

## Bio - Ross Harrison

Written by Flint Riverkeeper Editor-in-Chief

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Ross is from central Missouri. He began floating on a river in junior high with an Explorer Scout Troop led by the Junior High School principal, Roger McCreery. He has been planning and leading float trips ever since. He spent many, many days and nights on the spring fed, clear water streams of southern Missouri. Southern Missouri's limestone geology is almost identical to South Georgia's many clear water springs called Blue Holes. The layers and layers of underground aquifers provide amazing water quality.

His high school biology teacher, Jim Guilford, took his class to seine and collect critters from creeks and watch prairie chickens dance on a lek in wee hours of the morning. This led to a degree in Wildlife Biology from Washington State University.

He met his wife, Shirley when he was stationed at Ft. Benning in 1981. Their first date was a canoe trip on the Flint River near Thomaston. She owned her own canoe and tied it to the top of her '74 VW to get it to the Flint River. It was a sign. She still owns that completely restored '74 VW bug.

He is most proud of all his children for being outdoors men and women. They fish, hunt, canoe and hike. His youngest is working towards being a falconer when she is not helping build robots.

Ross grew up quail hunting and his passion is training Brittany pups. His pursuit is hunting the elusive wild Georgia quail on DNR provided Wildlife Management Areas. Have Dogs, Will Travel. Dial Ross. Albany.

He did six years active duty and then returned to Missouri and entered banking. Ross and Shirley lived in the snow and ice and sleet for twenty-five years before returning to their rightful place in the Deep South. They now call Albany home where he works for Flint Community Bank as their Chief Credit Officer.

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He met the Flint Riverkeeper staff on a float trip five years ago and has been an active volunteer organizing float trips and recruiting new members. He was elected to the board in 2016. He notes that the water flow and water clarity has dropped severely since his first trips down the Flint River in 1981, 1982 and 1983. Restoration of minimum acceptable flows is achievable by more efficient use of the water taken from the river and the more efficient return of water now sent to other watersheds. The management of the water resources of the region can be accomplished by all the stakeholders becoming as efficient as they possibly can utilizing new and emerging technology. Educating state legislators is essential to obtaining superior water stewardship.

He was active in the Army Reserve for 22 years and earned a Masters in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College. He was called to active duty after 9-11 and was assigned as Director of Homeland Defense for Operations Support Command at Rock Island Arsenal, Rock Island, Illinois. This job encompassed not only his infantry and logistics skills but his background in budgets and fund management. He retired in 2003.

His other not-for-profit endeavors include Habitat Chairman for the Southwest Georgia Chapter of Quail Forever, a member of the Georgia Wildlife Federation and Rotary International. You can find him on the Facebook forum, Bird Dogs and Fly Fishing.