



# Water Sweep benefits Ouachita River

BY BENGAMAN NYEGAARD

*Lead natural resource specialist, Ouachita-Black River, Louisiana Field Office*

On September 19, the Louisiana Field Office hosted the annual Water Sweep in collaboration with Ouachita Green. Participation was lower than usual this year due to COVID-19, but 150 volunteers dispersed along the Ouachita River and its immediate tributaries to gather and dispose of litter. Supplies were distributed in advance to limit crowds and individual contacts, and all registration for the event was completed online.

Clean-up across the areas began at 8 a.m. and concluded around 11 a.m. A USACE safety boat remained on standby in the water, and a roving dump trailer was available for the smaller clean-up areas. Waste Connections of Louisiana provided dumpsters at five of the larger clean-up areas to ensure maximum trash disposal. The dumpsters alone collected a total of 4,920 lbs of litter removed from the waterways this year. A total of 11 locations, including over 40 miles of the Ouachita River and immediate watershed areas benefited from this year's clean-up operations. The D'Arbonne Kayak club cleaned up areas in Bayou D'Arbonne and Bayou De'Loutre, which both run into the Ouachita River. Most the locations along the Ouachita River were based out of USACE and city recreation areas. Other agencies involved included Ouachita Green, Tensas Levee Board, the Ouachita Parish Sherriff's Office, West Monroe Fire and Rescue, and the West Monroe Chamber of Commerce.



**Above:** Despite COVID-19 challenges, volunteers worked alongside community agencies like the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office to successfully execute the water sweep.



**Above:** Volunteers and community agencies collected nearly 5,000 lbs of trash and litter along the Ouachita River during the annual Water Sweep this September.



**Above:** The D'Arbonne Kayak Club from D'Arbonne Parish, Louisiana, paddled along their clean-up area on the Ouachita River to collect and discard litter and help keep the river beautiful.