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# Ogeechee Riverkeeper®

Newsletter

February 2023



## Welcome Ben, ORK's new legal director!

**Ben is a proud Clevelander with roots in southwest Ohio, spending lots of time throughout the state. Growing up near Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River made a big impression on his early awareness of the importance of our shared waters. These waters' resilience and the decades of advocacy efforts around them continue to inspire his work.**

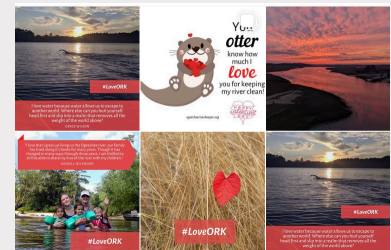
He gained a law degree from Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland, Oregon, with certificates in Environmental and Natural Resources Law and Energy, Innovation, and Sustainability Law. Ben was also awarded the law school's Environmental, Natural Resources, and Energy Leadership Award in 2019.

In his free time, Ben loves to get out camping and hiking whenever he can. He also enjoys live music, a good book, great trivia and board game competition, and trying to keep up with his dog.

## Learn more about Ben

### #LoveORK

Each February we like to celebrate Valentine's Day with ways that we #LoveORK. Share your favorite things to love about the river on social media using the hashtag. Add yours today!



See more  
Valentines



### Flora: *Taxodium distichum*

The bald cypress tree is a native to the Ogeechee River basin, with a network that stretches across the southern United States. Under the right conditions, the bald cypress can live for centuries.

Read more

### Legislative Update

The Okefenokee Swamp Protection Act has a bill number! HB71 is making its way through the legislative process. Please contact your lawmakers in support of this bill.

We are also working with legislators and stakeholders to introduce a bill regarding soil amendments.



[Support HB71](#)



[Read The Current article](#)

## ORK in The Current GA

Mary Landers joined ORK staff for a day on the river as we launched new monitoring equipment. It's just one aspect of ORK's work to protect the area's waterways from the massive developments coming to town.

## Frosted Flatwoods Salamander

The frosted flatwoods salamander is unique in Georgia to the Ogeechee River basin and listed as federally threatened conservation status. Learn more and participate in this education activity.



[Learn more](#)



## Volunteer in Statesboro

Jump into the creek with Keep Statesboro-Bulloch Beautiful and Ogeechee Riverkeeper by participating in our regular Don't Litter Lotts cleanup. Please be sure to register in advance so we can be in touch with any updates or cleanup details.

[Sign up now](#)

## Tool Kit for Citizens

Unchecked development is one of the most dangerous threats to water quality. This tool kit is intended as a guide for broad grassroots citizen coalitions to lobby local municipalities and governments to adopt planning and zoning ordinances that address a wide range of concerns.

[Download now](#)[Register now](#)

## Project WET Training

WET Educator Workshops are for all K-12 educators in formal or non-formal settings who are interested in using the Project WET water education curriculum with their students. Hosted by Gail Westcot (UGA), Lacey Huffling (GS), and Mel Sparrow (ORK). Pre-registration required.

**There are many ways you can help the Ogeechee Riverkeeper protect, preserve and improve the waterways within our basin.**

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