



# RIVER CHAT

UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE  
**RIVERKEEPER**

Fall, 1994

*Your River Your Future*

## Hard Rock Hosts First Annual Chattahoochee Fundraiser

On the evening of October 21, 1994, Atlanta's Hard Rock Cafe will host a spectacular event from 6-9 PM to benefit the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund. Featured guest speakers for this major fundraising party, co-chaired by Laura Turner Seydel and Robin Howell, include Robert Kennedy Jr. and Hudson Riverkeeper John Cronin with live entertainment provided by Sam Phillips and Drivin'-N-Cryin'. The event will include an open bar, buffet and a silent auction with special river-related items.

Attorney Robert Kennedy Jr. has led the efforts of the Hudson Riverkeeper to enforce clean water laws through legal action. John Cronin, the first "keeper" in the U.S., embodies the riverkeeper movement. Benefactors for this mega-event include R.E.M./Athens, Ltd., Price Waterhouse, Merrill Lynch, J. Mack Robinson Foundation, Post Properties, Inc., Curtis Candy Company, The Turner Foundation, and the Seydel-Woolley Foundation. Special thanks go to Delta Printing Company, Donahue Studios, 99X, Cellar Door, Station to Station, Printing Solutions and Performance Printing. Tickets (\$50) are available through the Riverkeeper office (816-9888).

Funds generated will be used by Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) to advocate the protection of the Chattahoochee River from its headwaters in the north Georgia mountains to West Point Lake. This 230 mile stretch of river, along with its tributaries and watershed, is severely impacted by urban development, industrial discharges and agricultural runoff. UCR uses traditional tools of advocacy and education to give a voice to this critical natural resource.

## The River Matters

Riverkeeper's Hard Rock Cafe Benefit October 21

"Chattahoochee Challenge" Kayak/Canoe Race from Powers Island to Paces Mill. Call Craig Denton for information (404-501-0785) October 22

McIntosh Reserve Festival. - Whitesburg October 29-30

13th Annual "Head of the Chattahoochee" Regatta - sponsored by the Atlanta Rowing Club. (Call 404-993-1879 for information.) November 5

Upper Hooch River Patrol - Belton Bridge Section. Call Carol Mercer (404-373-6683) or Sally Bethea (404-816-9888) November 5

Place scan of river in this area

The Riverkeeper's Territory: Headwaters to West Point Dam.

## Riverkeeper Initiates Headwaters Protection Campaign

South of Brasstown Bald in Union County, a small spring trickles out of the side of a mountain known as Coon Den Ridge. Thus begins the Chattahoochee River at appropriately-named Chattahoochee Gap. Further downstream, this steady flow of water sustains more than 2.5 million people, provides power, serves as the southern most trout habitat in the eastern U.S., fuels businesses and industries, and offers outstanding recreation.

Most of the Chattahoochee headwaters above the town of Helen (approximately dozen miles of river plus tributaries) is contained within the Chattahoochee National Forest managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) for multiple purposes. And, therein lies the rub. High density recreation use and timber cutting are rarely compatible uses for pristine headwater streams of a drinking water supply watershed.

Yet, the Forest Service has begun construction on one developed campground within 25' of the Chattahoochee and is planning three more campgrounds, including one horse camp, in the headwaters. In addition, USFS has initiated the scoping process to cut a large tract of timber southwest of Helen above Dukes Creek. Admittedly, the Forest Service faced with a difficult management problem thanks to old logging roads which easily access and traverse the river and its small tributaries. In recent years, the recreation demand in the headwaters area has increased significantly. On private lands in the headwaters area, state and local regulations which are protective of water quality are rarely enforced. *Continue on Page 2*



**ALL IS BORN OF WATER;  
ALL IS SUSTAINED BY WATER.**

©2010

# Phosphate Restrictions Help Downstream Water Quality

In 1990, the state imposed restrictions on the use of phosphate detergents in the Atlanta region. Did these restrictions, along with upgrades to municipal wastewater treatment systems, improve the Chattahoochee River downstream from Atlanta? Absolutely, according to a recent report published by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

USGS data indicates an *83-percent reduction* in phosphates discharged to the Chattahoochee from 1988 to 1993, which resulted in a *54-percent decrease* in the phosphorus load in the river. This news is excellent for West Point Lake, which is located seventy miles downstream from Atlanta and whose water quality has been seriously degraded since the mid-1980s due to upstream pollution.

The USGS report cautions, however, that phosphorus concentrations in wastewater effluent from three city of Atlanta treatment plants must still be reduced by an *additional 31-percent* by 1996 to comply with state regulations. Algal blooms and other evidence of eutrophication (or aging) observed in West Point Lake this past summer indicate that metro Atlanta must make significant *additional* strides to improve water quality for downstream communities.

Primary sources of input of phosphorus to the Chattahoochee River are wastewater plant effluent, animal manure and fertilizer. When excessive loads of phosphorus enter a river system, it causes plant growth to accelerate, absorbing oxygen necessary for aquatic species.

The USGS has been collecting data in the Chattahoochee River basin for several years as part of its National Water-Quality Assessment (NAWQA) program. While the final report won't be complete for another year or so, the NAWQA data is already providing an improved scientific basis for evaluating the effectiveness of water quality management programs and for predicting the likely effects of changes in land and water management practices on water quality.

For a copy of the USGS Abstract: *Effect of the Restricted Use of Phosphate Detergent and Upgraded Wastewater Treatment Facilities on Water Quality in the Chattahoochee River near Atlanta, Georgia*, call or write the Riverkeeper office (404-816-9888).

*Continued from Page 1- Headwaters Campaign*

## What is Riverkeeper doing to protect the Chattahoochee's headwaters?

\* **working to designate the headwaters above Helen, GA as an Outstanding Resource Water (ORW)**, a new state water quality designation. Riverkeeper intern Mike Diller, a biology student at West Georgia College, is compiling existing data to help document the outstanding natural features of this area and secure an ORW designation. The Southern Environmental Law Center is providing legal assistance in this effort.

\* **overseeing plans to develop recreational facilities in the headwaters area** and encouraging the USFS to establish minimum vegetated buffers (at least 100') between streams and any campgrounds deemed necessary.

\* **joining with Forest Watch**, a nonprofit group of volunteers who watchdog USFS proposals in the Chattahoochee National Forest, to keep an eye on the federal agency's activities in the Chattahoochee headwaters area.

\* **speaking with local governments** about regulations which are protective of the river and its watershed.

# Stream Lines

**Hatchery Sets Record** The state-operated Buford trout hatchery in Forsyth County set a production record from 1993 to 1994 with 21,500 pounds of trout above design capacity. More than 765,000 trout were shipped from the hatchery to state waters and other public trout rearing facilities, according to "Fish Tales", newsletter of the Tailwater Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The hatchery's water supply, the abundant cold clear Chattahoochee tailwater below Buford Dam, has allowed it to help other state and federal facilities in times of drought. Proposed development upstream in Forsyth County poses a threat to the facility, however, with the likelihood of sediment-filled stormwater flowing downstream and into the hatchery. In 1989, uncontrolled development in this watershed resulted in a surge of muddy stormwater which killed *90,000 fish* at Buford at no small expense to the state of Georgia. The Chattahoochee is a critical resource for anyone who fishes for trout in Georgia. Lack of enforcement of soil erosion control laws continues to constitute a *significant* problem. **(See Action Alert).**

**Big Creek Sediment Project** As one of only twenty groups recently awarded funds by the Urban Resources Partnership (a consortium of federal agencies), Riverkeeper will contribute to the improvement of natural resources in the ten-county Atlanta area with a unique project focused on the Big Creek watershed in Fulton and Forsyth Counties. Our special partners, the city of Alpharetta and corporate citizen Scientific Games, Inc., along with a core of volunteers and technical experts, have donated in-kind services and funds to match the \$25,000 grant award. This volunteer monitoring and education project targets serious sediment problems in the urbanizing Big Creek watershed with an emphasis on wet weather monitoring (i.e., collection of data during and after storm events to better evaluate sediment contributions to poor water quality and the effectiveness of control measures). Seven water quality workshops led by Dee West (Alpharetta's "Project Ripple" coordinator) are an important part of this year-long effort. **Call the Riverkeeper office (404-816-9888) if you would like to participate.**

**Volunteer In The Park** Would you or your volunteer group like to rehabilitate observation decks and trails, improve eroded stream banks, or remove trash in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area? The Volunteer in the Parks program coordinated by the National Park Service (NPS) needs your help. From Buford Dam to Peachtree Creek in Atlanta, a small NPS staff is responsible for maintenance of more than 4,000 acres of land and 48 miles of river. This urban park is visited annually by more than 3 million visitors and provides incredible recreation opportunities for the Atlanta region. **For more information, call Park Headquarters (404-399-8070).**

**Upper 'Hooch Patrol** Below Helen, Georgia the Chattahoochee flows approximately 32 miles to the headwaters of Lake Lanier through a highly scenic river corridor dotted with Class 1-2 rapids. However, the effects of second-home and recreational development, along with agricultural runoff, are taking a toll. A state water quality report indicates that one or more standard is violated in the river from Helen to Lanier, primarily fecal coliform (an indicator of bacteria). Sediment from uncontrolled development is reducing Lanier's storage capacity more than 2,000 acre-feet annually. The Georgia Canoeing Association and Atlanta Whitewater Club have joined with Riverkeeper to create the Upper 'Hooch River Patrol. This group of canoeists and kayakers paddles four sections of the Chattahoochee at least twice a year to conduct a physical assessment survey of the river and adjacent land uses. **Join us! Call Carol Mercer (404-373-6683) or the Riverkeeper office (404-816-9888).**

# Join The Team That's Keeping The River

To celebrate Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's first half-year in existence, we have produced this newsletter to let you know what we have been doing, and, very importantly, to thank the many people who have helped us. Our goal is to create and sustain an information network for all of you who are committed to improving the health of this critical natural resource -- the Chattahoochee River. I believe you will find the following list of individual contributions to be as overwhelming as I do. The force which has propelled the Riverkeeper program forward is solidly based on the generosity, creativity and consistent commitment of these people.

The vision for Chattahoochee Riverkeeper belongs to **Rutherford and Laura Turner Seydel** who persisted in bringing the "riverkeeper" concept south from the Hudson River in New York to the Chattahoochee. Rutherford, an Atlanta attorney, serves as Chairman of Riverkeeper's Board of Directors. Along with high energy and unflinching commitment, he and Laura have provided opportunities and access rare for a fledgling nonprofit organization. The other four members of Riverkeeper's Board of Directors have given significant amounts of their personal time to help establish an organization based on solid goals and objectives: **Bob Biebel** (partner-Price Waterhouse), **Allen Henderson** (governmental affairs representative), **David Pope** (environmental attorney-Carr, Tabb & Pope), and **Dr. Gail Marshall** (environmental educator).

The **Turner Foundation**, joined this summer by **The Vasser Woolley Foundation**, provided the seed money to enable us to open an office on March 1 and begin functioning as the primary citizen advocate for the upper Chattahoochee River basin. Their confidence in our mission provided the critical financial boost to allow the Riverkeeper organization to secure full-time staffing and other necessary startup items. The **National Rivers Coalition** provided funds (generously donated by REI) for advocacy initiatives to improve state water quality programs. The **1994 Earth Jam Concert** sponsored by **Plan It Green, Inc.** garnered additional funds for Riverkeeper.

Attorney and river advocate **David Greene** incorporated Chattahoochee Riverkeeper last January and is a member of Riverkeeper's growing legal committee, along with **David Eldridge**, **Steve O'Day**, **Brock Perry**, **Newton Quantz**, **Mary Johnson**, **Jere Wood**, committee chair and board member **David Pope**, and others. Legal assistance from the **Southern Environmental Law Center** based in Charlottesville, Virginia has already benefited our advocacy efforts.

No organization such as ours can announce itself, its actions and its intentions without logos, printed materials (such as this newsletter), T-shirts, invitations and clever design and 'marketing' ideas. The graphic design firm of **Donahue Studios** (**Denise Donahue**, **Chris Johnson**, and **Andrew Tse**) has been an invaluable pro bono partner in all aspects of Riverkeeper's startup and ongoing projects.

An open house held last spring in the Riverkeeper offices would not have been possible without the support of **Seydel International** for the party venue and hospitality, the photography of **Bard Wrisley** which graced the front of the invitations (designed by Donahue Studios), and organizational assistance from **Alice Champagne** (a key administrative/research volunteer who is now on the Riverkeeper staff part-time). A special party feature was the video (aerial perspective) of the entire upper Chattahoochee River which showed continuously during the event and was provided as an in-kind donation from the **Georgia Power Co.** Trout Unlimited

member and Georgia Power employee **Bob Beck** deserves the credit for generating the aerial video idea and helping make it a reality.

Riverkeeper's office space at North Parkway Square on Northside Parkway has been donated by **Beverly M. DuBose III**. For donated office equipment, thanks go to **Trust for Public Land**, **Greg Moran**, **Scott Seydel**, **Keith Parsons**, **Paul Hagan**, **Bob Biebel**, and **Alice Champagne**.

Only **Hans Neuhauser** could have so expertly handled the Board of Directors facilitation session last spring which resulted in Riverkeeper operating plans for advocacy, outreach, fundraising, and administration. Advice and occasional consolation from the following nonprofit gurus have been essential (and comforting!): **John Cronin** (Hudson Riverkeeper), **Jerry McCollum** (Georgia Wildlife Federation), **Deborah Sheppard** (Campaign for a Prosperous Georgia), **Don Elder** (Cahaba River Society), **Marcia Bansley** (Trees Atlanta), and **Greg Greer** (Chattahoochee Nature Center).

Chattahoochee River anglers have provided a wide range of advice and assistance - from trout fishing to environmental action (**Bill Couch**, **Gene Hansard**, **Allen McCollough**, **Gene Barrington**, **Greg Moran**, **Garland Stewart**, **Chris Scalley**, **Dick Jennings**, **Jimmy Harris**, **Yvonne Vance** and others). Technical assistance

has come from a diverse group of experts: **Dave Wangsness**, **Carol Couch**, and **Evelyn Hopkins** (US Geological Survey), **Ben Dysart**, **Elaine Nash**, **Liz Horsey**, **Bill Eisenhauser**, **Pat Stevens**, **Keith Parsons**, **Glynn Groszmann**, **Terry Hughey**, **Dr. Howard Marshall**, **Laurie Hawks**, **Dee West**, **Steve Leitman**, **Dr. Tom Debo**, **Dr. Bud Freeman** and **Dr. David Kamps**. **Carol Mercer** has organized the Chattahoochee River Patrol for the river section between Helen and Lake Lanier with **Bruce Rowan's** help. Kayaker **Craig Denton** is spearheading the "Chattahoochee Challenge" kayak/canoe race scheduled for October 22.

To handle Riverkeeper's financial affairs, we've been fortunate to have pro bono assistance from the accounting firm of **Price Waterhouse**, specifically **Bob Biebel**,

**Chris Bryant** and **Becky Stops**. This able team secured Riverkeeper's nonprofit (501(c)(3)) tax status through IRS filings approved on July 1, 1994. Keeping the pennies in line and accounted for at the Riverkeeper office (as well as many other administrative activities) has been the job of volunteer **Susan Smith**, wife of angler, paddler and river advocate **Walton Smith**. **Sharon Marshall** spent hours creating our mailing list.

**Fran Burst** (Burst Video/Film, Inc.) and **Laura DeLong** have provided expert public relations advice. **Jane Hartough** has assisted with grant writing. Not to go unsung, were early supporters who attended meetings throughout 1993 and crafted the mission of Riverkeeper with steady commitment and care: **Carolyn Boyd Hatcher**, **Alan Toney**, **Roger Buerki**, **Peter Bahouth**, **John Gentry**, **Steve Lane**, **Gail Arnott-Carr**, **Scott Banker**, **Wes Woolf**, **Brenda Burnette**, **Andrew Schock**, **Chuck Rabolli**, **Nell Jones**, **Gail Russell**, **Candy Field**, and **Russ England**. Finally, and, very importantly, thanks go to **Gray**, **Charles** and **Robert Bethea** for putting up with all the take-out dinners and late night phone calls! I may have missed recognizing someone-I hope not. If so, we'll remember you next time.

The Riverkeeper team is growing. Won't you join us? --- **Sally Bethea**, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.



# ACTION ALERT

**Your help is needed TODAY to protect north Georgia's trout streams - our most pristine waters. These critical waterways are under siege from development interests and others.**

Considered by state officials to be a resource worthy of special protection since 1967, trout streams are best safeguarded by maintaining a natural vegetated buffer along their banks to keep the stream water cool and filter pollutants.

Five years ago, state legislators mandated a 100' buffer along these high quality waters, which represent less than 7% of all stream miles in Georgia. Numerous exemptions and lack of enforcement have allowed development to invade these green buffers and degrade our trout streams, including those in the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River. Earlier this year, the legislature passed a law stating that even exempted activities must comply with minimum requirements, including the 100' buffer along trout streams.

A variance procedure for hardship cases remains in place.

Now, development interests and others waving the flag of "private property rights" are lobbying the state legislature, the Governor's office, and the state Environmental Protection Division to remove the 100' buffer requirement along state-designated trout streams.

**Call or write the Governor's office, Commissioner Joe Tanner (Dept. of Natural Resources), and your state representatives. Tell them that you demand adequate protection for Georgia's trout streams.**

Give personal examples of the reasons why you believe trout streams must be protected by keeping the 100' buffer requirement in place.

Governor Zell Miller (404-656-1776), The State Capitol, Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Commissioner Joe Tanner (404-656-3500), DNR, 205 Butler St. SE Atlanta, Georgia 30334

For additional information, call Riverkeeper or Trout Unlimited.

***Support the Riverkeeper's Action Fund with your tax deductible donations.  
P.O. Box 7338 Atlanta, Georgia 30357-0338***



*Your River Your Future*

P.O. Box 7338 Atlanta, Georgia 30357-0338  
404 816-9888

Non-Profit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit No. 3363  
Atlanta, Georgia