ATLANTA — The Georgia Water Coalition released its “Clean 13” list last week, praising 13 individuals and groups whose extraordinary efforts have led to cleaner water in Georgia.

“Since the passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972, we’ve seen Georgia’s waterways become cleaner and healthier, but there’s still much that needs to be done,” said Joe Cook, advocacy and communication coordinator with Coosa River Basin Initiative, a Georgia Water Coalition member organization. “Those recognized in our Clean 13 report are setting new standards to protect, preserve and restore Georgia’s rivers, lakes, streams and coastal waters.”

None of this year’s honorees are from Colquitt County but some are quite close, and a former Colquitt Countian can take at least some credit for his agency’s inclusion on the list.

The Stripling Irrigation Research Park, managed by the University of Georgia, works with farmers to encourage them to adopt water-efficient irrigation practices that keep more water in Georgia’s rivers for wildlife, recreation and downstream communities, the coalition said in a press release.

Calvin Perry, a Colquitt County native, has headed up the research park near Camilla since 2008. Last November the university awarded him the D.W. Brooks Award for Excellence in Extension for his work there.

“It’s all about providing information and changing mindsets. One day all growers will likely use this technology,” Perry said in the coalition’s report. “We’re also working with vendors to make the systems better, faster and cheaper. It’s like cruise control in your car; these technologies will someday become standard.”

The rest of the Clean 13 include:
- Apalachicola Chattahoochee Flint Stakeholders: Group provides road map to end tri-state water dispute.

- City of Augusta, Columbia County, City of Savannah: Water utilities invest in study to restore Savannah River.

- Clayton County Water Authority: Water utility restores flows to Flint River.

- Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority: Water conservation leadership reduces demands on Etowah River and Lake Allatoona.

- Glynn Environmental Coalition: Coastal watchdog works to protect Brunswick-area communities from toxic pollution.

- Interface: Industry leader in sustainability continues work to conserve natural resources at its LaGrange, Atlanta and West Point facilities.

- Dr. Jenna Jambeck: UGA environmental engineer searches for solutions to plastic pollution.


- Lodge on Little St. Simons Island: Eco-tourism destination protects 11,000-acre barrier island.

- Riverview Farms: Organic farm protects Coosawattee River.

- Southwire: Carrollton manufacturer leads on sustainability practices, community improvement.

- University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources: Dam removal revives Middle Oconee River near Athens.

Open the Georgia Water Coalition's website, where you can download details on each of the Clean 13 recipients.
Colquitt County native receives UGA Extension award