



# TENNESSEE RIVERKEEPER®

**Riverkeeper Updates**

*Brief summaries about recent Riverkeeper actions addressing pollution violations.*

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**Become A Volunteer!**

*We always need more volunteers. In this issue we highlight various volunteer opportunities.*

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**What is Riverkeeper?**

*Information about Tennessee Riverkeeper and our anti-pollution mission.*

**Page 3**

**Membership form**

*One of the best things you can do to help Riverkeeper is join. Become a member today!*

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**TENNESSEE RIVERKEEPER LAUNCHES NEW ANTI-MICROPLASTICS CAMPAIGN**

Scientists have found that the Tennessee River is polluted by as much as 16,000 to 18,000 parts per cubic meter of microplastics. In response, Riverkeeper has launched a new anti-microplastics campaign.

As widespread testing increases, the high concentration of microplastics being discovered in our waterways is alarming. Furthermore, the levels found in the Tennessee River are among the highest studied to date. While the scientific community is still working to pinpoint just how rampant the problem is, the adverse impact it is having on our wildlife is conclusive. As small critters and fish consume microplastics, it builds up the food chain as larger predators feed on them, through a process called biomagnification. Microplastics and plastic chemicals have even been found in our food and drinking water.

Tennessee Riverkeeper is battling microplastics in a number of ways. First, we are hosting cleanups along our creeks and riverbanks. These well attended cleanups exhibit the public’s concern for this issue, garnering significant media coverage and awareness to the microplastic problem. Second, we educate the public about plastic pollution, through the press, social media, events, and speeches. Finally, Tennessee Riverkeeper is advising and supporting local municipalities and their leaders on effective preventative measures that they can implement to protect their residents and communities.



**FLOODING AND SANITARY SEWER OVERFLOWS**

Tennessee Riverkeeper addresses sewage pollution as a major component of our clean water advocacy. Heavy rain brings flooding and sewage overflows that continue to pollute our watershed. Stormwater runoff and sewage overflows exacerbated by these rains are a threat to the people who enjoy local lakes and streams.

The precipitation this winter set records for many areas in the Tennessee River watershed. For example, in 2019, Decatur, Alabama experienced 50 sewage overflows totaling over 6,400,000 gallons of untreated sewage entering our waterways. Additionally, Tennessee Riverkeeper has filed suit against the Hamilton County Water and Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA) over alleged illegal discharges from the Signal Mountain Sewage Treatment Plant.



*This photo shows untreated sewage overflowing from a manhole cover.*

Flooding can cause runoff and sewage overflows that carry pathogens and disease. Generally, experts advise to wait 7 days before engaging in freshwater recreation like swimming or fishing following heavy rain. Tennessee Riverkeeper will continue working to bring awareness to these pollution issues that affect our watershed and its inhabitants.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Microplastics!**

*The Tennessee River is polluted by as many as 16,000 to 18,000 particles of microplastics per cubic meter.*

**RIVERKEEPER is on Instagram:**

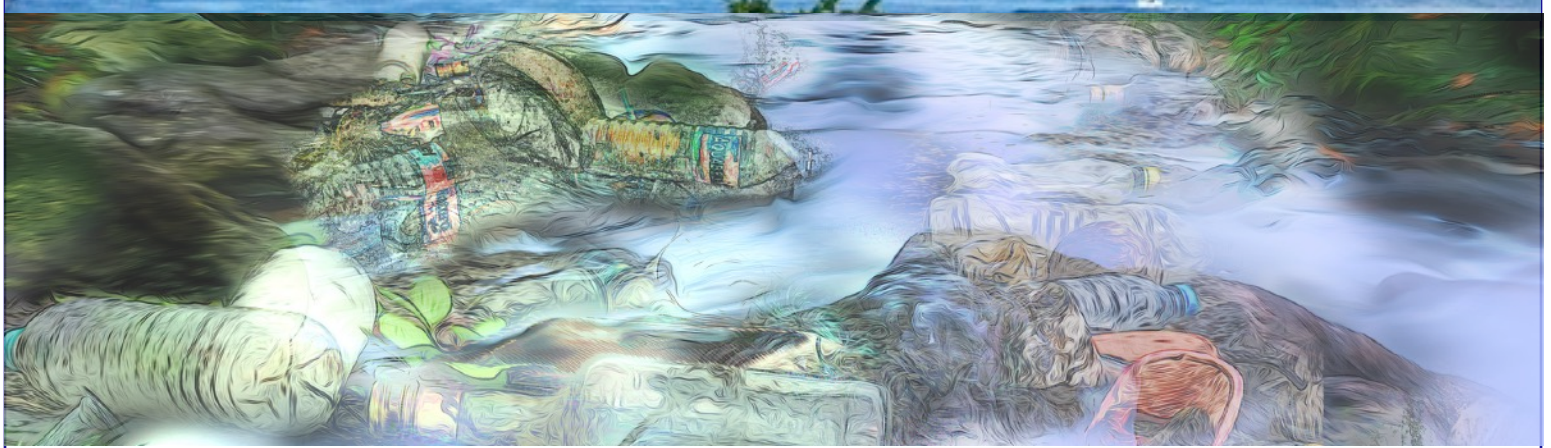
*Visit Tennessee Riverkeeper on Instagram, for news, updates, and brief articles:*

[Instagram.com/TennesseeRiver](https://www.instagram.com/TennesseeRiver)

**Tell Your Friends!**

*Word of mouth and social media are the most powerful tools to spread our message of clean water. Please share!*

# RIVERKEEPER UPDATES



## PULASKI SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT (STP)

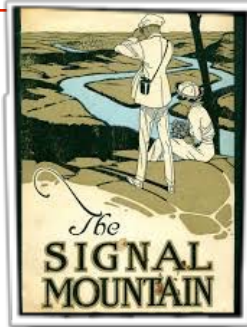
**PULASKI (TN)** - Tennessee Riverkeeper filed a three-count lawsuit in US District Court on August 16, 2018 against the City of Pulaski, Tennessee. The first count alleges Pulaski violated its permit by allowing 126 overflows in a five-year period which accounted for over 31 million gallons of raw sewage entering the environment. The second count was for failure to properly report the overflows and the third count asked for injunctive relief to require Pulaski to comply with its permit. After Pulaski showed that it has repaired pipes which allowed floodwater to enter its system, completed other repairs, and entered into an administrative agreement with TDEC, Riverkeeper settled its claim and dismissed the lawsuit. Riverkeeper will continue to monitor Pulaski to ensure it continues to comply with the TDEC agreement and its permit.



*Riverkeeper v. 3M Company. Flight provided by [SouthWings.org](http://SouthWings.org)*

## SIGNAL MOUNTAIN STP

**SIGNAL MOUNTAIN (TN)** - Riverkeeper filed a four count complaint in US District Court against Hamilton County Wastewater Treatment Authority on October 26, 2018. The first count alleges 1,533 violations or days of violation at the Signal Mountain sewage treatment plant. These are for discharging pollutants to surface waters in excess of the levels allowed by their permit. The second alleges permit violations by failure to avoid overflows in its collection system. The overflows in a five-year period released over 20 million gallons of raw sewage into the environment. The third count alleges the WWTA allowed sewage to bypass its treatment system and enter untreated into surface waters. The complaint alleges over 1,300 hours of bypass, which resulted in millions of gallons of raw sewage entering the environment. The final count requests the court enjoin the WWTA from continuing its permit violations.



*Sewage pipe in Chattanooga, Tennessee.*

## ASHLAND CITY STP

**ASHLAND CITY (TN)** - Tennessee Riverkeeper identified 59 sewage overflows which have continually dumped raw sewage into the Cumberland River, going back to January 2013. Riverkeeper is finalizing an agreement to bring Ashland City in compliance with the law.

## OAK RIDGE STP

**OAK RIDGE (TN)** - Tennessee Riverkeeper identified 1,533 sewage discharge violations since May 2013. Additionally, there were 195 sewage overflows during this time which have dumped over 20 million gallons of raw sewage into the Clinch River, a tributary of the Tennessee. Sewage has plagued the Oak Ridge area for over a decade. Riverkeeper continues to litigate this lawsuit.



*Riverkeeper has seven attorneys defending your water.*

# OUR SUPPORTERS + TAKE ACTION

## RECENT NEWS

Pollution issues are covered extensively by news outlets in our watershed. Visit the news section of Riverkeeper's website to learn more about pollution in your water. Please share the news on social media and educate your friends.

News archives: [www.tennesseekeeper.org/news-2/](http://www.tennesseekeeper.org/news-2/)



*Knoxville's CBS 8 / WVLT*



*Huntsville's CBS 19 / WHNT*

## JAMES FOLSOM III

James grew up in Cullman, AL and is a graduate of Bard College and Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He is a member of the Alabama State Bar. James's diverse professional background ranges from tech startups, nonprofits, law, municipal development, political consulting, and fundraising.

## PAT UNDERWOOD

Pat is a martial arts expert and yoga instructor from Decatur, AL. Pat is also a black belt Karate sensei. His energetic spirit and peaceful mindset help inspire our volunteer community toward cleaner water.



*James Folsom III on the Tennessee River in Decatur, Alabama*



*Pat Underwood cleaning up a tributary of the Tennessee River.*

## VOLUNTEERS

Do you love water? Tennessee Riverkeeper is seeking volunteers to help us with everything from cleanups to outreach. Help protect your water!

Contact: [info@tennesseeriver.org](mailto:info@tennesseeriver.org)



*Karen Thomas on Earth Day*



*Riverkeeper cleanup squad*



*Karen Thomas with Holiday Mailer*

## VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

- Litter Cleanups
- Events and Event Promotion
- Social Media Outreach
- New Member Recruiting
- Data Entry
- Pollution Permit Research
- Concert Outreach Team
- Action Alert Response Team
- Write Letters to Editors of Newspapers
- Graphic Design
- Musicians for Concert Fundraisers
- Volunteer Recruiting

For more info visit our website:

[www.TennesseeRiver.org](http://www.TennesseeRiver.org)

## About TENNESSEE RIVERKEEPER

The mission of Tennessee Riverkeeper is to protect the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers and the tributaries by enforcing environmental laws and educating the public. Our communities are all interconnected neighbors upstream and downstream and everyone needs clean water, whether you're black or white, rich or poor, Republican or Democrat. Riverkeeper advocates for the watershed to ensure that future generations will inherit safe, clean water in their communities.

Tennessee Riverkeeper monitors polluters and their pollution permits, responds to citizen complaints, and utilizes water sampling data to further

protect the Tennessee River and its tributaries. When the organization discovers illegal pollution, Riverkeeper will seek solutions, including enforcement of environmental laws.

For more info visit: [www.TennesseeRiver.org](http://www.TennesseeRiver.org)





# TENNESSEE RIVERKEEPER

P.O. Box 2594

Decatur, AL 35602

[www.TennesseeRiver.org](http://www.TennesseeRiver.org)

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## BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!



### RIVERKEEPER<sup>®</sup> MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please complete, detach, and return to:  
TENNESSEE RIVERKEEPER<sup>®</sup> P.O. Box 2594 Decatur, AL 35602

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_  
RIVER INTERESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

#### PLEASE CHECK A CATEGORY

- \_\_\_\_\_ Slackwater Darter .....\$25
- \_\_\_\_\_ Redfin Darter .....\$50
- \_\_\_\_\_ Boulder Darter .....\$100
- \_\_\_\_\_ Alabama Cavefish.....\$250
- \_\_\_\_\_ SPRING PYGMY SUNFISH.....\$1000
- \_\_\_\_\_ other amount .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer.....(list hours and type of work) \_\_\_\_\_

*The spring pygmy sunfish (Elassoma alabamae) is a small, striped fish that rarely grows larger than an inch and is known for its complex courtship "dance," which involves fin undulations, vertical bobbing, weaving and "dashing." Since its discovery in 1937, the spring pygmy sunfish has hovered on the brink of extinction. Habitat loss and degradation caused the small fish to completely disappear from two of three springs it was known to inhabit, leaving the Beaverdam Spring and Creek complex, and the surrounding area, as the one of the last known areas of occupied habitat.*

Please make checks payable to: **TENNESSEE RIVERKEEPER**  
You can also become a member at our website: [www.TennesseeRiver.org](http://www.TennesseeRiver.org)