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## River Watch

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**Congaree Riverkeeper thanks [SCE&G](#), [Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough](#) and [Guignard Associates](#) for renewing their business memberships.**

### Congaree Riverkeeper Selects Our Top River

2011 was a busy year for river and environmental issues at regional and national levels. The following are just headlines worth looking back on: **Endangered Species Act** and **Make Their Presence Known**. Studies have shown that shortnose sturgeon move upstream from Cooper lakes to spawn in the Congaree River. The presence of the endangered species in the Congaree may affect stream health from SCE&G's Saluda Project. Last year the Center for Biodiversity and the US Fish and Wildlife Service struck a settlement that will move 757 species towards protection under the Endangered Species Act. The settlement found that 374 freshwater species in the Southeast are at risk in South Carolina. Among those are the Broad River spiny crayfish and the robust redhead shiner. 2011 also saw a rise in the awareness of environmental problems facing our troubled urban tributaries. DHEC's TMDL to improve aquatic life in Smith Branch. Congaree Riverkeeper, River Alliance and others have focused on cleaning up Smith Branch. Rocky Branch has gained momentum and calls for action to prevent development in its floodplains.

## Can You Help Us?

We are looking for generous souls who will donate the following items (new or almost new) to Congaree Riverkeeper:

- \* 15-30 hp Outboard Motor, preferably a jet drive
- \* Video-Capable DSLR Camera
- \* GPS Unit
- \* Canoe

If interested, please call 760-3357. In return, we'll add you as a member, and for businesses, we'll include your logo on our website.

**Thanks to Austin & Rogers, PA who donated a desk and a filing cabinet, and McAngus Goudelock & Courie, who donated an office chair!**

## Iceman and Millrace Massacre

On Saturday January 7th, dozens of people crowded onto the rocks below Millrace rapid on the Lower Saluda River to watch Columbia's premiere whitewater race. This year marked the 12th annual running of the Iceman and Maillrace Massacre.

The unseasonably warm temperatures may have helped make this one of the largest turnouts in the event's history. Congratulations to all of the competitors who braved the cold waters and a special thanks to Andy Grizzell for organizing the race and to all the sponsors for making it a success.



frequent flooding. Gills Creek Watershed Association mobile application to report sewer spills and other concerns in the watershed. **Finally the Feds Reduce Emissions.** In December of 2011 the EPA issued standards for mercury pollution from power plants and Air Toxics Standards (MATS). The agency believes standards will improve public health by reducing respiratory developmental disorders and should dramatically reduce toxic emissions entering the environment. **Alpine No Longer a Threat to the Lower Saluda.** A bright spot was the purchase of Alpine Utilities by Ni America, a wastewater utility. Congaree Riverkeeper worked with DHEC to require significant investments in the wastewater system which will reduce wastewater overflows into the Lower Columbia. **Columbia Plays Catch Up.** In 2011, the City of Columbia stay ahead of the EPA by issuing over a \$100 million in bonds to improve its sewer system. The City also has a deadline to revise its stormwater ordinance to conform with its stormwater NPDES permit and stumbled along with a well-meaning but inadequate public participation process disappointed by failing to seize the initiative to incorporate policy objectives into this ordinance.

## Congaree Riverkeeper Spots Issues to Watch

We expect 2012 to be as busy if not busier than last year with river and environmental concerns. The following are issues to watch in 2012: **City of Columbia contracts with Lockhart to manage Columbia Canal.** Last year Lockhart took over management of the Columbia Canal from SCE&G. We hope that they will manage this resource in a safe and responsible manner which includes among other things maintaining minimum flows to the Broad River, maintaining the flood diversion dam and working to monitor and enhance Spider Lily populations. **Help on the Way for Tributaries.** 2011 saw a surge in the attention paid to tributaries such as Smith Branch, their fate is far from decided. Several projects have been proposed for both the baseball field and the Department of Health property which includes a portion of Smith Branch. We hope the City of Columbia will responsibly manage these projects in a way that improves our community and the local water quality without worsening existing problems. **FEMA Restudies Floodplain.** Last year, FEMA started work on a new study of hazards in the Congaree River floodplain. FEMA is expected to release new flood maps in 2012. Will the new flood maps remain the same as the currently effective maps, or will the Congaree River floodway?

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