

Gills Creek Watershed Association

**2011-2012
Annual Report**

Gills Creek Watershed Association

712 Main St., EWS 603

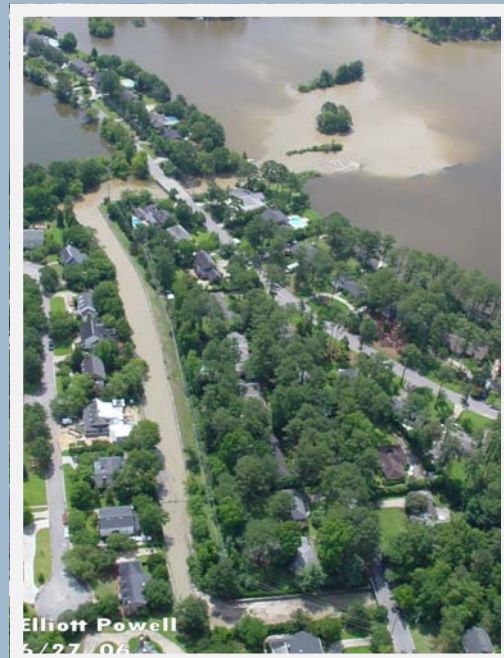
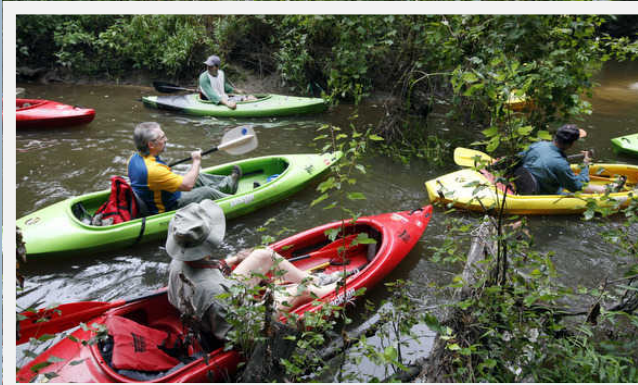
Columbia, SC 29208

803-727-8326

www.gillscreekwatershed.org



The Mission of the Gills Creek Watershed Association...



...is to restore and protect the Gills Creek Watershed by uniting citizens, government, organizations, and businesses.

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Building a Watershed Organization

The Gills Creek Watershed Association saw a number of milestones in 2011-12. The Association continued to build its organizational capacity and spread the word about watershed protection and restoration. Partnerships with local jurisdictions and citizen organizations were strengthened. In June 2012, we said goodbye to our founding staff member, and launched a search for her replacement. One sign of a healthy organization is its ability to weather changes in personnel and leadership, and the Association is in good standing on that front.

We have had several notable accomplishments for this fiscal year include the following:

- Participation in the crafting of the City of Columbia's first Stormwater Ordinance;
- Cooperative efforts with the newly formed Rocky Branch Watershed Alliance, including a seminar for City and County leaders on the development of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway in Charlotte;
- Launching of the Middle Watershed Planning effort, culminating in a successful grant proposal to continue with a Feasibility Study;
- Reporting on the Lake Katharine sedimentation issue, advocating a new public-private model for lake management;
- Upgrading the content of the GCWA website, a water sampling guide for concerned residents, and upgraded maps to better communicate watershed boundaries and features;
- Participation in many community events, meetings, and festivals with thousands in attendance, providing educational information about the watershed, major pollutants which impact water quality, and how people can become more involved;
- The formal adoption of South Beltline Boulevard through Keep the Midlands Beautiful Adopt-A-Highway program; and
- Fulfilling our fundraising goal of \$16,000 from private donations and membership revenue while recruiting 55 new members to the GCWA.

We are grateful to our members and active volunteers for making such good things happen this year!



Mark Mayson, Emily Jones, and Julie Mayson at the 2011 Wine for Water fundraiser and Annual Meeting.

In the Beginning

The Gills Creek Watershed Association was originally formed in the late 1990s by a group of citizens who noticed a decline in water quality in the Lake Katharine area. With the support of Richland County, the GCWA reformed in 2006 with a major focus on comprehensive watershed management. Since then, the GCWA has been working to create a strong and dedicated membership base, implement stream and lake restoration projects, and advocate for policy changes to improve water quality.

Lake Sedimentation

Sediment build-up, like these examples at Lake Katharine near Woodlake Road, is a key issue for many of our members.

Photos by Elliott Powell.



Water Quality

Eightmile Branch tributary appears milky-colored where it enters Gills Creek (right). The color comes from a high amount of dissolved solids that often come from construction sites (left) that are not properly managed.

Photos by Elliott Powell.

Location

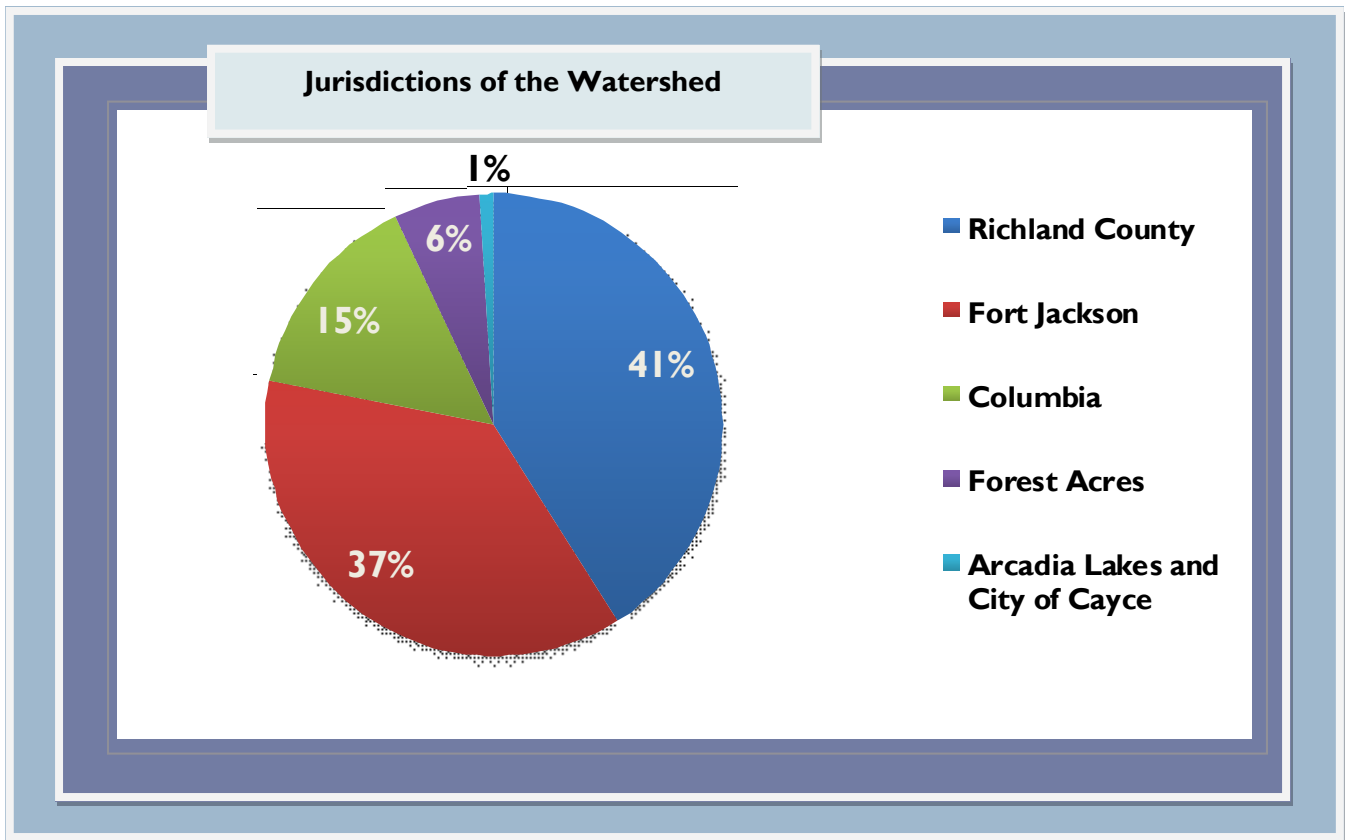
The area of the Gills Creek Watershed is 76 square miles. It contains approximately 70 miles of streams and over 47,000 acres of land within Richland County and Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

The primary named tributaries of the watershed are from east to west are Gills Creek, Jackson Creek and Little Jackson Creek. All three tributaries are impounded multiple times to create Centennial Lake, Springwood Lake, Windsor Lakes, and Arcadia Lakes, among others.

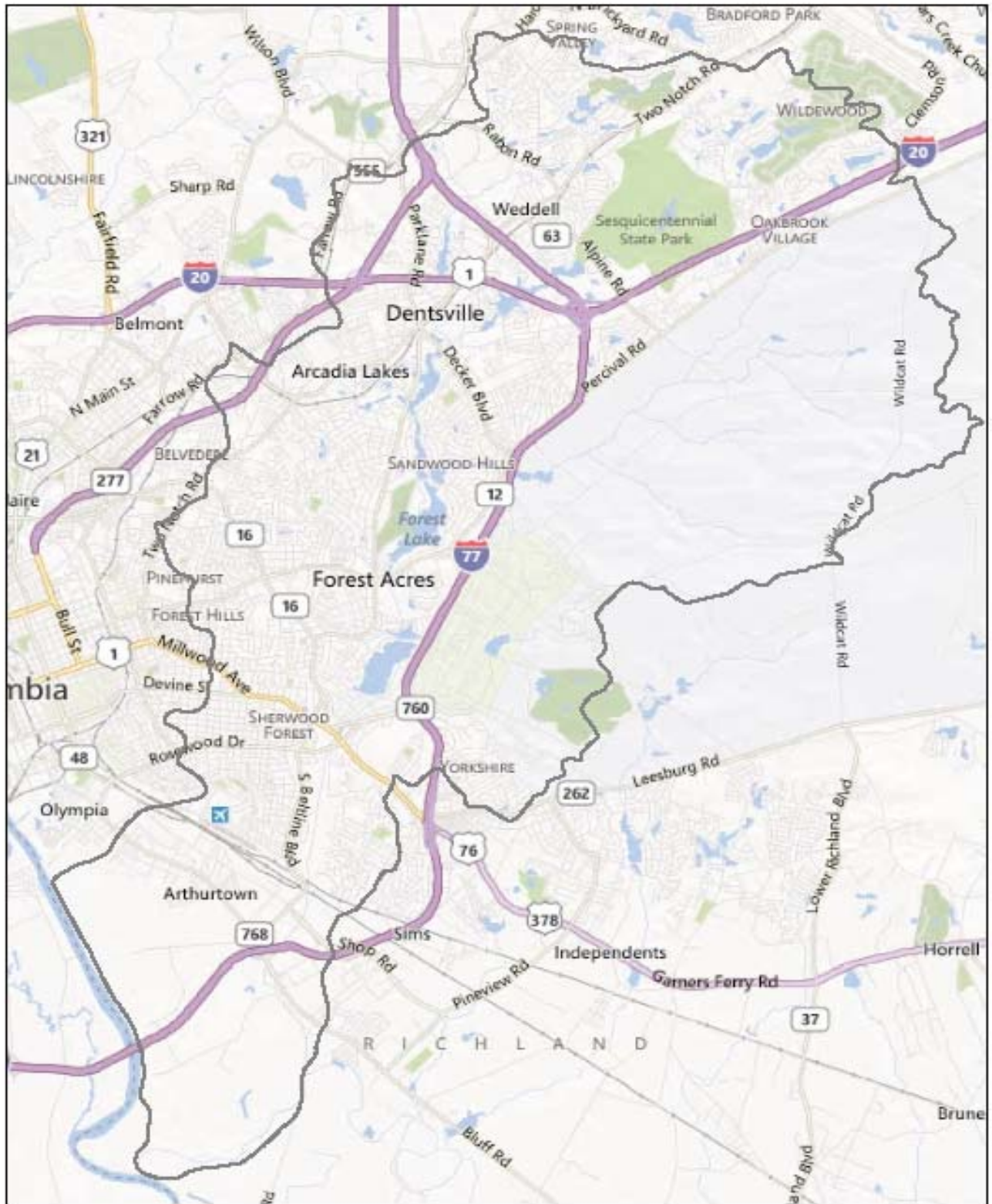
The headwaters of Gills Creek begin northeast of Sesquicentennial State Park at Hughes Pond and continue south through a largely undeveloped tract of Fort Jackson. Jackson Creek and Little Jackson Creek flow south through residential neighborhoods and shopping centers, joining together at Cary Lake. At Forest Lake, Gills Creek joins the other two streams, giving its name to the downstream reaches. Below Forest Lake, Eight mile Branch, Penn Branch, and Wildcat Creek feed into the main channel of Gills Creek.

The final major lake in the watershed is Lake Katharine. Downstream of Lake Katherine, Gills Creek flows freely through a variety of residential, agricultural, and commercial land uses until its confluence with the Congaree River south of I-77.

Each of these jurisdictions has their own land use policies, including plans for growth, zoning regulations, development standards, and sediment and erosion control regulations. A primary goal of the GCWA is to bring together the different jurisdictions in the watershed to restore and protect the watershed through implementation of the management plan, coordinated stormwater regulations, and cooperative restoration projects.



Watershed Map



Watershed Management Plan

The Gills Creek Watershed Management Plan was completed in 2009. The Plan identified the most applicable management strategies to be implemented in each sub-watershed. The following management strategies were considered:

- **Stormwater BMP Retrofits** – Best Management Practices (BMPs), either structural or nonstructural, that are implemented within existing development to reduce impacts from stormwater runoff;
- **Stream and Riparian Buffer Restoration** – Revegetation and/or restructuring of a stream channel, banks, and/or floodplain area to reduce high flows, downstream flooding, and erosion and to restore the biological and water quality functions of a stream;
- **Preservation** – Acquisition and permanent protection of undisturbed natural areas to protect wildlife habitat and downstream water quality;
- **New Development Policies** – Requirements or other policies to encourage control and treatment of stormwater runoff from new development to protect watershed functions, including water quality and aquatic habitat; and
- **Other Policies and Outreach** – Programs implemented to educate watershed citizens and promote watershed protection efforts.

The Middle Watershed:

One focal area for the Gills Creek Watershed Association is the Middle Watershed from Lake Katharine to Shop Road. High amounts of impermeable surfaces cause flash flooding and low water quality for this area and downstream.

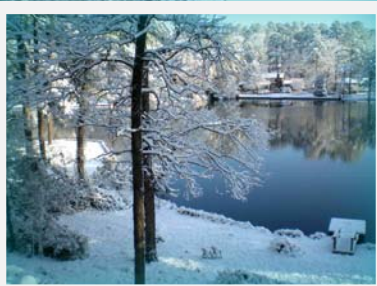
At right, an aerial photo of Gills Creek along Crowson Road at Garners Ferry Road near the former K-Mart.



Strategic Planning

In December 2010, the Board adopted a three-year Strategic Plan which outlined seven major goals and a set of specific tasks and objectives. By June 2012, 18 months into the term of the Plan, approximately 60% of the Plan's goals and objectives had been accomplished.

- Goal #1:** Improve water quality, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities in the Gills Creek watershed by promoting and implementing restoration projects that engage and benefit the community.
- Goal #2:** Inform and educate decision-makers and stakeholders in the watershed about the importance of effective watershed management and actions they can take to protect and restore the Gills Creek watershed.
- Goal #3:** Serve as a respected advocate for stormwater management and land use practices that will improve water quality in the Gills Creek Watershed.
- Goal #4:** Increase GCWA membership on a sustained basis and engage members and the larger community in GCWA's mission and programs.
- Goal #5:** Develop a financial management system and a sustainable fundraising strategy to support GCWA programs and staff and to implement this strategic plan.
- Goal #6:** Develop strong and active committees that implement GCWA programs, engage the community, and develop GCWA future leadership.
- Goal #7:** Develop GCWA Board of Directors to include a number of strong leaders and a membership that understands and fulfills its roles and responsibilities as Directors.



Top photos by Elliott Powell,
bottom photos by Amy Overstreet

General Events and Activities



Top left: From left to right; David Tuttle, Julie Jones, Carol Kososki, Buddy Atkins at the 2011 Wine for Water Fundraiser and Annual Meeting.

Top right: 2012 Urban Paddle at the Millaree Hunt Club. Photos by Jessica Artz.

Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month. During 2011-2012, a meeting took place each month except August. In August, a Board of Directors social event was held in lieu of a board meeting.

Annual Meeting and Wine for Water Fundraiser *October 20*

This year the GCWA combined the Annual Meeting and Wine for Water Fundraiser and held the event at the Rockbridge Club located close to Jackson Creek. At the Annual Meeting, we elected 5 new board members. Approximately 100 people attended the wine tasting.

Little Sugar Creek Seminar *February 9, Capital Senior Center*

This event, co-sponsored by GCWA and the Rocky Branch Watershed Alliance, brought to Columbia the project manager for Charlotte's Little Sugar Creek Greenway to speak about the 10-year effort to restore Little Sugar Creek and turn it into a community asset. City and County leaders were invited and over 50 people attended.

Cross Hill Market Food Truck Rodeo *January 14*

A food truck rodeo announced the groundbreaking at the site of the new Cross Hill Market developed by Edens. Edens donated a portion of the entry fees from the rodeo, attended by over 1,100 people, to GCWA.

Urban Paddle and Picnic *March 25, Millaree Hunt Club*

A barbeque picnic was held at this unique site near the Congaree River. Kayaks were available for people to explore Mill Creek and live music was provided by The Groovy Tuesdays. Approximately 40 people were in attendance.

Clean-Ups

Four clean-up events were organized this year, resulting in a total of 180 bags of collected trash. This year the GCWA adopted a portion of South Beltline Boulevard through Keep the Midlands Beautiful, Adopt-a-Highway Program. These clean-ups are held in partnership with student community service volunteers from Heathwood Hall.



Adopt-a-Highway Clean-Ups on South Beltline Boulevard



Eight-Mile Branch Creek Clean-Up

When Gills Creek Watershed resident Jacob Luksik noticed how polluted Eightmile Branch Creek was, he organized a clean-up that pulled out a copious amount of garbage and debris. For this project he was awarded his Eagle Scout badge and was recognized by the GCWA. The pictures above show the volunteers, the amount of garbage pulled out from the creek, and a sign they installed.

Reaching Out to Residents

Newsletters & Social Media

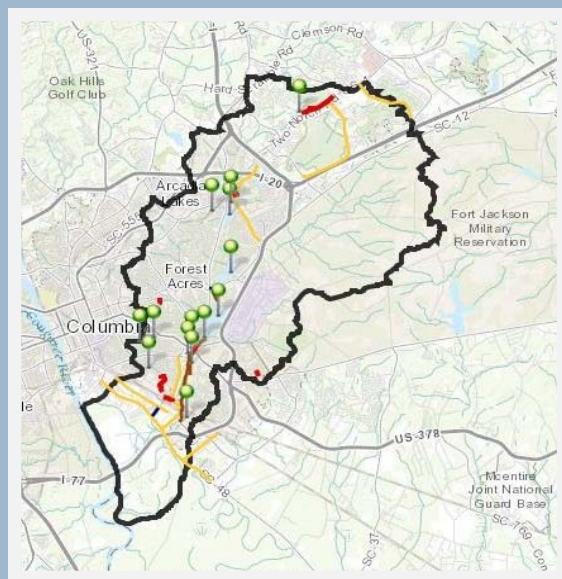
The Big Splash, GCWA's e-newsletter, is distributed monthly to a list of approximately 500 people. E-newsletters typically include information about upcoming events, stormwater issues, and acknowledgment of projects and/or volunteers. A newsletter had been sent each month of 2011-12. A Facebook page was started this year and has been a way to communicate quickly with members and friends.

Website

The GCWA website was expanded in 2011-2012 with a variety of new resources, including:

- Historical Timeline of the Watershed;
- Historic documents on watershed and greenway planning in Columbia;
- Composting Yard and Kitchen Waste;
- Pet Poop Disposal;
- Build a Rain Garden;
- Lawn & Landscape Best Practices, and Alternative Landscape Design;
- Volunteer Water Sampling;
- Litter and Our Waterways; and
- Interactive Project Map that indicates project areas in the Gills Creek Watershed.

At right, an interactive project map of the Gills Creek Watershed. On the website, the green pins highlight current projects. Below, pet waste info is available on the website.



The Education Committee reaches out to interested citizens to share the mission of the GCWA and educate citizens about how they impact water quality. The Committee represents GCWA at a variety of public events and festivals. The Committee also organizes specific presentations to groups such as homeowner associations, church groups and garden clubs. The Education Committee also assists the Membership Committee in recruiting new members and volunteers to the association.



Events Attended

City of Columbia Summer Celebration of Water

Richland County Neighborhood Planning Conference

America Recycles Day

USC’s Earthstock Festival

McCrary Earth Day Event

Tree of Life Big Nosh Festival

Forest Lake Presbyterian Church Earth Sunday

Sparkleberry Fair

Backyard Landscaping Series

Arcadia Lakes Picnic

Education Tools

The watershed model (above) is a learning tool to help children and adults understand what a watershed is. The ground map (right) helps to show citizens where they are in the watershed.

Top Left: 2011 City of Columbia Summer Celebration of Water

Middle Left: Tree of Life Big Nosh Festival

Right: 2011 City of Columbia Summer Celebration of Water





Wine for Water Fundraiser and Annual Meeting

Our second annual event featured hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and of course, wine. Above left to right: Bob Bishop, Carolyn Hudson, Pam Greenlaw; Julie Jones; Helen Milliken, Robin McLeod and Judy Timmons.

The Membership Committee works to recruit new members and engage current members in the mission and work of the GCWA. During this year, GCWA gained 55 new individual members. Of 84 members contacted for annual renewal, 64 members did renew making the renewal rate 76%. Association memberships were renewed by the Lake Katharine Homeowner's Association, and the Spring Lake Company (totaling 124 members).

Urban Paddle and Picnic

The Urban Paddle took place this year at the Millaree Hunt Club, featuring live music by the Groovy Tuesdays, a barbeque picnic, a nature walk hosted by John Cely, and kayaks for paddling the swamp.



The responsibilities of the Technical Committee include reviewing and coordinating technical projects in the watershed, reviewing and responding to regulatory matters, identifying potential restoration and water quality improvements, investigating citizen water quality complaints, and providing technical guidance to the Board, Executive, and Educational Committees. The Technical Committee also reviewed a stormwater pond compliance checklist developed by a GCWA member and assessed its feasibility for use by local municipalities.

This year, the Technical Committee undertook the following initiatives:

Middle Watershed Plan

- Developed a conceptual plan that includes greenways, stormwater retrofits, and stream restoration from Kilbourne Road to Shop Road.
- Created a map identifying potential projects in the plan.
- Applied for and received funding from the Richland County Conservation Commission to create a more detailed plan that includes schematic drawings, cost estimates, and recommended next steps.

Lake Katharine Task Force

- Brought together representatives from Lake Katharine and Little Lake Katharine.
- Discussed funding options to further identify the source of sedimentation problems.
- Issued a report recommending that a public benefit in flood and stormwater management be incorporated into projects where public funds are spent maintaining privately owned lakes.



The City of Columbia installed permeable pavement in Rosewood Park as a Best Management Practice (BMP) to reduce stormwater runoff.

Photos by Jessica Artz.

The responsibilities of the Financial Stewardship Committee include advising the Board on financial matters and reporting, and seeking new and sustained sources of revenue. This year, the GCWA has:

- Upgraded accounting processes using Quickbooks software, including new balance sheet formats for reports to Board
- Improved budget forecasting based on actual annual expenses
- Exceeded private fundraising goal of \$16,000 with a total of \$16,027.85
- Organized the Second Annual Wine for Water event which attracted 100 attendees and raised over \$1,920.00;
- Organized the Urban Paddle and Picnic at Millaree Hunt Club that had over 40 attendees and raised \$1,300;
- Hosted a presentation on Board stewardship by consultant Cindy NeSmith.
- Developed a fundraising plan for 2012-13 with a goal of \$20,000.
- Received positive review on 2011-12 financial audit.

2011 Photo Contest



2011 Photo Contest Winners:

Left: Overall contest winner, Faust Pauluzzi

Bottom Left: Carolyn Hudson

Bottom Middle: Lee Pippin

Bottom Right: Page Morris

Land



People



Lakes and Streams



Special Projects

Water Quality Sampling Guide for Volunteers

This document was created to assist homeowners, students and others interested in constructing their own water monitoring program. The document explains how to sample with home test kits for parameters such as E. coli, Dissolved Oxygen, Turbidity, pH, Temperature and Flow.

City Stormwater Roundtable

The GCWA participated in the City of Columbia's development of a new stormwater ordinance. Several sessions were held that included representatives from the environmental community, the development community, Richland County and City of Columbia staff. This group reviewed language in the ordinance that covered stream buffers, lot sizes, enforcement, and other issues. The final stormwater ordinance was passed in January 2012.

Mapping Resources

With a grant from the Richland County Conservation Commission, the GCWA was able to upgrade its educational display materials, purchase a watershed model, and hire a cartography student intern to create specialized display maps.

iRangers

The iRanger project allows volunteers with iPhones or iPads to use a special application to report stormwater concerns. With the application, the volunteer can send an e-mail to Richland County, the City of Columbia, and GCWA that includes a photo of the problem, a map and coordinates of the location. This program makes it easier for citizens to report problems, promotes coordination and communication between the different entities and allows for a follow-up system. During the grant cycle approximately 66% of the concerns reported were resolved.



High Dissolved Solids



Failing Silt Fence

iRanger Reporting

The GCWA received grants from the **Richland County Conservation Commission** and the **AT&T Foundation** to develop the iRanger Project.

Photos at left were taken by iRanger volunteers.

Audit Summary: Letter to The Board of Directors

HAMILTON, McKINNEY & MOSS

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

A PARTNERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

The Board of Directors
Gills Creek Watershed Association
Columbia, South Carolina

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Gills Creek Watershed Association (a non-profit organization) as of June 30, 2012 and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of Gills Creek Watershed Association's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Gills Creek Watershed Association as of June 30, 2012, and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Hamilton, McKinney & Moss
Columbia, South Carolina
October 04, 2012

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Phone: 803.787.1509 Email: cmoss@mosstax.com www.hmmcpafirm.com

Fax: 803.787.1782 #5 Calendar Ct. Suite 201-C Columbia, SC 29206

Members: American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and SC Association of CPAs

Audit Summary: Statement of Financial Position

GILLS CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

JUNE 30, 2012

ASSETS

Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 36,627
Prepaid insurance	1,620
Total Current Assets	38,247
Property, Plant and Equipment, net - Note B	<u>769</u>
Total Assets	<u>39,016</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	
Accrued expenses	<u>204</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>204</u>
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	38,812
Temporarily restricted	-
Permanently restricted	<u>-</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>38,812</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Asset	<u>\$ 39,016</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

2011-12 Board, Staff & Partners

2011-12 Board of Directors

Emily Jones, President

David Tuttle, Vice President

Sam Agee, Secretary

Dan Tufford, Treasurer

Elliott Powell, Past President

Robert Bunch, Technical Committee Chair

Julie Jones, Membership Committee Chair

Tameria Warren, Education Committee Chair

Michael Criss

Bernie Gaudi

Carol Kososki

Pete Mayers

Julie Mayson

Yancey McLeod

Judy Timmons

Advisory Members

James B. Atkins, Richland County Conservation Commission

Quinton Epps, Richland Count Stormwater Division

Victoria Kramer, City of Columbia Engineering Department

Mary Nevins, Carolina Clear

Jim Manning, Richland County Council

Anne McGovern, SCDHEC

Amy Overstreet, USDA NRCS

Mullen Taylor, McAngus Goudelock & Courie

Srinivas Valavala, Richland County Stormwater Division

Staff

Jessica Artz, Program Coordinator

Interns

Brian Davidson, Hannah Fox and Matt Henderson

Partner Organizations

Richland County

City of Columbia

City of Forest Acres

Town of Arcadia Lakes

Richland County Stormwater Consortium/Carolina Clear

Richland County Conservation Commission

Keep the Midlands Beautiful

Intertape Polymer Group

City of Columbia Climate Protection Action Committee

Congaree Riverkeeper

Rocky Branch Watershed Alliance

River Network

American Rivers

Webmaster

Lewis Kirk

Sponsors

AT&T Foundation

Edens

Forest Lake Property Owners

Fuss & O'Neill

Grimball Cotterill Landscape Architects

Natural Resource Mitigation, LLC

Palmetto Environmental Consulting

Organizational Members

Cary Lake HOA

Lake Katharine HOA

Spring Lake HOA

