



A PUBLICATION OF THE RICHLAND CREEK WATERSHED ALLIANCE | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

RCWA student steward sets the example

By Callie Hendrickson

My name is Callie Hendrickson, and I first heard of the Richland Creek Watershed Alliance (RCWA) when I was a seventh grader at West End Middle School. I had always loved the outdoors and especially Richland Creek - I practically grew up in it. It was in science class, and we were just beginning the chapter on pollution.

My classmates didn't seem phased by the information we were learning, but I was utterly disturbed. I knew that the effects of pollution in the water, as well as the ecosystems that live in it and around it had to be devastating to the environment. I immediately understood that something had to be done, the pollution had to be stopped. But what was I to do? Luckily, the very next day, we had a guest speaker in my science class to talk about pollution - Monette Rebecca. She had loads of information to share and I was eager to listen. What really spoke to me though, was the compassion you could hear in her voice as she described to us the effects of pollution. I could tell this was something she loathed just as much as I did, if not more.

I wanted her to know that water pollution was something that bothered me greatly, and that I wanted to be a part of doing something about it. The next thing I knew, I became the Student Steward for RCWA. I helped lead the building of a rain-garden at West End, as well as installing rain barrels there. I started attending the Creek Clean-Ups and fell in love with them. I also went out and stenciled storm drains in Sylvan Park to warn others of the damage that trash [dumping] in storm drains can do to our creeks and rivers. The satisfaction you get from participating in these events is indescribable, but the other great thing about it is how much fun you have! The companionship of everyone else who takes part in RCWA is undeniable. We laugh, we help each other out and we work together.

I'm now seventeen-going-on-eighteen years old, and have been a proud member of the Alliance for five years. I wouldn't change that for the world. But, no matter how much I feel we are changing the creek for the better, there always seems to be more work that needs to be done. That's why it is vital that members of RCWA keep participating in each event and keep spreading the word. Our beloved Richland Creek depends on it.



Callie ... (above) at registration table for RCWA 2008 Watershed Wide Clean Up and (below) planting her first tree (Shumard Oak) at the RCWA Urbandale Restoration Project (2012).

From RCWA...

Callie didn't know we were planning on recognizing her as Student Steward Leader at our 2012 Annual Gathering, when we asked her to write an article for our CreekVoice. Callie has graduated from high school and now considering furthering her education in Communications/Public Relations with a minor in Environmental Science. We are grateful for Callie's activism and inspired by her enthusiasm. We are sure she has a promising future and will make many contributions to society. Thanks and congratulations Callie!



Unhealthy streamside impairs water quality, channel performance and habitats. Stream no longer supports aquatic life and needs a RCWA Riparian Renewal project.



Healthy streamside preserve stream, support habitat and maintain water quality.

Richland Creek is ours to make a healthy again

By Monette Rebecca, President

Anytime is a good time to act, save Richland Creek, and 2013 is critical to ensure sustainability of the Richland Creek ecosystem. Thousands of people live and do business in the Richland Creek watershed and each has a chance to change the pattern that burdens Richland Creek into an opportunity to improve its water quality and stream habitat. Many miles of the stream need attention and support. The water and habitat need to be healthier, able to support a myriad of critters that make up the food web and ecosystem. We can put Richland Creek on a trajectory toward restoration as a thriving ecosystem again. By doing so, Richland Creek will receive more protection and promise to endure urban growth beyond our lifetimes.

Expect several opportunities to help RCWA in 2013 and we hope you will! Stream clean ups and riparian renewal projects are being planned. Let us know about the streamside on your property for renewal and we will arrange to have native trees planted to enhance habitat and prevent stream bank erosion. On March 2nd RCWA will lead a one-of-a-kind, concerted effort to clean up a mile-long tributary of Richland Creek, Neighborly Branch. Neighborly is located in a highly developed commercial

area, forgotten but still supporting life — three crayfish species identified and delivering clean spring water, organisms and nutrients to Richland Creek. Donate or volunteer to help bring attention to Neighborly Branch. Please pledge your support as a volunteer or event sponsor (rcwa@comcast.net / (615) 525-3379).

RCWA has begun a study partnership with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to monitor for amphibians in the Richland Creek ecosystem for 2013. Amphibians are declining at an alarming rate worldwide and in Tennessee. They are considered bio-indicators of environmental quality, in the middle of the food web, and in need of healthy aquatic and riparian habitats. Frogs and salamanders are sensitive to changes in air and water temperature and threatened by urban pollution and habitat loss. The amphibian study partnership may be last chance to find the rare Streamside Salamander in its historic Davidson County range.

Many thanks for five-years of support and lets grow further in 2013 to become the generation that saves the Richland Creek ecosystem — Stakeholders that make the difference!

A note from our treasurer, Joel Covington

Exciting things are happening along our urban waterway and the outlook is positive for even more meaningful progress in 2013. Your continued support is crucial to maintaining our momentum so please do consider RCWA in your giving plans this year. With your help, we can make Richland Creek a cleaner, healthier community asset.

Many thanks to our 2012 Supporters:

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
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2012 Partners:

Metro Public Works

Harpeth River Watershed Association

Tennessee Environmental Council

Hands On Nashville

...and hundreds more members, donors, and volunteers!

Help Save the Richland Creek Ecosystem



Clockwise from top left: Streamside Salamander (*Ambystoma barbouri*) is on Tennessee's high priority list for conservation management. RCWA is now involved in a joint study project with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency to identify species of frogs and salamanders in our ecosystem (Tennessee Amphibian Monitoring Program). Many More Signs of Life to Protect... Eastern Box Turtle, Great Blue Heron, Rock Bass, and Longear Sunfish.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 2, 2013 - Neighborly Branch Clean Up

Please contact RCWA to pledge your support as a volunteer or event sponsor (rcwa@comcast.net / (615) 525-3379). RCWA needs 60 volunteers for clean up of this mile-long tributary to Richland Creek that is located in a high-density commercial area of the watershed. Help us save Neighborly Branch!

Riparian Renewal Program

Many older trees were lost during the 2010 flood and native species have diminished from our riparian zones. We need to plant young trees now to prevent erosion of the stream bank, protect water quality and preserve habitats. Get free trees planted on your streamside. Contact RCWA at 615-525-3379/ rcwa@comcast.net) to make arrangements for your streamside renewal project and help save the Richland Creek ecosystem!

CREEKVOICE VOLUNTEER STAFF

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RCWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Monette Rebecca, Catherine Hayden, Joel Covington, Stacy Vereen and RCWA welcomes our newest board members, Steve Curnutte and Pat Williams. Let us know if you have interest in serving on the RCWA Board (615) 525-3379.

The Richland Creek Watershed Alliance mission is to educate, advocate and participate in activities and scientific research that improves, protects and enhances the environmental sustainability of the Richland Creek watershed.

JOIN RCWA - TO SHARE LEARN MORE & SAVE THE RICHLAND CREEK ECOSYSTEM

Submit your gift by snail mail or via PayPal from our website at www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org

Submit questions or concerns to rcwa@comcast.net.

For more details, photos or to comment, please visit our blog at rcwa.blogspot.com.

The Richland Creek Watershed Alliance is a tax-exempt, 501c3 non-profit organization (public charity).



Richland Creek Watershed Alliance

PO Box 92016 Nashville, TN 37209

A community-supported volunteer organization promoting environmental sustainability for the Richland Creek Watershed.

www.richlandcreekwatershedalliance.org

Our watershed is rich with stakeholders who share their gifts.