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Ijams River Rescue Removes Tons of Trash from Area Waterways March 9

(KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE, 3/15/2024) – Rain didn't stop 441 volunteers from cleaning up the community's waterways during the 35th annual Ijams River Rescue on March 9! They tackled trash at 31 sites in Knox and Blount counties, filling 1,097 bags with garbage weighing an estimated 21,958 pounds (10.48 tons). That doesn't include the weight of 46 tires and large items such as household appliances, furniture, and car parts.

Plastic and Styrofoam waste was common in all areas, but volunteers found items such as a robot puppy, drug paraphernalia, an antique lounge chair, a full patio set, suitcase, Betty Boop doll and shoes, sofas, stove parts, traffic barrels, a car seat, sports gear, a "nice watch," and a \$10 bill.

Ijams Volunteer Coordinator Christy Smith joined the nature center the week of the event in 2023, but had volunteered for the cleanup before.

"This was my first time organizing the event and I was quite nervous about the rain Saturday morning, but more volunteers showed up than we expected," Smith said. "The feedback I received from site captains and volunteers was so positive. I feel like everyone really showed up, worked hard, and had a wonderful time working together!"

"I am always so impressed with how our community comes together to do good work," she added. "Keeping our waterways clean is important not only for all of us but also for the ecosystems and species that thrive in these environments."

The 35th annual Ijams River Rescue was made possible by Dow, City of Knoxville Stormwater Engineering, First Horizon Foundation, TVA, Borderland Tees, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Vulcan Materials Company, Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union, Old Sevier District, Tailwater Properties, CAC AmeriCorps, and Water Quality Forum.

Ijams Nature Center is a 318-acre nonprofit educational center in the heart of Knoxville and serves visitors of all ages, stages, and abilities. Its 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. Ijams features 14 miles of hiking and mixed-use trails, a public access river dock, swimming, boating, biking, and so much more. Hundreds of world-class educational programs and events are coordinated and offered annually. Ijams' grounds and trails are open every day from 8:00 AM until dusk. For more information, visit ijams.org or call 865-577-4717.

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NOTE: Event photos are posted in a Facebook album at <https://www.facebook.com/ijamsnaturecenter>.