

RIVERCHAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

SAFE DRINKING WATER REQUIRES PROTECTING THE SOURCE

As you turn on your faucet for a drink of water, have you ever wondered exactly where that water comes from, or what's in it? New drinking water programs can help you find the answers.

Clean drinking water is essential for our health because our bodies are approximately *two-thirds* water by weight. Typically, clean and safe drinking water has been taken for granted in the United States. Recent events, however, such as the 1993 outbreak of the parasite *Cryptosporidium* in Milwaukee's water supply, which caused deaths and sickened thousands, have shaken our confidence in our tap water. The National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for instance, estimate that nearly one million Americans will become ill each year, 900 fatally, because of polluted drinking water. These issues have people worried, and some important national policy changes are the result.

New Tools to Protect Drinking Water

New provisions of the **Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)** focus on protecting the source of our drinking water by assessing and safeguarding source water watersheds, thus linking drinking water quality with watershed protection through various land use programs and other means. Traditionally, the SDWA has emphasized attainment of drinking water standards, called maximum contaminant



photo © 1999 Bard Wisley

Riverkeeper member Sam Downey counts on the Chattahoochee to quench his thirst.

levels (MCLs), which are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These standards are generally met through a series of expensive treatment technologies at the water treatment plant that include flocculation, filtration and disinfection.

Until recently, the *source* of the drinking water - the land area or watershed that drains into a river or a lake - has largely been ignored. Increasingly, however, we realize that protecting the source can safeguard water quality, public health and help keep treatment costs down (see *RiverChat* Fall 1998).

The 1996 amendments to the SDWA require states to perform source water assessments for all public water systems. These assessments, which will be available to the public, must describe drinking water supply watersheds and then identify potential contaminant sources, such as animal feedlots, landfills and construction areas.

See *Safe Drinking Water*, page 7

THE RIVER MATTERS

For more info check out our event calendar on www.chattahoochee.org

Soil Watch Workshops

Habersham County
Cobb County
DeKalb County
Fulton County

May 26
June 8
June 16
June 30

Whole Foods Market 5% Day

Benefits Riverkeeper - 2111 Briarcliff at LaVista

May 26

4th Annual Jerry Jam '99

Tickets available at Variety Playhouse or Ticketmaster 404-249-6400

June 12-13

River Adventures with the Cooks:

Canoe Duncan Bridge to Lula Bridge
Hike the River's Gorge

See Insert for details, or call 404-352-9828 Ext. 10

June 12-13
July 17

4th Saturday River Cleanups

Call Capt. Harlan Trammell 404.352.9828

Mar - Nov



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

Z-93's

4TH ANNUAL JERRY JAM

Benefits Riverkeeper

June 12-13, Variety Playhouse

call 404.851.9393

Reflections

Not until I was in my twenties, did I realize where my drinking water came from. Like most of my friends, growing up in Atlanta in the 1960s, I tubed down the Chattahoochee in the summer, but never made the connection between the river and my faucet.

My teenage boys have quite a different perspective, due in no small part to the excellent environmental education programs at their school. As my younger son said when he was six, "Mama, don't let the faucet run or the fish won't have enough water." He clearly gets the connection. Luckily, what our children now know about the river-lake-aquifer-faucet connection, we (adults and decision-makers) are finally beginning to understand. We are, at long last, acknowledging that our future depends on the actions we take to protect the source of our drinking water.

Close to half of all Georgians are sustained by the Chattahoochee River or its tributaries. As the major water supply storage basin above metro Atlanta, Lake Lanier's health is critical to the well-being of 2.8 million Georgians. During the 1999 General Assembly, Riverkeeper promoted and helped secure the passage of the **Lake Lanier Water Quality Study Committee**, a bipartisan effort which was led by **Rep. Clint Smith** (R-Dawsonville) and **Rep. Carl Rogers** (D-Gainesville).

This summer, the Lanier Study Committee will review options for managing the 1,000-square mile watershed above Lake Lanier in a way that minimizes lake pollution. One such mechanism might be the creation of an authority or commission whose powers could be to implement consistent watershed management activities between the 7 counties and 12 municipalities in the headwaters region.

Riverkeeper is taking an active role in the state's source water protection program (see page 1), and specifically in the protection of the Chattahoochee's headwaters. We believe that Governor Barnes and the 2000 General Assembly will take a strong interest in this issue as well.

Sally Betha

Riverkeeper

3RD ANNUAL RIVER REVIVAL - A HOMERUN!

Riverkeeper's 3rd Annual River Revival, held on May 6th at Turner Field, was a grand slam homerun! Over 700 guests, old members and new members alike, enjoyed the baseball games in Scouts Alley, the funk music of **Gurufish**, the video river montage by **iXL** and **Burst Video/Film, Inc.**, and the goodies in the silent auction, all while nibbling on ball park fare. Between corporate sponsorship, ticket sales, and the silent auction, the Revival raised over \$60,000 for Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper!

Much appreciation to all the silent auction donors whose generosity provided such pleasures as a weekend at The Lodge at St. Simons Island, Atlanta Braves tickets, sports memorabilia, canoe and kayak trips, fly fishing lessons, outdoor equipment, and dinners from many fine Atlanta restaurants. Special thanks to the **Turner Field** staff, especially David Lee and Jennifer Berger, who went above and beyond to provide a high-quality celebration.

Thanks to all of our corporate sponsors who made the success of this event possible:

LEAD SPONSOR

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RIVER PROTECTORS

Beau Turner & Gannon Hunt
Boating World
The Coca-Cola Company
Turner Field
Watts & Browning Engineers



Steering committee members & event chairs celebrate River Revival's success at Turner Field. Thanks for all your hard work!

RIVER GUARDIANS

Captain Planet Foundation
Georgia Power Company
Hooked on the Outdoors Magazine
NationsBank
Jennie & Peek Garlington
Laura & Rutherford Seydel
Leslie & Teddy Turner
Rhett Turner

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The Seydel Companies,
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A heartfelt thank you to Co-Chairs, **Chrissy Sapp**, **Lael Seydel**, and **Beau Turner**, as well as the steering committee members, host committee members, and all the volunteers that contributed to this year's awesome Revival.

CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION HOSTED BY TED TURNER

As a preview to this year's River Revival, **Ted Turner** hosted a Champagne Reception, held on the evening of April 15th on the rooftop of the **Metro-Atlanta Chamber of Commerce** to benefit Riverkeeper. More than sixty guests enjoyed the spectacular view of Centennial Olympic Park, while listening to the **Dave Bass Quartet**, enjoying fine food from **The Pavilion**, sipping wines from **Northeast Sales Distributing, Inc.**, sampling beer from **Sweetwater Brewing Company** and enjoying a refreshing glass of **Lipsey Water**.

Special thanks to photographer **Paul**



Clare Richie, on behalf of the Riverkeeper, presents gift to Ted Turner.

Hultberg who captured the evening on film, to artists and river adventurers, **Joe & Monica Cook**, who provided a river photograph to honor Mr. Turner and to **Georgia Power** for transforming **A. Setchel's** painting into a breathtaking invitation. Sincere thanks to volunteers **Chrissy Sapp**, **Andrew Sugrue**, **Kim Youngmans**, and **Amy Schulman** who gave their time and talents to ensure a extraordinary affair.

We are also grateful to the Metro-Atlanta Chamber of Commerce for generously donating the venue and providing exceptional support prior to and throughout the evening.



CHALLENGE PROTECTS URBAN STREAM BUFFER

Earlier this year, Riverkeeper challenged the state EPD's issuance of a variance to **Dougherty & Associates** to build condominiums within the mandated 25' buffer adjacent to a tributary to Atlanta's Peachtree Creek. This roadblock to construction prompted Dougherty to initiate settlement discussions with Riverkeeper staff and engineers. After several weeks of negotiations, the parties reached an agreement in which Dougherty committed to move a majority of the impervious surfaces out of the buffer. Dougherty also agreed to maintain vegetation under the condominium's cantilevered terraces that will hang over a portion of the buffer and posted a performance bond payable to Riverkeeper, if it fails to maintain vegetation under the terraces. Without Riverkeeper's challenge, Dougherty would have been allowed to destroy approximately 10,000 square feet of the tributary's natural buffer. We believe that this case has illustrated several important points. Unless challenged, developers will often ignore state buffer laws that protect our streams, in order to maximize profits. Secondly, EPD is not aggressively using its authority under state law to secure adequate compensation for encroachments into stream buffers, when it grants variances.

GRAVEL DREDGING APPLICATION POSTPONED

Our last *RiverChat* reported that the Corps of Engineers was considering **Martin Marietta Aggregates'** (MMA) application for a permit to dredge sand and gravel along a 100-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee below Columbus for the next ten years. In actuality, MMA is seeking to renew several existing dredging permits. Due to the overwhelming and persistent objections of Riverkeeper, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others, the Corps has postponed consideration of MMA's application for one year. During this year, MMA must study whether the dredging will increase turbidity or impact endangered aquatic life in the river. The Corps has extended MMA's existing permits for the year so that MMA

can operate while conducting these studies. Additionally, the Corps has assured Riverkeeper that any permits that it issues to MMA at the end of the year will cover a five-year (rather than ten) period and will include very specific permit terms designed to protect water quality and aquatic life.

CITY OF PALMETTO CLEANS UP ITS ACT

Riverkeeper has closely monitored the **City of Palmetto's wastewater treatment plant** in South Fulton County, which discharges into Little Bear Creek, for several years. The plant has had a long history of non-compliance, exceeding permitted discharge limits on fecal, biological oxygen demand, and total suspended solids for the past six years. In early 1998, we notified the city of our concerns regarding its discharge, but received no response. In February 1999, Riverkeeper sent the Mayor of Palmetto a notice letter, informing the city of our intent to sue under the federal Clean Water Act for the city's ongoing permit violations. Our letter prompted a meeting with the Mayor and his staff. According to the city's engineer, the plant's non-compliance history stems primarily from excessive flows from two mobile home parks tapped into the city sewers and the plant's outdated sludge handling system. The city has already solved the first problem by requiring the mobile home parks to repair their sewer lines. The city is also spending \$350,000 to upgrade its sludge handling system, to be completed within the next six months. At that time, the city engineer expects the plant's discharges to meet the limitations and requirements set forth in its permit.

GEORGIA TRANSMISSION REMEDIES BUFFER VIOLATIONS

In early January, Riverkeeper's HOTLINE received a call regarding an illegal encroachment into the 25-foot state mandated buffer along Haw Creek, a Forsyth County tributary to the Chattahoochee. Our investigation confirmed that **Georgia Transmission Corp.** (GTC) had encroached within the buffer, when clearing a right-of-way along Haw Creek, and that the state EPD had also been contacted and issued a

notice of violation. GTC was cooperative and has since corrected its erosion problems and initiated restoration of the site. Riverkeeper recommended that the company provide additional mitigation measures to compensate for the long-term impacts on the stream and its riparian buffer. GTC agreed to a monetary donation in order to purchase water quality testing equipment to be used by local citizens monitoring Haw Creek and to host a community watershed workshop. Thanks to **Carl Bennett** and **Kirk Lucius**, two strong advocates for Haw Creek and the Chattahoochee River, for persevering in their efforts to protect their stream!

CORNELIA SPENDS \$4 MILLION TO UPGRADE PLANT

In 1996, Riverkeeper sued the **city of Cornelia** for chronic permit violations at its sewage plant that discharges into the South Fork of Mud Creek. (*RiverChat* Winter 1997/1998). The parties settled the case by entering into a Consent Order in 1997, which required Cornelia to upgrade its sewage facility to meet permit limitations by March, 1999. Cornelia also agreed to fund a study of the South Fork of Mud Creek to monitor the water quality and aquatic life in this Habersham County tributary to the Chattahoochee. (**Fieldale Farms**, a large poultry-processing facility that discharges into Cornelia's sewer system, is also contributing to this study.) Cornelia took its tasks under the Consent Order seriously and completed the required plant upgrades on time, spending approximately \$4 million on the project. Test results indicate that discharges from the Plant are meeting all permit limits and requirements. Furthermore, the Mud Creek study is well underway, being led by Dr. Bruce Wallace of the University of Georgia. Riverkeeper expects the study to be completed by Summer, 2001.

To have your name added to the mailing list for "StreamChat", Riverkeeper's quarterly newsletter for our Stream Monitoring Network, call Dana Poole at 404-352-9828 ext17.

FROM ONE-OF-A-KIND KITS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION RIVERKEEPER TACKLES EROSION AT THE SOURCE

Since Riverkeeper's 1995 study of north Fulton County's Big Creek watershed, in which we documented the serious effects of soil erosion on urban streams, our organization has worked aggressively to bring awareness to the increasing problem of eroded soil and its impact on Georgia's rivers. Our efforts to keep sediment out of our waterways include:

- Educational programs,
- Partnerships with organizations such as the **Georgia Water Management Campaign**,
- Consultation with local governments to evaluate enforcement programs, and
- Advocacy through policy initiatives and legal action (see *Action Alert*, page 8).

Specialized Erosion Control Kits Offer Solutions

Education of developers, citizens and local officials has been a top priority to secure measurable progress in halting erosion and the transport of soils into our streams and more importantly, into our drinking water supply—the Chattahoochee River. In 1997, the first prong of our erosion education program was targeted at developers with a specialized kit containing state-of-the-art erosion control information, resources and product samples. With the success of this initiative, **Alice Champagne**, Riverkeeper's Water Protection Specialist, has worked with engineer **Steve Murray** and graphic designer **Simone du Boise** and **Denise Donahue** (see page 6) to create materials and workshops targeted at a variety of audiences including citizens and local officials.

"Soil Watch" Program Involves Citizens

A major community outreach program has brought citizens to Riverkeeper's "Soil Watch" workshops, currently offered throughout the Chattahoochee watershed. To date, workshops have been held in White, Hall, Forsyth, Lumpkin and Cobb Counties with a total of 140 people attending and 90 kits distributed. The basic instruction involves advice on evaluating Best Management Practices—BMPs (e.g., silt fences), taking pictures and writing letters to the appropriate agencies. The kit provides a method to document complaints about sediment leaving a construction site and entering community streams and the river. An important point is that enforcement of BMPs needs to be a high priority for local governments who are responsible for ensuring eroded soil does not enter streams.

Future workshops are planned for the City of Atlanta, Habersham County, Cobb County, DeKalb County and Fulton County. See Calendar (page 1) for dates and call Alice Champagne (404-352-9828) for additional information and workshop locations.

Successful Partnership — "When Red Clay Meets Blue Water"

"When Red Clay Meets Blue Water", a hugely successful conference sponsored by the Georgia Water Management Campaign (GWMC) in late March, was attended by more than 200 local officials and representatives. To quote speaker Dr. Jim Kundell, "dirty water is not good". It can ultimately cost local governments significant sums in order to provide clean drinking water and creates other problems such as flooding and damaged aquatic habitat. Conference participants received special "tool kits" created by Riverkeeper,

in partnership with the GWMC, that include: dirty water bottles (illustrating turbidity levels), a local government guide to erosion control, a field guide, reference materials, a mouse pad with media on erosion and a laminated wall map of Georgia's river basins.

NOTE: All local government "tool kits" have been distributed, however, a second edition is being planned and funding sources secured. Call Alice Champagne (404-352-9828 Ext. 16) to be placed on a list for future kits.



Alice Champagne, Riverkeeper's Water Protection Specialist

Effectiveness of Fulton County's Erosion Program Evaluated

In early 1998, Riverkeeper was hired as a consultant to Fulton County to evaluate the county's erosion control program and provide a "snapshot" analysis of its effectiveness with accompanying recommendations for improvement. With engineer and soil erosion control expert Steve Murray as our project manager, we spent six months reviewing files, interviewing county personnel, and conducting site visits throughout Fulton County. Our final report, which was presented to the Fulton County Commission last November, commends the county for many of its recent initiatives and urges the Commission and county staff to implement two dozen recommendations.

Alex Comer, Fulton's Chief Erosion Control Inspector, reports that the county is making significant progress. Some initiatives were already in progress when Riverkeeper's evaluation was completed last fall and others are being implemented based on our recommendations. Together, they include:

- staffing increases (5 more inspectors beginning in May),
- a new office in north Fulton County to serve as the inspection center for that area,
- a new Erosion Control Violations Checklist (which reduces administrative time),
- higher fines imposed by the Fulton Environmental Court for erosion violations,
- a 6-week training program for inspectors on how to prepare court case files to ensure consistent enforcement,
- a citizen deputy program to identify erosion violations,
- developer/builder workshops,
- implementation of Erosion and Sediment Control Enforcement Standards to maximize program consistency, and
- proposed changes to the Fulton Soil and Sedimentation Ordinance.

With approximately 800 subdivisions under construction and massive commercial and office development, Fulton has a challenge to keep county dirt out of the Chattahoochee and its tributaries. Recent efforts implemented by **Dr. James Faison**, Deputy Director, and his staff are beginning to make a measurable difference in Fulton County's erosion control program.

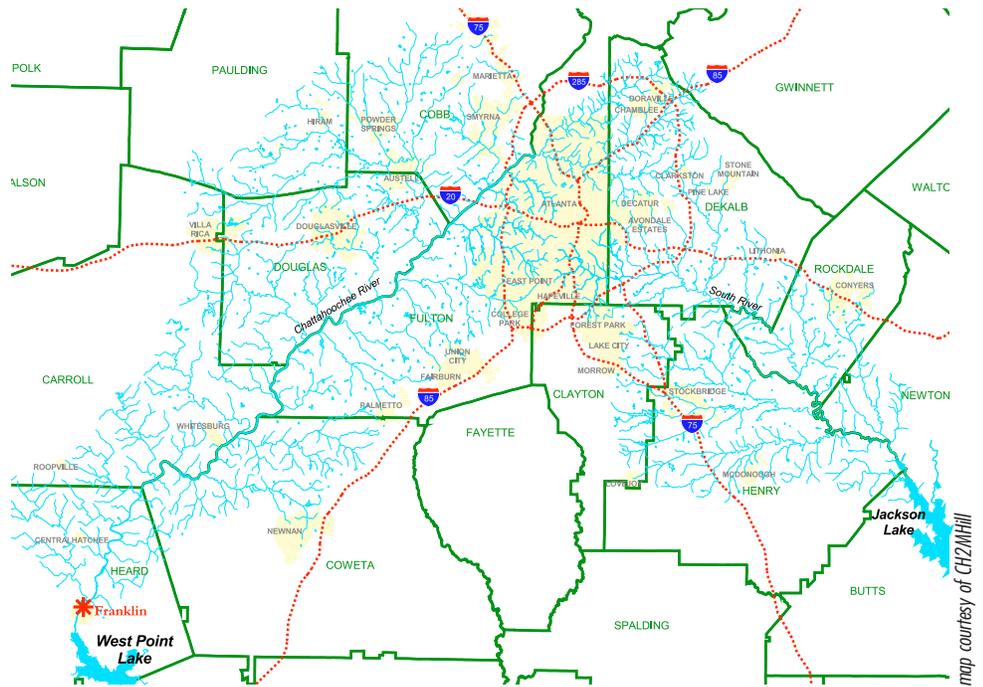
\$25 MILLION TO FUND GREENWAYS

LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM EMERGES

One of the many positive outcomes of Riverkeeper's legal settlement, or consent decree, with the city of Atlanta for violations of the Federal Clean Water Act, was the agreement that the city would create a \$25 million Greenways Acquisition Program to purchase lands along the Chattahoochee and South River corridors. The "designated" streams in the Chattahoochee River basin include the river from Interstate 75 in Atlanta south to the city of Franklin in Heard County, including tributaries in this corridor. At least 15% of the Greenway Properties must be located along the Chattahoochee downstream of Utoy Creek in south Fulton County.

Prior to making any land acquisitions, the city must gather key data regarding certain designated tributaries that flow to both the Chattahoochee and South Rivers. Data from a variety of public and private sources is currently being integrated into a Geographic Information System inventory database. A Greenways Acquisition Plan will outline how Atlanta will acquire, restore, and maintain protected areas, and must be submitted to the U.S. EPA and the state Environmental Protection Division for approval by September 2000.

The overriding goal of the Greenways Acquisition Program is to protect water quality by permanently preserving naturally vegetated green buffers along the



Land will be acquired along streams to protect the Chattahoochee and South Rivers.

designated streams, therefore, the consent decree clearly states that no more than 10% of the land purchased can be used for public access.

The city of Atlanta's land preservation program, sparked by the Riverkeeper consent decree, complements a significant Land Protection Campaign led by **Trust**

for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy which is focused on acquiring lands along the main stem of the Chattahoochee from Helen to Columbus. The TPL/TNC program is supported by funds from the federal government, private foundations and corporate sponsors.

Advisory Committee Oversees Greenways Program

Working with the city's consultants (CH2M Hill and US Infrastructure), a 10-member Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) advisory committee (the "SAC") is helping oversee the master planning and site selection process to ensure that all requirements of the consent decree are met. The purpose of the SAC is to review the submissions of the consultants, provide existing information for use by the consultants and provide advice and make recommendations to the city regularly throughout the life of the project.

While the SAC meets quarterly to review progress on the Stream Cleanup (see below) and other aspects of the consent decree, a Greenways Acquisition Sub-committee of the SAC is meeting more regularly to assist the consultants.

Members of the SAC are: Linda Jordan (Chair), Sally Bethea (Riverkeeper), Stacy Patton (Nature Conservancy), Harvey Young (Ga. Department of Natural Resources and Greenways Sub-committee Chair), Clair Muller (City Council), Gloria Martin (City Council), Cleta Winslow (City Council), Eric Toomer, Eric Wilson and Michael Weaver.

STREAM CLEANUP STATS

To date, *more than 460 TONS* of tires, scrap metal and debris have been removed from 22 miles of urban streams (Proctor Creek, South River, and portions of Utoy and Clear Creeks), as required by Riverkeeper's consent decree.

THE RIVERKEEPER STAFF

Sally Bethea - Executive Director and Riverkeeper
Michelle Fried - General Counsel
Mary Johnson - Staff Attorney
Katherine Baer - Director Headwaters Conservation

Alice Champagne - Water Protection Specialist
Dana Poole - Watershed Monitoring Coordinator
Susan Smith - Office Manager
Clare Richie - Development Director
Harlan Trammell - Boat Captain

www.chattahoochee.org
Phone 404-352-9828 FAX 404-352-8676 Email rivrkeep@mindspring.com

Denise Donahue — The Woman behind the “Hand”

Nike has its swoosh, Coca-Cola has its bottle, the Nature Conservancy has its oak leaf, and the Riverkeeper has its “hand,” a grass-roots logo that symbolically represents the organization’s simple mission of reclaiming a river.

The woman behind the hand, a logo which has adorned T-shirts, drink bottles, newsletters and other Riverkeeper materials, is **Denise Donahue**, principal of a Roswell-based design firm who has volunteered her time and talents since Riverkeeper’s inception in 1994.

The logo design, in combination with the Goethe quote, “All is born of water, all is sustained by water.” is an effort to make the connection between the river and its dependents.

“It’s an image that everyone can relate to,” Denise said. “That’s the vision I hold on to: water is your life line. It runs through your veins. It’s like having your hand on the



pulse of the river and having the river flowing through you.”

The logo’s symbolism might also reflect Denise’s relationship with Riverkeeper. She’s had the river, or at least river-related materials, running through her Roswell office almost constantly and she will quickly, and gladly, tell you that she along with Simone du Boise and staff at **Donahue Studios** are at Riverkeeper’s disposal.

During the past six years, they have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in design work, assisting with everything from the quarterly *River Chat* newsletter to the redesigning and updating of the Riverkeeper web site.

Their latest project was the design of the highly acclaimed erosion and sedimentation control kits currently being distributed to local government officials, citizen activists and contractors and builders.

Her catchy tag for her work with

Riverkeeper is “clear communication for clear water.”

“When I first met with Sally Bethea and Laura Seydel and learned about Riverkeeper, they touched the purist in me” she said. “I was impressed by their clear vision, clear purpose and passion - for the reclamation of a resource...I’m involved with the Riverkeeper because it means a lot to me to contribute to a worthwhile endeavor. It’s my responsibility, but it’s also my pleasure.”

When Donahue Studios is not working on Riverkeeper projects, the firm creates traditional print and multimedia corporate communications, image programs, and environments for clients including Kimberly-Clark, Bell South, GTE and Coca-Cola. And, when Denise isn’t designing, the Woodstock resident, and current Riverkeeper board member, is keeping track of her 13-year-old daughter, Shannon.

Contributed by Joe Cook

ALL IS BORN OF WATER:
ALL IS SUSTAINED BY WATER.
Goethe

CITIZENS IN ACTION AROUND THE WATERSHED...

Stream Monitoring Activities Expand

Adopt-A-Stream groups are appearing all over the Chattahoochee watershed and existing groups have received funding to expand activities. Riverkeeper recently received a grant from **Home Depot** to promote Adopt-A-Stream activities in Douglas County. We will work in partnership with **Friends of Douglas County** to start additional stream monitoring groups in the area. **Friends of Nancy Creek** received a national Watershed Assistance Grant from River Network to increase outreach efforts in this highly impacted urban watershed. **Green South Fulton** has held watershed socials to generate interest in their monitoring program. The **Utoy Creek Watershed Education Initiative**, led by community



Trent Monacell stencils storm drains in the Nancy Creek Watershed.

activist Robin Chanay, is completing its first successful year of programs in schools in the Utoy Basin. A new organization formed in this basin called “WAWA”, **West Atlanta Watershed Alliance**, is working to raise awareness and involve the community in a creating a comprehensive watershed management plan.

Volunteers Stencil Storm Drains

Volunteers participated in a storm drain stenciling event on April 24, with Riverkeeper and the **City of Atlanta** to stencil drains in the Nancy Creek Basin with the message “Dump No Waste, Drains to Stream”. Citizens have stenciled over 200 drains throughout the year with stenciling kits provided by Riverkeeper, Atlanta Urban Resources Partnership and the City

of Atlanta.

Creek Clean-ups

Members of the **Peachtree Road United Methodist Church** completed a clean-up



Members of Peachtree Road United Methodist Church spend “A Great Day of Service” cleaning up Peachtree Creek.

for “A Great Day of Service” on the North Fork of Peachtree Creek at Century Center. On May 15, volunteers will remove trash from Peachtree Creek with the **Clairmont Ridge Community Association**. A Nancy Creek clean-up is also scheduled on May 22 with Friends of Nancy Creek.

Stream monitoring programs are steadily growing in popularity and “adopt-a-stream” groups are continuing to form. *For detailed information on stream monitoring activities, clean-ups or storm drain stenciling, call Dana Poole at 404-352-9828 ext.17.*

SAFE DRINKING WATER

Continued from page 1

To help states convert their assessments into *protection* programs, money from a state drinking water revolving fund can now be used to help local governments and citizens protect these watersheds. Historically, these monies were only available for treatment facility upgrades. With low-interest loans from the state, interested communities will now have the option to purchase stream buffers, groundwater recharge areas or other important lands that affect drinking water supplies. These new provisions are especially important for the Chattahoochee River, which provides drinking water for 2.8 million Georgians.

Riverkeeper has been actively involved in the development of Georgia's source water program through participation on the state's Citizen and Technical Advisory Committees, convened to shape the requirements for Georgia's program.

Public Participation Required

Another important element of the source water assessment process is public participation. The U.S. EPA specifically requires that a broad range of citizens, especially those from at-risk groups such as the elderly and those with compromised autoimmune systems, be represented as part of the source water assessment and protection process. Individuals can get involved on a local level by working with the local water utility in areas with large distribution systems, and with the state for those areas served by smaller systems.

Active public participation will help ensure that source water assessments don't just sit on a shelf - and actually become a blueprint from which communities can forge a watershed protection program to protect drinking water quality and public health for all consumers.

Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs)

Look for new information - consumer confidence reports - coming soon in your water bill. Otherwise known as "drinking water right-to-know" reports, the SDWA now requires that all public water systems annually notify consumers about the quality of their tap water. CCRs must include contaminant levels, any MCL violations, and information about health implications. CCRs will provide citizens the opportunity to learn about the quality of their tap water, and can serve to build support for source water protection efforts, such as the protection of streamside areas and strengthening of development controls in the watershed. *Look for a report from your utility starting in October, 1999.*

From Watersheds to Watertaps

Southeast Regional Safe Drinking Water Summit

In early February, close to 100 people from nine southeastern states gathered at **Georgia Tech** to learn about implementing new provisions of the SDWA. The conference, organized by **Riverkeeper, Alabama Rivers Alliance** and **Clean Water Fund**, was made possible by a grant from **U.S. EPA, Region IV**. National and local speakers provided information about drinking water protection strategies and workgroup discussions focused on developing strategies to overcome barriers to the implementation of source water protection programs. To receive a conference summary, call Riverkeeper's Gainesville office at 770-538-2619.

Membership up for renewal? Please send it in today!

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

- \$10 Student
- \$15 Individual
- Please make a contribution of \$_____ or reserve membership for the person(s) listed below.
(A card will be sent notifying the recipient(s) of your gift.)
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- \$100 Contributor
- \$500 Lifetime
- Other \$ _____

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Phone _____ (H) _____ (W) _____ (Fax)

I would like to volunteer my time to help the Riverkeeper. Please get in touch with me.

Please make checks payable to: **Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper**

Contributions to the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund are tax-deductible.

Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) organization. Quarterly newsletters are provided to members and other subscribers.

Please send _____
Riverkeeper caps
at \$18.00 each (includes shipping)

Please send _____ large
_____ x-large

Riverkeeper t-shirts
at \$18.50 each (includes shipping)

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
1900 Emery St. Suite 450
Atlanta, GA 30318

ACTION ALERT

DOES MUDDY WATER MAKE YOU SEE RED?

IF SO, WRITE GOVERNOR BARNES TODAY!

After a 6-year legal battle, environmental groups*, the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and U.S. EPA have agreed on regulations for construction activities that will help keep soil erosion from polluting Georgia streams every time it rains.

The regulation, known as the **General Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities** (the "Permit"), will control the discharge of storm runoff from large development sites of 5 to 250 acres. (Sites over 250 acres will be subject to greater scrutiny through an "individual" permit process.). The EPD has said that it plans to issue the General Permit in the next several months.

Some members of the development community have expressed concerns about this regulation, claiming excessive costs of compliance, and have threatened to mount a legal challenge. Pressure is being applied to Governor Barnes, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Board and EPD, urging them to back off this strong regulation.

New "Ground Rules" to Control Erosion

While not perfect, Riverkeeper views the Permit as an important new tool in the fight to keep dirt out of our rivers, lakes and streams. We believe that the proposed process clearly lays out the ground rules for land development in Georgia in a fashion that protects those who are trying to comply with the law, while

penalizing those who are not. The Permit requires erosion control plans prepared by licensed professionals to meet Permit requirements and water quality monitoring to determine turbidity levels. Because the Permit is part of the federal Clean Water Act, affected individuals and groups such as Riverkeeper, will be able to take legal action against flagrant violators, when government agencies fail to do so.

* *Sierra Club, The Conservation Society, Terry Hughey*

WRITE Gov. Roy Barnes & DNR Board Chair Tom Wheeler TODAY.

Tell them why you're concerned about muddy water flowing into the Chattahoochee and its tributaries, including impacts such as: (1) increase in drinking water treatment costs, (2) destruction of fish habitat, (3) reduction of flood storage capacity in streams and (4) lower property values. Encourage them to support a strong erosion control program in Georgia based on EPD's proposed General Stormwater Permit, in conjunction with a comprehensive education program for developers.

**Governor Roy Barnes The State Capitol, Atlanta, GA 30334
Mr. Tom Wheeler DNR Board Chair, P.O. Box 957209 Duluth, GA 30136**



Reclaiming Our River

1900 Emery St. Suite 450 Atlanta, Georgia 30318
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*Our mission is to advocate and secure
the protection of the Chattahoochee River,
its tributaries and watershed.*

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