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### **Gardner-Webb Students Help Pull 61 Tires From New River in West Jefferson**

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# Gardner-Webb Students Help Pull 61 Tires From New River in West Jefferson

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Office of University  
Communications

September 24, 2019

## *Honors Student Association Makes 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Trip to Cleanup Event*



Photos by Joy Smith / GWU Photo Staff

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—New and returning members of the Gardner-Webb University Honors Student Association recently participated in a GWU 18-year tradition. Faculty sponsor Dr. Tom Jones, 27 GWU students and eight guests traveled to West Jefferson, North Carolina, to join New River Conservancy’s cleanup event, Mud, Sweat, and Volunteers.

Chelsea Blount, restoration director of New River Conservancy, said the GWU students were among a group of over 100 volunteers who covered approximately 23 river miles. “Volunteers pulled 204 tires and 3,860 pounds of trash out of the river,” Blount added. “The biggest tire haul of the day went to the group that floated from Cox Road to Zalloo’s Canoes. Consisting partially of students from Gardner-Webb, this group collected 61 tires along the 2.5-mile section.”

Pulling one of those tires out of the river were GWU students Joy Smith, of Casar, North Carolina, a senior photography major, and her canoe partner, Casey Almond, a sophomore nursing major from Dallas, North Carolina. Smith and Almond also found a very large piece of metal that had to lay across their canoe, because it wouldn’t fit inside.

This was Smith's third time to go with the group. "I always go back, because it feels so great to know that you are helping the environment by cleaning the New River," she observed. "Also, it's a great bonding experience to be in the woods with other students for two nights with no cell phone service. The best part about the trip is the times that we are all together cooking, eating, and talking. It's really nice to get to meet new people and enjoy nature."

Andrew Bounds, a freshman computer science major, went on the camping trip for the first time. "The best thing was being able to see just how much trash and tires we pulled out of the river," he reflected.

Jones coordinates the trip with the State Park and New River Conservancy to provide canoes for the students. After spending the day on the river and camping out, the honors students held a church service in West Jefferson at St. Mary's, one of the churches of the frescoes. On the way home, they enjoyed a luncheon at Daniel Boone Inn in Boone, North Carolina.

[Learn more about the Gardner-Webb Honors Program.](#)



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