

Riverkeeper James Holland is retiring this spring after more than a decade of working to preserve the Altamaha River Watershed. Here, he stands in front of a cypress tree, holding his cap to bid farewell and his camera to shoot photos of indigenous wildlife.

Founder of Altamaha Riverkeeper to retire

By Sandy Pharr

After a decade of fervently fighting to protect the Altamaha River Watershed, Riverkeeper James Holland is calling it quits. "There comes a time in everyone's life when serious decisions must be made," said Holland, who will retire as Altamaha Riverkeeper (ARK), effective April 30.

"As I reflect back over the last 10 years, I remember how a small group of angry commercial fishermen and several environmental advocates began to talk about how to improve the water quality in the Altamaha River," he said. "After several weeks of meetings and deliberations, we decided that starting a Riverkeeper organization would be the best way to protect the watershed."

The organization was established in the late 1990s, and Holland was named Riverkeeper on July 1, 2000. His unwavering passion for the Altamaha was soon known far and wide.

He has investigated every report of pollution in the river and retrieved water samples that the environmental agencies have used to prosecute the violators. He has checked out every fish kill; every illegal dumping site; every development project that threatened the river or the marsh.

His contentious arguments at

zoning board, county commission and city council meetings are legendary.

"Altamaha Riverkeeper has used its influence to encourage our elected officials to treat our rivers, marshes and wetlands with respect," he said. "They are the ones who must enforce protection of these very valuable resources."

Holland feels like ARK has made a difference ... even beyond the environmental concerns that his organization has helped correct.

"Our greatest achievement is the environmental awareness we

have created," said Holland. "The term 'water quality' is now a household word throughout the watershed."

Holland has always placed a special emphasis on educating people, especially children, about protecting the Altamaha Watershed, which contains thousands of acres of marshland and estuaries.

"Some of the most positive influence has been on the young people," said Holland. "It first began when I saw the look on the face of a young UGA ecology student the first time she saw raw sewage floating in the river."

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McIntosh County Shouters receive NAACP award for carrying on an age-old tradition

Special to The News

The McIntosh County Shouters received a Founders' Day award from the NAACP for preserving the ring shout. This ethnic tradition has been performed for over 250 years, and the McIntosh County Shouters are the last of the authentic ring shout groups.

The ceremony was held at the First Baptist Church in Harris Neck on Sunday, Feb. 7.

Representing the NAACP was Eunice Moore, who noted that some of the current members of the Shouters are not the original members who started shouting publicly in 1980. But, she commended the group for carrying on the tradition into this new century. She acknowledged the

importance of continuing a tradition that has been part of the Gullah-Geechee culture for more than a quarter of a century. "We decided this year to honor people in our community instead of national figures," stated Moore. "We have so many people here who contribute to the rich African American history of coastal Georgia."

Accepting the award for the McIntosh County Shouters was Freddie Palmer, who thanked the NAACP for acknowledging the importance of their keeping the Gullah-Geechee heritage alive.

"We love shouting and sharing this tradition with the public," said Palmer. "We thank you

for honoring us with this award."

Also honored were Cornelia Walker Bailey of Sapelo Island, the Reed Singers of the Bolden community, the Gospel Messengers of McIntosh County and Mary Moran of Harris Neck.

The McIntosh County Shouters began performing for the public 30 years ago, when it was discovered by outsiders that this tradition was still being practiced. Since 1980, they have performed for audiences around the country, including heads of state. They have received many honors, awards and commendations for honoring their heritage.

Holland began to visit classrooms and make presentations. He got one grade school science class so fired up, the kids organized as the "Salt Marsh Soldiers" to work on conservation projects.

"Even though we are proud of our accomplishments, we are facing big challenges ahead," said Holland, adding that the Altamaha Riverkeeper could not have accomplished so much without the support of ARK's members, staff and volunteers.

"Together, we have built a strong foundation," said Holland, who plans to continue his contribution by photography and education.

"As I pass the torch, I know the important work of protecting the watershed will continue," he said. "I expect there will be many more victories in the years to come."



Darien Telephone Company celebrated its 99th Anniversary and Customer Appreciation Day with an open house on Feb. 12. Customers who took advantage of the promotional offer to add services from November to January were entered to win a HD 42" television. Winner, Judy Zalumas of Eulonia, is retired Army, having started her Army Logistics career in Viet Nam and ending it with Desert Storm. She is shown in this photo with Darien Telephone Company staff. She works for McIntosh County and relocated here 14 years ago.

Announcing the Reopening of Yettie S. Costner, CPA

I am pleased to announce my return as sole owner to my firm, Yettie S. Costner, CPA, located on Hwy. 17, North in Darien, Georgia. I offer many apologies for the crazy fiasco at the office during the 2008 tax filing season. In interviews conducted prior to the sale of my business, the new people really seemed to fit the bill along with their promising background. They promised the tax prep fees would remain the same, as they had been in the past, and that they would personally take care of you as I had done. Unfortunately, I have learned of their misleadings to all of you and to myself. Also, I have found out that they were sending out several correspondences with my signature on them. This also was done without my knowing and without my permission. Even though I sold my practice in 2008 to the Burniacs, they are now gone and I have once again regained complete control of the entire business.

Please come in and you will find that I am a trusted expert who helps individuals and organizations envision and shape their financial future, characterized by commitment to objectivity, integrity and competence, excellent performance on behalf of clients, employers and the public, and accountability for the highest professional and business ethics.

My firm offers a wide array of services, including but not limited to:

- Individual and Business Income Tax Returns
- Accounting and Bookkeeping Services
- Payroll and Sales Tax Returns
- Payroll Quarterly Reports, as well as, W-2 and 1099 Processing
- Financial Statements Preparation

I offer a no-obligation consultation program, which enables potential clients to get to know the firm, discuss how the firm can help them and review the related fees.

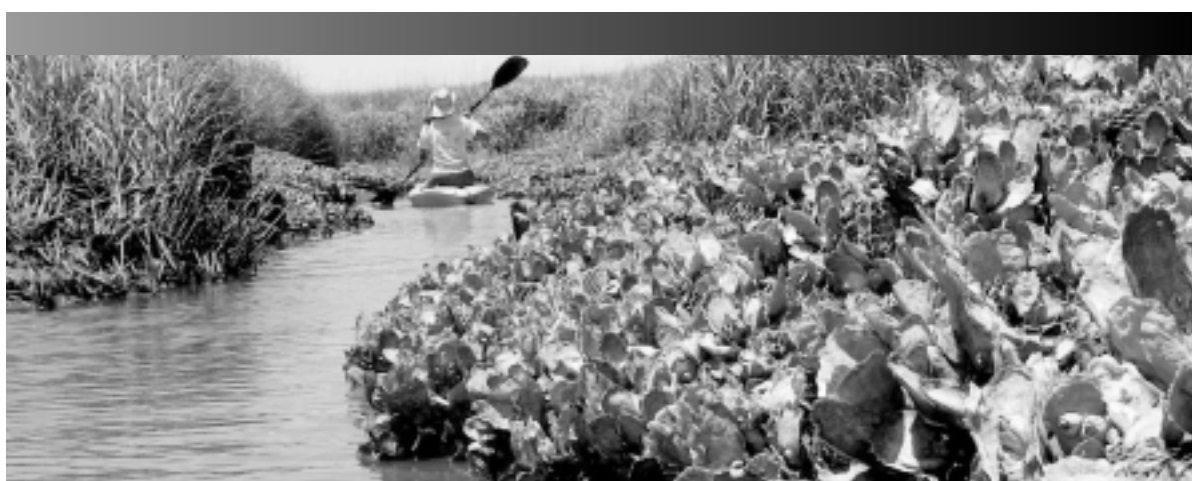
To all my clients that have continued to support me, Thank You!!

Yettie S. Costner, CPA

Yettie S. Costner, CPA
Certified Public Accountant

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My firm "Supports Our Troops," so during this 2009 tax filing season, I am offering discounts to all military personnel.



Volunteers Needed for Help With Oyster Restoration Projects

A coalition of conservation groups (UGA Marine Extension Service, The Nature Conservancy, GA Department of Natural Resources, Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve and the Coastal Conservation Association), is seeking volunteers to help bag oyster shells. The bagged shells will be used later this spring in oyster restoration projects to increase essential fish habitat, and to provide stabilization for the salt marsh against erosion.

Unless marked with an * volunteer work parties are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on the dates indicated for each of the shell centers listed to the right.

For more information or to register for an event, call or email the contact provided for each respective shell center.

After having an oyster roast please consider taking your shells to a shell recycling center near you. Please remember to separate the trash first as our centers do not have facilities to receive trash items. For more information on arranging shell pick-ups in the Brunswick area please contact Tommy Dougherty (Tommy.Dougherty@dnr.state.ga.us or 912-264-7218) and in the Savannah area, Daniel Harris (georgiaoyster@gmail.com or 912-598-2348).

Restoration projects are funded in part by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, Fish America Foundation and the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership.

Brunswick

Georgia Department of Natural Resources,
1 Conservation Way, Brunswick
Dates: Sat. Feb. 13th, Sat. Apr. 10th
Keith: georgiaoyster@gmail.com 912-262-3365

Jekyll

S. Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island
Date: Sat. Mar. 13th
Keith: georgiaoyster@gmail.com 912-262-3365

Tybee

Polk St, Tybee Island Public Works, Tybee Island
Date: Sat. Mar. 6th
Daniel: georgiaoyster@gmail.com 912-598-2348

Darien

Sapelo Island Visitors Center,
1766 Landing Road, S.E. Darien
Dates: Wed. Feb. 17th, *Sat. Feb. 20th (12-3pm),
Wed. Feb. 24th, Sat. Feb. 27th
Jessie: jessie1081@aol.com 912-485-2334

Skidaway

UGA MAREX, Skidaway Island, Savannah
Dates: Sat. Feb. 20th, Sat. Mar. 27th
Daniel: georgiaoyster@gmail.com 912-598-2348