

## CELEBRATING A DECADE OF KEEPING THE RIVER



**B**y any standard, the Chattahoochee River was in trouble in 1994, and little was being done about it. What a difference a decade makes, thanks to you and others like you!

### *From Canoe to Jet Boat with a 4-Stroke*

In 1994, the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper organization began with a donated canoe, a small donated office in the basement of a building near the River, six board members, one employee, and a \$50,000 grant from The Turner Foundation. Because a licensed riverkeeper group already existed on the Chattahoochee in Columbus, we focused our work in the 3600-square mile upper half of the River Basin—from the spring at Chattahoochee Gap in Union County to West Point Dam, 85 miles downstream of Atlanta.



That year, we secured the state's agreement to clean up contaminated groundwater leaking into the River from an underground gasoline tank, and created a system to monitor permit compliance by more than 160 municipal and industrial facilities.

In 1995, we christened our first motorized boat—a 17' john boat with a 4-stroke jet motor, capable of negotiating the Chattahoochee's shallow, rocky shoals. We also tackled Atlanta's decades-old pollution problems by organizing a



coalition of downstream local governments, businesses and individuals and filed suit against the city for violations of the Clean Water Act. And, we stopped industrial stormwater pollution from a riverfront asphalt recycling plant by negotiating a settlement agreement to clean up the site.

### *National Precedent Set in Sewage Case*

We won the state's Partnership Award in 1996 at the Georgia Adopt-a-Stream Conference for our Stream Monitoring Network, and also created the Proctor Creek Watershed Initiative to bring river programs to inner city school children. We discovered many sewage spills in Atlanta which resulted in extensive media coverage and a major federal/state investigation. In 1997, a national precedent was set when the federal court ruled in our favor in the suit against Atlanta. We published *The Riverkeeper's Guide to the Chattahoochee*, a first-ever recreational guidebook from the mountains to the sea and we served as the catalyst for a meeting which resulted in positive revisions to the tristate "water wars" compact proposed by Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

See *Decade*, page 7

## RESERVE YOUR TICKETS FOR THE CELEBRATION TODAY!

**O**n Friday evening, **September 17, 2004**, we will celebrate our **10th Anniversary** at The Foundry at Puritan Mill in Atlanta, honoring **Ted Turner** and **Robert Kennedy, Jr.** This exciting evening will begin with a VIP Reception followed by a fabulous seated dinner and awards ceremony. We will also highlight major accomplishments over the past decade and thank many of the people who have supported our work.



Ted Turner

Robert Edward "Ted" Turner III is an icon

not only for his success in the world of media and sports, but also due to his willingness to give to those in need and in support of environmental causes. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., President of the Waterkeeper Alliance, is credited with leading the fight to protect New York City's water supply, but his reputation as a defender of the environment stems from a long list of successful legal actions.

The event will include a live auction to benefit UCR, a video highlight of our major accomplishments over the decade, live entertainment, great food and company.

We are pleased that The Coca-Cola Company has committed as a presenting sponsor. On the growing list of corporate supporters are



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Whole Foods Markets, Honda Marine, Time Warner, Turner Broadcasting System, The Jane Smith Turner Foundation, Cox Enterprises, and Colonial Pipeline Company. The event co-chairs are Pat and Ray

Anderson and Laura and Rutherford Seydel. To buy tickets or become a sponsor, visit [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org), or contact Magnus Christon at: [mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org), or 404-352-9828, ext. 12.

## Riverkeeper Staff

**Sally Bethea**  
Executive Director and Riverkeeper

**Darcie Boden**  
Director Headwaters Conservation

**Birgit Bolton**  
Programs Coordinator/  
Legal Support

**Alice Champagne**  
Watershed Protection Specialist

**Bill Crawford**  
Business Manager

**Magnus Christon**  
Special Events Coordinator

**Page Gleason**  
Development Director

**Skelly Holmbeck-Pelham**  
Policy Director

**Mary Manson**  
Receptionist

**Elizabeth Nicholas**  
General Counsel

**Harlan Trammell**  
Boat Captain

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*Our mission is to advocate and secure the protection and stewardship of the Chattahoochee River, its tributaries and watershed.*

# REFLECTIONS

**A**tenth anniversary is an obvious time for reflection—a summing up of tasks completed and goals still unmet. Our cover story gives you a sample of some of the things your generous support has enabled us to accomplish over the past decade.

I measure this past decade in many ways, but the most

compelling to me personally is the growth of my two sons. When I helped found Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper in 1994, Charles and Robert were 12 and 8, respectively—boys in junior high and elementary classes who loved their summer camp in North Carolina and hiking its mountains, and their year-old, mostly-Lab puppy, Molly B.



Ten years later, the boys are both at least a half foot taller than their mother and have finished high school. Charles, a writer, is about to graduate from college, after taking a semester off last year to thru-hike the entire 2,167-mile Appalachian Trail. Robert received leadership commendations during a grueling month-long NOLS trip to Grizzly-territory in Alaska and starts college in the fall. Molly B., whose muzzle is very gray at age 11+, thankfully remains the heart of the Bethea family.

The growth, and maturity, of my boys, makes me realize just how long we've been working to protect the

Chattahoochee River. As I look forward to my boys' new adventures in the coming years, I also look forward to new challenges and strategies on the River.

## Looking Forward

One of the most important things that UCR can do in the next few years is to continue our leadership role in helping unite the efforts of those who are working to protect the waters of our state and region.

Ten years ago, there were only two "riverkeeper" groups, both on the Chattahoochee. Now, keeper programs thrive on the Altamaha, Canoochee, Savannah, Satilla and Coosa Rivers, and Georgia River Network is working actively to develop and strengthen these and other river conservation groups statewide. The Georgia Water Coalition, 87 member organizations strong, is becoming one of the best vehicles for collaborative work. Among other issues, the GWC has focused its attention on the development of the state's first water management plan, due to be completed in 2007.

In the years to come, UCR will continue its core programs—citizen response Hotline, workshops and Adopt-A-Stream training, water quality monitoring and reporting, legislative advocacy, annual river race and festival, permit review, legal action, and on-the-water presence through river and lake patrols. We'll be there every day to serve as the lightning rod for your concerns about our River and to help speak loudly on behalf of all the people, fish and wildlife who depend on the River system.

*Sally Bethea*

## KINGSIZED FUN AT THE EIGHTH ANNUAL RIVER REVIVAL!

**I**t was an incredible **8th Annual River Revival** for Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper members and friends! This year's event took place on Cinco de Mayo (May 5) and was themed **Fiesta del Rio** in recognition of the day. The event attracted over 500 guests to the **Park Tavern** at Piedmont Park in Atlanta. Underneath a clear and beautiful spring sky, the popular Atlanta-based band **Kingsized** entertained a crowded dance floor. Lots of other guests took the opportunity to visit with old friends and meet a few new ones, while benefiting one of our most precious resources—the Chattahoochee River.



Turner Broadcasting System, a Presenting Sponsor, was well-represented at this year's River Revival. (L-R) Stacy Falls, Lisa Harris (TBS), Caroline Brown, Lisa Robias (TBS) and Kristina Christy (TBS).

Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

**River Sponsors:** Ted Turner and The Pacific Group.

**Friends of the River Sponsors:** Aquascape Environmental, Cauley Creek Water Reclamation, Brown and Caldwell, CH2MHill, Atlanta Fly Fishing Club, Ecological Solutions, Southern Civil Engineers, Hooked on the Outdoors Magazine, and Georgia Soft Drink Association.

**Media Sponsors:** Armada Magazine and Z-93.

The funds raised at *Fiesta del Rio* will support our mission to advocate and secure the protection of the River.

Many thanks to our auction donors who made this year's live auction one of the best yet, netting nearly \$10,000! We express sincere appreciation to the 8th Annual River Revival Host Committee, Co-Chairs **Tess and Scott Seydel, Kimberly and Brian Lusink, and Andrew Sugrue**, and to our volunteers and guests who helped this year's event net over \$55,000, an amount that surpassed our fundraising goal!



Guest dance the night away raising funds for UCR.

Very special thanks to our 2004 River Revival Sponsors:

**Presenting Sponsors:** The Coca-Cola Company and Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.

**River Protector Sponsors:** Chevron, Georgia Power Co., and The Turner Foundation.

**River Guardian Sponsors:** Stormwater Management Inc., Newfields, Seyfarth Shaw LLP, and Upper Chattahoochee



UCR Business Manager Bill Crawford, in his Cinco de Mayo sombrero, greets guests.

### Alice Champagne, UCR Watershed

Protection Specialist, was selected by EPD Director, Dr. Carol Couch, as an environmental representative on the SB 460 Rules Team which will identify criteria to be used in considering applications for variances from the 25-foot stream buffer protection law.

In addition, she was appointed by Governor Perdue as the environmental representative to the Stakeholder Advisory Board established by law in 2003 to provide guidance for mandatory erosion control education and certification.

## WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS... DOWN THE STREET

In other newsletter issues, we have written about polluted stormwater runoff from construction and industrial sites, but there are also water quality problems caused by the runoff that washes from city streets and municipal infrastructure, such as the pipes and other structures that carry runoff to nearby waterways. The management and control of this stormwater is regulated by the federal "MS4" (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Permit, which covers large and medium-sized local governments. In May, UCR provided comments on proposed MS4 permit renewals for many municipalities in the Chattahoochee Basin. We believe better management of municipal stormwater, through more detailed MS4 permits, is essential to our efforts to curb the problems of contaminated runoff. *For more information about municipal separate storm sewer systems and permit requirements go to: <http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/munic.cfm>. For more information about the Georgia Stormwater Manual, recently developed as a guide to public works departments, engineers and others, go to: [www.georgiastormwater.com](http://www.georgiastormwater.com).*



## RECOVERY PLANNED FOR COBB COUNTY RIVERBANK

Few people see the blighted section of the Chattahoochee from I-285 (south crossing) down to I-20, where the River creates the border between Cobb and Fulton Counties. This area includes approximately 20 industrial properties, such as junkyards and grading and trucking companies, many of which have used the Riverbank as a dumping ground. In 1998, land use regulations imposed by the state Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA) were extended 34 miles downstream of the River's confluence with Peachtree Creek, affecting Cobb's industrial River section. MRPA was originally passed in 1973 to help guide development in a 2000-foot corridor on each side of the River from Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek and protect water quality. After Cobb officials accompanied UCR staff on a boat trip to view the area firsthand, they responded by creating maps, identifying property owners, and hosting a meeting with these owners and UCR to discuss MRPA buffer protection requirements and existing violations. While some landowners will cooperate with the county to remove material from the Riverbank, it appears that others may have to be taken to court to come into compliance.



## UCR JOINS FOREST APPEAL TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

On April 29, UCR joined Georgia Forest Watch and other conservation groups in an appeal of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) management plan that will allow increased road building and commercial logging at the expense of protecting water quality and wild areas in the Chattahoochee/Oconee National Forest.

Initial drafts of the Chattahoochee/Oconee Management Plan (Forest Plan) that were released four years ago included important environmental protections, as the result of input from a variety of forest users, including members of the public and conservation groups, such as UCR. Disregarding public input, the current Administration removed these protections before releasing the final draft Forest Plan earlier this year. UCR and the other organizations that are appealing the Forest Plan believe that this action violates the National Environmental Protection Act, the National Forest Management Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Administrative Procedures Act.

The groups charge that the USFS failed to: (1) adequately protect "roadless areas"—special places identified by the USFS as generally pristine, (2) expand wilderness designations and allow for increased backcountry recreation, and (3) require sufficient buffer zones to keep muddy runoff out of the mountain streams that serve as headwaters for many community drinking water supplies. In addition, the Forest Plan provides for the doubling of

# On Patrol



## CLEANUP PLANNED AT WATTS ROAD LANDFILL IN WEST ATLANTA

Before flowing into the Chattahoochee, Proctor Creek winds through an urban watershed in west Atlanta that includes industries, landfills, and junkyards adjacent to residences, churches, schools, and public housing. City sewer problems, along with polluted runoff from industrial sites, have contaminated Proctor Creek for decades. Pursuant to the consent decree settling UCR's 1995 lawsuit against Atlanta, the sewers will be significantly improved. In 2001, our attention turned to industrial sources of stormwater pollution impacting Proctor Creek and we have worked successfully with industries to improve their on-site management practices. Our current focus is a cluster of closed landfills, former open dumps, and broken sewer lines where water samples have revealed problems in tributaries in the area. One pollution source is BFI's Watts Road Landfill where increasing volumes of storm runoff have cut into the landfill, sending trash, debris and contaminants downstream. Georgia's EPD is now working with BFI to remediate the site, as a component of a larger vision to improve the area and involve the community.



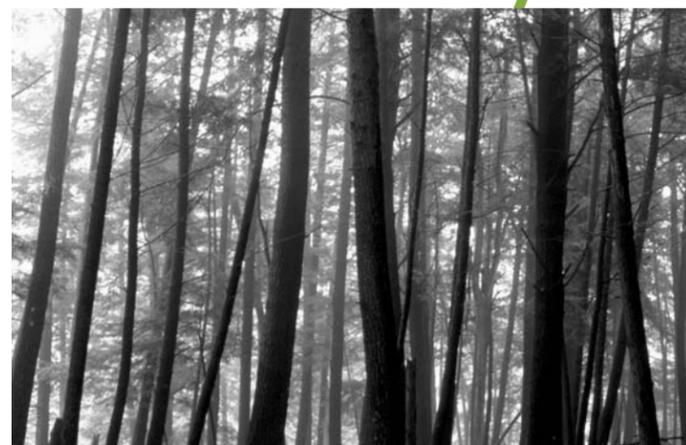
## PARK SERVICE PROPOSES BAN ON MOTORIZED BOATS

In June 2004, the National Park Service (NPS) published a *Draft General Management Plan (GMP)*, evaluating management alternatives for the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) during the next 10-15 years. In 2000, the NPS held "scoping" meetings to solicit ideas and opinions about CRNRA management, but no subsequent communication occurred between park planners and interested stakeholders until the recent release of the GMP. In addition to obvious process flaws, the content of the GMP is flawed and incomplete. For example, the NPS's preferred alternative bans gas-motorized boats from 49% of the 48-mile park and bank fishing from 15% of the park, though there is no proof that these river users are creating any environmental or public safety problems. We are working with sportsmen's groups to provide comments by the July 30 deadline urging the NPS to go back to the drawing board on the management alternatives.

planned timber harvests, as compared to the last decade.

The Chattahoochee/Oconee Forest is made up of 865,000 acres, containing much of what remains of Georgia's wild lands and streams. The clean streams, plentiful water, abundant wildlife, and unspoiled wilderness are a rich and valuable resource deserving protection. As written, the Forest Plan makes 87% of the Forest's roadless areas vulnerable to logging, road building, and other harmful activities. In addition, the Forest Plan ignores recommendations from the public and conservation groups that 41,000 eligible acres be designated and protected as wilderness. This action is directly at odds with the results of a USFS study in which an astounding majority (92%) of people support protection and/or addition of wilderness areas in the five Southern Appalachian national forests.

These attacks on forest preservation are not confined to the state of Georgia. In fact, two of the other groups participating in the Forest Plan appeal (SELC and Wildlaw) are also filing appeals of similar plans proposed in Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Alabama.



## ANNUAL RIVER RACE BUILDS MOMENTUM IN SECOND YEAR

On a very warm and clear Saturday morning in June, 140 boats and more than 200 paddlers arrived early at Garrard Landing Park in Roswell to test their skills and enjoy the Chattahoochee River.

They found a brand-new boat ramp with "Spongebob", "Elmo" and "Tweety Bird" waiting to start them on their journey. After talks by Race Master Bill Sapp and National Park



Paddlers with Spongebob, Elmo and Tweety Bird and UCR board member, Gary Gaines, at far right.

Service educator Jerry Hightower, warning racers about the River's "monster" frogs, the race began promptly at 9AM. An hour later, all boats were in the water on the way to the finish line at Roswell's Riverside Park.

Thanks are due to the many volunteers at the Race Start who helped with parking, registration and as starters



Festival attendees visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife exhibit.

and timers, especially the NPS volunteers and SCA (Student Conservation Association) who scraped the mud off of the boat ramp at 7AM!

### Winners in the Open and Recreational Categories

Open, or "competitive", paddlers raced a course covering ten miles, a section of which was back upstream to the finish line! The fastest time was accomplished by **Barend Spies** in a time of 1:16:47. Many of the recreational paddlers also caught the competitive spirit. The fastest time for their eight mile course was turned in by **Robert Osborn** at 1:12:34. Both Barend and Robert raced in kayaks. The fastest canoe time for open paddlers was 1:34:55 by **Steve and Delane Rosenau** and for recreational paddlers was 1:20:30 by **Timothy Abbott and Gina Nungester**. Race results are posted on [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org), just click on "Results".



Anticipation builds as racers prepare to get in the River at the start line.

### Partners Offer Education and Entertainment

In addition to the race, an environmental festival was held at Riverside Park offering great food, blue grass music and more than 30 environmental organizations and recreational outfitters on hand to share their information and resources. At the festival, citizens learned how to properly cast a fly fishing rod with help from the **Atlanta Fly Fishing Club** and **River Through Atlanta**, and kids made fun arts and crafts with **Cobb County Adopt-A-Stream** and the **Fulton County Water Quality Program**. The **Chattahoochee Nature Center** brought live animals.



## NEW TROUT UNLIMITED CHAPTER IN CHATTAHOOCHEE HEADWATERS

The **Gold Rush Chapter (GRC) of Trout Unlimited** was organized last fall in Dahlonega with Cane Creek, a secondary trout stream and major tributary to the Chestatee River, as the group's "home waters". GRC recently received a \$2500 grant for aquatic habitat improvements on a half-mile of Cane Creek within Camp Glisson, a Methodist Camp located on the outskirts of Dahlonega. Teenagers attending



Campers use rocks to build in-stream habitat structures for the trout that live in Cane Creek.

week-long camp sessions are helping to match the grant funds by volunteering their time and installing in-stream structures, such as rock vanes and K-dams. Additional components of the project include planting native vegetation, construction of low impact stream access points and the installation of interpretive signage. Although the main goal of the project is to improve stream habitat, a secondary goal is to raise environmental awareness about cold water fisheries and to stress the importance of enforcing erosion and sediment control regulations that help to protect water quality within the watershed.

To find out more about the Gold Rush Chapter of Trout Unlimited, cold water fisheries, and upcoming volunteer work days, visit the GRC's website at [www.goldrushtu.org](http://www.goldrushtu.org).

## UCR CELEBRATES EARTH DAY THROUGHOUT THE WATERSHED

April was very busy with several Earth Day celebrations throughout the Metro Atlanta area. On April 22, UCR and **Friends of the Upper Chattahoochee** held a small cleanup and conducted chemical water testing on the 'Hooch in downtown Helen.

On April 25, dedicated UCR volunteer, Kent Ruby, represented UCR at the **Riverside Neighborhood Association's Earth Day** event near Nancy Creek in Buckhead. This annual event drew more than 250 citizens to learn about additional local organizations and how they can get involved. At the UCR booth, kids and adults enjoyed interacting with the Enviroscope© model to learn how water pollution impacts our local waterways.



Children participate in an interactive puppet show at Riverside Neighborhood Association's Earth Day Event.

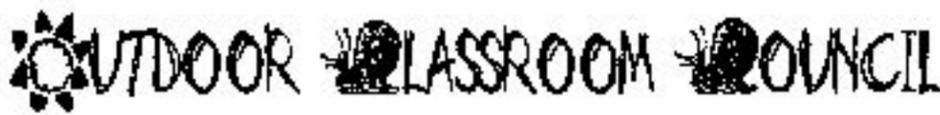


*Waters to the Sea: The Chattahoochee River has been selected by the Wildscreen Interactive Jury as an ARKive Interactive Award finalist. The winner will be announced at the Wildscreen Awards Ceremony on October 13th. Check out [www.wildscreenfestival.org](http://www.wildscreenfestival.org) to review a list of the finalists.*

JOIN US ON OCTOBER 22 AT BERRY COLLEGE

## DISCOVER TREASURES AT OUTDOOR CLASSROOM COUNCIL SYMPOSIUM

Each year, the Outdoor Classroom Council (OCC)



organizes an annual symposium aimed at helping schools develop and use their school property as active teaching areas. This year's OCC symposium will be on Friday, October 22, at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. Teachers and educators will "discover the treasures" as they attend interdisciplinary presentations and hands-on workshops on topics like tree identification, birding, pollinators, grant writing, soil composting and water quality. Additional training will be provided the day before (October 21) by the National Wildlife Federation who will

lead a Discovering Habitats workshop. On Saturday, October

23, Jerry Hightower with the National Park Service will host a workshop on Schoolyard Habitats. *For more information or to register, check out [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org).*

*OCC is a coalition of organizations and individuals sharing an interest in the design, development, maintenance and use of outdoor classrooms. Its mission is to serve teachers, parents, principals and community volunteers as a resource link, providing up-to-date training and literature.*

## STUDENT HAPPENINGS AROUND THE WATERSHED...

### CENTENNIAL ELEMENTARY GETS THEIR FEET WET WITH WATERSHED

Congratulations to Centennial Place Elementary in Atlanta—recipient of the 2004 Georgia Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) School of the Year Award! To win this award, the teachers and students at Centennial Place have been busy learning about water resources and the environment.

Throughout the 2003-04 school year, the curriculum specialist and four teachers from Centennial Place received training in EIC (Using the Environment as an Integrating Context) and the fifth grade team made water



*Students celebrate the opening of their new pond at Centennial Elementary.*

the focus of their teaching. The school partnered with the Georgia Aquarium and Georgia Adopt-A-Stream to engage their students in standards-based lessons about the school watershed, Chattahoochee River, and water quality. Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Coordinator, Kim Morris-Zarneke, spoke to the students about the water cycle, watersheds and nonpoint source pollution, and the students participated in a Rivers Alive cleanup event

in Candler Park where they removed over 320 pounds of garbage! The students also traveled to the **Chattahoochee Nature Center** to learn about the Bog Turtle and its natural history and walked along the Chattahoochee River, which was a first-time experience for many students. A key part of the EIC program is student-driven learning, so the Centennial Elementary students learned how to renovate their existing pond on school grounds—

which was in very poor shape. The students worked and researched how to create a pond, investigated potential pond designs, animals and plants lists, and overall supply costs. In May, they dedicated their new pond, which they hope all the grade levels will use in the future! We'll look forward to hearing from Centennial Elementary in the future.

### COOL WATERS WORKSHOP, A SPLASHING SUCCESS!

On June 14-16, the Public Education Committee for the **Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association (GW&PCA)** hosted their first annual Cool Waters Workshop for 30 teachers from the Metro Atlanta area. Action-packed presentations included training in Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, Healthy Water Healthy People, the Water Source Book, tours of local drinking water and wastewater treatment plants, as well as training on *Waters to the Sea: The Chattahoochee River* CD-ROM—UCR's latest educational resource. Teachers were thrilled to receive several great ideas and resources for their classroom next year!



*Teachers learn how to "hit the mark" to represent the accuracy and precision that is so important when collecting water quality data.*

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL READING LIST

#### GRADES 1-3

*Save the River!* by Sarah Glasscock  
*The Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood  
*Water Dance* by Thomas Locker

#### GRADES 4-6

*The River* by David Bellamy  
*Flush! Treating Water* by Karen Mueller Coombs  
*A River Ran Wild* by Lynne Cherry  
*The Boy Who Loved Rain* by Barbara Haupt  
*The Magic Schoolbus at the Water Works* by Joanna Cole  
*Where Does Water Come From?* by C. Vance Cast  
*Trouble River* by Betsy Byars  
*Letting Swift River Go* by Jane Yolen and Barbara Cooney  
*One Less Fish* by Kim Michelle Toft  
*A Drop of Water: A Book of Science and Wonder* by Walter Wick

## 10 YEARS OF WATERSHED EDUCATION

**1994:** Promoted GA Adopt-A-Stream, after UCR staff were in the first AAS training group.

**1996:** Initiated UCR's Stream Monitoring Network, training 200 volunteers in 13 different sub-watersheds.

**1998:** Partnered with the Captain Planet Foundation to provide Adopt-A-Stream grants for schools in the watershed.

**2000:** Partnered with Elachee Nature Science Center to create the first floating classroom on Lake Lanier, reaching 8,500 students to date.

**1999-2001:** Initiated UCR's Youth Program, reaching more than 4,000 students each year in Fulton County District 4 (Sandy Springs).

**1999-2003:** Expanded the Stream Monitoring Network to 8 metro Atlanta schools, reaching more than 500 students each year.

**2000-2004:** Implemented the REI River Stewardship Kit Program in 20 schools throughout the watershed.

**2003-04:** Implemented the Watershed Patch Project in 25 headwater schools to educate students on water stewardship.

**2004:** Co-Produced "Waters to the Sea---The Chattahoochee River" with Hamline University and Oxbow Meadows Learning Center, providing a virtual journey down the River to learn about natural history, water quality, water cycle, watersheds and river features.

# CAN WE SAVE THE HEMLOCKS IN THE RIVER'S HEADWATERS?

By James Sullivan

*Chattooga District Ranger, Georgia Forest Watch*

**O**n a UCR member hike last May, we descended a steep, dry slope off a high ridge in the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River. As we heard the first sounds of running water, hemlocks began to grace our path with wonderful green and lacy boughs, creating a habitat of deep shade and moist atmosphere. Can you imagine the Chattahoochee watershed without its hemlock trees?



*The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid*

The possibility of the Eastern Hemlock being eliminated from our forest, like the American Chestnut in the last century, is very real. An Asian insect, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), has become a serious threat to Eastern and Carolina Hemlocks. Our hiking group found HWA in stands of hemlock on Henson Creek, a Chattahoochee tributary. Other surveys have found HWA on Chattahoochee tributaries as far downstream as Dukes Creek.

## ***Insect Entered North America in 1924***

The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has been in North America since 1924 and in the eastern states since the 1950s. It is now infecting hemlocks from southern New England to north Georgia. In Georgia, it is known to be in Rabun, Towns, Union, Habersham and White Counties. The greatest infestations are currently in the Chattooga River watershed, but this insect pest is spreading quickly through the range of hemlock in Georgia.

The insect retards growth of new needles and twigs by sucking fluids from the twig at the base of the needle. Needles turn to a grayish-green and drop prematurely. Defoliation and tree death occurs in 4 to 10 years. The adelgid is moved around by birds and mammals, including humans, and disperses very locally in the wind. With no apparent natural predators to keep the populations in check and prevent tree mortality, many stands of hemlock in the middle Atlantic states have already succumbed to the adlegid. The hemlocks in our forest are

not going to survive this rapidly spreading infestation without our help.

## ***Rearing Facilities Needed for Adelgid Predators***

Predators of HWA were found in Asia and tested extensively for appropriateness of biological control by release into HWA-infested areas. Four tiny beetles were found to be ecologically and socially appropriate and were approved for release by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, along with a beetle that is a native to our Pacific northwest. Though still experimental, previous releases in middle Atlantic and New England states have demonstrated potential for control of HWA. There has been great success in rearing one species of predator and 13 releases have been made in Georgia's Chattooga River watershed.

We have a desperate need for more beetle rearing facilities, especially one in Georgia. Support for such a facility must come from government agencies and private sector sources. We do not have enough information to clearly predict the impacts that the loss of the hemlock could bring to the riparian and aquatic ecosystems in the Chattahoochee headwaters and elsewhere. A few of the possibilities include changes in stream temperature, loss of humid ground level habitats of amphibians, and a huge pulse of course woody debris from dead trees into our streams.



*James Sullivan, Chattooga District Ranger, Georgia Forest Watch*

More information about HWA at:  
[www.fs.fed.us/na/morgantown/fhp/hwa/hwasite.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/na/morgantown/fhp/hwa/hwasite.html)



*UCR's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.*

## **CAPTAIN'S CORNER**

### **PARK SERVICE PROPOSAL SPELLS TROUBLE FOR RIVER**

**T**he National Park Service (NPS) has proposed a management plan for the 48-mile Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek) that is bad medicine for boaters and fishermen (see *On Patrol*, page 3).

Under a proposal put out in June, about one-half of the river in the park would be off-limits to gas-powered motor vessels, including UCR's patrol boat, and the NPS could decide to ban these boats from additional river sections in the future. The proposed ban would include: McGinnis Ferry to Suwannee Creek, south of Jones Bridge to Holcomb Bridge, Island Ford to Vickery Creek, lower Morgan Falls Lake, and the Palisades. Though the plan is called an environmental impact study, it is based on the opinion of the NPS and their consultants. No environmental studies or surveys have ever been done that conclude motor vessels are causing problems on the Chattahoochee.

What this means for boaters, if the plan is approved,

is that the areas where motor vessel operation will be allowed will be slammed, concentrating all boating in a much smaller area. Not all boaters want to fish. Some just like to ride, and I work full-time from a boat. This also means that sewage spills, broken pipes, land disturbances, fish kills, buffer violations, etc. will simply go unchecked. Many large sewage spills that I have found and gotten stopped would still be flowing today, if I had not been in a jet boat.

If boaters can't use the Chattahoochee hassle-free, they will simply take their money and go elsewhere. If they can't use it, they may not care for it anymore either. To implement such a plan is to polarize and limit the entire river-user market. To limit the market is to also screen the people who would otherwise care for the river and take action to preserve it. Boaters can't afford this and the Chattahoochee can't either. Our river does not need to have the number of caring users cut or "limited". Our river needs all the help it can get from everyone.



## DECADE

Continued from page 1

The River corridor below Atlanta was protected by legislation that we helped pass in **1998**, and we also worked to defeat a bill that would have weakened trout stream buffer laws. Our Atlanta case was settled with a federal consent decree requiring strict deadlines—a \$2.5 million fine and a \$30 million supplemental environmental project to purchase greenways and remove trash from streams. We also helped delay the state's attempted approval of 50-year water withdrawal regulations that would have perpetuated Georgia's inadequate instream flow policy. Materials and workshops were developed to educate the public on ways to monitor construction sites and report violations.

### **Water Allocation Policy, Bacteria Monitoring and Stormwater Control**

In **1999**, we created the Tristate Conservation Coalition to promote the protection of water quality, biodiversity, and recreation in the context of the water allocation negotiations. Two tributaries to the River were protected by our legal actions against the state for issuing variances within state-protected buffers. We secured a 3-year funding commitment to initiate a Lake Lanier Patrol Program, and the city of Atlanta completed a one-year cleanup of 37 miles of urban streams, removing 568 tons of material.

We initiated daily bacteria monitoring in the River, in partnership with federal and state agencies in **2000**, and helped develop the state's process for listing and de-listing waterways as trout streams. We also purchased a pontoon boat, as a floating classroom, and started a new education program on Lake Lanier with Elachee Nature Center. A massive tree planting and riverbank stabilization was conducted on the River, and we helped settle Georgia's long-litigated General



Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities.

By **2001**, our Citizen HOTLINE was responding to more than 300 calls each year. We led a successful effort to secure fishermen's right-to-know regulations requiring all permitted dischargers to label their outfall pipes with emergency information, and secured a precedent-setting judicial decision regarding the standing of public interest groups to challenge water withdrawal permits. In **2002**, we helped organize the Georgia Water Coalition, which produced a comprehensive report containing recommendations for laws to improve the state's management of its water resources. We also appealed a decision to uphold a state permit allowing the discharge of millions of gallons of treated sewage into Lake Lanier, and actively participated in the deliberations of the Metro Atlanta Water Planning District.



### **Bringing People Back to the River**

The First Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race was started in **2003**, and we also developed a "Waters to the Sea" CD-ROM project for schools throughout the River Basin. Our fish consumption project was completed and we began to help the state educate at-risk populations about eating contaminated fish. A bill promoted by the Georgia DOT, which would have weakened stream buffer laws, was defeated, and we played a major role in the passage of legislation to reform the state's erosion control programs. The biggest victory was the Water Coalition's defeat of legislation that would have allowed the marketing of the state's water for private gain.

As we enter our second decade, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper is armed with a professional staff of ten, a committed and active board of 15, three boats, two offices, and a continued resolve to work aggressively to protect the Chattahoochee and its watershed for the people, fish and wildlife that depend on the River system. We cannot do this challenging work without your help and support. The successes of our first decade would not have been possible without your commitment to our River. Thank you.



## THE POLITICAL MORPHOLOGY OF RIVERS

By Tim Palmer, author and river conservationist  
(From "Streamlines", Spring 2004, published by River Network at [www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org))

The finest, greatest, and most fundamental of natural forces govern a river: gravity, climate, geology and the intricate rules of hydrology and ecology. All these combined forces give a river its character, its condition, and its shape or morphology. In less magisterial ways, politics shape a river as well. None today is exempt from the forces of change unleashed by the decisions that people make—collectively—through politics.

Like it or not, river conservation is political. Because rivers are public features, the decisions about how to care for them are public decisions.

### **Small "p" and Capital "P" Politics**

We have small "p" politics—the practice of making decisions politically. This is what river conservationists do all the time—researching, explaining, convincing, cajoling, sweet talking, negotiating and otherwise lobbying to see that the correct decisions are made. Then, we have capital "P" politics—getting the best people elected.

Even though people in this great endeavor called river conservation focus on small "p" politics and almost never wade ankle-deep into large "P" work, we get almost nowhere without good elected officials. On the other

hand, we can get almost everywhere with them.

I think that river conservationists prefer to do the small "p" politics because we feel like we're working for our river when we do that—it's all about science, and appreciation and communication, with the river at its core. It would be nice to think that this kind of lobbying could convince elected officials to do the right thing. Sometimes—even against great odds—it does.



Politics means strange bedfellows. Even a reluctant Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act (he vetoed the Clean Water Act, which was passed by a two-thirds override of Congress). Politics means making deals. In 1968, Wayne Aspinall of Colorado—himself the arch-enemy of conservation—allowed the National Wild and Scenic Rivers to pass, something that had not seemed possible. Turns out it was part of a deal that greased the tracks for authorization of new

dams and diversions from the upper Colorado River basin.

### **Getting Good People Elected**

But, most fundamentally, politics means getting good people elected. If we want to save rivers and promote stewardship, we're dependent on having politicians in office with at least some integrity, intelligence and concern for the future.

In earlier times, political support and courageous work of good elected officials brought us the Clean Water Act, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Endangered Species Act and all the other good environmental legislation we have. Good political intervention into otherwise bad politics stopped the building of dams in the Grand Canyon and on the Delaware, Tuolumne, the Sangamon, the Salmon and dozens of other streams. Even the most minor or local of decisions to save a river—a floodplain ordinance, a taxpayer's bond for better sewage treatment, a budget appropriation for a state department of fish and game—all these depend on having good people in public office.

Like it or not, conservation is politics, and if we want our rivers to be protected or restored, we need to be players in the game. The only alternative is to be spectators to the loss of everything we love.

# ACTION ALERT

## 10 THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO TO INFLUENCE POLITICS

**Commit and connect to the cause**—If you haven't already done so, join forces with your local or regional river/watershed protection group. See [www.georgiarivers.org](http://www.georgiarivers.org) for a list of river groups in Georgia.

**Run a petition drive on an issue**—Demonstrate public support and provide your elected officials with contact information of people who support river conservation. A petition drive can be an effective way to let your public officials know that a large sector of the community agrees with your concerns.

**Provide constituent contact**—Hold a house party for your friends and neighbors or the members of an organization in order to meet your legislators. Encourage one-on-one constituent contact and ask your public official to contact you or others, if anything comes up in which you would be interested. Your goal is to become a trusted source of information and voter feedback.

**Lobby**—Contrary to popular belief, even nonprofit groups can lobby. (The IRS has set limits on how much lobbying a 501(c)(3) organization can undertake and on the amount of money that can be spent on direct and grassroots lobbying). An individual can lobby as much as he/she wants, as long as it is clear they are doing so as an individual and not on behalf of a nonprofit organization.

**Monitor relevant public activity (and provide information)**—Any elected official has to be familiar with an

extraordinary number of complex issues. State representatives need to know what's happening at the local level.

**Talk to the media and send letters to the editor**—Take a reporter out to the river so that he/she can see first hand the importance of the issues. You can initiate a "letter to the editor" campaign, write an "op-ed" article, or meet with the editorial board.

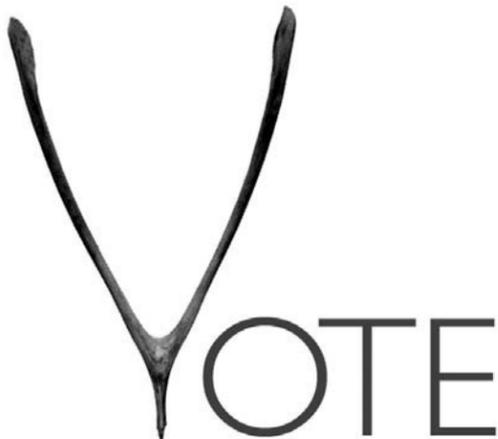
**Educate your candidates**—People and policy-makers can learn from your experience. Talk to candidates about river protection. You can even sponsor a forum for candidates.

**Encourage voting**—The U.S. has one of the lowest average voter turn-outs in the Democratic World (49.3% in 2000). Help register cause-educated voters and turn out the vote!

**Issue report cards**—Let your elected officials know when you are unhappy about the way they voted on an issue or how they may have misrepresented the issue to the public, but don't forget to also thank them when they vote on behalf of rivers.

**Democracy is not a spectator sport**—Political decisions, fiscal budgets, and legislation affecting our natural resources can spell life-support or they can accelerate extinction. Know how your candidates or elected officials feel about river conservation. Know how they have voted in the past. Give them feedback, not just on Election Day, but every chance you get.

(Source: *River Network's "Streamlines"*, Spring 2004)



EMPOWER YOUR WISHES

### What is Electioneering?

A 501(c)(3) organization like Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, cannot endorse, contribute to, work for, or otherwise support a candidate for public office, nor can it oppose one. This in no way prohibits officers, individual members, or employees from participating in a political campaign, provided that they say or do everything as private citizens and not as spokespersons for the organization or while using the organization's resources.

**Run for the River-5K Run**  
Saturday, November 6, 2004  
Start time: 8:00am  
4830 Rivergreen Parkway,  
Duluth, Georgia



**Make an environmental difference knowing your race proceeds will benefit UCR.**  
**Sponsored by Hooked on the Outdoors.**  
**Visit [www.runfortheriver.org](http://www.runfortheriver.org) to download your registration form.**

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## River Matters

**FREE DNR Kids Fishing Event!** August 21 and September 24

Charlie Elliot Wildlife Center  
9 a.m. - noon  
For more information, call 770-784-3121

**Evening Pontoon Float** August 24  
Lake Lanier  
Limited spaces, members only.  
Contact Birgit Bolton at [bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org)

**10th UCR Anniversary Celebration** September 17  
The Foundry at Puritan Mill  
7:30pm - 11pm  
For information, visit [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) or call 404-352-9828 ext. 12 or [mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org)

**Lake Lanier Annual Shore Sweep** September 25  
For more information, contact Darcie Boden at 770-531-1064 or [dboden@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:dboden@ucriverkeeper.org).

**Upper Hooch White Water Run** September 25  
Contact Bill Crawford: [bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org) or call: 404-352-9828 ext. 14

**A.D. Williams River Clean-up** September 9  
For more information or to sign-up, contact Birgit Bolton at [bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org)

**Outdoor Classroom Symposium** October 22  
Berry College, Rome  
Check out [www.eealliance.org](http://www.eealliance.org) for more information

**Big Trees Forest Hike** October 30  
Roswell  
10:30am  
For more information or to sign-up, contact Birgit Bolton at [bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org)

**Run for the River** November 6  
Contact Magnus Christon at [mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org) or Jeff Espy at 770-396-4320 or [jeff@ruhooked.com](mailto:jeff@ruhooked.com)



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