

Neuse River Cleanup (April 1)

Coordinator: Bobby Simpson, CCC Conservation Chair

What a great day to be on the river - partly sunny and in the low 80s! The Neuse River Cleanup was organized and easy to participate in because of the efforts of the Neuse River Foundation (NRF). When we arrived around 8:30 am at the Milburnie Dam we found REI with a nice tent set-up including coffee, fruit, breakfast bars, and PB&J sandwiches ready and waiting. NRF volunteers were on hand to help with signing in and the logistics.

The CCC had 15 volunteers who cleaned up the section from Milburnie Dam to Poole Road: Larry Ausley, Nancy Guthrie, Jeff Sailus, Michael Carter, Larry Evans, Pat Heron, Karen Heron, the Charlie Williams family, S.A.M. Brooks, Wayne Jones, Bob Brueckner, and Bobby Simpson. Many thanks to all of you - you represented the Club well! I especially enjoyed watching all of you as you did your duty. For example:

- Larry Ausley paddling with a 4-foot high, 50-gallon garbage can and a sheet of fiber board in the middle of his canoe
- Michael Carter stuffing trash in the stern of his recreational kayak
- Bob Brueckner flipping (again) in his solo whitewater canoe (some kayakers are still humbled by the noble canoe ?). Fortunately, Bob got control of his boat in time to haul in a 50-pound electric line insulator
- Larry Evans wrestling 3 tires off of stumps and debris in spite of his bad back

Several of us spent extra time at Gunnison's Rapid since the CCC teaches swift water rescue here and we wanted to be sure the area was clean since the locals know we use the area twice a year. When we arrived at the Poole Road takeout we found NRF volunteers waiting to take away our trash and carry our boats up to the parking lot, and the City of Raleigh was there with large trash compactor trucks.

In general, I was pleasantly surprised at how relatively clean we found the Neuse River. While there was plenty of trash to go around, you could tell that our ongoing efforts to take care of this river are paying off. As your conservation chair, I hope this article gives you a feel for how simple but effective these cleanups are. I hope you'll consider volunteering to lead or participate in future cleanups both this year and next. Looking forward to May, we have the opportunity to be visible again during National River Cleanup Week May 13 – 21. Doug Sprouse is coordinating a cleanup for Wilson Creek. I hope you'll be there!