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NEWS RELEASE

3/22/2021 – St. Marys Riverkeeper took home multiple awards at this year’s “Confluence 2021”, the annual conference of Georgia’s Adopt-A-Stream organization. Adopt-A-Stream is the state's volunteer water quality monitoring program. Volunteers regularly monitor sites and submit data to an online database.

The SMRK took home the “**Watershed Award**” (NGO) awarded to outstanding volunteer monitors, trainers and groups. Since forming in 2016, the organization has greatly expanded water monitoring along the river using Adopt-A-Stream protocols. Today, more than fifty sites are monitored regularly. A portion of the data is collected by high school science classes, one of the Riverkeeper’s most successful outreach projects. Under the leadership of Riverkeeper Anna Laws, the data collected has been integral in efforts to replace dozens of septic tanks and make other critical decisions regarding the health of the river. “This now expansive baseline dataset allows us to pinpoint problem tributaries in our watershed while also confirming that our watershed as a whole is very healthy,” Laws said. “Without Adopt-A-Stream to provide training, materials and a database, this wouldn’t have been possible. We are so grateful for their recognition with these awards, and look forward to a continuing beneficial partnership.”

In addition, three volunteers from Fernandina Beach, FL., -- Barry Shull, Faith Ross and Toby Tovar– received the “**Beyond Borders**” award for volunteering to collect samples and monitor the water quality outside the “borders” of Georgia.

Lastly, Catie Fenstermaker, a high school intern in Camden County, GA, landed the “**Nymph**” award for going above and beyond to promoting improvement to water quality as a newcomer.