

# SOUTHEAST AQUATIC RESOURCES PARTNERSHIP (SARP)

## 2010 YEAR IN REVIEW

The past year has brought about many significant challenges for fish and their habitats, such as the effects of the Deep Water Horizon Oil Spill, as well as key accomplishments that are strengthening aquatic habitat and species conservation in the Southeast. SARP, with the cooperation and

contributions of its partners, has achieved several notable successes in 2010. We are pleased to share some of the highlights of SARP's work:

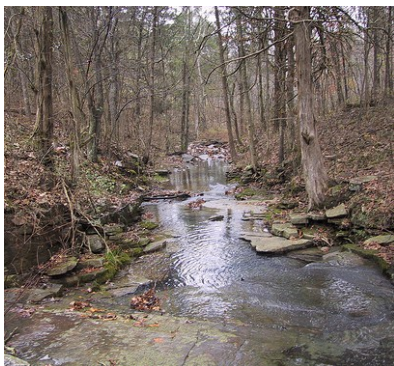


Spider Lilies in Flat Shoals Creek, Georgia  
Photo Credit: Dr. Steven Sammons

### **National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP):**

- ◆ SARP celebrated its 4th year as a Fish Habitat Partnership. We continued to recruit partners, educate, and build support for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan at the national and regional level.
- ◆ SARP was actively involved in the work of the National Fish Habitat Assessment, which characterizes the condition of inland and nearshore habitats in the lower contiguous 48 United States. SARP states contributed biological fish data to the National Assessment. SARP also shared its Riparian Assessment approach.
- ◆ SARP's coordinator received the Jim Range National Casting Call Vision Award in support of fish habitat.

### **The Southern Instream Flow Network (SIFN):**



Bissell Creek, Kentucky  
Photo Credit: Shelly Morris

- ◆ SIFN, a program of SARP, held its third annual workshop, which included forty-three participants from resource agencies and universities, three federal agencies, and two non-profit organizations, representing 11 states in the southeast region. Products of SIFN include a river classification system and hydrologic alteration assessment (ongoing), a research agenda, and an informational brand and associated educational materials.
- ◆ SIFN was awarded funding to continue its work through 2011 by the US Fish & Wildlife Service through the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC).



# Share Water. Save Us.

- ◆ As a result of a data sharing effort facilitated by SIFN, nine states are now contributing fisheries data to the MARIS, which will help researchers develop stronger flow-ecology relationships and ultimately work toward stronger instream flow protections.

- ◆ SIFN created a unique informational brand design that can be used by partners and potentially others to communicate the value of instream flow to legislative and public audiences.

## **Aquatic Habitat Restoration:**

- ◆ SARP continued to administer its Aquatic Habitat Restoration Program with funding for five projects in the region provided by NFHAP and US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), including the following:
  - \* Valley River Watershed Habitat Restoration Project, North Carolina
  - \* Crabtree Swamp Habitat Restoration, South Carolina
  - \* Harpeth River Restoration, Tennessee
  - \* Nashville Crayfish Habitat Restoration On The Nashville Zoo Property, Tennessee
  - \* Cooper Creek Instream Habitat Restoration Project, Virginia
- ◆ SARP's NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program (CRP) continued to fund, implement and monitor restoration projects benefiting marine and anadromous fish habitats. To date, SARP has funded 18 projects in six coastal states, creating living shorelines by restoring native plants and animals. Projects with ongoing work in 2010 are as follow:
  - \* From Bulkheads To Grass Beds, Florida
  - \* Deadman's Island Restoration Project, Florida
  - \* Improving Management of Seagrass Resources Through Restoration & Assessment, Florida
  - \* Fish Preserve Habitat Restoration, Florida
  - \* Ulele Springs Restoration Project, Florida
  - \* Port Orange Living shoreline and Oyster Reef Restoration System, Florida
  - \* Restoring Intertidal Oyster Reefs in Mosquito Lagoon, Florida
  - \* Oyster Reef Restoration/Enhancement Through The Use of Shell and Non-Shell Cultch Materials Reef, Georgia
  - \* Jefferson Parish Lafitte Terrace Planting, Louisiana
  - \* Hydrologic Restoration of Coastal Wetlands on North Carolina's Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula, North Carolina
  - \* Jockey's Ridge State Park Community-based Living Shoreline Restoration Project, Phase II, North Carolina
  - \* Using Positive Interactions Between Bivalves and Seagrass to Reduce Habitat Fragmentation and Restore Essential Fish Habitat, North Carolina
  - \* Creating oyster niche structures through restoration using crab traps, South Carolina
  - \* North Shore Eagle Point Oyster Restoration – Phase II, Texas
  - \* Community-based and larger-scale oyster restoration in ACE Basin NERR, South Carolina



Volunteers Fill Shell Bags, Jockey's Ridge, NC

### **The Southeast Native Black Bass Initiative:**

- ◆ In 2010, SARP helped to form the Southeast Native Black Bass Initiative, which is made up of local, state and federal agencies, universities and non-profit organizations and businesses from across the region who have come together in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to protect and preserve native black bass species in the southeastern United States. The initiative plans to address all species of native black bass in the southeast, with initial conservation actions focused on three species with critical conservation needs (Guadalupe bass, redeye bass and shoal bass).



Guadalupe River Bass Habitat, Texas

### **Strategic Habitat Planning:**

- ◆ As part of its Multi-State Conservation Grant, SARP contracted with the Southeast Watershed Forum (SEWF) to conduct a coastal-friendly development workshop at Keaton Beach Coastal Park in Taylor County, Florida. Through this work to ensure proper construction practices in the vicinity of sensitive wetlands, SEWF, along with partners NOAA, Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, and Gulf of Mexico Alliance is encouraging the County to use green development practices at their other facilities and construction sites. SARP support also helped SEWF leverage US Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program funds for wetlands restoration at the location.

### **The Science & Data (S&D) Committee:**

- ◆ SARP's S&D Committee continued to make strides in its development of assessment and prioritization tools. Work on a riparian assessment is in its final stages, with a white paper, spatial database and spatial analysis tool.

### **Communications & Outreach:**

- ◆ SARP hired its first Communications Coordinator to help expand its communications and outreach capabilities.
- ◆ SARP revitalized its Communications & Outreach Committee. The Committee held three successful meetings in 2010, with members from nine organizations/agencies participating.
- ◆ SARP continued to enhance the usability and functionality of its website, adding a new partner carousel and reciprocal links to partner websites to its homepage and profiles of the many projects underway.
- ◆ SARP launched a profile page on the GoFISHn.com site ([www.gofishn.com/southeastaquaticresourcespartnership](http://www.gofishn.com/southeastaquaticresourcespartnership)). GoFISHn.com is a social networking site where anglers connect to swap fishing stories and pictures, share fishing tips, and find fishing guides and services.
  - ◆ SARP continued publishing its quarterly newsletter, more than doubling its distribution.

*With partners, protecting, conserving and restoring aquatic resources, including habitats throughout the Southeast for the continuing use, benefit and enjoyment of the American people.*

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### **Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS):**

- ◆ All states in the SARP region have either completed ANS plans or their plans are in development. Those states with completed plans include Oklahoma, Louisiana, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia. Plans are underway in Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and North Carolina. Florida has a combined terrestrial and aquatic plan.



Duck River Mussels, TN  
Photo Credit: Lindsay Gardner

### **Partnerships:**

- ◆ SARP held two successful Steering Committee meetings — one in Little Rock, Arkansas, and another in Biloxi, Mississippi. The Steering Committee, made up of representatives from fourteen state fish and wildlife agencies and nine federal agencies, councils, and commissions, oversees and provides direction for all aspects of SARP work, including habitat assessments, conservation project selection and prioritization, grants and funding, and partner recruitment.
- ◆ SARP developed a partnership agreement to be used to enlist new partners and welcomed Georgia Power Company, Inc. as an official SARP partner.

### **About SARP**

The Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) is a regional collaboration of natural resource and science agencies, conservation organizations and private interests developed to strengthen the management and conservation of aquatic resources in the southeastern United States. SARP's mission is to, with partners, protect, conserve and restore aquatic resources including habitats throughout the Southeast for the continuing benefit, use and enjoyment of the American people. Nationally recognized as one of the first groups designated as an official "Fish Habitat Partnership" by the National Fish Habitat Board, SARP is implementing the goals of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan in the southeast region in some of the most ecologically and economically significant watersheds in the country. SARP is staffed by a core group of personnel, dedicated to SARP's vision, who work directly with key representatives from SARP's partner agencies and organizations to accomplish its projects and goals. SARP is funded through a variety of state, federal, and private grant and foundation sources.

To learn more about SARP and its programs and other resources, visit SARP's website at [www.southeastaquatics.net](http://www.southeastaquatics.net) or contact SARP Coordinator, Scott Robinson at 770-361-5639 or [scottr@southeastaquatics.net](mailto:scottr@southeastaquatics.net).