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Ogeechee Riverkeeper  
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## **FIRST RESEARCH FELLOW AT OGEECHEE RIVERKEEPER STARTS CRAYFISH PROJECT**

*The annual fellowship will provide research opportunities in the watershed*

Ogeechee Riverkeeper (ORK) has launched a new research fellowship to be filled each year. In 2022, the ORK Research Fellow is Brian Bush, a first-year graduate student at Georgia Southern University, pursuing a master's degree in biology. The fellowship is underwritten by investments secured from the 2011 fish kill settlement.

"We are excited to launch this annual fellowship," said Damon Mullis, executive director and riverkeeper of ORK. "Research is important to our mission to protect the waterways in our basin. This fellowship will spur more interest in our basin and result in more academic research projects. We are excited to have this initiative to further our mission."

The Ogeechee River Basin is home to 16 different native crayfish species, including *Procambarus petersi*, an endemic species commonly called the Ogeechee Crayfish. The project aims to document riverine crayfish populations and distribution, with a focus on *P. petersi*, and provide education and outreach opportunities throughout the watershed. Throughout the fellowship, Bush will be sharing blog posts and photos of his time in the field and in the lab.

Bush will lead the research project with the supervision of Checo Colón-Gaud, Ph.D., professor of biology and associate dean of the Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies at Georgia Southern University. Bush earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science from The Ohio State University, with Honors Research Distinction from the School of Environment and Natural Resources. During his time at Ohio State, Bush conducted research with Dr. Mažeika Sullivan in the stream and river ecology laboratory. After graduation, Bush worked for the Nevada Bureau of Land Management, conducting stream surveys in northern Nevada and southern Idaho.

**About Ogeechee Riverkeeper:** Ogeechee Riverkeeper 501(c)(3) works to protect, preserve, and improve the water quality of the Ogeechee River basin, which includes all of the streams flowing out to Ossabaw Sound and St. Catherine's Sound. The Canoochee River is about 108 miles long and the Ogeechee River itself is approximately 245 miles long. The Ogeechee River system drains more than 5,500 square miles across 22 counties in Georgia. More at [ogeecheeriverkeeper.org](http://ogeecheeriverkeeper.org).

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