

Resilient Ribault



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2024 HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Organized 41 community events in the Resilient Ribault project area.
- Hosted 22 cleanups at waterfront parks and boat ramps.
- Collected approximately 303 bags of trash.
- Over 750 people volunteered or participated in events.
- Hosted Summer Splash education event for families and children at Lonnie Miller Park.

RIVER AND NATURE CONNECTIONS

- Provided 17 boat trips on the Ribault River for 292 residents and community partners.
- Initiated improvements at several waterfront parks in the project area.
 - Worked with the JaxParks department and residents to install 3 benches and a picnic table and secured a grant from the Jacksonville Tree Commission to plant 15 trees in Ribault Scenic Drive Park. We also partnered with a 4-H group to install a raised pollinator garden bed and Duval Audubon to install a bird feeder.
 - Organized 10 monthly service project days at Riverview Park.
- Sponsored a UF School of Architecture Design Lab to develop plans for revitalizing the Gold Merit and Pope Place incinerator ash sites along the Ribault River into safe, accessible and sustainable public spaces. Graduate students developed innovative design solutions for transforming these formerly contaminated sites into vibrant, functional public spaces that can serve the community for years to come.
- Advocated for the City of Jacksonville to purchase the remediated Gold Merit and Pope Place properties to serve as a buffer from flooding for the surrounding community and provide access to the Ribault River. The City of Jacksonville is currently pursuing acquisition.
- Sponsored a UF School of Architecture Design Studio to develop plans for improvements that align with resident input for Winton Drive Park and Hillside Cemetery. The improvements will leverage the \$68M rebuild of Ribault High and offer opportunities for increasing access to nature while memorializing those that are laid to rest.

ADDRESSING POLLUTION & FLOODING PROBLEMS

- Worked with the City of Jacksonville and JEA to ensure incinerator ash remediation and septic tank phase-out projects are fully funded and on schedule for completion.
- St. Johns Riverkeeper was selected by the City of Jacksonville as the Statutory Partner for a \$17 million EPA Community Change Grant that would include home improvements and energy efficiency enhancements, green infrastructure projects to address flood risks, and the creation of Winton Drive Park on a recently remediated commercial landfill in the Ribault area. The EPA will notify recipients in early 2025.
- Started the two-year **Environmental Quality Assessment** of the Ribault River and Moncrief Creek watersheds to evaluate environmental and water quality problems and to identify sources of pollution and potential solutions.
- Monthly fecal bacteria sampling will be conducted for 2 years at 8 sites. At sites with chronically high bacteria levels, a more intensive investigation will be conducted to identify the sources.
- Due to several incinerator ash sites located along the Ribault and Moncrief, water quality samples will be tested for heavy metals and toxic substances found in the ash.
 - Testing will also include nutrients that cause toxic blue-green algae outbreaks, along with basic water quality parameters, such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, salinity, pH, and turbidity.
- In 2024, we conducted five field visits, collecting 50 fecal bacteria samples and 22 nutrient samples. 11 of the bacteria samples exceeded water quality standards for healthy waterways. No nutrient exceedances have been observed so far.

EDUCATION

- Partnered with Haskell to enhance Sallye B. Mathis Elementary's outdoor space with native landscaping, signage about Ribault River wildlife, and furniture constructed of reclaimed lumber for a teachers' lounge area.
- Partnered with Ribault High to test water quality in the Ribault River over the course of a week.
- Installed a Little Free Green Library at Riverview Park that provides free environment-focused books for all ages.
- Hosted a boat trip for Sallye B. Mathis faculty and teachers on the Ribault River.
- Designed a Sallye B. Mathis after-school program for 5th graders which will take place January-May 2025.
- Took 130 Ribault-area students out on educational boat trips.
- Partnered with Ribault Middle for summer camp.
- Partnered with Eartha's Farm to create the *River and Roots* program for middle and high school students. This focuses on sustainable farming and water/soil quality on Moncrief Creek.
- UNF faculty and students created *Water Stories: A River Harvest*, a multi-year placemaking project that explores land memory, environmental justice, and communal healing through storytelling and the performing arts. The performances are based on oral histories Dr. Tru Leverette Hall is collecting in support of Resilient Ribault and her book project.