

WILL STATE LEADERS FUND A WATER PLAN?

DROUGHT HEIGHTENS CONCERNS

There's a lot of talk and a lot of news stories about Georgia's first statewide water plan. Most people are having a hard time figuring out exactly what, if anything, this lengthy document means, but just about every one has seen the terrible impact that the drought has had on our state this summer—from the mountains to the coast.

As Lakes West Point and Lanier continue to drop many feet below normal pool, streams reach record lows, and gardens dry up, Georgia's leaders have finally produced the state's first blueprint to comprehensively manage its water resources.

As surely as citizens can see what water shortages look like now, in coming years they will see the impacts of the water policies our leaders adopt in the next few months. The **Georgia Water Coalition**, led by Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and others, is actively engaged in the water planning process. See www.georgiawater.org.

Water Plan Shortchanged

The draft statewide water plan released last summer by the state's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the Georgia Water Council is the result of a bill passed in 2004, which also created the Council. To read the draft water plan, find dates for public input and contact the Water Council, go to: www.georgiawatercouncil.org



Boat slips without water in September at West Point Lake downstream of Atlanta.

A comprehensive water plan that protects Georgia's rivers, lakes and streams, while allowing growth and industrial development, requires a serious commitment of funds. Yet, when Georgia's water plan was considered in the budget appropriations process, it received only \$1.5 million from all sources, clearly not enough for substantive work. EPD was only able to create a "water policy framework", basically a menu of water management concepts with a call for regional planning.

State leaders could have guessed what the price tag for water planning would be just by looking to metro Atlanta's effort. The water plans for the North Georgia Metro Water Planning District (District), adopted

in 2003, required more than \$8 million to complete and included only 16 (the wealthiest and most urban) of the state's 159 counties.

Legislature Will Determine Plan's Future

The policy framework for the water plan is expected to guide all future regional planning and address critical water issues affecting every jurisdiction in the state. The plan calls for the assessment of water quality and water quantity needs throughout Georgia and discusses "hot button" issues like interbasin transfers, water pollution trading, reservoir development, and instream flow protection.

See **Water Plan**, page 7

TALK TO YOUR STATE LEGISLATOR—IT'S IMPORTANT!

Do you know who represents you and your family in the Georgia House and Senate? Most people don't. Some might think they know, but often confuse their representatives in the U.S. Congress with the elected officials who gather every winter at the State Capitol in Atlanta to make decisions that affect our lives and communities.

It's easy to find out who your state legislators are, how to call or email them, what they do for a living, and even when their birthdays are. Go online or pick up the phone. They need to hear from you, especially if you want them to vote for clean water and a state water plan that is fair and protects the waterways where you live, fish, boat or swim.

Finding your Legislator

- Go on the Internet to www.congress.org.
- Enter your Zip Code under My Elected Officials. You may need to also insert your address, if you live in a split legislative district.
- The names of your State Representative and State Senator will be displayed. Click on each one to find out how to contact them, what committees they serve on, and even what they look like!

If you don't have a computer, you can call the Secretary of State's office and ask them to help you identify your state legislators: 404-656-2871. You can

also ask the librarian at your local public library.

Now that you've found out who represents your interests at the State Capitol, the rest is even easier. Just remember that all legislators like to communicate with their constituents; they want to know what you think. Send an email or pick up the phone. They can't represent you unless they know what you're thinking, and it's your job to let them know.

You can also sign up for the **Georgia Environmental Action Network (GEAN)** at www.protectgeorgia.net and participate in a collaborative effort among environmental and conservation organizations throughout the state to educate and mobilize their members through a state-of-the-art electronic email alert system.



Georgia Water Coalition members Jill Johnson and Summer Simpson speak with Senator John Bulloch at the State Capitol.

13TH ANNUAL PATRON DINNER

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REFLECTIONS

When I think about the very early days of the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper—even before we opened our office in March 1994—I think about the small group of people whose energy, ideas and hard work led to the creation of our organization and its successes over the past 13 years.

One of those people, **Alice Champagne**, decided last summer to move on to the next stage in her environmental career, after serving UCR as a volunteer and then as a dedicated staff member since 1993. Still working in the Chattahoochee River basin, Alice is now the Water Resources Engineer for the city of Roswell. While the UCR staff and board greatly miss her, we know that she's making good use of the knowledge and many skills she acquired at UCR, along with her unflinching commitment to environmental protection.



Photo credit: Beja Honarvar/
Atlanta Journal Constitution

From Volunteer and Mom to "River Hero"

I first met Alice when I was working for the Georgia Conservancy in the early 1990s. Alice had moved to Georgia from St. Louis just a few years before. With a degree in engineering and a lifelong desire to do environmental work, Alice offered to help me with wetlands and water-related projects, while also caring for her two children (Rene and John) then ages 8 and 6.

When the Conservancy agreed to help Laura and Rutherford Seydel realize their vision of a "riverkeeper" organization for their home river, the Chattahoochee, Alice became my right-hand assistant in creating and then building Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. Her enthusiasm and organizational skills were essential, especially during difficult times.

Alice's job and title changed over the years. Ultimately, she became our technical expert on erosion and stormwater, as a certified professional. Handling UCR's Hotline Program and working with our general counsel, Alice has helped keep tons of eroded soil out of the Chattahoochee and its tributaries, using her informed, practical and direct approach to resolving problems. In 2005, the national organization River Network presented Alice with its "River Hero" award.



Erosion Control Expert and Angler Joins UCR



In September, **Jason Ulseth** joined UCR as our Watershed Protection Specialist. He will handle our Hotline and *Get the Dirt Out Program*, as well as various monitoring and research projects.

Jason says, "I have been fishing and boating on the Chattahoochee all my life. I love the river and jumped at the chance to be a part of an organization dedicated to its protection."

With a strong academic background in water quality, biology and hydrology and in-the-field experience at the Georgia Soil and Water Commission, Jason has an excellent background for river protection work.

Sally Bethea

TAYLOR GLOVER HONORED AT PATRON DINNER

With almost 400 guests in attendance, UCR celebrated its 13th Annual Patron Appreciation Dinner at a new location this year, Park Tavern at Piedmont Park. The celebration began with a VIP Reception (sponsored by Colonial Pipeline) and Silent Auction followed by a seated dinner and program.

Four special awards were presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to preserving the Chattahoochee River, the water supply for millions of Georgians. **Taylor Glover**, President and Chief Executive Officer of Turner Enterprises, was honored with our prestigious *River Guardian Award* for his years of dedication to the river that flows past his hometown (Newnan, Georgia) and to UCR.

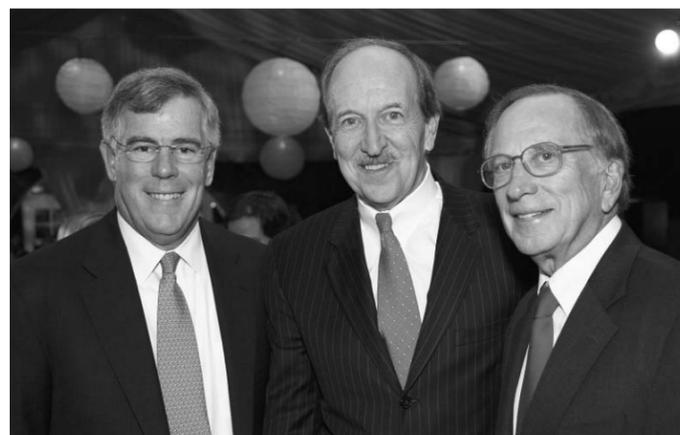


Phyllis Bowen of the Sapelo Foundation accepts the River Steward Award.

Other honorees were **Phyllis Bowen**, recipient of the *River Steward Award*. Phyllis is Director of the Sapelo Foundation and was honored for her role in the creation of the Georgia Water Coalition. **Rep. Brian Thomas**, recipient of the *River Legislator Award*, is renowned for his vigilance at the State Capitol on behalf of Georgia's rivers and the environment. And the *River Awareness Award* was given to the **National Park Service**

for their participation in the organization of our annual *Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival*.

We wish to provide special acknowledgement to **Whole**



River Guardian Award recipient Taylor Glover with George Benson and the Honorable Sam Nunn.

Foods Market and Park Tavern, who through their partnership provided our guests with an exceptional organic dinner. Between the generous donations of our sponsors, ticket sales, the Silent Auction and Live Auction, we raised \$245,000.



Angela and Paul Smith of Park Tavern with Mary Owens (center).

Event photos by: Kent Ruby

WETLANDS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY AT LANDFILL

For many years, UCR has worked on water quality problems at **Morgan Falls Landfill**, which began operations in the 1950s as an open dump located adjacent to the Chattahoochee River in north **Fulton County**. The municipal landfill, now closed, is capped and currently in use as a public golf course. Records indicate it was originally constructed without a protective liner on top of a small stream. Landfill leachate, liquid that seeps through waste, is the likely cause of the unnatural discoloration and high ammonia levels in the water downstream. With pro bono legal assistance from Smith, Gambrell & Russell, UCR filed a notice of intent to sue Fulton County. We have tried to work cooperatively with the county to resolve the problems. More than \$250,000 has been spent in remedial actions to date. —Although water quality improved somewhat, contaminants were still detected. Recently, the county repaired a stormwater pipe that runs through the landfill, as well as unprotected manholes that may have been sources of the contamination reaching the stream. The county will also install constructed wetlands that will provide natural pollution removal.

TUBING COMPANY CITED FOR VIOLATIONS

After a tornado passed through the city of Helen in 2005, UCR received complaints that the protected buffer along the river was being harmed by individuals claiming they were "repairing tornado damage". EPD investigated **Cool River Tubing** and determined that owner **Terry Sims** had done much more than just repair damaged picnic areas. Sims had installed a series of concrete pads and shelters within the 50-foot buffer without the required variance. EPD also discovered the presence of a water withdrawal pipe used to clean inner tubes, concrete stairs leading to the river, and enlarged patio areas. EPD issued a consent order requiring a \$2500 fine and the removal of the pipe, stairs and about 1000 ft² of concrete. UCR recently learned that while Sims was paying the fine and removing the concrete from the buffer at Cool River Tubing, he was busy encroaching in the 50-foot buffer on another piece of property further upstream, using heavy equipment *in* the stream to change the natural stream flow and create a waterfall. EPD is now taking a second enforcement action against Mr. Sims.



GET THE DIRT OUT GOES REGIONAL—MAYBE NATIONWIDE

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper launched our *Get the Dirt Out (GTDO)* campaign in 2005 to study the effectiveness of Georgia's construction stormwater program. Funded largely from a grant by the U.S. EPA, UCR worked with other riverkeeper groups across the state to investigate Georgia's implementation of its General Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities.

Focused on improving water quality, we developed educational materials and tools to document problems and evaluate the effectiveness of best management practices (BMPs) intended to prevent the flow of muddy water from construction sites. Project partners held more than 30 workshops and visited more than 100 construction sites during the two-year study period to document compliance and log complaints with local and state regulatory agencies.

Major violations were found at more than *two-thirds* of the development sites investigated. UCR staff presented the study results with federal, state and local officials. See www.getthedirtout.org for more information.

Riverkeepers Gather in North Carolina

Although our EPA project has ended, UCR is continuing the river protection program in the Chattahoochee watershed to keep muddy water out of our drinking water supplies and recreation areas, while also working with



UCR FILES APPEAL OF STATE APPROVAL FOR FORSYTH DEVELOPMENT

In September, UCR filed an appeal of an EPD decision to allow the piping of a Bald Ridge Creek tributary in Forsyth County for a strip shopping center. **Crossroads@400 LLC** and its consultants advised the county that they believed a 745-section of a stream was "ephemeral" and did not require any permits to bury. Forsyth County concurred. The Corps of Engineers and EPD then determined that the stream is "intermittent", requiring a variance, or waiver, from the state. Due to apparent political pressure from elected officials at the state and federal levels, EPD decided to defer to the county's determination that the stream should not be protected under the buffer law, ultimately issuing the necessary certification. UCR's appeal has stayed any further construction at the site until the issue can be litigated. UCR believes that it is illegal for EPD to delegate authority to any local government to determine which streams require buffer protection. This is a statewide problem and is resulting in significant reductions in protections for waterways throughout Georgia.



CELEBRATING THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

An unusual ceremony was held several hundred feet below the streets of **Atlanta** in July. UCR joined **Mayor Shirley Franklin** and other city officials to celebrate the completion of excavation work for a 27-foot diameter tunnel between the North Avenue CSO (combined overflow sewer) treatment facility and the city's R.M. Clayton sewage plant. The massive boring machine, nicknamed "Rocksanne", ground through the granite wall to connect two parts of the 4.5 mile long tunnel, while observers in hard-hats clapped. The tunnel is an important component of the massive sewer overhaul that the city is undertaking pursuant to the 1998 settlement of UCR's lawsuit against the city for chronic sewage spills. During the next year, the city will line areas of the granite tunnel with concrete. When completed in November 2008, polluted stormwater and sewage will flow into the tunnel for temporary storage before heading to a new treatment plant on the Chattahoochee near the Clayton plant.



Georgia River Network to support the ongoing statewide effort to train citizens. Because of its huge success, the *GTDO* program is moving to other states.

Following our *GTDO* model, the **Neuse Riverkeeper** in North Carolina recently launched its *Muddy Water Watch* Citizen Patrols. UCR staff and board member Denise Donahue have been working with the Neuse program for months, helping them develop materials and a plan for their campaign. In July, the Neuse organization held its first "Train-the-Trainer" session, which involved six other riverkeeper programs in North Carolina, as well as riverkeepers from South Carolina, Alabama, and Florida.



The failure of best management practices at this residential development site sends muddy water into nearby streams.

Photo credit: Skip Metheny

River Stewardship

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Sally Bethea
Executive Director and Riverkeeper

Bill Crawford
Business Manager

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

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BONNY PUTNEY: TIRELESS VOLUNTEER, KAYAKER AND 'TRASH QUEEN'

If there is a trash cleanup, a paddling trip or any other river event, you can expect to find **Bonny Putney** in charge or helping out. She is a tireless and enthusiastic advocate for Georgia's rivers and lakes, who is known locally (and proudly) as the "Trash Queen".

A native of the Chicago area, Bonny moved to the shores of Lake Lanier 28 years ago and has been there ever since, living on the south end of the lake near Buford Dam with her husband, Paul, and two dogs. Bonny says that she has spent most of her life caring about and helping the environment. With a corporate background in the handling of hazardous materials, she has naturally gravitated to working on community projects.

From Hazardous Waste Recycling to River Cleanups

Bonny's first experience with large citizen events was helping develop and run the "Fall and Spring into Recycling" Campaign in the 1990s. For the past six years, she has been a board member of Rivers Alive, Georgia's annual volunteer waterway cleanup event (www.riversalive.org). In 2007, Rivers Alive has more than 200 cleanups scheduled with 30,000 people volunteering to help pick up trash in and around Georgia's waterways.



Bonny Putney enjoying the Etowah River.

A veteran kayaker with the annual Paddle Georgia event, Bonny has helped UCR organize six cleanups this year, several of which were held in June on the river above Lake Lanier as part of National Cleanup Week. With help from 40 volunteers over two weekends, the group removed 350 pounds of trash from the Chattahoochee between Highway 115 Bridge and Belton Bridge, including tires, chairs and the usual cans and plastic bottles. Bonny says that cleaning up trash also gives her an opportunity to find "stuff" that she likes to use in art and yard projects!



TURNER VOLUNTEERS TAKE OVER THE CITY

Over 2000 Turner Broadcasting System employees, family members and friends turned out to support 29 nonprofit organizations in the Atlanta area on September 15, one of which was UCR. With project leaders Amanda Sealy and Lynn Zorn from Turner, UCR worked with the National Park Service to clean up the river and its banks at the Power's Island Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

Using twelve canoes, lots of clippers and garbage bags, volunteers were able to pull debris from the river and surrounding banks, from tires and plastic bags to the number one item—more than 400 plastic bottles! Volunteers also helped remove non-native vegetation and trim trees along the trails. Many thanks to those who joined in and made our fifth year of participation in Turner Volunteer Day a great success!

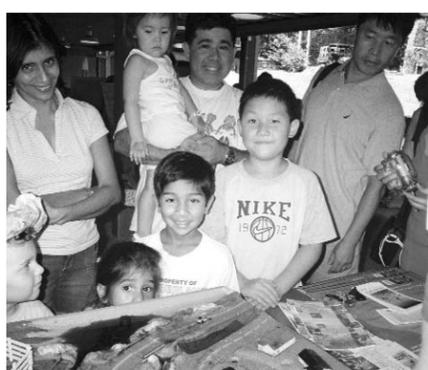


The Turner gang at the end of their annual river cleanup!



ANNUAL FUN FEST ON THE CHATTAHOOCHEE!

On the weekend of August 25-26, the National Park Service held its 5th Annual Chattahoochee River Summer Festival at the Chattahoochee Environmental Education Center in Alpharetta. This year's



The Enviroscape model is a big hit with the festival crowd.

event resulted in the biggest turnout to date with more than 3,000 in attendance! The festival celebrates two anniversaries: the creation of our National Park system on August 25, 1916, and the creation of the

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area on August 15, 1978, when the park was established with the signature of President Jimmy Carter.

People of all ages enjoyed the festival's wildlife programs, educational exhibits, live music, tree climbing and canoeing activities. UCR staff and volunteers participated both days, using our Enviroscape model which offers hands-on learning to show how stormwater from different pollution

sources can get into our rivers and lakes. For more information on the Enviroscape and how you can get this tabletop learning tool for your school, visit: <http://www.terendipity.com/enviroscape/>.

For more information on this Annual Summer Festival and how to participate next year, visit www.nps.gov/chat



UCR Intern Rachel Korschun explains how polluted stormwater from homes, businesses and farms can degrade water quality downstream.

HEALING THE WEST FORK OF THE LITTLE RIVER IN HALL COUNTY

The West Fork of the Little River, which lies about five miles north of Gainesville and feeds directly into Lake Lanier, has been degraded by historic and ongoing agricultural practices and stormwater runoff. UCR began working with Hall County and others in 2004 to address water quality and stream bank erosion problems in the 35 square-mile sub-watershed. The area has changed from rural/agricultural uses to low density residential and hobby farms in recent years.

The West Fork no longer meets the state's designated use of "fishing" and has been listed by the state as impaired. The increased stormwater runoff is leading to further degradation. With grant funding from EPA, the



Worker installs mat blankets to establish a stream buffer along the West Fork.

UCR EXAMINES CARBON FOOTPRINT

UCR wants to do its part to help reduce global warming by becoming a carbon neutral office, so we are calculating our organizational "carbon footprint" to see how we can reduce and then offset this use.

"Carbon footprint" is the term for the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that an individual, or an organization, is responsible for; it is usually reported in tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Our goal is to find out how much CO₂ our organization uses each year through various activities and then find ways to reduce it.

With the help of a volunteer from the engineering firm **Montgomery Watson Harza**, we are collecting the following data:

- Total electricity used in kilowatt-hours,
- Total gas used in cubic feet,
- Total paper used and reported in reams or cases by weight and recycled content, and
- Total miles traveled by all employees daily for work

THE RIVER IN MY OWN BACKYARD

By Tammy Morrissey

Not long after I began my job last spring as UCR's new Events and Outreach Director, I realized that I had quite a bit to learn about the river in my own backyard. So, I started a journey to see and enjoy the Chattahoochee River and the life that surrounds it as a way of getting back to the things I love most in life—plants, wildlife and water.

In June, I kayaked 14 miles with a group from Medlock Bridge to Azalea Park and became hooked completely. In two used kayaks that I found on-line, my husband, Tom, and I began to explore the river in the vicinity of the Abbotts Bridge Unit of the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area near our home. We observed huge patches of parrot feather plants in the water near golf courses where excess fertilizer may be affecting plant growth. I reported our findings to other UCR staff, and we are now talking with the National Park Service (NPS) about ways to deal with this invasive plant.

Cows!

One evening in the early fall, we decided to take a paddle but didn't have a lot of time before sundown. Tom suggested that we paddle upstream for a bit, as a workout. After about half an hour, we pulled into an eddy to rest. As we looked upstream, we noticed cows in the river!

project team is working to restore the watershed and improve water quality.

Stream Assessment and Field Surveys

The partners first completed a stream corridor assessment, documenting the need for restoration of three thousand linear feet of the waterway. Gainesville State College faculty and students then spent a year collecting baseline water quality data and conducting field surveys to prioritize areas and identify landowners. Now the project is moving into its final phase: implementation of best management practices (BMPs).

Four landowners are participating in these voluntary restoration efforts. During September, work occurred at three of the four sites (see photo). Activities varied among sites and included practices such as bank sloping, re-connecting the stream with its floodplain, designating a 50-foot buffer area to be planted during the dormant season, and installing "root-wads" (the large mass of roots and trunk portion of a mature tree) to stabilize eroding stream banks. Restoration of the fourth site, expected to occur within the next several months, will be much more extensive, and the engineering consultants are in the process of developing the site plan. *For more information, contact Darcie Holcomb at dholcomb@ucriverkeeper.org.*

related activities (including airline miles, automobile miles and boat hours).

Since avoiding all CO₂ emissions would be almost impossible, carbon offsetting will play a vital role in our plan. Carbon offsetting is a way of compensating for the emissions produced with an equivalent carbon dioxide saving. Once we determine how much CO₂ we generate and can reduce, we can then determine how much we will have to offset to become carbon neutral.

Offset projects have emerged worldwide and provide organizations the opportunity to reduce equivalent amounts of carbon locally or globally. As CO₂ emissions are distributed worldwide, it does not matter whether you make the reduction in Atlanta or on the other side of the globe.

For more information about how you can determine your own carbon footprint, go to <http://www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/>.

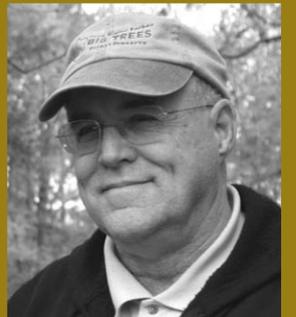


Cows in the Chattahoochee near the confluence of Suwanee Creek.

A small patch of farm land is wedged between the subdivisions that line the Chattahoochee. The NPS has the authority and responsibility to keep livestock out of the river to protect it from fecal contamination and riverbank erosion. Rangers are currently working with the landowner to keep the cows on dry land.

I'm still excited about learning to kayak, learning more about the parts of the river I've been on, and seeing how I can improve the health of the river I enjoy. I'm looking forward to what's around the next bend!

Remembering Charlie Cochrane



Charles "Charlie" Cochrane, executive director of the John Ripley Big Trees Forest Preserve, died from a sudden heart attack in July. UCR remembers and recognizes Charlie for his years of environmental dedication and collaboration on member hikes through Big Trees Preserve. Charlie never missed an opportunity to show people how important green space is to a city and how it can protect and keep our drinking water clean.

Photo credit: Robert Olive

ACUITY BRANDS PAYS LARGEST FINE IN REGION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

In late June, an Atlanta-based chemical and lighting manufacturer agreed to pay a \$3.8 million fine after pleading guilty in federal court to flagrant violations of the Clean Water Act.

Acuity Brands was charged with dumping polluted wastewater into city pipes that flowed to a treatment plant and then to the Chattahoochee River. The penalty was the largest ever imposed in the Northern District of Georgia for an environmental crime. The size of the fine reflected the many years of the violations, falsified reports and unacceptable company behavior.



The Acuity facility in northwest Atlanta makes industrial cleaning products under the brand name Zep.

City Vigilant in Enforcement Action

The city of Atlanta began investigating **Acuity Specialty Products**, a subsidiary of Acuity Brands, in 2002, after a city inspector discovered water from a garden hose was being used as a surrogate for the actual wastewater discharge at an Acuity plant in northwest Atlanta. In fact, the facility was actually discharging high levels of contaminants into the city's sewer system. Under the brand name **Zep**, detergent and cleaning products are manufactured at this facility, located in the Woodall Creek watershed.

The Woodall Creek area is highly industrial and UCR has worked for several years to bring facilities into compliance and restore this urban stream. The city of Atlanta is also focusing on this area which contains a number of pollution "hot spots", revealed by the city's long-term water quality monitoring program.

The government investigation, led by the city and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, uncovered years of problems at the Acuity plant, including falsified reports to

the city, lab samples diluted with tap water, a 10,000-gallon spill of untreated chemical byproducts in 2000, and an acid spill into a nearby creek in 2002. The spills were never reported.

The city requires the company to accurately report concentrations of phosphorous and acidity in its wastewater, which is supposed to be cleaned of the worst pollutants before it is discharged into the city sewer system. Phosphorous can sap oxygen from streams and

rivers, endangering aquatic life, fouling drinking water, and creating algal blooms. Acidity can corrode pipes, leading to leaks and further pollution.

Government Warns Against Document Falsification

An EPA representative said in June, "[Acuity] systematically broke the law and hid illegal behavior from the city of Atlanta. Today's plea agreement and sentence should be seen as a warning to all companies: if you falsify sampling results, you will be prosecuted."

EPA records show the agency also fined Acuity in 2006 for violating the Clean Air Act. In 2004, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) fined the company for air quality violations; however, EPD declined to participate in the recent wastewater investigation and enforcement.

According to Atlanta's Commissioner of Watershed Management, Robert Hunter, "Acuity has made environmental performance commitments from the highest level of their company. We believe that actions speak louder than words, and we are keeping a very close eye on their performance."

Source: "Pollution Fine Tops for Region", by Stacy Shelton. Atlanta Journal Constitution, June 30, 2007



CAPTAIN'S CORNER

COMMERCIAL VESSEL OPERATION EXPENSIVE

Most passengers who sit down for a relaxing ride on our new catamaran, *Chota Princess II*, probably don't have much of an idea of what goes into legally and safely operating a commercial vessel. There are a number of upfront, hidden and unusual expenses, in addition to the purchase cost of the boat itself, captains' fees and insurance.

A commercial boat can cost much more than a recreational vessel because it must be manufactured to U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) construction specifications. Before construction even begins, a plan must be submitted to the USCG for review and approval. The vessel is then constructed with additional bulkheads, plumbing, pumps, fire-fighting and safety equipment that are not found on most recreational boats.

No \$19.95 Oil Changes!

Maintenance is another big expense. I always figure operating the boat is only 50% of the cost; the rest involves engine and boat maintenance. Electrical, plumbing, safety equipment, ship's logs all have to be maintained to USCG standards to ensure safe, dependable operation. Haul-outs and yard time are expensive and occur once a year with a full yard inspection every three years.

Costs are about \$10 per foot on the haul-out, and a dealer will charge around \$125 per hour for engine work. There are no \$19.95 oil changes for boats. Fortunately, we have Honda outboards (with pretty much zero down-time) and I am a fully-trained Honda technician. This greatly reduces our costs.

Fuel at \$4 per gallon is another cost; the *Chota II* gets about 1.5 miles per gallon, which may not sound very impressive; however, considering there are up to 51 persons aboard a 40'+ boat traveling at 21 knots, it is exceptionally good mileage and the cost per person is very low.

Licensing is getting more expensive each year. After 9/11, the USCG was put into the Office of Homeland Security, and there are extensive background checks. Licensed mariners must now appear in person at a USCG exam center for finger printing and to be sworn in. If a new proposal called T.W.I.C. passes, licensed mariners would have to obtain additional background security credentials and expensive USCG card scanners.

It costs a lot to run a successful operation like our floating classroom, but it is all worth it to see the kids smile when I nail the throttle out of the No-Wake Zone for another trip on the lake.



UCR's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell

WATER PLAN

Continued from page 1

According to EPD Director Dr. Carol Couch, the next step - regional water planning - will cost at least \$30 million and take three years to accomplish. As of this writing, the lack of any strong commitment for such a funding level by the Governor's office or the legislative leadership is striking and troubling. Without adequate funds, Georgia *will not* be able to develop a water plan that protects all of our communities and our future.

The 14-member Water Council, chaired by Dr. Couch, has met for the past two years to guide the development of the draft plan. EPD also created and consulted stakeholder groups around the state. The Water Council is considering public comments and recommendations this fall; it will revise the plan as it deems appropriate and then transmit it to the state legislature in January where it must be approved or rejected.

Growth Industry Water Grab

The most fatal policy flaw in the draft water plan is that it is vague regarding how, or if, the existing Metro District water supply plans—which will accommodate a doubling of the District's population to eight million people by 2030—will be incorporated into the state plan. With Atlanta continuing to outpace all other areas in water use, but certainly not in water efficiency, it will be impossible to protect downstream communities and rivers without explicitly including the Atlanta area in the state plan.

The water plan, as currently drafted, allows, by reference to other law, a water grab by the Atlanta region (read: metro developers) that will directly affect every citizen in Georgia—not simply those who live in the region of unbridled growth and increasingly degraded and depleted streams, but also those who live downstream and must cope with the diminished flows that are left for them.

Georgia needs a water plan that unites the state and its people. Much of



Photo credit: Larry Winslet

The arrow in this photo points to the normal water level for this stream in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

this policy creation has been driven by the complaints of neighboring states about what they see as overuse of water resources by some areas of Georgia. The validity of those complaints is neither academic nor argumentative. Federal agencies and courts cannot simply dismiss those facts. There are areas of Georgia that find their interests better represented by these neighbors than by their own state. That makes plain the great need for a state water plan that unites Georgia.



FIGHT TO SAVE EASTERN HEMLOCKS CONTINUES

For the past several years, UCR has been working with **Georgia Forest Watch**, the **Lumpkin Coalition** and others on a new threat to the Chattahoochee Headwaters: the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. This invasive, sap-sucking aphid was inadvertently introduced in the country from Japan in the early 1950's; it spent almost 50 years making its way northward into New England, and then traveled southward into Georgia.



Technician prepares beetle specimen during grand-opening of UGA's new beetle lab.

The adelgid was first spotted along the Chattooga River in northeast Georgia five years ago. Since then, it has spread rapidly throughout the forested watersheds that cover the northern portion of the state. Scientists predict a loss of up to *90 percent* of our hemlock trees by the year 2015 due to this infestation.

Valuable Streamside Species

Hemlock stands are among the only *old growth* forests in the East and play a significant role in Georgia's mountain ecosystems. It is a valuable streamside species in the headwaters with roots that help stabilize stream banks. The Hemlock's beautiful thick green branches provide shade that keeps trout waters cool and gives shelter to a variety of birds and mammals.

The adelgid is largely incapable of moving on its own, but can be spread quickly, by birds and mammals, cars, humans, machinery and even the

wind. Once a tree is infested, the adelgid reproduces quickly—producing two generations in one year. Within two to four years, the infected tree is dead with nothing left but an ugly rust-colored skeleton where a beautiful tree once stood. Over the past two years, reports of infested trees in the upper Chattahoochee watershed have been increasing, especially on well-traveled trails and fishing areas where the adelgids are able to hitch a ride with hikers, fisherman and even on ATVs.

Three Ways to Irradiate Insect

There are currently three approaches to dealing with adelgid infestation:

- Insecticidal soap sprays and horticultural oils applied topically;
- Pesticide (imidacloprid) injected into the tree trunk or the soil beneath the tree; and
- Biological control using predatory beetles.

Many believe that without the use of biological controls, the Eastern Hemlock forests will perish within a few decades. Since there are no known native predators for the adelgid, biological control requires raising predatory beetles in a lab environment and releasing them where treatment is desired. Dr. Paul Arnold at Young Harris College was the first in Georgia to set up a predator beetle lab.

Beetle Lab to Open at North Georgia College

This past March, UGA opened a beetle rearing lab with support from a number of agencies and organizations, including the U.S. Forest Service, Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia ForestWatch, Lumpkin Coalition and UCR. There are plans to open a third lab at North Georgia College and State University (NGCSU) this fall, with hopes that the lab will have beetles ready to release this winter. While beetles from both Young Harris and UGA are currently only released on public lands, Dr. Robert Fuller with NGCSU hopes to release the beetles where they will have the most impact, whether on public or private lands.

Additional efforts to save the trees are being made. The first weekend of November 2007 marks the 3rd Annual Hemlockfest, now a two-day festival with all proceeds going to help the fight against the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. As in the previous two years, UCR will help sponsor this worthwhile event (*see www.lumpkincoalition.org*).

Thanks to Mark Warren for providing much of the background for this article.

GIVE THE GIFT OF CLEAN WATER - HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS!

Shop UCR's store to find unique gift options while helping to keep our water safe and clean. These items and more can be ordered online at www.chattahoochee.org or by calling 404-352-9828. Prices include shipping and handling.

UCR GIFT Membership - \$25

You are already a UCR member - thank you! But what about your friends, family and neighbors? By purchasing a gift membership in UCR you will support our programs and help others learn about the issues affecting our watershed. We will send a gift card along with our UCR water bottle. Please see the envelope enclosed for more information on membership levels.



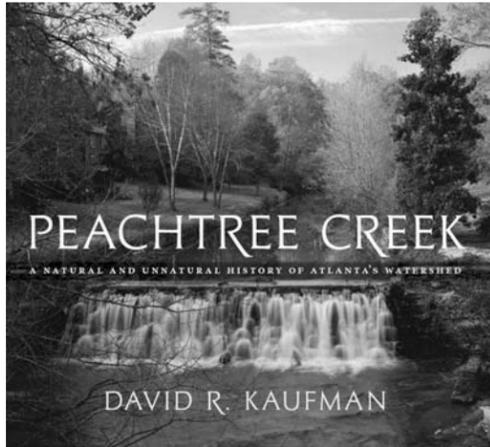
Bottle Bag - \$10

Choose the eco-friendly way to shop with this roomy tote made from 100% post-consumer recycled soda, water and food containers. Takes the place of two shopping bags!



Peachtree Creek: A Natural and Unnatural History of Atlanta's Watershed, by Dave Kaufman - \$32

In 1990 David Kaufman decided to explore Peachtree Creek from its headwaters to its confluence with the Chattahoochee River. For thirteen years he paddled the creek, photographed it, and researched its history as the Atlanta area's major watershed. The resulting book is a compelling mix of urban travelogue, local history, and call for conservation. Historical images and Kaufman's evocative color photographs help capture the creek's many faces, past and present.



Save the River, Free Your Soul T-shirt - \$15



Women's cut soft cotton v-necks come in light blue with dark blue print and black with bright aqua print. Men's crew neck T-shirts available in black.

River Matters

Hemlock Festival November 2-4
Murrayville, GA
Contact: info@lumpkincoalition.org

Adopt-A-Stream Biological Workshop November 3
Chattahoochee Nature Center
Roswell, GA
For more information call 404-612-8006.

13th Annual X-Mas Party for the Planet - Visionary Voyages December 14
The Tabernacle in Atlanta
Go to www.xmasparty.org.

Georgia Legislature Convenes January 8

Georgia River Network Annual Conference February 22-23
Berry College, Rome, GA
Go to www.garivers.org

6th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race & Festival June 14
Contact tmorrissey@ucriverkeeper.org

Paddle Georgia Flint River June 20-27
Go to www.garivers.org/paddle_georgia/pghome.html.

Take ACTION to Conserve Water

For extensive tips on conserving water at home or at work: www.conservewatergeorgia.net

Information on statewide watering restrictions: <http://www.gaepd.org/Documents/outdoorwater.html>

If you are concerned about excessive water usage in your community, call your local water provider.



Keeping Watch Over Our Waters

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