

Project Summary for David Caldwell, Broad Riverkeeper

MountainTrue's Broad Riverkeeper, David Caldwell, works with communities and citizens in Rutherford, Polk, and Cleveland counties to monitor water quality and advocate for best management practices that will improve our waters for drinking, swimming, and fishing. From its headwaters along the Eastern Continental Divide and the South Mountains, these streams and rivers which join and flow into the "Big" Broad above the South Carolina state line are a treasure to be enjoyed and cared for.

The Broad River Watershed includes 5,419 square miles within both North and South Carolina. Five Natural Heritage Program Priority Areas are in the basin: the Rollins/South Mountains Natural Area, Hickory Nut Gorge, the Green River Gorge, the Pacolet River Gorge, and Pinnacle Mountain. These areas provide habitat for more than 100 rare plant and animal species and 24 rare natural communities.

The Broad Riverkeeper is a program of [MountainTrue's Southern Regional Office](#) and a proud member of the [Waterkeeper Alliance](#). MountainTrue's Water Team publishes a bi-annual State of Our Rivers report which helps inform the public about water quality: <https://mountaintrue.org/2021-state-of-the-river-reports/>

Particularly important to this nomination are David's efforts to improve water quality in the First Broad River sub-basin. The First Broad River is the source water for both Cleveland County Water, serving the entire county and beyond, and City of Shelby Water. During the summer between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the Broad Riverkeeper and volunteers collect and analyze water samples from 10 popular swimming sites in the Broad basin, including two in the First Broad River. This is part of a global network called Swim Guide: <https://www.theswimguide.org/affiliates/151> Results are posted each Thursday so that river recreators know whether it is safe to swim. Not only is this useful for the folks who use the river for swimming and fishing, but it also informs and educates the public and policy makers about the health of our rivers and lakes.

Additionally, David organizes several river cleanups each summer including at least two on the First Broad River. Volunteers have removed hundreds of tires and tons on trash from the First Broad over the past 10 years.

<https://www.shelbystar.com/story/lifestyle/things-to-do/2017/09/07/woman-remembered-at-saturday-event/18878124007/>

<https://www.shelbystar.com/story/news/2022/06/02/rotarians-scouts-and-others-pull-trash-first-broad-river/7456875001/>

Broad Riverkeeper also conducts the Swim Guide sampling in Moss Lake, Kings Mountain's drinking water supply. He has identified a harmful algal bloom in the lake and is working with NC Department of Environmental Quality and Kings Mountain Water Authority to address sediment, nutrient, and bacteria pollution in the lake.

<https://www.shelbystar.com/story/special/2020/08/01/riverkeeper-finds-algae-bloom-on-moss-lake/115004856/>