



On behalf of its members, Congaree Riverkeeper works to protect and improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and recreation on the Congaree, Lower Saluda and Lower Broad Rivers through advocacy, education and enforcement of environmental laws.

River Watch

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See A Water Quality Problem?

Call us at 803-760-3357 or send us an [email](#). We will investigate.

We Wouldn't Be Here Today Without the Support of our Founding Members

In January 2009, Congaree Riverkeeper appealed to friends, colleagues, neighbors, and the public at large to make a tax-deductible contribution of \$100 or more to the organization before December 31, 2010 and be recognized as founding members of Congaree

The Problem with Alpine Utilities

Alpine Utilities is a small, private sewer utility that discharges its treated wastewater into Stoops Creek, a tributary of the Saluda River. According to DHEC, on Saturday, January 29, wastewater overflowed from the Alpine Utilities' collection system on Alconbury Court in the Grove Park area. A citizen notified Alpine Utilities the next day, January 30, at 7:00 p.m. Both Alpine and DHEC were at the scene within an hour of the call. Approximately 2,000 gallons of wastewater flowed into a stormwater detention pond as a result of grease blockage in the sewer pipe. The sewage was removed from the detention pond. DHEC tested water in and below the pond for fecal coliform levels. The results ranged from 150 colonies to 280 colonies per 100 milliliters (ml) which is well below the state water quality standard of 400 colonies per 100 ml daily maximum (400/100 ml). While cleaning up this spill, DHEC was notified that another overflow had occurred from a manhole on Chartwell Road. This overflow, estimated to be 3,000 gallons, was also caused by a grease blockage in Alpine Utilities' sewer pipes. An estimated 900 gallons reached Stoops Creek. Water samples from Stoops Creek showed fecal coliform levels ranging from 240-1,200 colonies per 100 ml, some of which far exceeded the state standard of 400/100 ml. This recent episode is, sadly, nothing new. Over the past six months, 9 other sewer overflows occurred at Alpine Utilities. The recent sewer overflow is part of a larger recurring problem of sewer overflows that must be solved. Short-term solutions include pushing Alpine Utilities to responsibly maintain its system and comply with its wastewater permit, including getting serious about tackling the problem of grease blockages. We will do what we can to pressure Alpine Utilities to do its job right, including taking legal action. But the real solution to this problem is consolidation of Alpine Utilities' sewer system into the City of Columbia's system. Consolidation will take time and effort. But Congaree Riverkeeper commits to the goal of consolidation because it is the only real solution to the problem of Alpine Utilities. However long it takes, we will be working to make this happen. We need your help to carry on a sustained campaign to solve the Alpine Utilities problem. If you care about the Saluda River and want to stop Alpine's sewer overflows, then [make a contribution](#) to Congaree Riverkeeper today.

Proposed Legislation Targets Chronic Sewage Overflows

This week, a bill was introduced in the South Carolina House of Representatives that is a step in the right direction in terms of reducing

Riverkeeper. We are very thankful for the generosity of our founding members, and over the next few months, we will be honoring them, starting with these fine businesses, organizations and individuals:

Weston Adams, III
Patricia A. Parker
CCM Advisors, LLC
Grady & Stephanie North
Robert & Jane Key
Iris Garden Club
Marcia Montgomery
George Meriwether
Susan Hamilton
Amanda Manuel Odum
Bob Wislinski
Steven Suttle
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William Kale
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Sandra Rankin
Michael Frank
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Gay Gardners' Garden Club
William Kale
Chip & Melissa Spruce-Brown
Kate Hartley
Whitney Deldridge
Angela Valvasori
Jane & Johnny Scott
Freeman Belser

chronic sewage overflows. The bill, H3617, requires wastewater utilities who have three sewer overflows of 5,000 gallons or more within a 12-month period, that are large enough to cause serious adverse impacts to the environment or public health, to submit a comprehensive review of its sewer system to DHEC. The utility must then prepare an action plan to address the cause of the spills and whether system upgrades are necessary. This plan must be implemented no later than 2 years after the plan is completed. However, a utility cannot spend money to implement the plan that it would ordinarily use for operation and maintenance of its sewer system. Instead, it must use whatever funds remain after operation and maintenance expenses are covered. A utility with a DHEC-approved action plan has priority for any state funds for construction or upgrade of its infrastructure. Congaree Riverkeeper joins the Conservation Voters of SC, business leaders and others in support of this bill. If passed, H3617 could be another way to combat Alpine Utilities' chronic sewer overflows.

We Need Volunteers

Congaree Riverkeeper is looking for volunteers who can help us work on organizing our membership drive and performing various research projects. We also need volunteers to work at our River Rocks festival to be held on May 28, 2011. If you have the interest and skills to assist with these tasks, please call Stuart Greeter at 760-3357. We would really appreciate your help!

KUDOS CORNER: Great Job Richland County!

Richland County has made impressive strides in its efforts to prevent pollution from reaching our rivers and streams through stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff, which carries a variety of pollutants from roads, parking lots, and driveways during heavy rains, can have harmful impacts to the health of our streams and rivers if not properly monitored and dealt with. Richland County has the most advanced and comprehensive stormwater monitoring program in the State. The program, which was initiated in 2006, has 2 to 5 years of water quality data for more than 100 sampling stations spread across the County. While the program has not monitored samples long enough to show clear trends, in general there appears to be improvement at many of the stations. Countywide, 55% of all ambient station samples showed improved water quality over the original baseline samples collected in 2008. Similar improvements have been demonstrated at the wet weather (33%), sediment (19%) and macroinvertebrate (15%) stations. Water quality samples in the Gills Creek and Crane Creek watersheds also showed improved water quality conditions. The results are encouraging, and Congaree Riverkeeper applauds the work that Richland County is doing to clean up our rivers. More detailed information on the Richland County's stormwater monitoring program including monitoring station locations and data, can be found on the County's website. Any questions about the program can be directed to Srinivas Valavala, Richland County Stormwater Manager, at VALAVALAS@rcgov.us or call 803-576-2465.

Do you know of a person, business or organization that should be recognized for making a positive impact on water quality in the Midlands? Email your nomination for KUDOS CORNER to Stuart Greeter.

Please visit our website at <http://www.congareeriverkeeper.org>.
Donate to our cause at <http://congareeriverkeeper.org/become-member-help-clean-our-waterways>.