



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chattahoochee Riverkeeper installs “smart trash trap” in Sweetwater Creek

DOUGLASVILLE, GEORGIA — Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) is continuing its mission toward a trash-free Chattahoochee by installing both an in-stream water sensor and trash trap in Sweetwater Creek.

Funded from a Google grant, the Watergoat in this large tributary to the Chattahoochee River is CRK’s ninth trash trap; however, this device is the organization’s first boom-style trash trap that has also been paired with a Chattahoochee Aquatic Sensor System Integrated (CASSI), which will track water health indicators like temperature, conductivity, and more in real-time.

The CASSI is attached to the Watergoat as it rests on the top of the creek. Data from the CASSI will be transmitted to CRK live via a solar-powered cellular network connection, while trash collected by the Watergoat’s boom line will be removed weekly and after heavy rains.

“We’re hopeful that the Watergoat and CASSI combination will offer helpful insights into the health of the Chattahoochee’s tributaries,” said CRK Watershed Protection Specialist Jordan Yu. “This strategically placed ‘smart trash trap’ and our regular Neighborhood Water Watch monitoring in the area may shed light on a wide range of potential pollutants, from litter to sewage to construction runoff.”

The Watergoat comes after a year-long study of the effectiveness of similar devices in Atlanta’s Proctor Creek Watershed. Results of the study are detailed in CRK’s report – [Litter Gitter Feasibility in Urban Waters](#).

The study also highlights factors non-profits and municipalities must consider when implementing trash traps as part of a trash reduction plan. It outlines the labor and financial requirements of operation and analyzes the Litter Gitter’s trash collection ability in Proctor Creek.

Since June 2019, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s other trash traps have collected more than 1,100 pounds of trash. Of that, 31% was recycled. Consistent with the findings of land-based cleanups, the most frequently found items were plastic beverage bottles, water bottles, plastic bags, and Styrofoam products.

CRK will continue to explore new models, methods, and technologies to protect the river in 2021.

“These devices are part of a larger effort to ensure trash-free waterways,” says Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Jason Ulseth. “In-stream litter collection, public cleanups, and education are all key.”

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Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River, its lakes and tributaries for the people, fish, and wildlife that depend upon it.

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