



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Ijams River Rescue Removes 15.4 Tons of Trash from Area Waterways March 27

Rain couldn't stop the 32nd annual Ijams River Rescue presented by TVA! Almost 475 volunteers braved inclement weather to collect 15.4 tons of trash from 32 sites in and along East Tennessee's waterways on March 27, 2021.

Originally there were 717 volunteers signed up to tackle 41 sites in the community, but the heavy, intermittent rains caused cancellations and rescheduled cleanups. Even with rain breaks, volunteers removed 919 bags of garbage and 82 tires from sites.

"Heavy rain always means more trash because the rising waters wash everything downstream and into the Tennessee River," Ijams Volunteer Coordinator Madelyn Collins said. "We are so appreciative to everyone who braved the storms and did the work while they could. It was amazing how much volunteers accomplished in such a short time."

In addition to the typical trash volunteers find during a cleanup such as aluminum cans, tires, Styrofoam and plastic bottles, this year's cleanup also retrieved unusual items such as car parts, charred car remains, a Santa rug, a recliner, mattresses, a motorcycle helmet, construction cones, a bicycle, a tomato cage, a toilet, a baby stroller, three softballs, DVDs, IDs, a rocking horse and a plastic shed.

One lucky volunteer found a \$50 bill.

"That volunteer really 'cleaned up,'" Collins said. "But the takeaway from this year's event—and every other cleanup this community does—is that we need to be more careful about how we dispose of trash and recyclables. If you don't put it where it belongs, it ends up in our water."

Ijams appreciates everyone who helped make the 2021 Ijams River Rescue a success. This event would not have been possible without the generous support of TVA, City of Knoxville Stormwater Engineering, Bio Plumbing, LLC, First Horizon Foundation, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, WestRock CP, LLC, Genera, Inc., Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union, Waste Connections of Tennessee, Inc., CAC AmeriCorps, and the Water Quality Forum.

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit, 315-acre educational nature center for all ages, abilities and walks of life. Ijams' mission is to encourage stewardship of the natural world by providing an urban greenspace for people to learn about and enjoy the outdoors through engaging experiences. Located just three miles from downtown Knoxville, Ijams features 12 miles of hiking and mixed-use trails, a public access river dock, swimming, boating, biking and more. The center offers hundreds of educational programs annually for all ages. The Ijams grounds and trails are open every day from 8 a.m. until dusk. The Visitor Center is open daily from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, visit ijams.org.

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NOTE: Photos have been posted in an Album on the Ijams Facebook page at @ijamsnaturecenter. The direct link is:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=ijamsnaturecenter&set=a.4028780407145168>