

# Georgia Power grants funds to WWALS for Water Quality Testing

July 29, 2020



Suzy Hall with a Petrifilm, Test kit, in Water Quality Testing Training @ SGRC, by John S. Quarterman, for WWALS.net, 14 September 2019, <http://wwals.net/2019/12/12/water-quality-testing-training-sgrc-2019-09-14/>

During the [long siege of pollution](#) coming down the Suwannee River from Georgia, it was discovered that our governmental agencies (health and environmental, both in Georgia and Florida) were doing inadequate testing in the river. At the insistence of Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson from OSFR and Suwannee RiverKeeper John Quarterman (WWALS) more testing as initiated.

WWALS' Quarterman continued doing much independently and has now finally received a grant to help with the project.

For a long time it was thought that the City of Valdosta was the

sole perpetrator but now, thanks to continued testing, we know there are additional sources.

To learn more about the testing, follow the links at the end of the press release.

*Comments by OSFR historian Jim Tatum.*

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*– A river is like a life: once taken,  
it cannot be brought back © Jim Tatum*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Georgia Power grants funds to WWALS for Water Quality Testing

Hahira, GA, July 27, 2020 – Aiding our attempts to clean up the Withlacoochee River, Georgia Power Foundation has provided a substantial grant to WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (“WWALS”). WWALS will buy more water quality testing kits and supplies with the funds, as well as other expenses related to our volunteer water quality testing program.

“Please accept our most sincere thanks for your recognition and support of WWALS Watershed Coalition and our work for clean, fishable, swimmable, boatable water,” said WWALS Executive Director Gretchen Quarterman. “We look forward to a productive water quality testing program this year.”

“We’re honored to get to help,” said Joe Brownlee, Georgia Power Southwest Region Director. “One of our goals is to make sure the people of Georgia know about our great natural resources. And also that they’re safe. And y’all help do that by making awareness around water testing. And you build strong relationships I know now, coordinating with the City of

Valdosta, making sure they publish their test results. Everything seems to be working and getting better. We're on a sharp upward curve of getting better with what we do with water and getting to enjoy it. And my little girl, I'm working for her future, and Georgia Power is. Thank y'all, thank you to the volunteer testers, and the Riverkeeper."

"The response of the Georgia Power grant and Mr. Brownlee's comments are quite touching (to me) due to the recognition of how difficult it is for a volunteer organization to do biological water testing over a huge area. The grant enables regular testing that can pinpoint multi-source pollution, which requires a varied response. It's quite gratifying that both individuals and large companies realize this is a complex situation," said WWALS President Tom H. Johnson, Jr.

"We have several testers already trained, waiting for testing kits. Thanks to Georgia Power, we can buy them kits and get them started testing!" said WWALS Testing Committee Chair Suzy Hall. "Plus we can buy enough kits to train new testers with physical distancing even during the virus pandemic."

"We like to think WWALS water quality testing has already done some good, helping warn people when the waterways are contaminated, helping find contamination sources, and encouraging several governmental organizations in Georgia and Florida to test more," said Suwannee Riverkeeper John S. Quarterman. "With these funds from Georgia Power we can do much more. Also thanks to Valdosta Mayor Scott James for introducing us to Joe Brownlee."

"The more testing, the more we can also check to see whether fixes such as fencing cattle away from waterways are actually working to improve the situation," said WWALS Science Committee Chair Dr. Tom Potter. "Interested governmental, educational, or

agricultural organizations please contact us about that.”

About WWALS: Founded in June 2012, WWALS Watershed Coalition, Inc. (WWALS) advocates for conservation and stewardship of the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds in south Georgia and north Florida through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities. John S. Quarterman is the Suwannee Riverkeeper®, which is a staff position and a project of WWALS as the member of Waterkeeper® Alliance for the Suwannee River Basin.

WWALS Water Quality Testing is summarized here:  
<http://wwals.net/issues/testing/>

Here is a video about this grant: [https://youtu.be/zy0N\\_kRhPfI](https://youtu.be/zy0N_kRhPfI)

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