



World Record Attempt at Halfway Point

German professor swims and analyzes entire 652-mile Tennessee River

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In just 16 days, Dr. Andreas Fath is already halfway to setting a new world record in his effort to swim the entire Tennessee River.

A Professor of Medical and Life Sciences at Furtwangen University in Germany, Fath is nearing the midpoint of TenneSwim, his attempt to swim and analyze the water quality along all 652 miles of the river.

Fath began his "Swim for Science" on July 27 when he entered the river's headwaters at the confluence of the Holston and French Broad Rivers in Knoxville, Tennessee. Today, he is nearing Huntsville, Alabama, more than 300 miles downstream from the starting point. On Saturday afternoon, Aug. 12, he is expected to reach the halfway point on his 652-mile swim. *He is available to talk with news media during a Huntsville stop at Ditto Landing on Saturday. See press contacts above to arrange interviews there or at later stops during his swim.*

Fath and a team of scientists are taking daily water samples that will provide a comprehensive analysis of the health of North America's most biodiverse river. Fath is projected to reach Paducah, Kentucky, where the Tennessee River joins the Ohio River, around Aug. 29. Contact the River Discovery Center for details.

This is not Fath's first record-setting river swim for science. In the summer of 2014, Andreas Fath broke the world record for speed swimming the Rhine River from its source in the Swiss Alps to its confluence with the North Sea. Fath took daily water samples that provided an unprecedented look at the quality of water within this historic river.

"Everyone can help to keep our waters healthy and clean, for example, by producing less waste or properly disposing unused medications," Fath says. This is what he recommended during his presentation at the Tennessee Aquarium in Chattanooga on August 3rd.

In addition to testing for common water quality indicators such as temperature, nitrates, and phosphates, samples will be analyzed for traces of pharmaceuticals, hormones, microplastics, perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) and heavy metals. These substances will be evaluated 4-10 weeks after the termination of the project.

At 652 miles, the Tennessee River is 112 miles shorter than the Rhine, but its significantly slower current will pose an even greater challenge for Fath. Extreme headwinds, energy-sapping waves and high water temperatures (73-86 degrees Fahrenheit) have added to the difficulty of swimming the Tennessee River during the past two weeks.

Partners and Sponsors

TenneSwim is organized in partnership with the [University of the South](#), the [Tennessee Aquarium](#), [The Nature Conservancy](#), the [University of Georgia River Basin Center](#), [Ijams Nature Center](#), the [River Discovery Center of Paducah](#), [Tennessee State Parks](#), and the [Tennessee Valley Authority](#). Financial support comes from The [Lyndhurst Foundation](#), Riverview Foundation, [PerkinElmer](#), [Sweetwater Brewing Company](#), and a host of German sponsors. A group of German and Austrian research institutions assist with the analysis of water samples. GPS Live Tracking is provided by IMIA and WeSPOT.

Crowdfunding

The public can support the project financially via the web-based Crowdfunding platform "GoFundMe": gofundme.com/swimming-the-tn-river-for-science. Contributions will be used for water analysis costs only. All other expenses will be paid for by project sponsors.

About the Swimmer

Andreas Fath has a doctoral degree in chemistry. He is a professor at Furtwangen University (Black Forest, Germany), where he teaches physical chemistry and analysis. His research focuses on the electrochemical degradation of pollutants (such as perfluorinated tensides and antibiotics) in wastewater, and on microplastics that act as water filters.

Join Us

Much more information is available on our team website tenneswim.org and our Facebook page facebook.com/tenneswim. People can follow Dr. Andreas Fath in real-time via GPS tracking at event.gps-live-tracking.com/tenneswim/.

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