge-to-reef management concept, transforming their classrooms with hands-on activities like chemical water testing and macroinvertebrate sampling along the Mopan River. The following day, they travelled to the scenic **Calabash Caye** in the **Turneffe Atoll** for an immersive three-day adventure, engaging in activities like litter assessments, development of climate education units, and snorkeling the vibrant Belize Barrier Reef. Each educator walked away with **20 Certified Professional Development credits**, and a wealth of new knowledge to inspire their students.

The enthusiasm for these workshops was so overwhelming that we found ourselves with a waiting list as early as June 2025, thanks in part to the marketing and communication efforts of WaterWays and Galen University's shared dedicated intern, **Miracle Bood**. This surge of interest, coupled with additional funding from the **World Wildlife Fund**, enabled us to host a second student workshop, offering even more young minds the chance to explore conservation concepts and engage with local partners. We are not only making waves but creating a lasting impact in Belize. **We can't wait to see what we will accomplish in the years ahead!**



Three teacher participants returned to facilitate this year's workshops showing the impact inaugural year. Their passion and expertise from 2024 enriched the experience for the **15 teachers and 27 secondary students** who arrived at Calabash Caye, eager to jump into advocacy and conservation activities.

**WE ARE TRULY  
GRATEFUL FOR THE  
CONTINUOUS  
SUPPORT FROM THE  
CEK FOUNDATION!**





## TENNESSEE RIVER RESCUE

The **37th annual Tennessee River Rescue** was a remarkable success, with volunteers from Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia collaborating to clean the Tennessee River watershed (*pictured above*). This year, **65 cleanup projects** were completed, including an effort with volunteers from Chicago! The cumulative effort yielded over **58,600 pounds** of litter collected, along with more than **409 tires**, contributing over 14,000 pounds. The event, originally founded by community members from around the Chattanooga region, has expanded to include **12 regional counties** from Knox County, Tennessee, to Colbert County (Muscle Shoals), Alabama. **That's a project area spanning over 396 river miles!**

Another highlight of the River Rescue was the **City of Dayton's Trash Masters** event, which collected nearly half a ton of trash while emulating a fishing competition with prizes for the biggest haul! We are so excited to see this event grow and expand throughout the region. More creative solutions are needed to tackle the litter crisis proactively to prevent litter from its sources. To continue the success, for the month of October, WaterWays partnered with local schools for on-campus cleanups, supported by **American Water's Charitable Foundation**, to educate students about watershed impacts.

Thank you to our **50+ regional partners** who make this event happen each year, including zone leaders, the **Tennessee Riverline** through its coordination with local rivertowns, and **Osprey Initiative** for providing recycling opportunities with certified plastic and aluminum recyclers in Alabama. Together, we are tackling litter and protecting the Tennessee River system.



Visit the River  
Rescue website!



TENNESSEE  
VALLEY  
AUTHORITY



AMERICAN WATER



TENNESSEE  
RIVERLINE

We would also like to thank our premiere (*pictured above*) & regional sponsors for their invaluable support.



**58,600**

pounds of litter collected  
- 14,000 of which recycled



**409**

tires removed from  
the watershed



**1,500**

volunteers from 12  
regional counties



**396**

river miles of  
coverage



check out the  
2025 gallery!





# LITTER MASTER PLAN

## Collaborating for a Cleaner Tennessee River System

WaterWays is actively partnering with the **City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County Parks**, local businesses, and schools to decrease litter and prevent the breakdown of waste into microplastics in the **Tennessee River System**.

We offer a wide range of programs and events with the goal of reducing litter in our waterways—including the **Tennessee River Rescue, Adopt-A-Waterway initiative, annual stewardship activities, and the Bonnaroo clean-up and gear salvage**

Through these initiatives we have discovered that one of the most effective and passive tools to combat litter is the use of **litter booms**.

Pictured on the left is **Dr. Ben Holt** from **The Baylor School**. The litter booms installed on Baylor's campus represent the third and fourth installations coordinated by WaterWays in collaboration with Osprey Initiative in the Chattanooga area. Dr. Holt is integrating this boom into his sustainability curriculum, where his students are interpreting litter data to assist WaterWays and its partners in developing a comprehensive litter management plan for Greater Chattanooga. Thanks to these installations, along with the litter booms placed on **Citico** and **Chattanooga Creek**, we are gathering crucial data on the types, brands, and conditions of floating litter. This information is key for identifying litter contributors and pinpointing locations that require targeted interventions.

## COMING SOON TO SPRING CREEK!

Local business, Terracon, recently awarded a grant to WaterWays in recognition of their efforts to improve our world and environment. This funding will be used to purchase a litter boom to be installed on Spring Creek in the City of East Ridge, intercepting litter before it reaches the Tennessee River.

**"We are happy to support Mary Beth Sutton and her team in their efforts to keep our world a little safer. I encourage all of my friends and colleagues to contribute. It is not reasonable to sit on the sidelines and expect government agencies and municipalities to pick up after us."** — Mark Harrison, Terracon (pictured above)



**4** booms installed in Chattanooga since 2023



**6,800** lbs. collected since 2023





The **RainSmart Yards program** fosters a strong sense of land stewardship within our community, empowering local homeowners to address stormwater issues and protect the **Tennessee River Watershed** right from their own yards! Since 2018, WaterWays has proudly partnered with the **City of Chattanooga** to incentivize homeowners to transform their yards into “creek-friendly” spaces, capturing stormwater runoff through native plantings, green infrastructure, and rain barrels. In 2024, the City of Red Bank joined the program and now offers its residents stormwater incentives! 2025 has been a successful year as we continued our mission to offer stormwater management resources and education to homeowners. We would like to welcome 23 newly certified RainSmart Yards to the program, creating a community of over **198 certified yards!** As WaterWays continues to work to expand our program to local municipalities throughout the region, we hope to successfully create an urban landscape which hosts sustainable ecosystems less prone to flooding and pollution in our water resources!

While the RainSmart Yards program continues to evolve, we would love to keep our community informed on how they can actively participate. Stay in the know for updates and free RainSmart Yards workshops by signing up for our newsletter or checking out our events page on our website, [mywaterways.org](http://mywaterways.org).

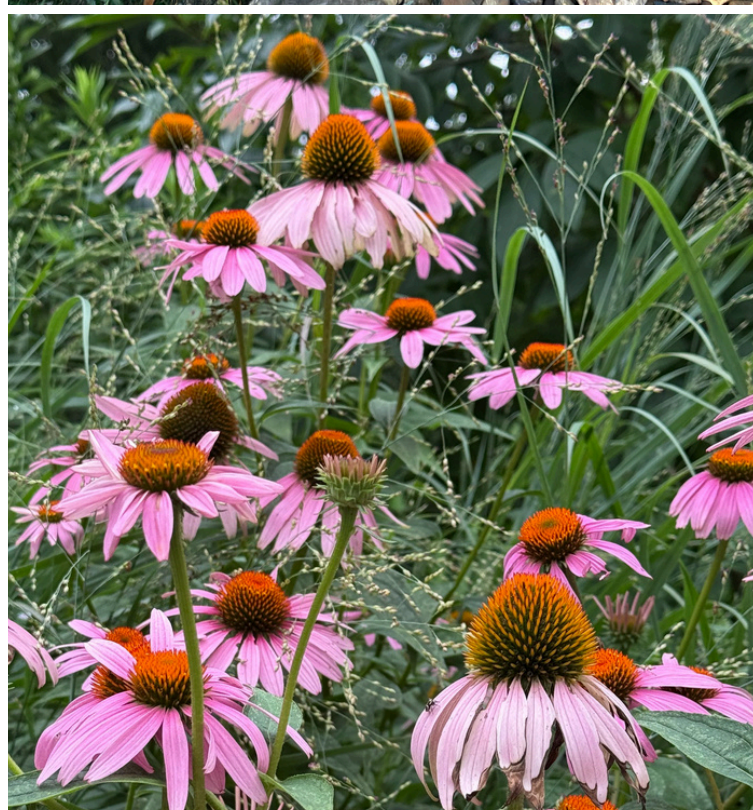
**We want you to keep your yearly stormwater discount up to date!** If you currently participate in the RainSmart Yards program and live in the City of Chattanooga, remember to get your yard photos and signed agreement forms turned in no later than June 25th, 2026. Surveys for new and recertifying yards will be conducted from **March through October** of next year.

Interested in making your yard part of the solution?  
**Email [Isabelle@mywaterways.org](mailto:Isabelle@mywaterways.org) for more information.**



**3.2** million gallons of stormwater abated

figure based on 198 homes, retaining ~16,000 gallons of rainwater per year







## ADOPT-A-WATERWAY

Founded in 2018 on the belief that it takes a village to keep our watershed clean, healthy, and thriving, the **Adopt-A-Waterway** program empowers individuals, families, businesses, and community groups to become stewards of their local waterways. By committing to care for a section of creek, river, or stream over a two-year period, adopters play a vital role in preserving the health of the Tennessee River Watershed.

Since the program's launch, **25 stream sections have been adopted**, leading to measurable improvements in water quality, litter reduction, invasive species removal, and overall ecosystem health. Beyond the environmental impact, this program has fostered a deeper connection between our community and the waterways that sustain us.

We strive to connect as many volunteers as possible with their local water resources. That's why we're excited to announce that starting in 2026, **we'll be launching monthly volunteer stewardship events** — no long-term commitment required! These events will give everyone a chance to get their hands dirty while making a positive impact close to home. **Activities will include litter clean-ups, tree plantings, invasive plant removal, water quality testing (both macroinvertebrate and abiotic), and fun, educational programs for all ages.**

Whether you want to participate for a two year commitment or just once, there's a place for you in this work.

**We can't wait to see you in the creeks next year!**

**We are still accepting new adopters for two-year commitments!** If you own land adjacent to a creek, stream, or river — or simply have a heart for conservation — consider becoming a waterway adopter and take part in a powerful, grassroots effort to **keep our Tennessee River Watershed clean, vibrant, and resilient.**



Learn more!



local stream sections  
adopted & improved



### MEET ISABELLE WATERSHED PROJECT COORDINATOR

Isabelle joined WaterWays in March as the **RainSmart Yards Coordinator** and has since taken on **Adopt-A-Waterway** and restoration project support. With a Bachelor's in **Environmental Science** and field research in soil conservation, she feels right at home restoring the Tennessee River Watershed. **Isabelle believes local action is the most powerful tool for conserving, protecting, and restoring natural resources.** Contact her to chat about RainSmart Yards, adopting a waterway, or restoration in your area!  
**Isabelle@mywaterways.org**



## STREAMBANK REPAIR

Our streambank repair workshops grow by leaps and bounds each year, **with 2025 being our biggest year yet!** At the start of this year, WaterWays co-hosted a workshop at Heritage Park with our fabulous partner **Dr. Andrea Ludwig at UT Ag Extension** as well as the **City of Chattanooga**. At this workshop, city employees and community members learned cost-effective, natural ways to repair eroded streambanks with biodegradable materials (*coir logs and matting made from coconut fibers*), bare roots, and “live stakes” of native riparian plant species. March brought on a similar workshop at **Reads Creek**, where we have conducted several workshops in the past at the base of **Walden’s Ridge Park**. This stretch of stream shows the direct success and effects of these streambank repair methods. You can now see native re-vegetation and bank stabilization happening in real time thanks to our low-impact repair techniques and native plant installations. In addition to our public streambank repair workshops, WaterWays worked with students at **Baylor School** to install a litter boom on their campus. While they were there, we demo’d DIY streambank repair methods with a coir log, coir matting and native live stakes in an eroded section of Stringers Branch.



Baylor students install coir log and matting on Stringer's Branch



Heritage Park Workshop January, 2025



## READS CREEK 2022



In total, we have seven (yes, SEVEN!) streambank repair workshops scheduled for winter 2025-2026. Fall/Winter 2025 workshops began at **Red Clay State Park** on November 14th, where we revegetated a compacted and eroded trail running along a sacred Cherokee spring in the park. For this project, we only planted medicinal and edible plants recorded by the Cherokee tribe! Next, on November 22nd, we worked at **Tendril's Therapy on Mountain Creek**. This section of the creek is of high use, heavily eroded, and experiences major flash flooding during storm events. We worked with the community and Tendril's Therapy kids and parents to complete this workshop! Our final 2025 workshop will be in December on a section of **Stringer's Branch** located behind the Red Bank Police Station. Here we will remove invasive species and replant with native riparian species to add function and aesthetics to this portion of the creek.

Our Winter 2026 workshops will include continued restoration on our very own portion of Stringer's Branch behind the Gear Closet, Read's Creek, and a site on Signal Mountain. **Stay tuned to find out more about those workshops and please, join in on the restoration fun! Scan the QR code above to see upcoming events.**

**Speaking of Read's Creek**, we will be conducting another workshop there in spring of 2026, making it our fourth year restoring this site! **Date TBD**, but we hope you'll join us at this spring workshop to see what multiple years of streambank restoration looks like!

**REGISTER FOR  
UPCOMING  
WORKSHOPS!  
SCAN THE  
QR CODE**



**THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS,  
SPONSORS, AND GRANTING AGENTS!**



**1,650**

livestakes installed in the winter of '24 and spring /fall 25'



**105**

community members trained



**1,900**

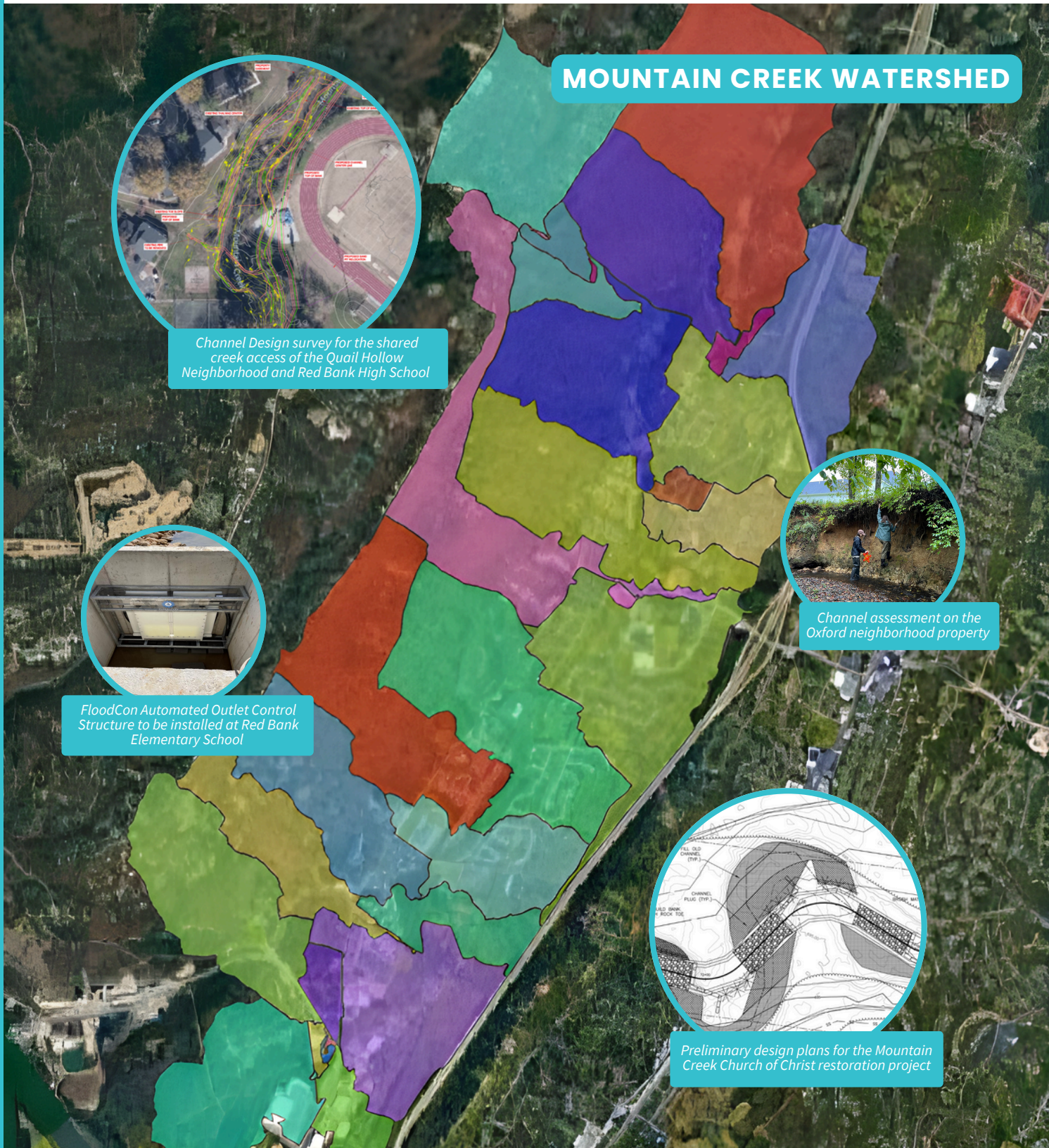
linear feet of streambank strengthened and repaired

**READS CREEK 2025**



# RESTORING MOUNTAIN CREEK

We have an exceptional opportunity happening on Mountain Creek (watershed map, including sub-basins pictured below)! In our long standing partnership with the **City of Chattanooga Stormwater Resources** and our support from the **Tennessee Department of Agriculture's 319 grant program**, we are working on four or five sites to reduce erosion and restore the stream! In addition, we are adding an Automated Outlet Control Structure at the **Red Bank Elementary** stormwater retention basin to slow the flow gouging out the opposite bank of Mountain Creek. Three out of four engineering designs are complete and the outlet structure is being installed as this newsletter is going to print. Our long term goal is to get Mountain Creek **"de listed" or removed from Tennessee's 303d list of polluted streams.**







*Publix Day of Service 2025 - Invasive plant removal on Stringer's Branch*

**We can use your help!** The real solution to streambank erosion is to reduce the flash floods that hit Mountain Creek because of excess runoff, a problem with most creeks and streams in our area. Students at Red Bank Middle School and High School will help! What can you do? Make sure your yard or your business property absorbs as much water as possible. Add rain gardens. Plant native plants and let your grass get a little longer (*check out our RainSmart Yards Program on page 9*). Volunteer to help us with student or streambank programs.

## **SLOW the FLOW and help our creeks!**

### **CORPORATE STEWARDSHIP**

**WaterWays wants to give a huge shout-out to the amazing volunteers from Publix and Mueller Water Company!** Your dedication to helping with grant work, like removing invasive species at Stringer's Branch and working on the riparian restoration at Reads Creek, has been incredible. Your efforts are vital in tackling the tough restoration and maintenance tasks that help keep our community safe from storm surges and potential flooding. Thank you so much for your hard work and commitment!

**WaterWays can collaborate with your company to offer customized volunteer opportunities that foster team bonding and create a positive impact in the community!**

By engaging employees in meaningful activities, we not only enhance their sense of purpose but also demonstrate your company's commitment to being a responsible corporate citizen.



*Mueller Water Company Employees plant trees at Reads Creek*



*City of Red Bank Administration and friends volunteer at annual Weed Wrangle*





## CHATTANOOGA'S USED GEAR STORE

📍 **305 Signal Mountain Road, Red Bank, TN**

**We sell used outdoor gear! What happens with the money? It goes to support WaterWays and helps clean up your rivers, lakes, and streams. This small store contributes annually to our mission.**

This year, **The Gear Closet** celebrated its second year at our new(ish) location in Red Bank on Signal Mountain Rd, and we couldn't be happier with all of the new customers and familiar faces coming through the door. We've seen so many great donations (and consignments!) coming every day. Thanks to all of you, **we have brought in over \$100,000** in the last year in fundraising towards all of the clean water initiatives WaterWays provides in our community. All of us at **WaterWays and The Gear Closet** are so appreciative of the support every customer provides when they shop at the store. And of course, we hope to see some of those same faces tagging along with us to **Bonnaroo** for our annual gear salvage! This past year presented its challenges with the flash flooding that struck the **Bonnaroo Music Festival**. The WaterWays team and some of our trusty volunteers worked on a tight schedule to make it out to the festival grounds where we salvaged a **few thousand pounds of gear over the course of two days**— all of which would have otherwise been sent straight to the closest landfill. Although the aftermath of the intense flooding made it a little tricky, we were able to pull off our **best Bonnaroo Yard Sale fundraiser ever!** A special thanks goes out to all of our volunteers who trekked through the mud and helped rebuild tents with us. **We couldn't have done it without all of you!** We hope to see some new and familiar faces again next year.


**JOIN US AGAIN - JUNE 15, 2026**  
**FOR THE NEXT**  
**BONNAROO GEAR SALVAGE!**





## SAVE WATER DRINK WINE

This past spring, WaterWays held its annual **Save Water, Drink Wine** fundraiser at **Greenway Farm**, shining a spotlight on local water champions and community partners who support our rivers and streams. Attendees indulged in delectable local cuisine, wines, and beers, all while enjoying new additions to the evening such as a rum tasting by **Privateer Rum** and tasty scoops from **Ben & Jerrys**! The evening also included a silent auction and the presentation of the **Big Splash Awards**, recognizing those dedicated to environmental stewardship and advocacy of our waterways. Participants left inspired, knowing they played a part in a vital cause.

 **41,500**  
dollars raised for watershed  
education and protection!



## NAME CHANGE

Save Water, Drink Wine is transforming into **Save Water Soirée in 2026!**  
This name change highlights our commitment to celebrating all of the water wins that strengthen our community and our waterways.





# BIG SPLASH

## 2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS

This year's Big Splash Awards recognized **deserving corporate, community, and volunteer water champions** for their efforts to safeguard and steward our local water resources. On the porch of the Greenway Farm Conference Center, nestled above the banks of the North Chickamauga Creek, attendees at the 12th annual Save Water Drink Wine joined WaterWays' Executive Director, Mary Beth Sutton, and Director of Operations, Brooke Fleeman, for the awards presentation.

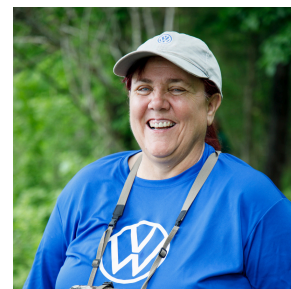


### Corporate Water Champion | Komatsu, accepted by Gerald Street

Komatsu earned the 2025 Business Big Splash Award for its commitment to environmental responsibility, including managing pollutants and striving to be a zero waste facility, with only 7% of waste sent to landfills. The company addresses stormwater runoff by maintaining drains and planning native plant installations to filter sediments. Its employees volunteer for local waterway cleanups and help protect biodiversity. Beyond the plant, Komatsu supports sustainability initiatives at local schools, including outdoor learning areas and maintaining a rain garden.

### Community Water Champion | Kaye Fiorello

Kaye Fiorello, Volkswagen's Environmental Compliance Specialist, was this year's Community Water Champion. She addressed issues caused by dragonflies and beavers at the VW plant and Enterprise South Nature Park. Through the Dragonfly Project, she facilitated research to deter dragonflies from manufacturing area while preserving wetlands. For the Beaver Defeater Project, she engaged 8th graders to design devices that mitigate property flooding without harming beavers. Additionally, she collaborated on creating an outdoor classroom and trails for environmental education.



### Volunteer Water Champion | Scott Ruth

Scott Ruth was recognized as the Volunteer Water Champion for his dedication to improving water quality in Signal Mountain streams after the departure of a watershed coordinator. He tirelessly engaged with landowners, local plumbers, and volunteers, addressing septic system issues and reducing stormwater runoff. Under his leadership, WaterWays successfully implemented fixes and established wetlands to treat runoff from abandoned mines, all while Scott led landowner negotiations.



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS



Explore with us



## TENNESSEE RIVER RESCUE

We would like to recognize our premier Tennessee River Rescue sponsors: **Tennessee Valley Authority, American Water Charitable Foundation, and the Tennessee RiverLine.**



AMERICAN WATER



TENNESSEE RIVERLINE

[TENNESSEERIVERRESCUE.ORG](http://TENNESSEERIVERRESCUE.ORG)

## CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TODAY

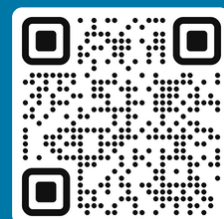


**Support our mission. Donate today!**

WaterWays accepts donations year round via Venmo, PayPal, or a mailed check. Your monetary donations go towards our educational programs, stream restoration projects, and so much more to improve our local waterways. We also appreciate gifts of your time - check out our volunteer opportunities. **Our mission is powered by our community!**

Physical checks may be mailed to:  
WaterWays  
PO Box 4437  
Chattanooga, TN 37405

**DONATE SECURELY ONLINE!**



We proudly operate as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit institution. Charitable contributions toward our work are fully tax-deductible.  
EIN: 20-1065856



**TO THOSE WHO MAKE ALL  
OF THIS POSSIBLE,  
THANK YOU!**



# Save Water Soiree

THE ANNUAL FUNDRAISER OF WATERWAYS



**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

*Join us for a night of fundraising, local food,  
drinks, Big Splash Awards and a silent auction.*

**Friday, 03.27.2026**



**WATERWAYS**

P.O. Box 4437

Chattanooga, TN 37405 USA

[www.mywaterways.org](http://www.mywaterways.org)