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Media Contact:

Cindy Hassil, Development Director
865-577-4717, ext. 1006 / chassil@ijams.org

Ijams River Rescue Removes 17.2 Tons of Trash from Area Waterways March 8

(KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE, 3/21/2025) – The 36th annual Ijams River Rescue on March 8 brought together 518 volunteers to clean up 34 sites, removing an estimated 34,402 pounds (17.2 tons) of trash from the Tennessee River, creeks, streams, and shorelines in Knox, Anderson, Blount, and Loudon Counties.

Volunteers collected 1,157 bags of trash as well as 100 tires and large items, such as a mattress and roofing material. Interesting finds included a \$10 bill, a golf bag, televisions, industrial cables, a bowling ball, an unopened beer, a saw, and a computer system.

The 2024 cleanup removed an estimated 10.48 tons of trash and large items from 31 sites in Knox and Blount counties. Thanks to partners, this year's cleanup could once again expand to sites in Anderson and Loudon counties.

One cleanup partner, Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful, collected 6,944 pounds of trash in eight coves on Fort Loudon Lake in Lenoir City.

“Nonprofit cleanup organizations, neighborhood groups, sponsors, and volunteers all have a common goal: To improve the health and cleanliness of the lands and waters in our communities,” Ijams Volunteer Manager Brandy Cox said. “The Ijams River Rescue is just one day a year, but cleanups are a year-round labor of love. We all work together to improve East Tennessee, and our histories are intertwined.”

The Ijams River Rescue was part of the inaugural Tennessee River Tour led by Living Lands and Waters in 2015, which led to the creation of Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful in 2016.

The 36th annual Ijams River Rescue was made possible thanks to City of Knoxville Stormwater Engineering, Dow, First Horizon Bank, Brunswick Boat Group, Vulcan Materials Company, Borderland Tees, Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union, Old Sevier District, Tailwater Properties, and Tennessee Valley Authority, with support from CAC AmeriCorps and Water Quality Forum. Additional partners for the 36th annual event included the City of Knoxville, Knox County, Keep Knoxville Beautiful, and Keep Blount Beautiful.

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>.