

## LOCAL CONSERVATION GROUP HOSTS ITS ANNUAL MEETING

**(November 8, 2023 – Greenville, SC)** This year's Friends of the Reedy River Annual Meeting took place in the Water Discovery Lab Conference Room at Renewable Water Resources (ReWa) from 5:30 to 7:30 pm on Monday, November 6th and was open to all FoRR members.

Friends of the Reedy River (FoRR) recognized Dapper Ink as a 2023 Best Friend of the Reedy River for consistently going above and beyond by donating all of the River Cleanup volunteer t-shirts and financially contributing to the organization through the 1% of the Planet global giving network. They also gave Southernside Brewing Co. the award for hosting the last three River Cleanup Afterparties and 30th Anniversary Celebration. FoRR recognized Guy Hochstetler as a 2023 Best Friend of the Reedy River for donating his time for freshwater and macroinvertebrate water quality monitoring, volunteering as a Site Leader in the 2023 Fall River Cleanup, and advocating for the Reedy's health. All of the award recipients were able to attend the meeting to accept their certificate.

Keynote speaker Rebecca West, ReWa's Chief Operating Officer and former FoRR board member, reflected on how far the Reedy River has come along since its days of severe pollution and neglect. She mentioned that Greenville citizens and businesses are paying much closer attention at how to protect and preserve one of our city's greatest assets. While there is still much work to be done, FoRR's 30 years of continuous effort has helped make it the valuable resource that it is today.

Two new board members were elected for three-year terms in 2023: Bret Tracy (VP, Merits Health Products) and Jackie Soladay (President, Paris Mountain Marketing). Award recipient Guy Hochstetler was also nominated and approved for the Board of Directors. The 2024 Executive Committee positions are as follows: Scott Butler (President), Dick Stelling (Vice President), Katherine Amidon (Secretary), Elisabeth Schatke (Treasurer), and Katie Callahan (Immediate Past President).

FoRR celebrated its 30th Anniversary this year. They continued growing the water quality monitoring program through the SC Adopt-A-Stream. They advocated for buffer ordinances along the Reedy and encouraged sustainable development decisions to help protect valuable wetlands. FoRR mobilized 150+ volunteers at their Spring River Cleanup and 350+ volunteers at their Fall River Cleanup, removing approximately 5.8 tons of trash and 85 tires from the Reedy and its banks. They participated in several educational and outreach events such as, the Jewish Film Festival, The Children's Museum of the Upstate Spring and Sprout Festival, TD Saturday Market, and Roper Mountain Science Center's Afternoon Exploration.

*Founded in 1993, Friends of the Reedy River is a 501(c) (3) non-profit, volunteer-based, conservation organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, and restoring the Reedy River. They carry out their work through river cleanups, riverbank restoration, educational events, and water monitoring programs. Friends of the Reedy River is transforming the river through on-the-ground, grass-roots efforts. [www.FriendsOfTheReedyRiver.org](http://www.FriendsOfTheReedyRiver.org)*

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