

# RIVER CHAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER  
WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG

## NEWS FROM THE CHATTAHOOCHEE HEADWATERS

**“Y**all need to prove the water is unclean first before you take my property with more buffers,” yells one woman followed by clapping and whistles. “This just about amounts to communism,” cries another. Amens echo throughout the crowd, as the next person shouts to be heard amongst the 400-person crowd packing a school gymnasium in Cleveland.

For over two hours last month, angry citizens voiced complaints about regulations to protect the north Georgia streams that supply our drinking water. Meetings such as these are frustratingly common within the six largely rural counties that comprise the Chattahoochee Headwaters, a 1000-square-mile watershed that drains into Lake Lanier and includes the Soque and Chestatee Rivers.

In 1996, Riverkeeper’s Headwaters office was established with a grant from the U.S. EPA for a Riparian Education Program and the Soque River Restoration Project (see [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)). Subsequently,

Headwaters staff have branched into water conservation, safeguarding trout streams, lake monitoring and source water protection. Working with local governments to protect watersheds has proven to be one of our biggest challenges.



Kristin Costley and State Zoologist Chris Skelton sample fish at Buck Shoals

Georgia is a “home rule” state – meaning that all land use decisions are made at the local level. Therefore, it is critical that these local decisions are adequately informed regarding threats to our water supplies, such as pollution from storm runoff. Although there are no state laws dictating local land use regulations, there are incentives for cities and counties to make their own decisions to prevent water pollution.

### A Victory for Clean Water in Hall County

The state requires local governments that are applying for new or expanded wastewater or withdrawal permits to develop and implement a watershed protection plan. For that purpose, Hall and Forsyth Counties and the City of Gainesville funded a watershed assessment—basically a “report card” on the health of the waters within their jurisdictions. Streams were sampled, assessed and improvement measures recommended. The public was invited to comment on the recommendations at numerous meetings, and a technical advisory group included diverse members such as Riverkeeper, the Homebuilders Association, Farm Bureau and others.

Under the leadership of Public Works Director **Rob Rivers**, Hall County proposed an excellent ordinance that strengthened erosion control, provided for stormwater management, and widened vegetated buffer zones. Riverkeeper testified at meetings to support the ordinance, however, loud opposition was heard from farmers, developers and even some state legislators—despite the sound scientific basis for the ordinance, excellent outreach efforts, and the fact that permits for the area’s future growth are contingent on adequately protecting our waters. Business leaders proposed a last minute “compromise” that would have gutted the ordinance, but thanks to Commissioners **Gary Gibbs** and **Roger Cole**, important parts of the ordinance were salvaged and the final version passed unanimously (see [www.hallcounty.org](http://www.hallcounty.org)). Although Riverkeeper does not believe that this ordinance goes far enough to fulfill *all* state permitting require-

**THE RIVER MATTERS**  
For Additional Information Check Our OnLine Calendar  
[WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG](http://WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG)

- Soil Watch Workshop for North Fulton County** June 19  
Call 404.352.9828 ext. 16 or [achampagne@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:achampagne@ucriverkeeper.org)
- Adopt-A-Stream Workshop for Habersham County** June 23  
Call 404.352.9828 ext. 17 or [krose@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:krose@ucriverkeeper.org)
- 2nd Annual Riverkeeper Golf Classic** June 26  
Call 404.352.9828 ext. 12 or [slayton@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:slayton@ucriverkeeper.org)
- Metro Atlanta Canoe Trip—Member Outing** June 30  
Call 404.352.9828 ext. 24 or [bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org)
- Hike the River’s Gorge—Member Outing** July 14  
Call 404.352.9828 ext. 24 or [bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org)

- Soil Watch Workshops:**
- Little Nancy Creek Watershed Alliance** August 23
- South Fulton County** August 28  
Call 404.352.9828 ext. 16 or [achampagne@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:achampagne@ucriverkeeper.org)
- Chemical/Biological Adopt-A-Stream Workshops**
- Call 404.352.9828 ext. 17 or [krose@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:krose@ucriverkeeper.org)



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

# Reflections

Lobbyists and lawyers for some of Georgia's businesses and industries like to use a simple, two-word phrase to strike fear in the hearts of legislators and kill environmental bills—"citizen lawsuits". This phrase is typically employed to invoke images of frivolous litigation brought by angry tree-huggers intent on filling the court system with hundreds of actions and generally stopping the wheels of commerce.

During the 2001 session of the Georgia Legislature, the threat of citizen lawsuits was hyped by the **Georgia Chamber of Commerce**, along with its pals in the textile, pulp and paper, petroleum, mining, and real estate industries, who claimed that the **Water Bill of Rights** was, in fact, a Trojan Horse for citizen lawsuits.

Despite its proud endorsement by hundreds of diverse groups and local governments representing more than 1.6 million Georgians, this non-binding resolution with its aspirational goals was proclaimed to be yet another way for citizens to torment the business community with unfounded and expensive claims. Riverkeeper and its sister organizations around the country received particular attention from this crowd, who pointed to a Keeper lawsuit in North Carolina against the hog industry as proof of the very problem. (Perhaps the Chamber should ask Neuse River landowners and fishermen who endured the catastrophic pollution from mega-hog farms, loss of jobs and sickness exactly what they think about this citizen suit!)

## Citizen Lawsuits are Important Tools

The Water Bill of Rights was not written to provide citizens with more access to the courts, but, even if it had been, so what!? Citizen lawsuits are very important tools that are unfortunately needed to help clean up our environment and safeguard public health when government agencies fail to act.

How was the lethal pesticide DDT finally banned from use? A citizen lawsuit filed by a national environmental group in the 1970s. Why is the city of Atlanta finally cleaning up its sewage under a federal consent decree? A citizen lawsuit filed by this organization. Why are business leaders in metro Atlanta finally paying attention to the Chattahoochee's limited wastewater capacity and serious pollution problems? A citizen lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club.

In seven years, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has filed and settled two Clean Water Act cases, one Open Meetings Act case and three administrative appeals of state permits—all to protect the rights of our members to safely use and enjoy the waters in the Chattahoochee River system. (Two additional permit appeals are pending.)

Groups who secure the resources to work with citizens, collect data, and hire lawyers and technical experts to protect the public interest should be applauded, not vilified. Typically, it has been citizen lawsuits that have resulted in some of the most important decisions to protect the water we drink and the air we breathe.

*Sally Bethea*  
Riverkeeper

## 'REVIVING THE RIVER'

This year's 5th Annual **River Revival** celebration was a major success in every way. In just five short years, our member event has grown ten-fold in net revenues to **\$70,000**, thanks to the generous support of members, sponsors and volunteers.



*Scotty & Lael Seydel,  
Event Co-Chairs*

On a beautiful moonlit night in early May, five hundred guests enjoyed the hospitality of Paul Smith, owner of midtown Atlanta's **Park Tavern**, listened to the sounds of the **Bradley Cole Smith Acoustic Band**, bid on auction items and visited with friends.

Stars of the show included: Co-Chairs, **Chrissy Sapp, Lael Seydel, Scotty Seydel** and **Beau Turner**, along with our hard working

**Steering Committee:** Wendy Staton Burge, Katie Bush, Beth Gottlieb, Christine Hung, Wynne Jarboe, Dominique Love, Kristi Rose, Amy Schulman, Andrew Sugrue, and Kim Youghans.

### Thanks to our 2001 Sponsors!

#### **Lead Sponsor:**

Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.

#### **River Protector Sponsors:**

Watts & Browning Engineers, Inc. and Home Depot.

#### **River Guardian Sponsors:**

Delta Air Lines, Inc., Georgia-Pacific Corporation, Newfields, Inc., The Coca-Cola Company, The UPS Foundation. Beau Turner, and Rhett & Angela Turner.

#### **River Sponsors:**

Beth Gottlieb & Donaldson & Co., Incorporated, Jennie & Peek Garlington, Habersham Investment & Development Corp., Interface Research Corporation, Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Mary Ann Industries,

Rochester & Associates, Southwire, The Pacific Group, Travis Pruitt & Associates, and Leslie & Teddy Turner.

#### **Friends of the River Sponsors:**

Brown & Caldwell, CH2MHill, Hooked on the Outdoors Magazine, and Post Properties.

#### **Special Sponsors:**

Georgia Power, Mitch Rood and Z-93.

**Plan to join us in 2002!!!**

## THE RIVERKEEPER STAFF

[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

**Sally Bethea** - Executive Director and Riverkeeper  
**Michelle Fried** - General Counsel  
**Katherine Baer** - Director Headwaters Conservation  
**Alice Champagne** - Watershed Protection Specialist  
**Matt Kales** - Program Manager for River Basin Protection  
**Kristi Rose** - Director Watershed Monitoring & Education  
**Pam Davee** - Development Director  
**Bill Crawford** - Business Manager  
**Birgit Boltan** - Administrative/Legal Assistant  
**Sandy Layton** - Special Events Coordinator  
**Harlan Trammell** - Boat Captain  
**Mary Manson** - Receptionist  
**Kristin Costley** - Source Water Specialist

Phone 404-352-9828 FAX 404-352-8676

# ON PATROL



## Helen—The River Runs Through It

The Chattahoochee begins a dozen miles upstream of the **City of Helen** in the Chattahoochee National Forest. As the river starts its 542-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico, the first serious “greeting” it receives is from this Bavarian-styled city. Along with members of **Trout Unlimited**, Riverkeeper recently met with City Manager Jerry Elkins to discuss issues threatening the river as it runs through the City. Helen depends heavily on the Chattahoochee as a source of tourist income from anglers, tubers, shoppers and others, therefore Helen has a real stake in river protection. Over the years, Riverkeeper has observed encroachments into the 50-foot state-mandated buffer zone along the river—an area established to provide cool temperatures for trout survival as well as bank stabilization. Other concerns include a recently-permitted riverside waterslide park and erosion problems. Riverkeeper will work with City staff and local residents to make sure that the Chattahoochee truly is a “top priority” for Helen, reinforcing the economic and environmental importance of the river that runs through it.

## Atlanta Submits Cleanup Plan for Combined Sewer Overflows

Pursuant to the federal consent decree negotiated in 1998 by the U.S. EPA, the state EPD, the **City of Atlanta** and Riverkeeper, the City submitted a “remedial measures plan” on April 1, 2001. This document outlines the City’s proposal to clean up the combined sewer overflows (CSOs) that have, for decades, discharged polluted stormwater and untreated sewage into the Chattahoochee and its tributaries every time it rains. The City and its consultants conducted various studies and water quality and quantity analyses in accordance with the decree, which information provided the basis for Atlanta’s cleanup plan. The proposal presented to the EPA and EPD for their review and “authorization to proceed” is a combination of several technologies tailored to the specific CSO sub-water-

sheds, including storage, treatment and pipe separation. While it is *not* Riverkeeper’s decision to approve or disapprove the City’s selected alternative—that remains solely the purview of the government agencies—we hired our own wastewater engineers to review the City’s proposal and to make sure that there are no fatal flaws, that it is conceptually adequate, and that water quality standards in the discharges will be met. Carpenter Environmental, an engineering firm that has worked with many other Keeper groups, was engaged to perform this work.

## Fulton’s Chronic Sewage Problems

While the City of Atlanta has received deserved attention for problems associated with its antiquated sewer system (see above), **Fulton County** has not been the target of as much media focus for its very similar problems. As the owner of three sewage treatment plants and an extensive sanitary collection system, the County has been responsible for thousands of sewage spills over the past decade that have contaminated the Chattahoochee and its tributaries. Like Atlanta, Fulton’s problems arise from failing infrastructure, rapid growth and development that the sewer system can’t handle (especially in north Fulton), as well as operational problems at the **John’s Creek** and **Big Creek** treatment plants in north Fulton (which discharge directly into the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area) and at the **Camp Creek facility** in south Fulton. What is the Fulton County government doing about this? It appears that they are spending far more time arguing about penalties associated with state enforcement actions than they are with funding and expediting needed plant and system improvements. Riverkeeper is reviewing this situation to determine what actions, if any, can be taken to force Fulton County to adhere to a sewage cleanup schedule.

## Lumpkin Agrees to Mitigate for Stream Buffer Variance

Last fall, Riverkeeper challenged EPD’s issuance of a stream buffer

variance to **Lumpkin County**. The County applied for the variance so that it could pipe nearly 400 feet of an unnamed trout stream to **Yahoola Creek** to accommodate a parking lot for its new mental health facility. Immediately upon receiving the variance, and before Riverkeeper could file its challenge, the County piped the stream. Realizing it would be difficult to restore the stream, Riverkeeper approached Lumpkin’s new County Commissioner with a plan to mitigate the long-term damage of the piping. After months of discussions, the County has agreed to redesign the site to help filter stormwater runoff and to ensure that the stream, as it enters and leaves the site, is as stable and shaded as possible. The new Commissioner has also taken steps towards improving Lumpkin’s erosion control program.

## Riverkeeper’s Standing to Protect the River Challenged

Last November, Riverkeeper challenged EPD’s issuance of a modified surface water withdrawal permit to **Georgia Power Company (GPC)**. The permit allows GPC to withdraw up to 116 million gallons per day (mgd) of water from the Chattahoochee River, purportedly for operations at its **Plant Wansley** electric generating facility in Heard County. The modified permit doubles the withdrawal amount authorized by GPC’s existing permit. EPD issued the modified permit without requiring GPC to establish that it needs the significant increase in water and without conducting a study to determine the impacts of the withdrawal on the River and its users. After the administrative law judge set a hearing date for the case, GPC and EPD challenged Riverkeeper’s standing to question the legality of the permit, in essence alleging that Riverkeeper cannot, on behalf of our members, establish that the River and our members’ use of the River could be harmed by the withdrawal. Riverkeeper has vigorously opposed this attack, and secured the testimony of several local members who regularly fish, boat and enjoy the beauty of this section of the River.

# Aquatic Food Web Study Reveals Fish Contamination

Recent findings by a team of university scientists, led by Riverkeeper Board member **Dr. Judy Meyer** and her graduate student **Emma Rosi-Marshall**, indicates that the concentration of certain metals in fish and aquatic insects is elevated in the Chattahoochee, suggesting that the river's aquatic food web may be contaminated.

The research, which was funded by **The Turner Foundation**, has revealed high concentrations of *mercury* and *arsenic* in fishes, including carp, channel catfish, shad, and large mouth bass at four sites on the Chattahoochee main stem within and below metropolitan Atlanta. In addition, the researchers found metal concentrations in aquatic insects that are as high as a western river draining a Superfund site! Because aquatic insects represent a significant food source for many of the fishes sampled, the high concentrations of metals in these insects and the fish that eat them may mean that metals are entering the food chain via the aquatic insects and are then accumulating, via a process known as *biomagnification*, in fish tissue and organs.

People who eat their catch from the Chattahoochee may be exposing themselves, and others, to metals that have concentrated in these fish. Though the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has established site- and species-specific fish consumption advisories for the Chattahoochee, these advisories are broadcast in a limited manner, and may not be accessible to anglers who do not read English, own a Georgia fishing license, and/or are generally unfamiliar with the risks associated with eating contaminated fish.

Riverkeeper has identified significant numbers of anglers from Morgan Falls to the headwaters of West Point Lake who reported that they ate their catch at rates greater than those recommended by DNR. The potential contamination of the food web, coupled with a distinct lack of angler awareness about the implications of consuming

contaminated fish, points to a potentially significant public health issue.

## Fish Consumption Outreach Campaign

In response to this issue, Riverkeeper is launching a Fish Consumption Outreach Campaign, aimed at promoting awareness among "subsistence anglers" in the Upper Chattahoochee watershed. The campaign, which is funded in part by **The Community Foundation of Atlanta**, has several components, including identification of "at risk" angler popula-



Fishes, such as this diseased largemouth bass from the Chattahoochee 166 Crossing, may be unsafe for human consumption

tions, river access locations, and effective conduits for outreach to these populations, such as community centers and places of worship. Riverkeeper will partner with public and private entities to make fish consumption advisories more readily available to subsistence anglers through signage and other forms of communication, and to develop a model for successful fish consumption outreach that can be used in other watersheds.

---

## DNR Board Adopts White Paper on Water Issues

At its May meeting, the DNR Board adopted a "white paper" on statewide water quality issues for presentation to a **Joint Study Committee** created during the 2001 session by one of Governor Barnes' water initiatives (S.R. 142). The Study Committee, which is co-chaired by **Sen. Hugh Gillis** and **Rep. Bob Hanner**, is tasked with developing a statewide comprehensive water plan and accompanying legislative actions by September 2002.

For the past five months, a Water Subcommittee of the DNR Board's Environmental Protection Committee met on numerous occasions to develop the "white paper" which covers a wide range of issues from interbasin transfers and regional reservoirs to public involvement, water quality monitoring and standards. (For a copy of this 60-page white paper, call the Riverkeeper office at 404-352-9828, ext. 24)

### Interim Instream Flow Protection Policy Approved

One of the issues closely examined by DNR's Water Subcommittee concerned the state's policy for protecting instream flows, in other words, the amount of water "left" in our rivers and streams below withdrawals for industries and municipalities and below reservoirs. For more than 20 years, the state has used a calculation called the "7Q10" (the lowest seven-day continuous flow at a particular point in a stream) to establish minimum flow levels. In 1995,

Georgia's Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) published a report that recommended a different approach, stating, "There is clear consensus among aquatic biologists on the need to reserve more water for instream habitat requirements than is provided by the 7Q10 flow".

A task force, including Riverkeeper, that met from 1996 to 1997 also concluded that the current 7Q10 policy was inadequate to protect flows for aquatic life in state waters and recommended an *interim approach* to be employed until further research on Georgia streams could verify an appropriate final policy. In a joint recommendation made to the Water Subcommittee, both WRD and EPD finally concluded that the basic interim approach recommended by the stakeholder group in 1997 should be adopted.

After meeting with Sen. Gillis and Rep. Hanner to explain the issue, the DNR Board voted unanimously to adopt the Interim Instream Flow Protection Policy and to seek funding to conduct needed research upon which to base a final policy. This action represents a *significant* new direction for DNR and reveals a strong commitment to protect the flows in our rivers and streams for the thousands of creatures who depend not only on clean water, but also on adequate seasonal flows. (For a copy of the *Interim Instream Flow Protection Policy*, call the Riverkeeper office at 404-352-9828, ext. 24)

# Georgia Legislature Samples Water Issues

The 2001 session of the General Assembly had been billed as “The Year of Water”. Along with other environmental groups in the state, Riverkeeper was anxious to see what **Governor Barnes** would offer in the way of legislation. A focus on water had been postponed twice in previous sessions, once to deal with the metro Atlanta transportation crisis, and again for education reform. During the spring of 2000, the state’s environmental groups began meeting to develop a common set of goals—a vision—for the state’s water policy, which ultimately became the **Georgia Water Bill of Rights**, an important conservation initiative in the 2001 Session (see *Reflections*, page 2).

When the Governor did present his Water Bill in the form of S.B. 130, it was less than what we had hoped for—a narrow focus on metro Atlanta with water issues in the rest of the state relegated to a **Joint Water Study Committee** chaired by Rep. Bob Hanner and Sen. Hugh Gillis and a Fall 2002 deadline for a final report (see page 4). A **Metro North Georgia Water Planning District** was established by S.B. 130 with mandates to fix wastewater treatment problems, start the cleanup of previously ignored stormwater pollution, and develop plans for conservation and supply. The environmental coalition was able to amend this legislation to require that the District establish and meet planning goals by deadlines, and to prevent metro Atlanta from avoiding conservation by bringing water from outside its present supply watersheds. Attempts to include the Chattahoochee Headwaters in the District failed, however.

## Bill Allows Use of Citizen Sampling Data!

Riverkeeper advocated and secured the passage of a bill requiring that the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) develop a protocol for accepting water quality samples collected by anyone, including adopt-a-stream groups, for official use in determining the condition of Georgia’s streams. By July 2002, EPD must finalize its protocol for the collection of *quality-assured* data, which will allow any trained citizen, business, or local government that wants to help the state by sampling specific streams. Thanks to **Senator Charles Walker** for introducing this bill and to our lobbyist **Neill Herring** for identifying a legislative “vehicle” to ensure the bill’s passage at the eleventh hour!

## Water Bill of Rights Tabled

The Water Bill of Rights was introduced as a non-binding resolution in both the House and in the Senate. While it was favorably passed out of Senate Natural Resources Committee, the resolution was ultimately tabled on the Senate Floor. It can, however, be taken up at any time during the 2002 session. The House version failed to move its resolution out of House Natural Resources Committee.

Despite the fact that the resolutions did not pass this

year, the effort to develop and promote the Water Bill of Rights must be considered an enormous political success. It represents the first time that a coalition of *all* Georgia environmental groups worked to proactively support legislation, rather than simply oppose bad legislation. Additionally, the campaign forced our ideas and carefully-conceived water principles to the front of Georgia’s political stage, where they remained a primary focus during the entire legislative session.

## GEORGIA CHAMBER OPPOSES LABELING OF WASTEWATER PIPES

A stakeholder group is being convened, at the request of the DNR Board, to review proposed regulations that would require all wastewater discharge permit holders (e.g., industries and local governments) to post their outfall pipes with emergency contact information. This “**fisherman’s right-to-know**” requirement has been used effectively in other states to help citizens report emergencies such as accidental spills and ensure that they are cleaned up as soon as possible. The state’s emergency response team and state fisheries biologists have said that pipe labeling would aid their work as well.

Led by the **Georgia Chamber of Commerce**, the business community and the textile, pulp and paper, agribusiness and mining industries have mounted a campaign to *oppose* the posting of these wastewater pipes which discharge into the public’s waters. These groups have lobbied state legislators and DNR Board members claiming that the labeling of outfall pipes will result in trespass, “misleading photo-ops and negative publicity”, industrial espionage, and unsightly, graffiti-laden signage.



**To register your views on this important right-to-know issue, write DNR Board Chair Jamie Reynolds—2561 Lake Oconee Parkway Greensboro, GA 30642. FAX: 706-453-4749.**

## Do you know your watershed address?

Soon, you will see these signs on state roads throughout Georgia. A new Watershed Signage Program, coordinated by the U.S EPA in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation, is producing and placing 102 watershed signs in priority watersheds. In the Upper Chattahoochee Watershed, fifteen signs will be placed from the headwaters near Unicoi Gap to the State Capitol in downtown Atlanta.



## HEADWATERS

Continued from page 1

ments, it represents a significant step in the right direction.

### **Drinking Water Protections are Slammed in Habersham**

More than a decade ago, the Georgia Planning Act was passed by the Legislature to encourage local governments to protect wetlands, river corridors, mountain tops, groundwater recharge areas, and drinking water supply watersheds, such as the Chattahoochee Headwaters. Local governments that do not adopt and implement ordinances containing environmental planning criteria, developed subsequently by the state, risk losing eligibility for some state loans and grants (see [www.dca.state.ga.us/DCA](http://www.dca.state.ga.us/DCA)).

Watersheds that drain to a drinking water supply (reservoir or river withdrawal) must enact more stringent protections to ensure a lasting source of clean and safe water. Although these requirements, such as stream buffers, have been in place for many years, several counties are actively opposing them. For example, Habersham County Manager **Ron Vandiver** has recently said "I'm not going to enforce these ordinances..." The result of such pronouncements can be chilling—at a crowded recent meeting, Riverkeeper's **Kristin Costley** was the *sole* person to speak in favor of watershed protection.

Although the opposition is loud, Riverkeeper has found that the majority of citizens *do* favor drinking water protection. As part of our Soque Source Water Project (see *RiverChat* Fall 2000), a survey developed with the **Soque River Watershed Association** and analyzed by UGA's Survey Research Center showed that *92.5% of Habersham survey respondents support local efforts to protect drinking water.*

Unfortunately, a few vocal, and typically uninformed individuals, can sway crowds and undercut political will at all levels of government. The state has already advised some counties that they may delay the adoption of protective ordinances.

### **Water Flows Downstream...**

Because local elected officials have both the power and the responsibility to determine the future of our Chattahoochee River, we will continue to work closely with these leaders whenever possible, especially in the Headwaters region whose streams are key to the sustainability of drinking water for more than 3 million Georgians.

Over the last five years, Riverkeeper has seen a tremendous growth in interest among Headwater residents in protecting the Chattahoochee. We are striving to make sure those voices are also heard above the crowd. Amen to that!

---

## Baer: Five Years of Saving Streams...and Chickens

**W**hen **Katherine Baer** leaves Riverkeeper this summer to pursue a law degree, she'll leave a legacy of improved waters and watershed policies in the Chattahoochee's headwaters region above Lake Lanier. For the past five years, Baer has directed Riverkeeper's programs in this area from our Gainesville office.



She managed the successful Soque River Streambank Restoration Project and helped create the Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center, a partnership with Elachee Nature Center, which introduces children to water quality issues via a floating classroom. She fielded Hotline calls, assisted other citizen advocacy groups like the Soque River Watershed Association and Hall County's United Neighborhoods Advisory Council and worked to build constructive relationships with developers and land owners throughout the headwaters region.

Policy issues have also been important in the headwaters where environmental advocacy is in its infancy. Baer advocated for the Hall County Watershed Ordinance and instigated a committee to set criteria for the listing and de-listing of trout streams. On Lanier, Baer worked to establish additional state lake monitoring

stations and started a program to define Georgia's nascent nutrient trading proposal. It has been a busy five years.

"I know that people in our field will always have a job to do," she said. "Some of the most positive experiences I've had have been working with individuals and advocacy groups and seeing that there is a wide spread interest in water quality issues. The challenge is getting those voices heard."

### **Baer**

One stumbling block to restoration and water protection efforts in the headwaters has been the conflict between the rights of private property owners and the rights of downstream landowners (*see cover article*).

Baer, an Atlanta native who received her undergraduate degree from Stanford University and her masters in conservation ecology from the University of Georgia, hopes to return to work with a non-profit environmental organization after her law studies. She'll be leaving Riverkeeper in June and relocating to the Baltimore area with her husband Mike Paul and three dogs. Her two chickens, rescued from one of the area's many chicken trucks will be left behind. "They're the luckiest chickens in Hall County," she joked. "They were rescued by probably the only vegetarians in the County."

*Contributed by Joe Cook*

# Youth Program Engages Fulton Students in River Protection

During the 2000-2001 school year, funding from the **Fulton County Department of Human Services** supported the **Riverkeeper Youth Program** and involved *more than 3,000 students* throughout the County's District Four in environmental programs related to the Chattahoochee River and water issues in general. In collaboration with other organizations, Riverkeeper incorporated water science and environmental concepts into art, reading, math and theater activities in innovative ways.

More than a dozen schools in Fulton's **District Four**—which covers the Lindbergh area to Sandy Springs—were provided with a wide variety of hands-on learning opportunities on the Chattahoochee and its tributaries, coordinated by Riverkeeper's education consultant **Donna Smythe**. Options included canoeing and float trips, macroinvertebrate sampling, stream walks and water quality testing on local streams.



This program provides an excellent opportunity for students to experience the natural world, while promoting an ethic of river stewardship. The Riverkeeper Youth Program is structured to build a life-long love of our state's waterways and to directly connect kids with their local environment.

Next year, Riverkeeper will continue environmental education programs in Fulton County's District Four and expand Youth Program into South Fulton's **District Seven**, thanks to an increase in County funding. **Program Highlights**

This spring, **Sutton Middle School** students, led by science teacher Brenda Brochstein, visited the Tennessee Aquarium and the Chattahoochee Nature Center, conducted chemical and biological testing of Nancy Creek, and participated in a rafting and camping trip on the Chattahoochee River with the **Georgia Environmental Organization (GEO)**. "This program has really connected my students with their local water resources," said teacher Brenda Brochstein.

In celebration of Earth Day, a **Girl Scout Water Drop Patch Rally** was held at **Big Trees Forest Preserve** in Roswell. The Water Drop Patch is a joint project of Girl Scouts of the USA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. More than 40 girl scouts earned their patch by participating in water quality activities such as stream sampling, stream walks, storm drain stenciling, a poetry and art activity, plant and animal identification, and presentations on water careers.

## Thanks to the following schools and organizations who participated in the Riverkeeper Youth Program 2000-2001:

Galloway School	High Point Elementary
Ridgeview Middle School	Garden Hills Elementary
Sutton Middle School	Boys and Girls Clubs
North Atlanta High School	CHRIS Homes, Inc.
Margaret Mitchell School	Inner City Outings
Spalding School's Odyssey Program	Girl Scouts of America

**Congratulations to Alice Champagne** who is now a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control.

Membership up for renewal? Please send it in today!

## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Student    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Steward  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Protector | <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ |

A contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is made to reserve a membership for:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (Fax)

email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper** or charge to your credit card.

Contributions are tax deductible. Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your gift will be acknowledged by letter.

Quarterly newsletters are provided to our members. Please visit our website at [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org). Members receive discounts on our merchandise.

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

Credit Card

Amex  Master Card  Visa

No: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp: \_\_\_\_\_ Month

\_\_\_\_\_ Year

## ACTION ALERT!

# Bush's Proposed Budget Threatens Water Monitoring in Georgia

President Bush's proposed budget for fiscal year 2002 contains severe cuts in appropriations for the U.S.

**Geologic Survey**, the federal agency who, for *more than one hundred years*, has diligently monitored the quality and quantity of Georgia's (and the nation's) water resources.

Bush's proposed \$44 million reduction in USGS funding would eliminate key water programs, including the National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program, an ongoing initiative to gather, analyze, and disseminate information about the health of the Chattahoochee River Basin.

### **USGS Toxics, Groundwater and Gauging Programs Hit**

In addition to the NAWQA program, the proposed budget cuts (representing a 25% decrease in funding) would terminate toxic substance hydrology research, groundwater resources, water information delivery, and stream gauging programs. In short, USGS' capacity to provide timely, accurate, and impartial data to water managers, elected officials, and the public in Georgia would be severely inhibited should Congress approve the President's proposed budget.

Georgia is at a crossroads with regards to water

management. How we address the mounting water issues affecting the Chattahoochee River, and all of our state's rivers, will depend in large part on how much we can learn about these rivers, their current condition, and their ability to support human and ecological needs in the future.

**You can help.** Please write your Representative to Congress and urge him/her to extend every effort to ensure that funding for USGS programs and activities in Georgia remain intact for the coming fiscal year. To find the address of your Representative, log on to the League of Conservation Voter's website at: <http://lcv.org/cgi-bin/lcv/lcvcongress.pl?cf=lcv/cong.cf>.

For additional information, please contact Matt Kales of the Riverkeeper staff at: [mkales@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:mkales@ucriverkeeper.org) or (404) 352-9828, ext.19.

### **EMAIL ADDRESSES WANTED!**

Riverkeeper is updating its member database and needs your email address. Please EMAIL this information to [bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org) as soon as possible. Thank you!



*Reclaiming Our River*

1900 Emery St. Suite 450 Atlanta, Georgia 30318  
404 352-9828

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

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

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Michael Coles

Denise Donahue

Bert Ellis

Billy Hall

Bill Malloy

Dr. Judy Meyer

Steve O'Day

Chrissy Sapp

Walton Smith

J. Rutherford Seydel II, Chair

**Address Service Requested**

*River Chat, a quarterly publication of Upper  
Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, is made possible  
by funding provided by Turner  
Broadcasting System, Inc.*

