

PROTECTING WATER, PROPERTY AT THE STATE LEGISLATURE GROWING STRENGTH OF GEORGIA WATER COALITION



Photo credit: Adrian Fusinaz

The 2005 session of the Georgia General Assembly was historic in a number of ways, including a "New Georgia" Republican leadership of both chambers and in the office of the Governor. For the first time since 1877, the Party of Lincoln now controls two branches of our state government. In addition, legislators were elected in brand-new districts, drawn by a federal court, which resulted in a record number of new members.

Top environmental issues in 2005 related to funding, protection of property values, and open government. The Governor and the legislature did restore some of the solid waste and hazardous waste trust funds to the programs under which they were collected, but the problem of collections exceeding appropriations for those activities persists, and provides an excuse for the regulated community to resist new fees.

An alternative funding source to support EPD's permitting program through wastewater discharge permit fees



SB 5 sponsor Dan Moody rolls a skeleton representing the unpopular bill into a committee meeting, signaling its demise.

(HB 550) was introduced by an impressive bi-partisan list of legislators, but it was not allowed to come to a vote in committee because of the above-referenced resistance.

Statewide Water Plan Underfunded

A priority for the Georgia Water Coalition (GWC) in 2005 was that funding for the state water plan, authorized in 2004, be raised to a level sufficient to create a comprehensive guide for the management of the state's vital water resource starting in each river basin. The GWC is now 115 member organizations strong, representing more than 200,000 Georgians (www.georgiawater.org).

Photo credit: Ben Gray/Atlanta Journal Constitution

Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Director Dr. Carol Couch

originally estimated that it would take \$20 million to fund a three-year process and the development of a thorough and comprehensive water plan, based on early input from the people who live and work in Georgia's river basins. It became evident by late fall 2004 that Governor Perdue and
*See **Legislature**, page 7*

ENVIRONMENT UNITES LEFT AND RIGHT

"Can green be a bridge between red and blue?" asked a recent article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* by Paul Nussbaum (3/23/05).

According to Mr. Nussbaum, who cites numerous examples from around the country, Republicans and Democrats see environment-related agreements as a way to build broader consensus and provide common ground in an increasingly polarized nation. He says that conservatives, such as pro-gun hunters and anti-abortion evangelicals, are making common cause with pro-abortion-rights and gun-control liberals on land conservation,



Photo credit: Erin Sawyer

Senator Chip Rogers (R-Canton), Rep. Billy Mitchell, (D-Stone Mountain), and Sen. Doug Stoner (D-Smyrna) attended the 2005 Legislative Reception of the Georgia Environmental Council, illustrating the bi-partisan appeal of environmental issues in Georgia.

pollution, and endangered-species protection. Robert J. Brulle, associate professor of environmental policy at Drexel University, quoted in this article, said the blurring of ideological lines on the environment is apparent in Washington: "When you look at this Congress, it's easily the most conservative in

50 years, but the Clear Skies bill didn't even make it out of committee and the opening up of ANWR (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) won by a single vote."

Nussbaum notes that in "red" Montana, voters rejected a proposal to repeal a 1998 ban on cyanide leaching, a gold-mining method. The debate pitted concerns about water pollution against proffered economic gains from mining. At the ballot box, on issues such as land preservation, water quality, renewable energy and public transit, American voters crossed party lines to approve about 75 percent of environment-related ballot measures last November, even as they chose George Bush over John Kerry for president.

In Gwinnett County, where 66 percent of voters picked Bush, voters by the same margin approved a one-cent sales-tax increase to pay for \$85 million to protect open space. In Indian River County, Florida, voters went overwhelmingly (61 percent) for Bush, and even more overwhelmingly (67 percent) for spending \$50 million to preserve open space. Nationwide, 162 of a record 217 land-preservation ballot measures were approved.

"We've heard a lot about the death of environmentalism, but I think what we're seeing is the rebirth of environmentalism. We're going back to where we were in the 1970s," said Deb Callahan, president of the League of Conservation Voters. "We're building a populist movement." *For the entire story, see www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/front/11196569.htm.*

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

REFLECTIONS

Metropolitan Atlanta has the distinction of being the home of the *southernmost* trout fishery in the entire nation--currently, that is.

If as is predicted, a doubling of the population in the Atlanta region occurs by 2030 and present patterns of poorly planned development continue, we could lose this distinction and the associated environmental and economic benefits. Trout depend on cold, clean river water, which is increasingly polluted by stormwater from construction activities, pavement, roads and damaged tributaries.



A Coldwater Stream for Fifty Years

The 48-miles of the Chattahoochee River downstream of Buford Dam have been considered a coldwater stream since the impoundment of Lake Lanier in the late 1950s. Water released below the dam, in the "tailwater", is taken from the very cold water on the bottom of the lake.

Annually, there are about 115,000 fishing trips to this river section and anglers spend an estimated \$10.5 million. It is one of the most popular fisheries in Georgia, supporting about 120 trips per acre. The river is currently stocked with rainbow and brown trout, and a year-round trout fishery exists from Buford Dam to Morgan Falls Dam. Approximately 20 miles of excellent habitat below Morgan Falls have been lost to thermal pollution since the late 1980s due to development impacts.

Reproducing Trout!

The Chattahoochee between Buford Dam and Peachtree Creek is classified as Secondary Trout Waters (STW), meaning a waterway that depends entirely on stocking to support the population. Yet, in the past ten years, fisheries experts have documented trout *reproduction* in the river between Buford Dam and Highway 400 near Roswell. Therefore, the STW standard adopted for this tailwater fishery no longer provides protection needed for trout survival through the summer, when heated stormwater flows into the river after it rains.

The state designed studies to develop tailwater-specific temperature criteria to protect the reproducing trout fishery. The Wildlife Resources Division will complete its work by the end of 2006, but another year (and adequate funding) will be needed for EPD to conduct modeling that will guide final recommendations.

Bottom line: the state will not be considering additional protection for this valuable resource until 2008, at the earliest. By that time, more local governments will have been permitted to discharge wastewater into this river section and more development will have paved the watershed.

Atlanta's unique trout fishery will still be viable in 20 years only if community leaders and elected officials realize, and decide today, that it is worth saving and aggressively push the state to take action to protect it for future generations. *See related story on page 4, Chattahoochee Champ*

Sally Bethea

SWEETWATER FEATURES THE RIVER ON NEW PACKAGING

SweetWater Brewing Company has created new packaging for 12-packs of its award-winning 420 Extra Pale Ale featuring the Chattahoochee River and UCR on the bottom of the carton.



"Given that we use Chattahoochee water to brew, and that I am a huge fan of trout fishing and just being on the water, this is a great way to support a group that is keeping our water safe," says SweetWater co-founder and president Frederick Bensch.

An 18,000-barrel microbrewery that specializes in produc-

ing aggressive West Coast style beers for the Southeast, SweetWater says that the 420 Extra Pale Ale is its most popular brew. At least 10,000 cases of the 420 brand 12-packs are distributed monthly.

"Having SweetWater's support is wonderful because it illustrates how having a clean water supply supports local businesses," says UCR Director Sally Bethea. "Now many more people will learn about the Chattahoochee and our efforts to keep watch over the river and its watershed to benefit everything from recreational use to making great tasting beer." See www.sweetwaterbrew.com.



NEW BOARD MEMBERS BRING CORPORATE EXPERTISE

Ben Jordan and **Richard Jacobson** joined UCR's Board of Directors in 2004, bringing with them extensive experience in the corporate world, wonderful community connections, and a passion for our work.



Ben Jordan

Originally from Talbot County in the Flint River Basin and now working in Atlanta for Coca-Cola, Ben received degrees in environmental engineering from M.I.T. He works with Coke's environment and water resources department, serving as a liaison between the global organization and the company's field network around the world. Ben has been a strong supporter of UCR's *Waters to the Sea* Program, which is targeted for middle school students and includes an interactive CD-ROM and virtual journey down the river. He says that his childhood on a peach farm in rural Georgia led to his interest in conservation.

Richard is vice president and treasurer of Cox Enterprises, Inc., one of the nation's leading media companies, and has been with Cox for more than 20 years. Richard currently serves on the boards of The Dunwoody Medical

Center, Communities in Schools and the Chattahoochee Nature Center, in addition to UCR. A cum laude graduate of the University of Florida, Richard has a bachelor's degree in finance and accounting, and a master's degree with honors in finance from Georgia State University. His financial skills greatly contribute to UCR's organizational management.



Richard Jacobson

STAFF NEWS

Alice Champagne, UCR's Technical Programs Director and long-time staff member, was chosen as a "River Hero" by the national organization River Network which received nominations from across the country. Alice will receive her award at the River Rally to be held in late May in Keystone, Colorado.

In January 2005, Georgia Trend Magazine named UCR Executive Director **Sally Bethea** one of the 100 "most influential" Georgians. Sally was also highlighted in Atlanta Woman Magazine in April and spoke at a related luncheon event entitled "Women Saving the Planet".

APPEAL OF STATE INDUSTRIAL PERMIT FILED

In March, Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) issued a **General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities** (Industrial Permit), renewing the pollution control requirements for approximately 3,700 facilities in the state. As a "general permit", the Industrial Permit does not have facility-specific requirements; instead, it requires each facility to develop a plan to control runoff, and specifically to limit the quantity of contaminated runoff leaving the facility and entering waterways. UCR invested a great deal of time and effort participating in EPD's ad hoc stakeholder meetings for almost two years, preparing comments on the numerous drafts of the permit, and conducting meetings with EPA and EPD. Our goal was to help develop a strong and workable permit through a consensus-building process. Unfortunately, the permit that was ultimately issued by the state fails to include adequate measures to protect Georgia's rivers, lakes and streams from industrial pollution. Not satisfied with the permit, UCR filed an administrative appeal of the Industrial Permit in April with counsel from Southern Environmental Law Center.

DEVELOPER AGREES TO PROTECT COBB STREAMS

In February, UCR reached a settlement agreement with **New Vision Development Partners**, the developer and owner of a planned residential and commercial site in the city of **Powder Springs**, Cobb County. The agreement will resolve erosion control and stream buffer violations initially discovered on the site last summer. Although UCR discussed the problems with the developer and city officials at length, violations continued. Accordingly, UCR filed a notice of intent to sue under the Clean Water Act last October with counsel from the Georgia Center for Law in the Public Interest for encroachments into state-protected stream buffers, failure to delineate state waters properly, failure of erosion control practices, and discharge of sediment into state waters. The developer immediately contacted UCR to discuss settlement. Fortunately, all parties were able to reach an agreement to remediate the site and provide additional environmental enhancements, such as the use of low impact designs, constructed wetlands, and a permanent conservation easement on the property. The property has since been sold, but the buyers have agreed to all terms of the settlement which UCR will monitor.

MASSIVE 'NEW TOWN' IN CARROLL COUNTY THREATENS RIVER AND WEST POINT LAKE

Flying virtually under the radar screen is a proposed development that presents a significant threat to West Point Lake, a 25-mile section of the Chattahoochee upstream of the lake, and streams in the Wolf and Snake Creek watersheds in Carroll County.

Landowner and developer **Temple-Inland** is proposing 19,000 residential units and 7.9 million square feet of retail/office space on 11,000 acres in a rural corner of Carroll County, and a portion of Douglas County, that drains into the Chattahoochee River. Just as this river section is improving, thanks to the city of Atlanta's \$2 billion investment in sewage infrastructure upgrades, a new and closer threat to the lake and river looms.

Carroll County cannot say with any certainty how the project's anticipated population of 60,000 people will be supplied with water or sewage management. Downstream stormwater impacts from construction and impervious surfaces are assured.

Inadequate Water Supply, Sewage and Protection

In 2001, Carroll County pulled out of the Metro Water Planning District (now 16 counties, including Douglas), deciding that it did not want to participate in long-term regional planning efforts to ensure adequate water supplies and wastewater and stormwater treatment.

On Patrol

VALLEY LAKES PROPERTY IMPACTED BY STATE FACILITY

Following many frustrating months trying to resolve serious erosion control violations and filling of wetlands in south Fulton County, UCR filed suit against the **Georgia Department of Corrections** (GDC) in early April with counsel from Georgia Center for Law in the Public Interest. UCR was first alerted to the water quality problems associated with the expansion of **Larmore Probation Center** through a call to our HOTLINE from a homeowner in Valley Lakes Subdivision, directly downstream from the detention center expansion. The Valley Lakes neighborhood, which has several lakes, fishing ponds and wetland areas, has been impacted by sediment runoff from the 19-acre construction site. Despite extensive efforts by the neighborhood residents and UCR to bring GDC into compliance with erosion control requirements, all efforts failed. We hope that our lawsuit under the Clean Water Act will finally resolve the numerous problems on the site and require the GDC to repair the damage their development has caused to the downstream property and waters in the Chattahoochee River system.

EPD ENFORCES BUFFER LAW ALONG RIVER IN HELEN

A stream buffer variance is required for land disturbance activities within 50 feet of the Chattahoochee River in Helen (White County) since it is designated as a "trout stream" under state law. Recently, Helen's city engineer granted permission to a developer to construct a multi-dwelling residential project *within* this buffer zone, despite the fact that the developer had not secured a variance from the state. When the heavy equipment rolled in and started clearing the riverbank, UCR staff began receiving Hotline calls from UCR members and concerned citizens. We quickly contacted Peggy Chambers at EPD and, upon confirming that no buffer variance had been issued for this project, we filed a complaint with EPD and encouraged Helen City Commissioners to issue a stop work order until EPD personnel could conduct an investigation. EPD visited the site and, upon confirmation of the buffer encroachment, met with the developer. UCR will review the state consent order once it is released for public comment.



The District approved water plans in 2003 that, if implemented, will help ensure quality of life for its citizens and downstream communities. Sewage discharges must meet high standards and local governments must approve local ordinances dealing with various water quality issues. Not so in Carroll County whose existing local land use regulations are inadequate for such a massive development.

ARC May Request Formal Mediation

In accordance with the Georgia Planning Act, the Temple-Inland development must be evaluated by the Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center (RDC).

The RDC is required by law to determine whether or not projects of a certain size, and this project is *the largest* single development of regional impact ever proposed, are "in the best interest of the state". Comments from UCR and others resulted in an extension of the comment period to mid-April. In its comment letter, the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) declared its intention to seek formal mediation through the state Department of Community Affairs due to deficiencies in the proposal and its adjacency to ARC's jurisdiction.



Paddler on West Point Lake

Photo credit: Monica S. Cook

River Stewardship

PADDLE GEORGIA 2005 A WEEK-LONG ADVENTURE ON THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER

Looking for a different kind of family vacation this summer? Georgia River Network (GRN) has the trip for you. June 25-July 1, GRN will present Paddle Georgia 2005, a week-long canoe camping adventure on the Chattahoochee River.

The route takes paddlers through the scenic Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, through the backyards of north Atlanta's most exclusive neighborhoods, past "industrial Atlanta" where wastewater treatment facilities discharge to the river and into rural land south of Atlanta highlighted by scenic bluffs, thrilling shoals and other unexpected natural treasures of the Piedmont.

"This is really an educational adventure," said Joe Cook, event coordinator. "The idea is to allow people to explore



the river, learn about it, gain an appreciation for it, and have a darn good time doing it." The trip is suitable for novice paddlers as well as experienced paddlers and is open to any person-powered vessel, though canoes and kayaks are best suited for the trip. More than just a canoe trip, the event will include tours of facilities located along the river, nightly camping and entertainment, games and programs highlighting the river's cultural and natural history.

The event serves as a fundraiser for GRN and Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and is sponsored by Georgia Power Company. Registration is currently underway. *Registration forms and details are available at <http://www.garivers.org/paddlegeorgia/pghome.html> or by contacting GRN's Paddle Georgia Coordinator, Joe Cook, at joe@joecook.net or at 706-235-1170.*

HATCHERY MANAGER RECEIVES TU AWARD BILL COUCH—A CHATTAHOOCHEE CHAMP

by Don Kengla

Often heard: "Can you believe it, a trout stream running through a city of four million people?" But, the Chattahoochee is not a trout stream without trout and the source of a huge number of those fish is the Buford Hatchery managed by a Chattahoochee Champ, Bill Couch.

Twenty plus years ago, while working as a high school teacher, Atlanta native and former U.S. Marine Bill Couch arrived at the idea of working in fisheries management. His pursuit required additional schooling and an interested professor helped Bill enter graduate school; he emerged with a masters degree in fisheries, but his road to Buford involved several sharp turns.

Bill began his involvement with the state fisheries program by doing volunteer work. He met Buford Hatchery Manager Tim Hess who, in 1982, offered a minimum wage position that Bill took over the advice of his professor and a certain young lady. A pay raise and Hess's departure left Bill hooked, knee-deep in the facility's operation and he hasn't stopped since. After end-to-end challenges and 60-hour weeks, Bill serves in his 23rd year at the facility, now Hatchery manager himself.

The head trout man warms to recollections of those challenges. Bill has spent two decades engineering improvements in the facility and managing its operation to a level at which it produces over half a million trout annually. Bill



Bill Couch

turned an installation initially limited by the water volume that drains could clear from the raceways into an operation that is governed by shear fish rearing space.

Back in his pleasantly cluttered office, between telephone calls, Bill talks with animation and obvious expertise about trout habitat throughout the state. That he loves his work is unmistakable. Leaning back in his chair, he smiles that this will probably be the post from which he retires one day. Along the way, he will have provided millions of trout and countless hours of quality recreation to Georgia's sportsmen and their families.

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2005 EARTH DAY PHOTOS



UCR volunteers including representatives from Interface, Inc., and Starbucks enjoy lunch at the end of their Palisades East cleanup on Saturday, April 16, 2005. This cleanup was sponsored by UCR members Mr. and Mrs. John Baker and was jointly presented with the National Park Service. Many thanks to the over 45 volunteers!

Robyn Quasebarth (L) with Starbucks joined a dozen other company employees, enthusiastic volunteers from Interface, and UCR members to clean up a section of the river near Whitewater Creek with help from the National Park Service.



Andrea Corwin Pinabell, Regional Manager for STORMWATER Management, Inc. presents UCR staff with a check for \$2,500.

For the third year, UCR was a recipient of Stormwater's national contest where citizens cast votes for their favorite watershed protection group. UCR thanks Stormwater Management for their continued support!

DRINK, USE, PROTECT...COOL WATERS!

Summer Workshops for Teachers

By Sharon Cowden Smith

The Georgia Water & Pollution Control Association invites Georgia K-12 teachers to attend Cool Waters, a fun-filled, three-day workshop June 7-9, 2005, at the Cobb County Water System's Water Quality Laboratory. Designed to enhance water environment education, Cool Waters offers educators the opportunity to learn water resource curricula directly from water professionals and to receive information and practical hands-on applications for classroom use about important water quality and water resource issues facing Georgia today.

Each day of the workshop will feature a different theme (Drink, Use, Protect) and begin with a field trip. Day one (Drink) begins with a tour of drinking water treatment facility. On day two (Use) teachers will visit a wastewater treatment plant. And on day three (Protect) there will be a special field trip to the Chattahoochee including Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) training in stream monitoring protocols. The afternoons will focus on classroom activities that reinforce the lessons learned on the field trips.

Healthy Water, Healthy People

In order to tailor the workshop for local issues concerning water quality and nonpoint source pollution, training in the new water quality curriculum Healthy Water, Healthy People (HWHP) will be featured throughout the workshop. Sponsored by the Department of Natural Resources's Project WET, HWHP is an innovative water quality education program that brings field experience into the classroom with hands-on activities for students.

PARTNERS FOR CLEAN WATER

According to the 2000 Census, the Hispanic population in the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area grew to 268,851, a 370% increase over the 1990 Census. In the past three years, 30 of Georgia's 159 counties saw their Hispanic populations increase by at least 40%, with most of that growth coming in metro Atlanta and north Georgia. In Hall County, Hispanics make up nearly 23% of the population.

To help meet UCR's goal of promoting an ethic of environmental stewardship among all citizens who rely on the Chattahoochee River system, we have developed *Partners for Clean Water*, an environmental education initiative to benefit Hispanic youth in Gainesville and



Hispanic students sample water aboard the Chota Princess in 2004.

Hall County. Through this program, we will provide a unique and enriching educational experience, connecting Hispanic children who live in the Headwaters region to the Chattahoochee River and teaching them about the

importance of preserving and protecting our environment and natural resources. By providing a series of educational water-related activities and events, we hope to raise the level of awareness in this growing segment of the population, as well as to promote active and informed decision-making among the Hispanic community.

For more information, contact Darcie Holcomb at dholcomb@ucriverkeeper.org or call 770-531-1064.



Workshop participants are excited to learn about aquatic macro invertebrates as part of the Adopt-A-Stream training.

Teachers will leave the workshop with a host of water-related resources for use in their classrooms. All course-work materials, curricula, field trip transportation, continental breakfast, and lunch are included in the workshop registration fee of \$25.00. Participants will receive the Water Sourcebook CD-Rom, the HWHP Activity Guide and Testing Kit Manual, the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Educator's Guide, and numerous other water quality resources. Teachers will also earn two Professional Learning Unit credits (PLU's) for attending the workshop.

Register online at www.gwpca.org or call 770-794-5227 for more information. Workshop space is limited, so reserve your spot today!

ANNUAL ENVIROTHON TESTS ECOSYSTEM KNOWLEDGE

During March and April, teams of high school students from all over the state participated in regional competitions, as well as the State Envirothon held at Camp Kaleo in Forsyth, Georgia in late April.

The annual competition focuses on ecosystem management and tests the students' skill and knowledge in a variety of study areas, including water, forestry, soils and wildlife. During the competition, students move through a series of stations where they are given questions in several different formats such as fill in the blank, true/false, multiple choice, matching or a written narrative. Some stations require the teams to conduct an investigation at the site in order to answer the test questions.

Students who participate in the competition are provided with study materials, however, since the focus is on ecosystems, test questions may come from other study materials or require the student to synthesize information from several sources. In addition to the traditional study areas,



Coweta 4H 2004 winners of Georgia State Envirothon Competition.

each year the students must address a current environmental issue. The environmental issue for this year's state competition is "Managing Cultural Landscapes" and each team is required to solve a specific problem and provide an oral presentation of the results. The team that wins the State Envirothon will advance to the national Canon Envirothon being held this year in Springfield, Missouri on July 18-24.

MERCURY CONTAMINATION A HOT TOPIC NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) often tracks national water quality issues, keeping an eye toward their local implications. Mercury contamination in our nation's waters is an issue that UCR has been working on both locally and federally. This issue has been receiving greater attention nationally, with the introduction of the Bush Administration's "Clear Skies" legislation, which has resulted in much debate over its approach to reducing mercury.

Mercury finds its way into our waters after being released into the air primarily from coal-fired power plants. It enters the food web, contaminating fish as it ascends the food chain. Mercury has become an increasing threat to public health as humans eat fish that contain unhealthy mercury levels.

Mercury has been linked to mental retardation and other neurological problems, and can cause death in high enough concentrations. However, one of the most problematic issues surrounding mercury contamination is its effects on developing fetuses and children. When women of child-bearing age or pregnant women consume fish contaminated with mercury the effects on their unborn children can be severe.

Fish Consumption Advisories Increased this Decade

Fish consumption advisories are now common, and according to Waterkeeper Alliance, the number of state advisories has increased from 27 states in 1993 to 45 states in 2002. Georgia's waters have been affected by the toxic effects of mercury contamination, with fish in the Chattahoochee and other waters found to have high mercury levels. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has issued guidelines for eating fish in Georgia, with some species carrying consumption recommendations of not more than one meal per month. See www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/environ/ and click on 'fish consumption guidelines'.



A powerplant generating electricity and pollution.

Photo credit: iStockphoto.com

While local communities are dealing with fish contamination and the related health effects, the federal government is debating how to best deal with this contaminant. The current Administration addresses mercury in its "Clear Skies" legislation, offering a cap-and-trade program for utility companies rather than stricter regulations. This program will allow power companies additional time before installing the newest pollution controls. While utility companies argue that those controls will be too expensive to install now, environmental and public health organizations say that permitting companies to delay this type of control will allow harmful effects of mercury to proliferate.

The U.S. Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee voted in March on the hotly debated "Clear Skies" legislation after extended lobbying from both sides. The committee remained at an impasse with 9 votes in favor of the

legislation and 9 votes against it. The committee worked for several weeks to break the deadlock, but in the end was unable to persuade any senators to reconsider their votes. Georgia Senator Johnny Isakson consistently supported this legislation, and remained one of the 9 votes in favor of "Clear Skies."

With this current legislation unable to emerge from committee, environmental groups continue to support tighter regulations rather than weakening standards. UCR continues to follow this issue, commenting on both the federal and state level and advocating to protect public and environmental health.

Recently, 10 states joined together to sue the federal government over the Bush Administration's mercury standards, claiming that the rules do not protect children and pregnant women from mercury contamination. For more information about mercury contamination visit www.waterkeeper.org



UCR's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

GETTING YOUR BOAT READY FOR SPRING

Our boats at Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper are operated weekly and are ready for instant deployment at all times. But, many times during the spring, I run up on the following scenario: The first day it cracks 70F, everyone starts thinking about spending days on the river or lake. Too many times I have been at the ramp watching the family load up the boat and getting ready to shove off--only to be greeted by a boat that won't start and a wasted day, while others enjoy a pleasant spring day on the water.

Scenarios such as the above are preventable. If you "winterize" your boat you will need to de-winterize it. Depending on what was done to winterize it, certain procedures can be performed to get you back on the water, hassle-free, on that first sunny spring day.

Check List

Drain any anti-freeze out of the block. Check for missing freeze plugs. Replace all water plugs. Dead batteries are the most common cause of "no-start" and clogged carburetor jets are the number two cause. Make sure your battery is fresh (not out of date) and has a strong charge

and that fuel flows freely from the fuel line through the carburetor--you did drain the fuel last fall, didn't you? For 2-strokes, change the spark plugs. Change gear case fluid, if it is time or the fluid appears cloudy.

Old fuel should be removed. Water and impurities in the fuel are the number three cause for "no-starts". Water from condensation over the winter will accumulate in the tank. The use of good filters to trap and separate water and impurities cannot be over-emphasized.

For 4-stroke engines, change the oil, whether you have used it or not. Oil viscosity starts breaking down when it comes in contact with the atmosphere, so change it at least once per year. When draining oil, make sure a catch pan is in place and that the old oil is taken to a recycling center and not dumped into the nearest storm drain!

During all procedures, make sure fluids are not spilled into the bilge and that catch pans and absorbent materials suited for the purpose are properly in place so that oil, gas, anti-freeze, etc., do not find their way into the water through the bilge pump.

LEGISLATURE

Continued from page 1

others were not inclined to fund the planning process at that level. Instead, the Governor's FY05 and 06 budgets included \$540,000 for the plan, which added to last year's appropriation (\$300,000) represents *only \$840,000* of state money to come up with a management plan for Georgia's 70,000 miles of rivers, lakes, aquifers and estuaries.

Bills Attack Property Values and the Environment

During the past year, the GWC worked collaboratively to re-frame its message to more clearly convey its goals for Georgia's people and natural resources. Using a new slogan--*Protect Water, Protect Property, Upstream and Downstream, for Future Generations*-- GWC work is now resonating even more effectively with diverse groups throughout the state. This re-focusing proved to be of immense value in the 2005 legislative context.

A growing sensitivity on the part of the general public to abuses of property rights by both governmental and influential private interests has emerged in Georgia and throughout the country. Examples include: a US Supreme Court case to determine if a local government can condemn property and convey it to another private party; a growing number of state legislators from both parties concerned about protecting homes and businesses against developers and corporations; and increasing calls for reform of the use of eminent domain power by utilities and governments.

Three bills in the 2005 session focused attention on property rights issues. Representing a Georgia version of the US Supreme Court case mentioned above, SB 5 resulted in intense public outcry that killed the bill before it was heard in full committee. While HB 218 passed the House, growing public objection to its cloaking all "programs of economic development" in secrecy resulted in its death on the Senate floor.

SB 190 would have removed the rights of citizens to meaningfully appeal environmental permits for facilities and activities that could adversely affect their communities and the value of their property. This bill passed the Senate, amended to give the appearance of fairness by preventing

(staying) the permitted work from proceeding for a period of 30 days. The House Natural Resources Committee extended that time to almost 90 days --still too short a time period for complicated environmental cases to be heard.

A Major Victory

On the 37th day of the 39-day session, two dozen environmental lobbyists and citizens kept the House corridor humming until the mid-afternoon when House leaders advised the proponents of SB 190, including the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Power and the Agribusiness Council, that additional compromise was needed.

For the third year in a row, the GWC won a major legislative victory with the compromise on SB 190 that allows sufficient time for a solid record to be made in an environmental permit appeal, as long as permittees, such as businesses, developers and local governments, do not unnecessarily delay the legal process.

For more legislative information, visit www.legis.state.ga.us.



Jaylan Harbison King, 10, grandson of Sen. Ed Harbison mimics the expression of many legislators as he sits in his grandfather's seat on Family Day at the Capitol.

Photo credit: Ben Gray/Atlanta Journal Constitution



GET THE DIRT OUT CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF

Water quality problems in communities may be resolved more quickly when citizens know what to look for and how to work cooperatively with government agencies. With this concept in mind, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) has embarked on a major new campaign to "get the dirt out".



Major Cause of Impaired Waters

Polluted stormwater runoff is the major cause of impaired water quality in Georgia's streams, rivers and lakes, according to the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Many sedimentation problems are the result of inadequate erosion and sedimentation controls on construction sites. Silt and sediment (mud) runoff from

a construction site chokes the life out of streams and increases the cost of producing clean drinking water.

Recognizing the negative impacts associated with stormwater runoff, EPA developed Phase I stormwater requirements in 1990, which resulted in the first NPDES Stormwater Discharge Associated with Construction Activity General Permit ("General Permit"). In 2003, Georgia adopted its second issuance of this General Permit, which regulates land disturbance projects of one-acre or more. While EPD is trying to improve its education and enforcement activities related to this issue, it has been significantly hampered by the failure of the state legislature to return to the agency all user fees paid by developers pursuant to legislation passed several years ago.

New Campaign Swings into Action

Partnering with other riverkeeper and watershed groups in the state and the **Georgia Center for Law in the Public Interest**, UCR kicked off the two-year *Get the Dirt Out* Campaign earlier this year, with financial support from the U.S. EPA and the **Catherine R. Arnold Fund** of the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta. Special training materials were developed, with significant help from **Donahue Studios** in Roswell, and workshops for interested citizens are being held around the state.

The project will strategically tackle construction-related stormwater problems in river basins throughout Georgia, including the Chattahoochee, where UCR has worked actively for more than a decade conducting research, offering educational programs and advocating enforcement against the bad actors in the industry. As an organization, we have invested significant time and money to focus on these activities over the years, including support for UCR staffer Alice Champagne to become an expert in stormwater issues, as well as serving as an elected Cobb County Soil and Water Supervisor.

The *Get the Dirt Out: Georgia Construction Stormwater Project* is an enhanced version of UCR's former Soil Watch program conducted from 1997-2003. During this period UCR trained over 1,200 citizens and distributed materials to citizens, developers and local governments. The new *Get the Dirt Out* program will help evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of Georgia's General Permit in selected watersheds. By creating educational materials for citizens, local governments and developers about the General Permit, the *Get the Dirt Out* project will target Georgia's most serious water quality problem associated with runoff from construction sites.

Workshops will be offered on an as-needed basis and, as the project develops, more information will be available on the project website. To find out more about the *Get the Dirt Out* project and how you can be involved go to www.getthedirtout.org or www.chattahoochee.org.



Failed silt fence sends muddy water downstream.

3RD ANNUAL BACK TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RACE & FESTIVAL

COME BACK TO THE RIVER ON JUNE 4!

Saturday, June 4, 2005
Race 9 am, Festival
10 am -2 pm

This year's River Festival will include a **Swap & Shop** starting at 10 am.

Recycle your used canoes, kayaks and gear and make some cash, or buy good quality used gear at a bargain. You can also test out some new gear from High Country Outfitters. Dagger and Perception boats will be available to paddle from Noon - 2 pm, following the Race. A portion of the swap proceeds will benefit Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.

Register On-Line

You may register for the Race on-line at www.chattahoochee.org or mail/fax the Registration Form below. The



Spongebob, Elmo and Tweety are your starters.

Photo credit: Kent Ruby

Chevron, Harry's Farmers Market, Fox5 WAGA Atlanta, 96Rock and High Country Outfitters with support from many exhibitors and paddlers such as yourself. The Back to the Chattahoochee Race is the fifth and final in the **Georgia Flatwater Canoe/Kayak Race Series**. There are "Open" and "Recreational" events for all ages and skill levels. Participants in the "Open",

competitive events may earn points toward awards for the Race Series. Both events start at Garrard Landing Park in north Fulton County (Holcomb Bridge) and end at the pedestrian bridge at Roswell's Riverside Park. Last year's recreational paddlers will be pleased to know that their starters, **Spongebob, Elmo and Tweety Bird**, will again send them on their journey down the river!

Event Viewing

Spectators may view the Race from National Park Service trails at Island Ford, Don White Park (Riverside Drive under GA 400 Bridge), and the pedestrian bridge at Riverside Park (the finish line). The Environmental Festival begins as the Race ends. *Come enjoy the Festival food and music!* The Swallows Restaurant in Roswell is bringing its great BBQ and veggie sandwiches, along with some Nashville music. Enjoy exhibits presented by organizations working to protect and preserve Georgia's natural places. And, don't forget to take advantage of the **Swap & Shop!**



Swap Shop--new this year.

City of Roswell, the National Park Service and the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper are again the presenters for 2005. Our sponsors include **The Coca-Cola Company,**

Back To The Chattahoochee River Race & Festival - Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (H): _____ (W): _____

E-Mail: _____

T-Shirt Size: YL S M L XL XXL Meal: Meat Veggie

Method of Payment: (circle one) Check VISA MC AMEX

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Doubles Partner Name: _____

T-Shirt Size: YL S M L XL XXL Meal: Meat Veggie

Register online at www.chattahoochee.org Fees: Solo \$35, Tandem \$50
Or FAX registration form to: 404-352-8676, Attention: Bill Crawford
Or mail registration form to: Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, 3 Puritan Mill, 916 Joseph Lowery Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30318
Fees include BBQ or Veggie Lunch starting at 11AM and One Year Membership in Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Circle one in each category:			
Skill:	open	recreational	
Number:	solo	tandem	
Boat:	canoe	kayak	
Gender:	women	men	co-ed
Special:	fledgling	master	parent-child



Keeping Watch Over Our Waters

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

Address Service Requested

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

River Matters

Back to the Chattahoochee Practice Run **May 14**
Contact Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 ext. 14 or bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org

3rd Annual Back to the Chattahoochee Race/Festival **June 4**
For more information, contact Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 ext. 14 or bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org

Headwaters Hike **June 25**
For questions or to sign up, contact Birgit Bolton at 404.352.9828 ext. 24 or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Paddle Georgia **June 25-July 1**
For more information or to sign up, visit: www.garivers.org/paddlegeorgia/pghome.html

Buck Shoals Barbeque and River Float **August 20**
Contact Magnus Christon at 404-352-9828 ext. 12 or mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org

Big Trees Forest Preserve Hike **September 10**
For questions or to sign up, contact Birgit Bolton at 404.352.9828 ext. 24 or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Patron Appreciation Dinner **September 15**
Contact Magnus Christon at 404-352-9828 ext. 12 or mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org

McIntosh Reserve Paddle **October 29-30**
For questions or to sign up, contact Birgit Bolton at 404.352.9828 ext. 24 or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Get the Dirt Out Workshops
For workshop dates, contact Alice Champagne at 404.352.9828 ext 16 or www.getthedirtout.org



a member of Earth Share OF GEORGIA

