

GET OUT YOUR CANOES AND KAYAKS!

"BACK TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE" RIVER RACES AND FESTIVAL SET FOR JUNE 7



The Chattahoochee at Island Ford, one of several rapids on the race course.

It's time to come back to the River!

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and Rivers Alive!, the state's volunteer cleanup group, are hosting the first annual "Back to the Chattahoochee Races and Festival" on Saturday June 7, in partnership with **Chevron Corporation, City of Roswell, National Park Service** and the **Chattahoochee Nature Center**.

The finish line for the races and the festival will be held at Roswell's new Riverside Park. With its ample parking and state-of-the-art facilities, the park will come alive with the sounds of bluegrass, the smell of barbecue, environmental exhibits, and the excitement of racers crossing the finish line. The canoe and kayak races will start at Garrard's Landing Park at Holcomb Bridge Road and paddlers will cover a distance of 8 to 10 miles, depending on the event. While pro racers are expected from all over the country, recreational paddlers are strongly encouraged to participate in the novice events.

Roswell Mayor Jere Wood Challenges All Racers!

Jere Wood, Mayor of Roswell, will be racing in the kayak



Gripping his paddle, Mayor Wood challenges all prospective racers.

event. If you want to beat the Mayor's time, you had better start paddling! The canoe and kayak races will be coordinated by Hairy Scary Evolutions Productions, who are also organizing the racers packets which include rules, gear, safety and frequently asked questions. *A race trial run is scheduled Saturday, May 10, at 10 A.M., Garrard's Landing to Riverside Park. Call Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 ext. 14 for details.*

Not interested in racing? Stop by Riverside Park between 10AM and 2PM for lunch, music and to learn about the Chattahoochee River at the environmental festival. Enjoy the climbing wall set up by Atlanta Rocks!, fly-fishing demonstrations by Trout Unlimited, and hands-on environmental educational activities. At 1PM, the canoe and kayak race awards will be presented to the competitors. The Festival is free and the racing events are \$30 for solo racers and \$40 for doubles. Racing contestants receive a Back to the Chattahoochee T-Shirt and Chattahoochee River photo calendar.

You may register at www.chattahoochee.org, or call 404-352-9828 ext 14 to register or to secure a brochure. See page 7 for registration form.

OLYMPIC ATHLETES TRAIN IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

You might not know it, but Atlanta is home to some elite paddlers who train on the Chattahoochee.

The 1972 television broadcast of Jamie McEwan, winning the Bronze in the Whitewater Canoe and Kayak Slalom's Olympic debut, catalyzed U.S. paddlers seeking rapids to train for this exhilarating sport. In 1978, native Atlantan, Dr. David Jones, discovered paddling opportunities at the artificial rock weir which creates a waterfall near Atlanta's intake facility at Peachtree Creek. It remains a premiere training facility today.

The **Atlanta Whitewater Club** started a slalom club that, through an United States Olympic Committee (USOC) program, became the **Atlanta Center for Excellence (ACE)**, a group dedicated to training Atlanta slalom athletes. Around the time of the 1992 and 1996 Olympics, Atlanta became home to many U.S. Team athletes and coaches.

Today, ACE consistently places athletes in the top four boats of the U.S. National, Junior, and Cadet Teams. Success is attributable to ACE



Austin Crane is a member of the 2003 US Canoe and Kayak Team.

sponsors, athletes, coaches Mike Larimer ('96 Olympic Coach) and Mike Hurd, and the many volunteers. The National Park Service helps by

allowing the racers to use two other sites on the Chattahoochee, and Six Flags Atlanta has donated training time on their Thunder River ride for the athletes at the Annual ACE Christmas Training Camp. *For more information, see: www.acecanoeandkayak.org*

Flat Water Racing on Lanier

Flat water "Sprint" racers also train on Lake Lanier. The **Lanier Canoe & Kayak Club (LCKC)** was established in 1994 when Sergio Orsi, President of the International Canoe Federation, visited Gainesville as part of the official 1996 Olympic venue approval process. The development of the Sprint Canoe/Kayak program was initiated by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG). The first Junior Olympic race, hosted by the LCKC in 1995, was also the first sprint race ever held in Georgia.

Addition of a boathouse in 1997 secured the Olympic legacy for Sprint racing in Georgia which now includes many eager, talented young athletes - five of them placing on the

See Olympics, page 7

Riverkeeper Staff

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Elena Mola

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

REFLECTIONS



George Israel, the new President of the **Georgia Chamber of Commerce**, is said to be "blunt, folksy and unabashedly pro-growth", according to the March 2003 issue of *Georgia Trend* magazine. He also thinks that the state's economy will do just fine if environmentalists and lawmakers stop "burdening" business.

"We're competing against China and other places that do things differently. We can sit here with our clean laws--our clean air and water stuff--to the extent that we cannot compete in the world", Israel told *Georgia Trend* reporter Marie Hardin.

The Chamber's new head doesn't think that Atlanta's air quality is a major problem, claiming that only "anecdotal evidence" links asthma and other health problems to dirty air. He also believes that low-sulfur fuel is not an antidote for dirty air, that water should be able to be sold as a commodity and not treated as a shared common resource (see *legislative article, page 7*), and that businesses should not have to pay any fees to cover costs associated with their use of the public's air, water and land in profit-making.

Last October, Israel, a former Macon mayor, followed Lindsay Thomas as the President of the 3400-member

organization which describes itself as the "voice of Georgia's business community". Thomas, now with Atlanta Gas Light, has a reputation as a business leader who understands that the economy cannot prosper without clean air, clean water and healthy natural systems for wildlife. His eloquent speeches often emphasized the need for environmental protection to support a successful business climate.

Israel's recent comments to *Georgia Trend* reflect a markedly different perspective from that of his predecessor--and strongly suggest that the Georgia Chamber is moving increasingly in a direction that is not in sync with the people of Georgia, 84 percent of whom chose "protecting the environment and water resources" as their number one priority in a recent poll.

Israel's head-in-the-sand attitude should concern *all* Chamber members. Why would any responsible business leader in Georgia want to belong to an organization that is so obviously being misled? Real business leaders, like Roy Richards and Ray Anderson (Southwire and Interface, respectively) have enhanced their firms' bottom lines with progressive decisions that provide environmentally-friendly products and processes.

Programs and policies that promote clean air, clean water and greenspace do not burden our communities. They protect a healthy work force and quality of life, both of which are critical to a thriving economy.

Sally Bethea

NICHOLAS TO HEAD RIVERKEEPER'S LEGAL PROGRAM

Riverkeeper's new General Counsel, **Betsy Nicholas**, a Florida native, took a job with a law firm in New York after graduating from Tulane University Law School where she received a Certificate of Specialization in Environmental Law. She was also a Managing Editor for the Tulane Environmental Law Journal, a practicing student attorney in the Tulane Environmental Law Clinic, and co-editor of the Environmental Law Newsletter. Yearning for sweet tea, better weather and a job with a nonprofit environmental advocacy group, Betsy joined us in March. With a BS in botany, a law degree from the best environmental law school in the South, and four years at private firms, she is well-prepared for her new job.



Betsy Nicholas

At the end of 2002, we lost long-time General Counsel **Michelle Fried** to the Rocky Mountains and love! In June, she will marry former staffer **Matt Kales**, who now works for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Denver. During Michelle's four years with Riverkeeper, she established herself as one of the best environmental public interest attorneys in Georgia and secured many successes for our organization. Michelle's extensive experience with the General Stormwater Permit for Construction Activities was critical in the negotiations that settled years of litigation over the Permit, and her vigilance to protect stream buffers was legendary. More recently, Michelle worked on two important appeals of state permits--a water withdrawal permit for a coal-fired power plant, and the discharge of treated sewage into Lake Lanier (see *On Patrol, page 3*). We miss her and wish her well!



NEW MEMBERS BRING SKILLS AND DIVERSITY TO RIVERKEEPER BOARD

Harold M. (Sonny) Cohen, who joined our board last fall, is Vice President and Deputy General Counsel of AFC Enterprises, Inc., the parent company to Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits, Church's Chicken, Cinnabon, and Seattle's Best Coffee. Sonny grew up on the lower Chattahoochee River as a native of Columbus, Georgia. Graduating with honors from Tulane University and Georgetown Law School, he started his career with the Atlanta law firm of King & Spalding as a real estate and corporate lawyer, and has been with AFC Enterprises for over six years. Sonny has been a long-time supporter of the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, prior to joining the Board. He and his family, which includes a one-year-old son, enjoy spending time on Lake Harding on the Chattahoochee just downstream of Lake West Point.



Sonny Cohen

Elena Mola, our most recent addition to the board, arrived in the U.S. in 1968 as a refugee from Cuba, where she had been a certified teacher. While volunteering

assistance to other immigrants, Elena also worked as a teacher's aid for the Atlanta Public School System. In 1974, she became an assistant teacher for the Cultural Adjustment Program, teaching Spanish culture and civilization to Spanish-speaking students in middle and high school. At the same time, she began efforts to create an after-school tutoring program for children in Atlanta's Lindbergh community. As a member of The Committee of the Ten Thousand, she networked with social agencies, such as the Latin American Association, Catholic Social Services and Christian Council, to help quickly resettle arrivals during the 1980 influx of Cuban refugees. Elena earned her B.A. at Georgia State University in 1981 and pursued her Masters in teaching. She currently serves as the Hispanic Liaison for the Atlanta Public Schools, based at Sutton Middle School. Elena will be working with Riverkeeper Director of Education, Kristi Rose, to develop and implement Spanish versions of our river education curriculum for the growing Hispanic community in our watershed.



Elena C. Mola

HALL COUNTY JUDGE FINDS FATAL FLAWS IN GWINNETT PERMIT

Last November, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR), represented by **Georgia Center for Law in the Public Interest, Lake Lanier Association (LLA), Sierra Club** and **Terry Hughey** appealed the Administrative Law Judge's (ALJ) decision upholding Gwinnett County's permit to discharge 40 million gallons per day of treated sewage into Lake Lanier. UCR first challenged Gwinnett's permit before the ALJ in 2000 because the permit would not adequately protect the Lake from pollutants in the discharge. On March 4, 2003, Hall County Superior Court Judge, John Girardeau reversed the ALJ's decision and remanded the permit to the ALJ. The Judge found that EPD should have provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the final discharge location which changed after the public comment period ended. The Judge also found that the permit violated provisions of the law designed to protect existing water quality levels. According to the Judge, the discharge authorized by the permit will lower water quality in Lanier unnecessarily because Gwinnett's Wayne Hill treatment plant can meet more stringent pollution limits. EPD and Gwinnett County appealed the decision to the Georgia Court of Appeals.

WATER WARS—PUBLIC IS IN THE DARK

"Reservoirs will be up and rivers will be down" has been the mantra of Georgia officials negotiating with Florida and Alabama to divide the waters of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) Basin, however, specific information about just what these levels will be is scarce. The consequences of any tristate water settlement will be far-reaching and long-lasting, governing water levels in the entire Chattahoochee Basin for the next 50 years. Informed only by a year-old draft proposal that predates Governor Perdue, Georgia stakeholders remain excluded from the process, uncertain about what the state will propose next, and how the proposal will affect waterways. The Governors of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to reach an agreement by June 30, 2003, committing to interstate cooperation, without promise of intrastate cooperation. Skelly Holmbeck-Pelham, coordinator of the **Tristate Conservation Coalition**, has said that the governors of the three states may be talking to each other but they are not talking to the citizens.



RIVERKEEPER HOTLINE OFFERS AID TO THE PUBLIC

2002 — A BUSY YEAR FOR CITIZEN RESPONSE PROGRAM

Riverkeeper's offices (Atlanta and Gainesville) receive over 300 phone calls and emails per year from people with river or stream-related problems. We are also contacted through the HOTLINE section on our website (www.chattahoochee.org). Investigations are conducted by **Darcie Boden**, our Director of Headwaters Conservation in Gainesville, for Hall, Forsyth, White, Lumpkin and Habersham Counties, and



Raw sewage spilling out of a manhole into the River is a good reason to get involved with Riverkeeper's HOTLINE!

Alice Champagne in our Atlanta office, who handles the rest of the upper Chattahoochee watershed with assistance from **Birgit Bolton**.

A determination is made as to whether the matter should be referred to local, state or federal officials or become the subject of a more intensive investigation, and possible action, by Riverkeeper.

What should you do if you see: a muddy discharge from a construction site, a trash dump on a riverbank, a pipe dumping soapy suds into a stream, a gray-milky discharge into a river or stream buffer destruction and erosion entering a creek?

- Call your LOCAL authorities first, so that the action can be stopped ASAP. See Riverkeeper's website for specific phone numbers of who to contact.
- Call the state EPD Emergency Response Team at 404-656-4863 to report sewage spills, fish kills, and other water quality violations.
- Take photographs, if possible, of the suspected pollution source, but DO NOT trespass!
- Contact Riverkeeper to report suspected pollution (404-352-9828/16 or achampagne@ucriverkeeper.org).
- If necessary, follow-up with letter and pictures to document the problem.

On Patrol

RAY'S ON THE RIVER DUMPS WINE

In March, the owners of **Ray's on the River** decided to stage a protest of France's anti-war position (*read: conduct a publicity stunt*) by dumping sixty bottles of French wine into the Chattahoochee flowing less than 150 feet from the back of the Atlanta restaurant. A press release sent out by Ray's earlier in the day alerted Riverkeeper members and supporters of the impending event. Riverkeeper Director Sally Bethea called and spoke with two top level employees for Ray's and Killer Creek, a north Fulton restaurant that staged a similar event by dumping wine into a nearby marsh. She urged them *not* to pour the wine in the River because, in addition to being illegal, the action would send a very bad message to the public—that it was acceptable to dump unwanted material into the nearest waterway! She suggested that they could make their statement just as effectively by pouring the wine on the ground or elsewhere. Our concerns were ignored and the wine protest took place. Dozens of people have contacted us and, in their own form of protest, have vowed never to eat at Ray's again.

HORSESHOE BEND GOLF COURSE DUMPS TRASH

Fishermen **Bob Coombs** and **Chris Scalley**, both Riverkeeper members, recently noticed a huge pile of debris on the riverbank in Roswell's **Horseshoe Bend Golf Club**. A 200 x 400 foot area was compacted with scraps of metal, discarded vegetation, trash and other waste. After being alerted through our HOTLINE, we contacted the environmental compliance officer with the city of Roswell. His investigation led to citations for multiple violations, including an illegal landfill and illegal encroachments with the River's buffer, established by the state Metro River Protection Act. Horseshoe Bend will be required to remove all trash and re-plant the damaged area. *To learn how to report a pollution problem on the river, call the Riverkeeper HOTLINE at 404-352-9828 ext.16 or go to www.chattahoochee.org.*

Upper
Chattahoochee
Basin

Helen

Lake
Lanier



Buford
Dam

Atlanta



West
Point
Lake

West Point Dam

2002 HOTLINE STATISTICS 303 COMPLAINTS IN UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE

Problem

Soil Erosion	24%
Water Quality (fish kill, odor, color, dumping)	32%
Re-Zoning/Land Use	15%
Stream Buffer Violations	13%
Metropolitan River Protection Act	6%
Sewage Spills	5%
Stormwater/Flooding	5%

Action Taken

Referred to appropriate local authority	51%
Site Visit	9%
UCR Follow-Up (phone calls/letters)	25%
On-going	11%
Unresolved	4%

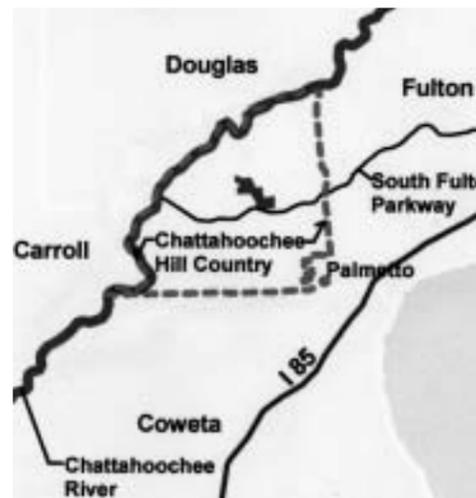
HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE PROMOTES BOLD NEW PLAN FOR SOUTH FULTON

Imagine a tract of land one-third the size of everything inside I-285, but with nothing on it but trees, streams and a few houses and barns—all less than 45 minutes from downtown Atlanta!

The essence of the Chattahoochee Hill Country in south Fulton County has historically been its rolling pastures, rural homesteads, historic homes, large rock outcroppings, horse farms, streams and creeks and forests. The number of streams and wetlands, the miles of the Chattahoochee and its tributaries, and the plants and wildlife that inhabit this area are not found anywhere else in the County.

The **Chattahoochee Hill Country Alliance (CHCA)**, a nonprofit group of landowners and residents in south Fulton, has worked for over a year to master-plan 60,000 acres (*see map*), using a comprehensive land use model that emphasizes ecological health and optimizes property value and quality growth in the area. Open land in the Hill Country, one of the largest undeveloped areas in north Georgia, absorbs floods, recharges aquifers, cleans the air, harbors wildlife and measurably increases the land value of adjacent property. Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper is working with CHCA on its environmental protection programs, especially as they relate to water quality and riparian (streamside) protection.

In a landmark decision, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved the Chattahoochee Hill Country Overlay District guidelines last October for an area bordered to the west by the Chattahoochee River, to the south by Coweta County and to the east by Cascade-Palmetto Highway (SR 154).



With the development of a master plan, using innovative strategies such as concentrating the majority of the growth in village centers and hamlets along with conservation subdivisions, the same density of population can be supported while disturbing only 16% of the land.

For more information, contact CHCA at dowen@chatthill-country.org or 770-463-1548. Address: 10950 Hutcheson Ferry Road.

A GREAT DAY OF SERVICE ON THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Volunteers dedicate their time to remove trash



Volunteers enjoyed paddling the River during the clean-up.

On Saturday, March 29th, more than 42 volunteers joined efforts to clean up the Chattahoochee River north of Atlanta. Volunteers from **Peachtree Road United Methodist Church (PRUMC)** helped clean up the Chattahoochee River at Paces Mills Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in honor of PRUMC's Eleventh Annual Great Day of Service. Additional volunteers from **Lovett School, Fulton County Water Quality Program** and **National Park Service** canoed the river from the Powers Island Unit of the National Park Service to Paces Mill Unit pulling out trash and debris along the way. Thanks to the hard work of these volunteers, we can enjoy a much cleaner River.



REECE TURRENTINE'S CHATTAHOOCHEE

Reece Turrentine has canoed the Chattahoochee and other rivers of the south for more than 50 years. He expresses his love for the urban section of the river in an excerpt from *The Riverkeeper's Guide to the Chattahoochee* by Fred Brown and Sherrie Smith (1997). To purchase a copy of the Guidebook, go to www.chattahoochee.org.

"Not long ago, I was walking upstream along the East Palisades river's edge trail, looking for a better location to beach canoes. When I'm guiding a group down this 'city section' I always like to stop them here for a hike into the woods and up the cliffs of the old 'Indian Shelter.' It's a 30-foot deep rock overhang that archaeologists determine nomadic Indians, following the river's course, used for the shelter for 6-7,000 years. The river trails were Atlanta's original interstate highway.

I had just seen the I-75 bridge in the distance. Where I stopped now, I could no longer see it, but I could still hear the roaring engines and speeding tires slapping the bridge joints of the pavement. So close and yet so far. They couldn't see me. When you're bumper to bumper at that speed, nobody has time to look out at a river.

For a moment, my imagination ran away with me and I thought I could hear the traffic of I-285 upstream and around the bend to my right. It was some kind of distant roar. I looked under limbs upstream and saw the source of the muffled roar. I was relieved. It was not the traffic. It was Thornton Shoals, bubbling over its rocks. It was sounds of wilderness, not interstates. Although the two worlds are competing for dominance out here, this spot at least looked and sounded like wilderness. What a strange place I was standing on. To my left, downstream and around the bend, was a mixture of Long Island Shoals and I-75. To my right, upstream and around the bend was Thornton Shoals and I-285. Similar sounds from different worlds. But that wasn't the end of it. In front of me was the river, teeming with fish and wildlife. Where I stood was a pocket of pure wilderness."



Reece Turrentine

Got Earth Share?

Earth Share of Georgia offers citizens one smart and simple way to care for our air, land and water. As Georgia's only environmental fund, Earth Share partners with Georgia businesses and employees to support more than 60 leading environmental groups through workplace campaigns and other activities.

Earth Share has 60 member groups, including Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, ranging from local grassroots organizations to well-known national organizations representing a broad array of environmental issues.

If your workplace isn't currently an Earth Share partner, their staff will be happy to work with you to create a first-time campaign or add an environmental choice to an existing campaign. Contact Alice Rolls, Executive Director, at the Earth Share office (404-873-3173) to determine the best strategy for initiating a campaign.



STUDENTS IN ACTION AROUND THE WATERSHED... CHATTAHOOCHEE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MAKE HISTORY AT THE CAPITOL

Several years ago, a **Chattahoochee High School** student became concerned about the pollution in the creek behind the north Fulton County school, which flows into nearby John's Creek, a tributary to the Chattahoochee River. Questions evolved into an ongoing



Students leave the Capitol after successfully campaigning for House Bill 528.

student research project, "Active Riparian Commensal Habitat" or ARCH Project. One specific aspect of the project involves the replacement of the detention pond on the Chattahoochee

campus with a natural wetland habitat. Once the new design is installed using grant monies, the wetland will remove pollutants from stormwater runoff from the school's parking lot and surrounding neighborhoods.

Inspired by the on-campus environmental project, the students joined forces with **Rep. Mark Burkhalter** (R-District 36) to promote legislation to improve detention pond designs. On March 5th, 57 Chattahoochee High School students and two teachers traveled to the State Capitol to petition the House Ways and Means subcommittee to support H.B. 528, a bill that would provide financial incentives to land developers to create wetland habitats, instead of detention ponds.

Chattahoochee HS began preparing for their Capitol visit at the beginning of the school year by researching how to draft a bill in teacher Dell Pamplin's Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science class and teacher Adam Smiley's AP Government class. Wayne Allen, legislative counsel for the Georgia Legislature, assisted the teams by writing the legal version of the bill, based on the student's rough draft. The students also spent many hours learning the myriad of details surrounding "their law" and practicing the finer points of lobbying. Thanks to the hard work of these students, HB 528 passed out of the House Ways and Means subcommittee unanimously and, as of this writing, was headed to the full committee for review.

For the current status of HB 528 and other bills, go to www.chattahoochee.org and click on "To Track Legislation" at the bottom of the Splash Page.



Chattahoochee HS student Chad Hayes presents the benefits of HB 528 to legislators.

FREE YOUTH FLY-FISHING CLINIC SET FOR MAY 10

On May 10, the **Third Annual Youth Fly-Fishing Clinic** will be held at the Buford Trout Hatchery on the Chattahoochee, hosted by three chapters of **Trout Unlimited** (Upper Chattahoochee, Tailwater, and Flint), **Orvis Atlanta** and **Georgia Women Fly Fishers**. This free, comprehensive fly-fishing clinic is open to kids from 10-15 years old, and is designed for the beginning fly-fisher. Taught by instructors from the above host organizations, this clinic will provide kids with basic instruction in all phases of fly-fishing including equipment overview, knot-tying, insect identification and fly-casting. Top-of-the-line door prizes will be provided by Orvis and other event supporters with a grand prize awarded to one lucky student who will be flown to a trophy fishing stream or lake in the continental US, compliments of ASA/Delta Air Lines! (A parent or adult guardian must accompany the winning student.) The class is limited to 36 students. *For more information, contact Carol Berger at cberger@mindspring.com or 770-998-1075.*



A student learns the basics of fly-casting.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED? ENVIROSCOPE® MODEL GIVES THE ANSWER



The EnviroScape® demonstrates pollution sources for students at E.C. West Elementary in South Fulton County.

Looking for an interesting way to make the watershed concept a reality for your students? Consider using one of the EnviroScape® models, which create a better understanding of water pollution in your local community. The three-dimensional landscapes illustrate all the areas of a community from industrial, agricultural, residential to recreational areas and through hands-on demonstration, students see how each can potentially pollute a local waterway. Afterwards, a follow-up demonstration shows how such pollution problems can be minimized or stopped entirely through the use of best management practices.

For more information on the EnviroScape® model, check out their website at www.envirosapes.com, or call Kristi Rose 404-352-9828 ext. 17 to schedule a presentation in your classroom.

COMIC OPERA BENEFITS THE RIVER

This past April, we took our members and friends to Paris--- Paris on Ponce that is! *Le Moulin Rouge at Paris on Ponce* (de Leon Boulevard) was the setting for Riverkeeper's Opera for the River debut. Dr. Miracle, Bizet's comic opera, was performed by the Atlanta Opera Studio. Guests enjoyed wine, Italian desserts and the antiques gallery. Funds raised will benefit watershed education programs. Thanks to Abreu Charitable Trust, Claxton Printing Co., Carrabba's Italian Grill, Sandra Crawford's Voice Studio, Dr. Thomas N. Griffin, Jr. and Donahue Studios, Inc. for their support.

Two key water bills were introduced in this year's legislature, which will have ended by the time you receive this newsletter. One deals with reform of Georgia's soil erosion programs, and the other sets up a process to develop the state's first comprehensive plan to provide for the use and protection of Georgia's rivers, lakes, streams, aquifers and estuaries. While it is anticipated that the erosion legislation will pass this year, the outcome of the second bill is uncertain. *For an update on the status of these bills, go to www.chattahoochee.org and click on "To Track Legislation" at the bottom of the Splash Page.*

Reform of Erosion Programs on the Horizon

After years of discussions among diverse groups, **HB 285** was introduced by **Rep. Jim Stokes** (D-Covington) with a goal of reforming erosion control programs that had been determined by the State Auditor in 2001 to be highly ineffective in protecting water quality. The stakeholder group, led by DNR's Bob Kerr, included homebuilders, contractors, government agencies, businesses, environmentalists, and utilities. They were able to achieve a "fragile balance" in the legislation which offers something for everyone involved.

Riverkeeper's soil erosion expert, Alice Champagne, represented Riverkeeper as a stakeholder on the Kerr committee. She also convened and led an informal coalition of environmental organizations working on this issue. Major legislative changes include:

- Reduction of monitoring required on construction projects,

- Imposition of user fees to improve enforcement and support certification programs,
- Adoption of rules for user fees and criteria for certification, overviews and de-certification of local programs, and
- Imposition of mandatory stop work orders.



The Georgia State Capitol

HB 285 passed the House overwhelmingly on a vote of 166-3, and was anticipated to have no problems in the Senate. Once the bill becomes law, we will still have our work cut out for us in the implementation of its requirements.

NOTE: The only stakeholder that stepped out of line in this process was, not surprisingly, the **Georgia DOT** which attempted to secure an exemption from state stream buffer regulations through legislation that it asked **Sen. Tommy Williams** to introduce (**SB 122**). With support from **Sen. Robert Lamutt** (R-Cobb), Riverkeeper and Georgia PIRG helped to kill the bill. Sen. Williams was not happy that he had been "misled" by the DOT with regard to the need for the bill.

Water for the People or for the Highest Bidder?

The more controversial water bill, **HB 237**, was introduced by **Rep. Bob Hanner** (D-Parrott) in response to the work of the Joint Study Committee, which met over the past year and a half to develop recommendations for water management. (See page 6 of last *RiverChat* for background on this legislation, article entitled Georgia Water Coalition or go to www.georgiawater.org.)

While HB 237 addresses the need to develop a statewide water plan, restrict interbasin transfers, re-allocate water in restricted areas, and meter farm permits, it does so with provisions that would set a *damaging precedent* for water management in Georgia. It would allow for the sale of water withdrawal permits in water-restricted areas, thereby turning our state waters into a commodity, although existing regulations already allow for the re-allocation of water in such areas. This "market" approach could send our "riparian regulated" system of water law in the direction of water permitting in Western states where the Colorado River no longer reaches the sea.

The bill also exempts the 16-county Metro Water Planning District, which covers five river basins, from any restrictions on movement of water from one basin to another, which would allow an unlimited transfer of water from the Etowah to the Chattahoochee River Basin. Lastly, HB 237 establishes a top-down planning process for the state water plan, which gives no assurance that the citizens of Georgia will have a real say in the plan development.



Riverkeeper's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

HARLAN'S FISHING TIPS: How to Catch Stripers in the River

Due to low water and fish mortality resulting from four years of drought, fishing in the Chattahoochee from Hwy 166 to Morgan Falls Dam has been poor, however, this year's rains promise a banner striper year. The stripers are seasonal fish that "run up" from West Point Lake. Catching stripers from Morgan Falls to Hwy 166 is easy and fun. Forget about big tackle boxes--they'll just get broken when that 25 pounder comes in the boat. All you need to boat stripers is the right time, place, and a small sack full of lures.

I have caught stripers up to 31 pounds. With most fish averaging over 20 pounds, they are loads of fun, but make sure that you have stout tackle as a 25 pounder's first run is a reel-smoker. There are snags in the shallow River, so to avoid losing expensive lures,

you will need to boss these huge fish in the current and steer them from snags. I use a Penn 750 spinning reel with matching rod spooled with 20 lb. Ande line. Make sure you use new line, as your old stuff will break on the bigger fish, and forget live bait. Live bait is heavy, messy, takes up space, and looks like everything else. Jigs are too heavy, get snagged and look boring to fish. The lure of choice is a big black and silver Cisco Redfin.



Captain Harlan Trammell holds a prize striper.

The time to go fishing for stripers is when it's hot--the hotter the better, and July is prime. Fish the evening, right as it is getting dark. Time is short, so you can't move around. Good spots to fish are Utoy Creek, Atlanta Road and the large wave upriver from it, and Morgan Falls Dam. Boat ramps are located at Morgan Falls Dam and Hwy 166. I don't eat the stripers I catch.

METRO ATLANTA WATER DISTRICT PLANS:

Safeguarding the River or Gambling its Future?

When Sonny Perdue beat Roy Barnes last November in the Georgia Governor's race, the future of the Metro Atlanta Water District and its regional plans for a 16-county area was immediately jeopardized. The District had been a Barnes project--established by state law in 2001.

The failure of this year's legislature to provide full funding for the operation of the District has been one signal that regional water planning in the Atlanta area might not be that high on Gov. Perdue's list. The draft water supply, wastewater and stormwater plans, prepared by District consultants, are another sign that the District is more interested in fueling the region's unbridled growth, than in finding real solutions to protect its streams, rivers and lakes. Management strategies and recommendations in these draft documents treat the District's waterways more as conveyance ditches than as natural systems.

Critical Elements are Missing in Draft Water Plans

The water plans for the District, which sprawls over five major river basins, are intended to serve as road maps for water management for the next 30 years. But, two critical elements are missing: (1) a solid plan to manage the greatest threat to our waterways - buildings and pavement (i.e. hardened surfaces), and (2) clear data that shows it is possible to permit additional water withdrawals and wastewater discharges, while keeping our rivers clear and healthy.

Data in the draft plans clearly show the link between impervious surfaces and diminishing water quality:

- More than half of the stream miles within the District do not fully support their designated uses, primarily due to stormwater runoff;
- Two of the four water intakes on the Chattahoochee River are designat-

ed as having a "high" susceptibility to water supply contamination--again due largely to stormwater runoff; and

- Metro Atlanta sends 57 billion to 133 billion gallons of polluted runoff into streams and rivers each year due to paved over land. This water would otherwise have filtered through the soil to local waterways.

Business as usual will be the end of business as usual, if our streams flood with pollutants after every storm, and then dry up between rain events. A District-wide stormwater utility could provide funding for stormwater management, and offer flexibility for development. We strongly support such utilities which have worked well in other Georgia cities and throughout the country.

While the draft plans call for conservation measures, they do so without assurances that instream flows for water quality, ecology and recreation will be protected. In fact, these plans assume minimum flows in the Chattahoochee--lower than the River has ever experienced. It is certain that as river levels decline, concentrations of pollutants will increase and aquatic habitat and recreational use will be impaired. Already, water quality in the Chattahoochee Basin is lower compared to the other four basins in the District. Without strong scientific evidence that these lower levels will not harm our river and ongoing water quality monitoring, we commit ourselves to a multi-billion dollar undertaking that is more gamble than safeguard.

Finally, water conservation can translate into more people and more pollution, rather than cleaner water, eatable fish, and healthy streams, without measurable commitments to protecting the environment. It may also be hard to convince current metro Atlanta residents to conserve water without such assurances. Visit www.northgeorgiawater.org for more information.



OLYMPIC ATHLETES

Continued from page 1

2003 National Teams. The best Sprinters in the world will converge on Gainesville and Lake Lanier when LCKC hosts the 33rd World Championships, September 10-14, 2003. Riverkeeper board member, Gary Gaines, is involved with the Sprint Program at Clark's Bridge. For more information see: www.lckc.org



Sonrisa Reed, US National Champion, paddles in to the dock on Lake Lanier.

Recreational Paddling Clubs

Beginning or recreational paddlers who may not be ready for Olympic training can join local boating clubs. These clubs provide training, river and lake trips and events as well as the social aspects of a club. Three of these boating clubs that are active in the Atlanta area are:

Atlanta Rowing Club at www.atlantarow.org or 770-993-1879

Atlanta Whitewater Club at www.atlantawhitewater.com or 404-524-1328

Georgia Canoeing Association at www.georgiacanoe.org or 770-421-9729

BACK TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RACE REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTER AT WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG OR CALL 404-352-9828, EXT. 14

SINGLE MEN WOMEN YOUTH

PRO/KAYAK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRO/CANOE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOVICE/KAYAK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOVICE/CANOE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DOUBLE MEN WOMEN COED YOUTH

PRO/KAYAK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRO/CANOE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOVICE/KAYAK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NOVICE/CANOE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER (H) (W)

E-MAIL

VISA/MASTERCARD/AMEX EXP.

T-SHIRT SIZE: M L XL XX

DOUBLES PARTNER

MAIL: BILL CRAWFORD
UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER
3 PURITAN MILL
916 JOSEPH LOWERY BLVD.
ATLANTA, GA 30318

ALL USCA BOAT CATEGORIES

(CHECK ONE):

- PRO
 RACER
 CRUISER
 STANDARD
 RECREATION
(DEFAULT)

FAX: 404-352-8676, ATTENTION BILL CRAWFORD

River CHAT 7

ACTION ALERT

Make Your Voice Heard

DRAFT FOREST PLAN WEAK ON PROTECTION FOR WATERSHEDS

Our National Forests contain the headwaters of most of the major rivers in Georgia, including the Chattahoochee. For the past seven years, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has been developing a revision to their Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) for the Chattahoochee/Oconee National Forest and five other national forests in the region. The draft of the new LRMP has finally been released to the public for review and comment by July 3, 2003.

The Draft Forest Plan will not adequately protect the Chattahoochee Headwaters for reasons that include the following:

- Wilderness areas that were included in earlier drafts of the Chattahoochee/Oconee Forest Plan have been removed. This means that watersheds, once proposed for protection, will be available for intensive management, road building, and logging. Also, there are over 400,000 acres that are designated as suitable for new All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) trails. ATVs cause serious erosion problems, destroying headwater streams.



Headwaters of the Chattahoochee River

- A protective Riparian Zone (i.e. corridor), recommended by Forest Service biologists, was rejected as being too restrictive. The Draft Plan does not address unnecessary roads, grazing or noxious plan control in riparian (streamside) areas. Additionally, the widths of the buffer zone have been decreased.

The LRMP determines how the Forest will be managed for the next 10-15 years so make sure your voice is heard!

**Submit your comments to:
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest,
Content Analysis Team, P.O. Box
221150, Salt Lake City, UT 84122 by
July 3, 2003.**

The Draft plan is available on the web at www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/planning/sa_plans/Chattahoochee/welcome.htm, or you can request a CD or hard copy from the Forest Supervisor's office at 1755 Cleveland Highway, Gainesville, GA 30501 (770) 297-3000.

For additional information, please contact Darcie Boden at UCR's Gainesville office: dboden@ucriverkeeper.org, or Katherine Groves at Georgia Forestwatch: katherineg@ellijay.com



ANNUAL FUND REMINDER!

Please don't forget to send in your contribution to the **2003 Annual Fund Campaign**. This is our most important fundraiser of the year and is separate from our membership renewal. It helps us to raise money that is not restricted to particular programs, so we can use it for critical advocacy and legal work that does not fall under a specific grant allocation.



Even in these difficult times, we need to ask you for your continued support to keep the waters of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries clean and available to the people and wildlife that depend upon them. Your annual gift will help us to reach our \$1.2M organizational goal. Please give generously today. For more information, contact Pam Davee at 404-352-9828, ext. 15.



Reclaiming Our River

3 Puritan Mill
916 Joseph Lowery Blvd. Atlanta, Georgia 30318
404 352-9828

HEADWATERS HIKE - MAY 17

The headwaters hike will be a cross-country (no trails) hike to **Cool Springs Falls in Mark Trail Wilderness**. The hike is only about 2.5 miles, but hikers should be prepared for strenuous walking in steep terrain. Stout hiking boots, lunch, water and rain gear, if needed, must be carried.

We will start at Double Culvert Branch which has an abundance of wildflowers and a beautiful waterfall. Then we will travel upstream and uphill from Double Culvert Branch and cross into the watershed of Cool Spring Branch.

Meet at the Chattahoochee River Wildlife Management Area Check-in Station on Poplar Stump Road at 10AM. From Helen: North on GA 75 to GA alternate 75 South (at the Alpine Flea Market), turn left and cross the river then turn right on Poplar Stump Road. Check-in Station is about 3.5 miles on the right. This road is paved at the start and turns into a good gravel road. To sign up or for more information, contact Birgit Bolton at bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org.

Non-Profit
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Permit No.

Address Service Requested

River Matters

**Practice River Run
for June 7th Race** May 10

Contact Bill Crawford at
404-352-9828 ext. 14 or
bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org

**Stream Cleanup
Burdett Park
South Fulton County** May 17

Contact Sharon Cowden at
770-698-5739 or
Sharon.Cowden@co.fulton.ga.us

Headwaters Hike May 17

Contact Birgit Bolton at
404-352-9828 ext. 24 or
bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

**Butterfly Release
at Rock Creek Park
in Gainesville, GA** May 19

For information contact
Darcie Boden at 770-531-1064

**Community
Watershed
Network** June 3

Contact Alice Champagne at
404-352-9828, ext. 16 or
achampagne@ucriverkeeper.org

**Back to the
Chattahoochee
Canoe & Kayak
Races/Festival** June 7

Contact Bill Crawford at
404-352-9828 ext. 14 or
bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org

**River Cleanup
in Helen GA** June 7

For information contact
Darcie Boden at 770-531-1064
or e-mail Alan Sykes at krae@alltel.net

**Lanier Canoe
and Kayak Club
Summer Camp** June 27

Please call soon to reserve
your place. To register:
770-287-7888 or visit: www.lckc.org

**Moonlight
Pontoon Float** August 12

8:00pm
Contact Birgit Bolton at
404-352-9828 ext. 24 or
bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

**Overnight Trip from
McIntosh Reserve
to Franklin** Sept 27 & 28

Contact Birgit Bolton at
404-352-9828 ext. 24 or
bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org



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