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**University of Alabama PR Student Earns Prestigious Grant to Intern with Black Warrior Riverkeeper**

**Tuscaloosa, Ala.** - Gillian Richard, a native of Gurley, Ala., has received a grant from the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation to work with the nonprofit clean water advocacy organization Black Warrior Riverkeeper. Richard, a senior majoring in public relations at The University of Alabama, will be working as a communications intern for the group throughout the summer. This grant is the highest honor that the College of Communication and Information Sciences bestows on a student. The University of Alabama's public relations program was ranked in the [top 5 PR programs](#) nationally in each of the past 5 years.

"I'm incredibly honored to be able to work with Black Warrior Riverkeeper," said Richard. "It's the perfect internship for me as a communications student and as an Alabamian. I can play a part in protecting my home state's water."

[Black Warrior Riverkeeper](#) is a nonprofit organization based in Birmingham. The group protects public health, recreation and wildlife by monitoring the Black Warrior River watershed, which spans 17 Alabama counties.

[American Rivers](#), a national organization, recently selected the Black Warrior River for the 2013 *Most Endangered Rivers* list due to the [Shepherd Bend Mine](#) proposal, which would be built on property in Walker County primarily owned by The University of Alabama. The proposed coal mine site is directly across the river from a Birmingham Water Works Board intake that supplies drinking water to 200,000 people. Black Warrior Riverkeeper is calling on UA System Trustees to stop the proposal and thereby protect not only the river but also the people that would be impacted by polluted drinking water and increased water bills.

[The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation](#) funds the conservation of natural resources in North America and the Caribbean Basin with emphasis on the United States. The relationship between the Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation, The University of Alabama and Black Warrior Riverkeeper will benefit over a million people living throughout the Black Warrior River watershed, in addition to countless visitors.

"The Curtis and Edith Munson Foundation's generous grant to The University of Alabama's elite PR program is reaping fantastic benefits for our organization," said Charles Scribner, Executive Director of Black Warrior Riverkeeper. "In just her first week, our talented communications intern Gillian Richard has already enhanced our ability to promote the virtues of watershed protection."

"In addition to providing financial support directly to conservation organizations, the Foundation developed a partnership with the Department of Advertising and Public Relations at the University of Alabama," said Dr. Joseph Phelps, chairman of the department, "The student receives the financial support and excellent experience and the nonprofit organizations benefit from the student's efforts in an area that they typically do not have the funds to staff on a full-time basis."

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Black Warrior Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the Black Warrior River and its tributaries. We are a citizen-based nonprofit organization advocating for clean water, wildlife habitat, recreation and public health in our patrol area, the Black Warrior River watershed. This river basin is entirely contained in Alabama, America's leading state for freshwater biodiversity. To learn more, visit [www.BlackWarriorRiver.org](http://www.BlackWarriorRiver.org).