



THE SAVANNAH RIVER'S BLACKWATER JEWEL: EBENEZER CREEK

Ebenezer Creek is a 13-mile blackwater creek near Savannah, Georgia, part of the Savannah River system. It is full of natural beauty, American history, and ecological wonders: some of the bald cypress trees in the creek are estimated to be over 1,000 years old. It's also home fascinating wildlife like wading birds, owls, alligators and amphibians. Ebenezer has been called "Georgia's best example of a blackwater stream ecosystem." The creek's distinctive sweet tea-colored water is caused by the tannins in decaying organic matter on the swamp bottom.

Ebenezer Creek is recognized by the National Park Service as a National Natural Landmark, and a State Scenic River—one of only three Georgia rivers to hold that distinction. However, while it honors Ebenezer as a unique site worth preserving, the state designation holds no significant regulatory weight for protecting the fragile waterway.

That's why SRK strives to protect Ebenezer Creek from a variety of threats. We worked with Effingham County to update its wastewater system; busted illegal cypress harvesting; and continually seek and prevent pollution from nearby agriculture and development. In 2018, DRT America, a turpentine plant on the creek, applied to pipe wastewater to the Springfield sewage treatment facility. Residents and visitors feared the effects of chemical pollution on Ebenezer and tributaries. Thanks to SRK and partners rallying public opposition, City Council denied the permit and Ebenezer Creek was saved, for now.

Until now, the fight for Ebenezer has been a piecemeal approach, but the time has come to change that. To gain permanent protections, the community must support ongoing preservation and restoration efforts, and above all, they must fall in love with this special waterway.



SRK EFFORTS TO SAVE EBENEZER CREEK

SRK is galvanizing local efforts to save the creek. We are collaborating with community members, businesses, eco-tourism, partner groups, and elected officials to ensure the wonder, wildlife, and water quality of Ebenezer Creek are protected forever.

Project Goals

Increase Engagement

SRK will guide a positive shift in community concern, awareness, and participation in activities on Ebenezer Creek, and promote sustainable eco-tourism like canoeing, kayaking, and tours. Using our waterways inspires pride in local heritage, contributes to the local economy, and forms a network of advocates for its future. Engagement leads to better stewardship of wild places.

Reduce Pollution

We will identify and mitigate potential pollution risks in the area, carry out regular water quality testing and report unsafe conditions to the public, lead cleanups to remove trash and debris, and help limit human impact to foot and boat traffic.

Support Conservation

Along with coastal community groups, state agency partnerships we advocate for conservation and stronger protections for Ebenezer Creek. We support nomination of Ebenezer as a National Wild and Scenic River, efforts to construct a greenway from the town of Springfield along the creek, and any other endeavors or policies seeking to protect the creek for future generations.

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