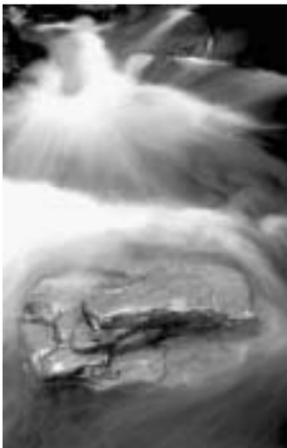


WATER FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE



The River runs clean and cold in the uppermost stretches of the Chattahoochee.

A glass of Atlanta tap water graced page one of *U.S. News and World Report's* cover article recently. It made Atlanta the poster child of the water crisis. The water in the magazine resembled murky green tea, rather than the clear liquid we expect to see flowing from our faucets. But, as we endure our fourth year of drought, we could take a "glass half-full" rather than "glass half-empty" view in response to this image of Atlanta's water supply. The water may be dirty at times, but at least it is there.

Recent analyses indicate that many areas in Georgia are bumping up against their water supply limits—much sooner than expected. As population growth continues and the drought lingers, once plentiful water is becoming "blue gold". In the midst of this major water challenge, the state is struggling with a political question of the most fundamental nature: *who owns Georgia's surface and ground water?*

Georgia Water Coalition Fills Void

The newly-formed Georgia Water Coalition believes that the answer to this question is as clear as our ideal glass of tap water: the surface and ground waters of the state must continue to be a public resource, managed in the public interest and in a sustainable manner by the state to protect natural systems and meet human and economic needs. On behalf of its 50 member organizations, the

Coalition is providing its water policy recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly and the general public for consideration prior to the 2003 General Assembly.

Water Could Become Big Business

The question of water ownership seems, at first glance, to be an academic, instead of practical, problem. But, William Booth reported recently in the *Washington Post* that schemes abound to move water across great distances for profit. A well-connected British wheeler-dealer has connived to sell water to be stored in an aquifer below the Mojave Desert to southern California. Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens expects to market the blue gold of the Ogallala Aquifer

to Dallas, and more ambitious ideas about ocean shipping of water from rivers and glaciers via huge plastic bags underscore the desperation of cities. These plans raise questions about how much water can be withdrawn from rivers and aquifers that cross natural and jurisdictional boundaries without causing negative effects on natural systems, surrounding property values and local economies.

Water marketing, like these examples, also raises questions of equity, ethics, and basic human rights. For example, many counties and cities in Georgia are working hard to implement water-saving measures to protect

See *By the People*, page 7



The Clean Water Act Turns 30!

In October, thirty years ago, the U.S. Congress passed one of the most important tools that citizens have to clean up, protect and restore their waterways. The Clean Water Act of 1972 came at a time when rivers were burning, and seemed idealistic in its insistence that water be fishable and swimmable. The Chattahoochee below Atlanta was filled with sludge worms from untreated sewage in the water. We've come a long way since then, but some of our rivers and lakes are *more* polluted and degraded, largely because of the sprawling growth in the watersheds that drain into them. Much of this pollution may seem less dramatic, less visible, than flaming oil spills, but it may also be more resistant to easy remedies. We're now seeing the frightening results that low stream flows can have on water quality and aquatic life, when floodplains, wetlands and other greenspace are filled and paved.

As Jimmy Carter has written, "The problems with rivers do not always begin in rivers."

Whatever we do to a landscape can ultimately be seen in the river into which that landscape drains—and we have done terrible things to many landscapes. To achieve the goals of the Clean Water Act, we must stop using our rivers and landscapes as though they were disposable." (*The Clean Water Act: An Owner's Manual*, a River Network publication available at www.rivernetwork.org.)

One of the most important provisions of the Clean Water Act allows citizens to sue polluters when government agencies fail to enforce its requirements. After a 60-day notice letter to all parties, the citizens may take their case to federal court, seeking injunctive relief. In other words, asking a federal judge to demand that the pollution be cleaned up. Without this provision and Riverkeeper's 1995 lawsuit, today, the city of Atlanta would not be under a federal consent decree to fix its serious infrastructure problems that routinely send untreated sewage into neighborhood streams every time that it rains.

So, Happy Birthday to the Clean Water Act! One day we'll hope to meet your goal that all waters be "fishable and swimmable".



Taking advantage of a sunny summer day by rafting on the Chattahoochee through Atlanta.

Riverkeeper Staff

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Bill Malloy

Dr. Judy Meyer

Steve O'Day

Chrissy Hobbs

J. Rutherford Seydel II, Chair

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

REFLECTIONS



After 25 years as an environmental advocate, I thought that I had seen it all—in terms of bad faith negotiations and political maneuvering. The "work" of the Joint Legislative Water Study Committee (JSC), over the past year, showed me that anything can, and will, be done, when enough money is at stake.

Although other topics were debated, the lightning rod issue during JSC deliberations was reduced to one simple question. *Do Georgia's surface and ground waters belong to all Georgians for reasonable uses?* The re-sounding answer from the agribusiness-dominated JSC was "NO", as the group refused to include a key principle supporting water as a public resource in its final report. The degree to which agribusiness and industry have fought this basic human right has been astounding and telling.

In southwest Georgia, home to 5 of the 23 members including Co-chair Rep. Bob Hanner, transplanted Western economists have found a foothold in the depressed farming region to sell a concept that could make water an economic commodity throughout Georgia. They want to establish private property rights in water and let this "blue gold" flow to the highest bidder, in or out of state. (See cover story.) Five other members of the

JSC represented agribusiness or industry interests, while only two environmentalists were appointed.

A 50-member Advisory Council was also established pursuant to the resolution that created the JSC and its mission to develop a framework and process for Georgia's first water management plan. Despite the resolution's requirement that "citizen groups in each river basin" be represented on this Council, the majority of the appointees from the 14 basins are not connected to grassroots citizen organizations.

At one meeting, Albany farmer George McIntosh claimed erroneously that the public resource statement (a recommendation of the JSC's water rights subcommittee) was already in the JSC's draft report. It wasn't. At another meeting, he declared that seven environmental principles had not been approved at a prior meeting, however, he had, in fact, seconded the motion to approve them at that meeting! This did not deter Rep. Hanner from calling for a vote on McIntosh's motion to delete the principles from the final JSC report. The vote was reported as being 9-6 in favor of McIntosh, although there remains some uncertainty regarding the vote of Co-chair Sen. Hugh Gillis. At the final meeting, the seven principles were re-inserted for "consideration" only.

The JSC thoroughly tarnished its credibility. It will be up to the Governor and the Legislature to make sure that our waterways are preserved as public resources.

Sally Bethea

AN EVENING IN THE COUNTRY...

Join us for an evening at **Robert Hancock's** cabin on the River in Heard County on Nov. 2, 2002, at 5 p.m. Bring a friend and enjoy BBQ, beer, wine and bluegrass music. \$20 per person. For information call Erin Gallagher at 404-352-9828 ext. 12 or email egallagher@ucriverkeeper.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Please reserve Thursday, November 21 (7-9PM) for Riverkeeper's 2002 Annual Membership meeting at Southface Energy Institute. This year's guest presenter is Dave Kaufman, author of *Peachtree Creek, Atlanta's Forgotten River*. Bring a friend and enjoy Dave's presentation and see his wonderful photos and memorabilia. For information, call Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828, ext 14 or e-mail: bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org

SAVE THE DATE---2002 X-MAS PARTY

The 2002 X-MAS Party will be held at the Tabernacle in downtown Atlanta on December 6th. If you are interested in sponsoring this event or buying tickets, please contact Erin Gallagher at 404-352-9828 ext. 12, or e-mail egallagher@ucriverkeeper.org.

ADIEU TO RIVERKEEPER'S EVENTS QUEEN...

In July, **Erin Gallagher**, replaced **Sandy Layton** as Riverkeeper's Special Events Coordinator. We welcome Erin who worked for the past four years in Corporate Affairs for Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., where she handled a variety of community projects, including the organization of Turner Volunteer Day. Erin has a Bachelor's degree in communications from West Virginia University.



Erin Gallagher

Sandy first came to Riverkeeper in 1996, when our special events program was just evolving. Thanks to her expert organizational skills and experience, Sandy developed the program to at least eight significant events per year, with the assistance of Board members and other supporters, thereby creating a major source of operating revenue for our programs. She also did an excellent job representing Riverkeeper on the Board of Environmental Fund for Georgia, now EarthShare. We wish Sandy the best, as she begins a new career with Next Technology!



CANOE MARKS ANNIVERSARY WITH RIVER CELEBRATION

This past August marked **Canoe Restaurant's** seventh anniversary. To celebrate its successes, Canoe created "River Celebration 2002" to recognize the anniversary and its long-standing partnership with Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. River facts and photographs were displayed throughout the restaurant. Special cuisine, drinks and events were enjoyed by all who visited Canoe throughout August. Diners had the option to choose from the "River Celebration Menu," a five-course dinner paired with wine featuring favorites from Canoe's first year. Canoe bartenders also joined in on the fun and created a special cocktail called the "Rivertini." Special events included a "Wines by the River" tasting in the River Garden on the banks of the Chattahoochee. Coinciding with the wine tasting was a book signing by **Joe and Monica Cook**, authors of *River Song*, a beautiful photographic journey down the River. Boat rides aboard the "Sweet Virginia", captained by Riverkeeper's **Harlan Trammell**, were also offered to Canoe customers during a Sunday brunch. We were thrilled to be a part of Canoe's anniversary celebration and thank **George McKerrow**, **Ron SanMartin** and **Gerry Klaskala** for all the support they have given us over the years, and congratulate them on their 7th anniversary!



Canoe patrons enjoy a ride aboard the "Sweet Virginia".

INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM INTERNS

This summer Riverkeeper had one full-time legal intern and three part-time program interns. **Sadie Gardner**, a second year law student from the University of Mississippi finished her legal internship this August under the guidance of our General Counsel, Michelle Fried. **Drew Morris**, a senior from the University of Florida, earned 3 credits towards his environmental degree by assisting Kristi Rose with Education programs. **Mihkel Allpere**, also pursuing an environmental degree from Denison University, assisted staffers with water sampling and was very instrumental in our Stormwater campaign through his GIS contributions. Lastly, **Aliyah Johnson**, a senior biology student at Georgia State has dedicated her time to Riverkeeper by helping Alice Champagne, our Watershed Protection Specialist, with her buffer variance program and will be staying with Riverkeeper through the fall. The work and support these interns contribute to Riverkeeper is invaluable, and we hope to have more hard working interns for the winter and spring semesters. If you know a student who is interested in becoming a Riverkeeper intern, please contact our Programs Coordinator, Birgit Bolton at: 404-352-9828 ext. 24 or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org.



SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE AFFIRMS BAD DECISION IN GEORGIA POWER CASE

An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) ruled in Riverkeeper's favor earlier this year in our challenge to the water withdrawal permit issued to **Georgia Power Company (GPC)** for its coal-fired plant in Heard County. The ALJ found that GPC did *not* need to withdraw 116 million gallons per day (mgd) of water from the River. GPC and the Director of the Environmental Protection Division quickly filed briefs asking the ALJ to reconsider his ruling. In a surprising change of heart, and with little explanation, the ALJ *reversed* his earlier decision and upheld the 116 mgd permit term. Riverkeeper appealed the ALJ's ruling to Fulton Superior Court, but the Superior Court affirmed the ALJ's bad decision. While disappointed with both judicial rulings, we are pleased that our action established that citizens are water users protected by state law with the right to appeal withdrawal permits. Also, GPC had to significantly augment its original permit application with additional drought and conservation information.

TMDL STATE PROPOSES SHODDY "POLLUTION BUDGETS" FOR STREAMS

Total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) are pollution budgets designed to reduce pollution levels in degraded, or impaired, waterways. For example, Clear Creek, an urban tributary to the Chattahoochee, suffers from raw sewage, storm runoff, channelization, and low dissolved oxygen, placing it on Georgia's 2002 list of impaired waters (*see photo below*). EPD must develop a TMDL for every waterbody on this list. A good TMDL should assess sources of pollution, determine the level of pollution the waterbody can receive and still meet state water quality standards (i.e., the pollution budget), allocate portions of the pollution budget to each identified source of pollution, and leave a portion unallocated as a margin of safety. In July, EPD proposed TMDLs for waters in the Chattahoochee Basin. Overall, the proposed TMDLs are *inadequate*, failing to identify pollution sources and making only general recommendations on how to clean up the polluted waterways. In September, we submitted comments to the state, based on an engineering and water quality analysis.



No natural buffer along Clear Creek below Atlanta's Combined Sewer Overflow facility.

EMBAYMENTS ON LAKE LANIER NEED CHLOROPHYLL STANDARDS

In 2000, the Georgia Board of Natural Resources approved water quality standards for Lake Lanier for a suite of parameters (e.g., dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, chlorophyll-a, nitrogen and phosphorous) which serve as benchmarks for the Lake's health. Monitoring stations were designated at only five mid-channel locations throughout the 38,000-acre lake due to limited state resources. As a result, Riverkeeper advocated for additional monitoring to provide a more comprehensive representation of Lake Lanier. During 2001, the state EPD was able to conduct supplemental monitoring at five embayment locations—areas where tributaries enter the Lake and nutrients can concentrate, causing algal blooms.

Riverkeeper also initiated a monitoring program on Lake Lanier to collect additional data, focusing on chlorophyll-a (chl_a), which is a pigment found in plants and algae that is required for photosynthesis. The measure-

ment of chl_a indicates the biomass, or amount, of algae in lake water. Excess algae (an indicator of nutrient pollution) reduces water clarity and dissolved oxygen levels such that algae blooms and fish kills may result. Riverkeeper's monitoring program on Lanier is intended to measure chl_a levels against state standards and over a greater spacial scale, and collect additional data in embayments.

A review of 2001 data and preliminary 2002 data confirms that standards should be adopted for embayments—in addition to the five mid-channel locations. All but one bay station showed higher average annual chl_a levels than the benchmark stations in both EPD and Riverkeeper data. In addition to setting embayment standards, we continue to advocate that a "one-time" maximum be designated to detect pollution "hot spots". The current standards are based on an annual average over the growing season (April through October) which is not a true reflection of Lake conditions. During

months with higher levels of precipitation, additional phosphorous carried in stormwater runoff supports increased algae growth, leading to spikes in chl_a levels. For this reason, additional wet weather monitoring should be conducted to collect data that accurately measures impacts from stormwater runoff and to eliminate "hot spots".

Although none of the five benchmark stations exceeded the annual chl_a standards during 2001, some of the averages are approaching the maximum, and it is possible that this standard could be exceeded in the next few seasons, especially as the Lake's watershed continues to develop. A database is being built with this new monitoring information from Riverkeeper, Gainesville College, the Upper Chattahoochee River Basin Group and the Adopt-A-Lake program. Ultimately, we envision that this database will provide the necessary information to refine and improve Lanier's water quality standards and enforcement.

On Patrol



GENERAL SHALE TAKES STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SERIOUSLY

Riverkeeper's Stormwater Campaign is making significant strides towards addressing industrial pollution impacts to Proctor Creek in southwest Atlanta. With our partners (Georgia Center for Law and the Public Interest and National Wildlife Federation), we are investigating industrial facilities in the Proctor watershed for potential stormwater violations. We met with the state EPD to discuss the Campaign and asked them to investigate four industrial facilities of serious concern. EPD has inspected two of these four facilities, to date, and required them to improve their stormwater management practices. **General Shale**, a brick manufacturing company, completed the required improvements very quickly and allowed our consultant to inspect their site. This inspection revealed that General Shale is now effectively controlling the stormwater that runs off its site. At a community meeting in the watershed, hosted by NWF, Riverkeeper and the Georgia Center asked for help in identifying problem industries. We have also developed a water-quality monitoring program that will allow us to focus our work on the most polluted segments of Proctor Creek.



MYSTIFYING DISCHARGE A RESULT OF A POWER OUTAGE?

On July 29, as a thunderstorm moved into north Fulton County, a Riverkeeper member was fishing on the Chattahoochee near Horseshoe Bend and witnessed a brownish-black substance flowing from the outfall pipe at **Fulton's John's Creek sewage plant**. When the fisherman walked through the plant property to get out of the storm, he asked an employee what had happened and was told that a power outage had occurred. The fisherman called our HOTLINE to report the spill and we promptly contacted the state EPD. Three weeks later, the state inspected the John's Creek plant for the second time and found "more questions, than answers", including incomplete operating records for the day of the spill. Plant employees claim that there was no spill on July 29, but the state continues to investigate the matter. It is our understanding that EPD plans to request a full investigation of this mysterious incident. Over the years, fishermen have reported numerous similar occurrences. As a side note, Fulton is planning to double the permitted discharge from the John's Creek plant in the next three years.



BROOK TROUT LIMITED HOOKS 50+ MEMBERS

Ralph Shaw thinks it's a shame that among 55 protected species of fish in Georgia, from darters to madtoms, the state's *only native trout* is afforded no protection at all. Many people don't know that the brook trout is Georgia's only native trout and that rainbow and brown trout were introduced to the area. Actually, Ralph says, the brook trout is not a trout at all, but is technically a char. These are just a couple of facts that Ralph hopes to make known, and **Brook Trout Limited**, a non-profit outdoor educational organization, is off to a swimming start to spread the word.

Ralph, a Georgia native (famous for his lawsuit to stop federal logging in Baker's Branch, headwaters of the Soque River in Habersham County) has lived in the Chattahoochee's headwaters for over thirty years and has been an avid outdoorsman his entire life. Concerned over the loss of critical



Ralph Shaw checks turbidity in Baker's Branch

habitat and subsequent population declines of the brook trout, he decided it was time to speak out and work actively to get these special fish the protection he feels they deserve. It turns out Ralph is not alone in these desires. Since early spring of this year, he has rounded up at least 50 other folks that share his love of the outdoors and enthusiasm to protect this native species. Together they formed Brook Trout Limited whose specific mission is to establish the southern range of the southern strain of brook trout by identifying

their habitats and populations in the Chattahoochee and Soque watersheds. Sounds like a great excuse to go fishing! The group does much more than fish, however. At a recent meeting, ecologist Dr. Phillip Greear, lectured on stream capture to an audience of 21. Brook Trout Limited hopes to host more guest lecturers and also begin offering educational wilderness outings.

Brook Trout Limited is currently working with an impressive volunteer staff, including a hydrologist, botanist, microbiologist, past and present college professors, and others with diverse interests and talents. Five members recently attended an Adopt-a-Stream training workshop led by Riverkeeper's **Kristi Rose** and were certified to monitor water quality. *For more information on future meetings and upcoming events, check out www.brooktroutlimited.org*



SOQUE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION HIRES NEW DIRECTOR

A lot has changed in Habersham County, home of the Soque River. What once was a completely rural community is now facing some of the same adversities that larger cities are up against: water shortages, sprawling development, and loss of forested land. In the fall of 1997, a handful of concerned citizens got together to discuss some of these issues, and shortly thereafter the **Soque River Watershed Association** (SRWA) was up and running as a non-profit community-based watershed protection group. Riverkeeper has played an active role in SRWA since its conception, and has witnessed its evolution from a fledgling group to an organization with a firm position in the community. SRWA was awarded a grant from The Turner Foundation with funds specifically designated for the hiring of a full-time

Executive Director. **Justin Ellis**, who worked for the past five years as Watershed Leadership Director with the Alabama Rivers Alliance, was hired in January of this year. Justin brings experience and enthusiasm for working with local watershed groups to the position, and Riverkeeper is thrilled to have him as a colleague in the headwaters. *For information on SRWA call 706-754-9382 or email at srwa@hemc.net.*



SRWA's new Executive Director, Justin Ellis



EVERY STREAM DESERVES A NAME

Naming is a basic human tendency. It allows us to perceive the distinct identities of people and places and conveys those characteristics that make them unique. In 1890, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names was created to establish uniform geographic name usage throughout federal agencies and programs.



Rottenwood Creek: Names help give us a greater familiarity with our surroundings and a sense of belonging to our environment.

The name of a stream can describe physical attributes, indicate historical or cultural significance, or commemorate a worthy individual.

Giving your Creek a Commemorative Name

Naming geographic features after individuals was one way that early settlers marked the land and enhanced the general concept of sense of place. Even today, commemorative naming helps us to recognize achievements and contributions to the history of an area. The Geographic Names Board uses the following guidelines to make its decisions:

- Only persons who have been deceased for at least 5 years will be considered for commemorative naming. (Birth and death dates must be submitted, if known.)

- The person being honored by the naming should have had a direct long-term association (at least 20 years) with the stream or made a significant contribution to the area or State in which it is located. A short biography of the person describing his/her contribution to the area must be submitted.

- Persons with outstanding national or international reputation will be considered, even if the person was not directly associated with the geographic feature.

The Board will require: (1) the full form of the name being proposed; (2) the location of the stream, including latitude and longitude; (3) the reason for naming the stream; (4) the origin and meaning of the name; and (5) the basis of knowledge that the stream is unnamed.

For more information about naming your stream contact:
Executive Secretary, Domestic Names Committee
U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Phone: 703-648-4544

The Chattahoochee Captured in Time Calendar



A gift that benefits the river and showcases its beauty year-round. Call Marjon deGroot of the Atlanta Rowing Club, 770-649-4700, or see www.atlantarow.org

RIVERS OF THE SOUTHEAST CD ROM A NEW EDUCATION TOOL FOR CLASSROOMS

Thanks to generous funding from **Coca-Cola** and the **Woodruff Foundation**, a new interactive CD-ROM for kids will be produced on rivers of the Southeast, with special focus on the Chattahoochee



River. Riverkeeper will work with **Hamline University's Global Center for Environmental Education** to produce a new educational resource for hundreds of children to learn about their local

waterways. Modeled after Hamline's original CD on the Upper Mississippi River, this educational tool will allow students to learn more about the water cycle, watershed hydrology and ecosystem concepts. The core of the CD will be delivered through a virtual river journey down the length of the Chattahoochee River that will take river users from a historical perspective to modern day time. Water quality impacts will be explored through a visit to the virtual water quality lab which will incorporate a land-use theme. We plan to have this CD available for schools by the fall of 2003. *For more information, contact Kristi Rose at 404-352-9828 or krose@ucriverkeeper.org*

RIVERKEEPER YOUTH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS GEO RIVER TRIPS FOR KIDS

The **Georgia Environmental Organization (GEO)** Chattahoochee Watershed Exploration program combines environmental education with outdoor adventure to promote water conservation practices and increase stewardship of local watersheds. Floating down the River in a 6-ft. rubber raft, participants conduct chemical and biological analysis of water samples to develop scientific skills and concrete evidence of pollutant levels. After testing in several locations of the river, the data is compared to levels in a healthy river. Conclusions are then drawn about the water quality present that day in the Chattahoochee River. This program also surveys all of the possible pollution sources that threaten the water quality of the Chattahoochee River. Distinctions made between point source and non-point source pollution reveal the impacts made on a watershed from everyday activity in our local communities. *For more information on GEO, contact Trey Gibbs at 404-605-0000 or visit their website at www.gaenv.org.*



Students learn about water quality while having fun floating down the Chattahoochee River.

COMPAÑEROS PARA AGUA LINDA (PARTNERS FOR CLEAN WATER)

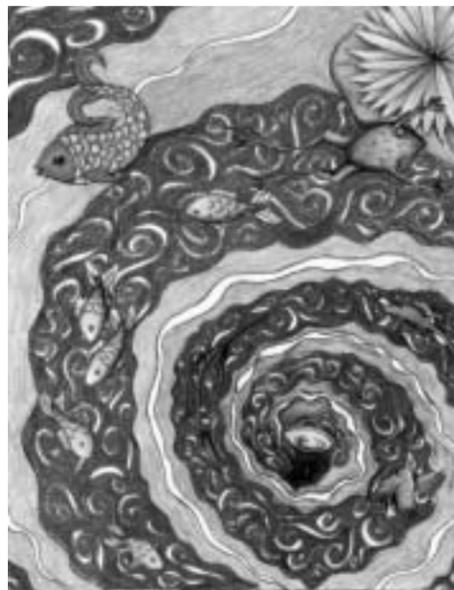
Thanks to funding from the North Georgia Community Foundation, Riverkeeper initiated the first phase of *Compañeros para Agua Linda*, a new headwaters education program. On July 22, Latino kids from the **Boys and Girls Club of Hall County** visited the *Chota Princess* to learn about water quality and explore the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River. Each student had the opportunity to conduct tests for pH and turbidity levels, as well as sampling for plankton. By participating in discussions and hands-on activities, Riverkeeper plans to give Latino youth a better understanding of water quality issues and how their choices can protect the Chattahoochee River and Lake Lanier for generations.

Riverkeeper, in partnership with Elachee Nature Center, will continue the *Compañeros* program as part of a long-term outreach strategy, once additional funding is

River Kids

WATERSHED PATCH PROJECT

Working with Patty Scott of EPA's Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C., Riverkeeper developed a generic version of the successful Girl Scouts of the USA's "Water Drop Patch" program. This watershed protection program is designed for use by Keeper groups and other environmental education organizations across the country. A 50-page booklet contains many community projects and hands-on activities with incentives for awards and certificates to motivate the students to further their knowledge of water resources. This fall, EPA will provide 1,000 copies of the initial printing which Riverkeeper will make available to schools throughout the Chattahoochee watershed. *For more information*



Cover of new Watershed Patch Project manual provided by Jasmine U., Age 17, GA, River of Words Contest Art Finalist.

on this program please contact Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 or bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org.

CRITTERS IN THE CREEK



As part of the Cornelia-Habersham County Library Summer Reading Program, Riverkeeper staffers Kristin Costley and Darcie Boden led "Critters in the Creek". Kids got the chance to learn about the macroinvertebrates inhabiting the Soque River in Habersham County and the opportunity to cool off on a hot, summer day.

secured. *For more information on this program, please contact Darcie Boden at 770-531-1064, or dboden@ucriverkeeper.org.*



Kids get hands on experience aboard the Chota Princess.

RIVERKEEPER TO HIGHLIGHT RIVERSMART CAMPAIGN

RiverSmart is a three-year public education campaign promoted by RiverNetwork to raise public awareness of the issues that threaten our rivers and drinking supply. The goal is to help people change some of their simple everyday behavior as a way to help conserve water. Stay tuned for future RiverSmart goals and tips as we advertise them on our website and in our newsletters and classrooms. To learn more about RiverSmart, visit www.riversmart.org.





The Dam at Lullwater Estate

How did it happen, I asked myself as I navigated my canoe along Peachtree Creek through the forgotten backwaters of Atlanta? How could this former source of drinking water, which first attracted Indian civilizations and later settlers to the area, have been relegated to a sewer—a dumping ground?

Early in my quest to find out about Peachtree Creek and its environs, I was granted an interview with the late historian Franklin Garrett. I relayed my mission to seek the roots of the waterway and its impact on Atlanta's history. He thought for a moment, and then said, "Other than the Indian Village of Standing Peachtree, and the Civil War Battle which was fought along it, I don't know that much happened along Peachtree Creek." Regardless, we continued to talk, and before our meeting ended, Franklin had identified many significant events and people connected to the waterway and Atlanta's formative years. These included not only the birthplace of Atlanta, but also its source of water and the roots of its namesake "Peachtree".

Franklin's initial response stemmed from the fact that, as with many historians, he studied history in terms of socio-political and economic evolution. He knew a great deal about the history of Peachtree Creek, but had seldom thought of Atlanta's history in terms of the interaction of a populous and its waterways—its natural history.

Taking a Different Tack

My tack was different. Water is the basis of life. We build civilizations

and economies because there are resources in place which allow us to do so. Not knowing much about the nature of historical research, I naively plodded forward, integrating elements of social and natural history, hydrology, and politics. Twelve years later, my manuscript is complete, but not so my travels through the watershed.

I decided to explore the water first. I entered Peachtree Creek at its headwaters in the suburbs, traveling from Dunwoody to the north to Tucker and Norcross to the east. Climbing over sewer pipes and log jams, I explored it at water level. From arrowheads and pottery shards to mill ruins and grand estates, I began to develop an understanding of its evolution.

I found the ruins of Decatur's 1906 Waterworks, where the flowing waters of South and Burnt Forks of Peachtree Creek were impounded to provide the city's drinking water. I canoed through the grounds of the Veteran's hospital where Walter Candler once raced trotters, and a massive parking lot in the floodplain now causes downstream bank erosion. I spoke with fishermen and homeless persons living under the bridges.

Beneath Atlanta's Pavement

In the archives and literature, I found the people who left these traces, as a record of Atlanta's development and the changes to the landscape. Have you ever wondered if there was a Howell's Mill? A Moore's Mill? The answer is yes, and the history of these

places and the people who built them are as significant to Atlanta's evolution as Asa Candler's Drug Store.

The landscape has also seen its share of changes, such as the failure of the Orme Street Trunk Sewer, which collapsed in 1993, causing a giant sinkhole downtown which engulfed autos and killed two people. That sewer was once an upper stretch of Tanyard Creek, a tributary of Peachtree Creek whose headwaters are buried near Centennial Olympic Park. Much of Clear Creek, another Peachtree Creek tributary, also succumbed to the same fate and lies hidden beneath Atlanta's pavement.

Atlanta's watershed history is not singularly unique. Creating a sustainable co-existence with nature is typically motivated by catastrophe rather than by vision. It appears that Atlanta has turned the corner and is moving towards a long-term solution to its sewer problems. I just hope that by the book's second printing I will have a success story to add to the mix.

Dave Kaufman is the author of Peachtree Creek, Atlanta's Forgotten River (Publication date to be announced). He will speak at our Annual Meeting on November 21.



The Urban Canoeist
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Riverkeeper's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Georgia Power Contains Oil Spill at Power Plant

On the night of July 12 at about 8PM, I noticed black smoke coming from **Georgia Power's Plant McDonough**, a coal-fired electric generating facility on the Chattahoochee at South Cobb Dr. Later that night, I learned that a fire had caused a spill of transformer coolant oil into the Chattahoochee. The next morning, surrounded by news crews from all major local stations, I launched the "Sweet Virginia" to take a look. I noticed a sheen on the soil on the riverbank and downstream I-285. There was a heavy diesel-like smell, but I saw no dead fish. A large boom with absorbent pads had been deployed by plant personnel across the river. The state EPD's Emergency Response Team advised Riverkeeper that a transformer had cracked and spilled an unmeasured amount of mineral oil into the river, as a result of an explosion and the fire. The total capacity of the transformer was 5,000 gallons. I returned one day later to look for dead fish, as it often takes that long for them to float up, and saw none. A week passed with high water from heavy rains and I returned for a follow-up and saw no sheen and smelled no odors. The boom has been moved to the side, but remains in the water.

Our Harlan meets Harlen

(As Told by a Crew Member)

After completing several on-the-bank surveys of fishermen, Harlan spies a small skiff off in the distance. He carefully approaches the skiff at slow speed. The two boatmen meet eyeball to eyeball, carefully determining if respect is due. Harlan asks the boatman, "Did you make that skiff yourself - it's mighty fine work". "Yes" said the boatman, "I formed the hull out of poplar and it is great for fishing".

"By the way, my name is Harlan". "Well, my name is Harlen". The mutual respect of the two boatmen solidifies - from different generations, but both have a great respect for each other and the River.



BY THE PEOPLE

Continued from page 1

stream flows and aquifer levels, while preventing pollutants from entering those waters. However, if a private entity obtains the right to sell this same water to the highest bidder, who reimburses the citizens whose efforts have made this resource available for that sale? Enron had water marketing in its sights before it crumbled due to corporate fraud. Clearly, we risk a great deal if we leave it to private water marketers to look out for the public good. It is up to the Governor and the Georgia Legislature to take a clear and uncompromised stand on who owns our water.

Making it Clear

When Georgia makes it plain that its waters continue to be a *public resource*, the state will not lose its ability to reallocate water for different uses. The state ensures that the citizens of the state come first. The interest of those citizens is in the permanent protection of their waters and the health of the natural systems. The state's job is to assure the right of everyone to reasonable uses of state waters—for drinking, swimming, and fishing, as well as for agriculture and industry. It must assure that those with political power or money cannot benefit at the expense of everyone.

A statewide water plan for Georgia must be unambiguous on the issue of water as a public resource. Unfortunately, the final recommendations of a Joint Legislative Study Committee charged with guiding the state water plan are more political than profound. It is this Study Committee that has kicked up dust around the water supply issue by ducking the hard question of who owns Georgia's waters. The Committee pointedly rejected the recommendation of its own Water Rights Working Group that water be considered "a public resource managed by the state in the public interest."

The Committee member who led the fight to remove this phrase, an agribusinessman, claims that a clear statement such as this would set the stage for lawsuits. Perhaps he is confused, thinking of the scores of recent cases in the drought-plagued states of the western U.S. over who is entitled to use how much water from which source, and when. The Joint Study Committee's failure to declare that Georgia's water is a public resource is like advertising for lawyers from California and Texas, skilled in litigating water rights, to move to Georgia, so that they can "help" us manage our resources the way they have in the west.

WATER SAVING CHALLENGE

As Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper staff and members, it is important to lead the way in the conservation of Georgia waters. There are water saving techniques we can employ to meet this challenge.

Have you ever wondered how much water you use? Some water bills list usage in thousands of gallons while others note it in CCFs (Consumption in Cubic Feet). One CCF is equal to 750 gallons. I looked at my recent water bill and found that my family used 20 CCF of water over a 60 day billing cycle.

The formula for individual usage is:

CCF X 750 gal (or M gallons) = Household gallons for billing period/ Billing period days/ Household members = Per capita daily usage

In my case: $20 \times 750 = 15,000 / 60 / 3 = 83$ gallons per day

You can compare this usage to the national and Georgia average (excluding commercial use). The national is 101 per day and Georgia is 107 per day (USGS).

For a "virtual home tour" that shows you how to save water in every room of the house, visit the website of California Urban Water Conservation Council at www.cuwcc.org

REGULATING CONSTRUCTION RUNOFF

AFTER 27 YEARS, EROSION LAWS STILL DON'T STOP THE DIRT

The sediment that flows from construction sites, when it rains, increases the cost of treating drinking water, smothers fish habitat in streams, lowers property values, and muddies the waters we use for recreation. Realizing the impact that this sediment has on state waterways, Georgia lawmakers passed the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (GESA) in 1975. The very goal of GESA was to stop dirt from leaving construction sites, but a 2001 Performance Audit of Georgia's erosion control programs conducted by the State Auditor revealed that the program has fallen *far short* of this goal.

Overlapping Enforcement Programs

In addition to GESA, the state EPD also issued a General Permit for Construction Activities in 2000, a permit required by the federal Clean Water Act for discharges of stormwater runoff from most construction activities. The General Permit overlaps with GESA, in many respects, and has created a dual permitting system in the state, under which a developer must obtain a land disturbance permit from a local government under GESA and also comply with the General Permit from the state. The performance audit found that this system created confusion and diluted the program's effectiveness.

Reform Efforts Underway

To field questions and address problems with the implementation of the General Permit, EPD formed an Advisory Committee in 2000. The committee is a group of approximately 35 stakeholders from various fields, including developers, utility contractors, road builders, engineers, and environmental groups. Riverkeeper's soil erosion expert, **Alice Champagne**, sits on the committee which has met in full and in sub-committees more than a dozen times over the past 2 years. The Advisory Committee's goal is to recommend changes to improve the General Permit and the structure of the state's erosion control program. The Erosion and Sediment Overview Council, created in 2001 by Georgia's Legislature, was charged with processing the Advisory Committee's recommendations and proposing legislation for the 2003 General Assembly.



Dirt runs off construction site due to insufficient Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Riverkeeper's Recommendations

Riverkeeper believes that reform of Georgia's erosion control program is critical to the future health of our waterways. A few of our key recommendations for improvement, which we are discussing with other stakeholders on the Advisory Committee and the Overview Council, are:

- GESA and the General Permit should be streamlined, so that a developer only receives one permit—the General Permit.
- EPD should remain responsible for enforcement of the General Permit, but work with local governments for erosion control plan review and site inspection.
- EPD should restructure its erosion control program, so that each EPD regional office has a team dedicated to enforcement of the General Permit within their regions. In addition to being physically closer to the issue, the regional teams would be better poised to work with local officials.
- There must be tougher criteria for local governments to become qualified issuing authorities, including training for all local personnel involved in the program.
- The General Permit must continue to require monitoring of the level of sediment leaving construction sites. This data should then be submitted to EPD.
- Erosion control training for the development community should be required.

In order for Georgia's soil erosion control program to be effective, it must be a top priority for *all* involved. Otherwise, Georgia red clay will continue to roll off construction areas and into the streams and rivers that supply our drinking water and our recreation.



2002 Annual Fund Campaign meets Matching Grant Challenge!

We have met the Turner and Richards Foundations 2 to 1 matching challenge. In spite of this exciting news, we are slightly behind target for the campaign to date. If you have yet to make your contribution to the 2002 Annual Campaign Fund, send it today in the enclosed envelope. We need your support to do our work to protect the Chattahoochee! Please contact Pam Davee at 404-352-9828 ext. 15 with questions.

PEOPLE AND THE RIVER

For some, the connection to the Chattahoochee and its tributaries is definitely spiritual. The Native Americans bathed in it daily and, as a first right, plunged their newborn babies in its cool waters. In a region steeped in religious tradition there have been more than a few Christians "cleansed" in the Chattahoochee and its tributaries.

For others the connection is commercial. Your forefathers may have gone to Houston's Mill or Henderson's Mill or Howell's Mill for their ground meal. If they traveled west out of Atlanta, they might have used Johnson's Ferry or Pace's Ferry to cross the River.

Many of us today get our connection through recreation: fishing, rowing, canoeing, swimming, boating—just to mention a few. Anyone who enjoys these activities will tell you that it is more than exercise. It is a connection; a return to our roots as people of the land and water.

With rapid development throughout the Chattahoochee watershed, more and more people make their connection through environmental stewardship such as volunteering as water monitors or participating in a streambank restoration project. Such stewardship meets the River's challenges of today and ensures that future generations may also make the "river connection".

"All the rivers come from that one River and go back to it like it was the ocean sea and if you believe, you can lay your pain in that River and get rid of it because that is the River that was made to carry sin. It's a River full of pain itself, pain itself... to be washed away, slow, you people, slow as this here old red water River round my feet."

*The Reverend Bevel Summers in "The River",
by Flannery O'Connor*



Above: Rehoboth Baptist Church cleanses its flock in Burnt Fork of Peachtree Creek at Frazier Road and the old Seaboard (now CSX) Railroad; the year is 1933.

Below: Members of the Riverpoint Community Church, Habersham County, conducting a baptism on the upper Chattahoochee; the year is 2002. The location on the River is between Blue Creek Road (Hwy255) and Highway 115.



Photograph submitted by member William G. Merrick of Clarkesville, GA.

IS THIS WATER SAFE? YES, if you are informed.

Through a partnership between **Riverkeeper, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, Georgia Environmental Protection Division, The Georgia Conservancy and Trust for Public Land**, we have been studying water quality issues to determine whether it is safe to play in the Chattahoochee River.



Join us for a Safe Water Seminar on Tuesday, October 22, 2002 at Roswell River Landing, 245 Azalea Drive, Roswell, GA 30075 9AM-1PM

to discuss how and when to recreate safely in the Chattahoochee River

National Recreation Area and the importance of keeping our rivers healthy. **Keynote speaker: Bob Zimmerman, Charles River Watershed Association** in Boston. Other speakers will include representatives from the National Park Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Geological Survey, state agencies, local governments and nonprofit organizations. Free admission includes a picnic lunch by the River at Noon. **For information or if you plan to attend, contact the Riverkeeper office at 404-352-9828 (ext. 24) or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org.**

Seminar sponsored in part by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

Don't forget to check Bacteria levels before recreating on the Chattahoochee River!

Real-time predictions of bacteria counts are available on the new BacteriALERT web page at <http://ga2.er.usgs.gov/bacteria/>

River Matters

Riverkeeper Cleanup **October 19**
Nancy Creek
Contact Sharon Cowden
at 770-698-5739

Big Trees Forest Preserve Hike **October 26**
Call Birgit Bolton at
404.352.9828 ext. 24 or
bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Empowered Women Voices & Vision **October 29**
For more information, please contact:
kprocks@mindspring.com or
404.256.4271

BBQ Picnic **November 2**
Heard County Riverside Cabin
Contact Erin Gallagher at
404.352.9828 ext. 12 or
egallagher@ucriverkeeper.org

Canoe the Chattahoochee Below Atlanta **November 16**
Contact Birgit Bolton at
404.352.9828 ext. 24 or
bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Annual Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Membership Meeting **November 21**

Southface Energy Institute
Contact Bill Crawford at
404.352.9828 ext. 14 or
bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org

Run for the River **November 29**
sponsored by Phi Gamma Delta
Contact Erin Gallagher at
404.352.9828 ext. 12 or
egallagher@ucriverkeeper.org

X-Mas Party **December 6**
The Tabernacle
Contact Erin Gallagher at
404.352.9828 ext. 12 or
egallagher@ucriverkeeper.org

