

LAKE LANIER CELEBRATES FIFTY DAYS FOR FIFTY YEARS

LAKE LANIER



www.lakelanier50.com

On February 1, 1956, the gates closed at Buford Dam, creating one of the largest reservoirs in Georgia, authorized by Congress for the purposes of flood control, hydropower and navigation.

The construction of the 38,000-acre multi-purpose reservoir named after Georgia born poet Sidney Clopton Lanier was a huge undertaking that required the acquisition of more than 56,000 acres of land from 700 families.

There are individuals who can tell their entire life story around the impoundment of the river and the changes seen both upstream and downstream of the reservoir since the dam was constructed. Occasionally, it's possible to still hear "stories" about towns being immersed by the filling of the lake and people who had everything washed away, but there's little, if any, truth to these legends.

Coca-Cola Bottles Used in 1957 Dedication

To commemorate the 50 years that have passed since the



General Holle's Inspection Party at Buford Dam in September 1953.

Photo credit: Corps of Engineers

summer of 1957 when Buford Dam began generating electric power and Lanier's first marina opened for business, the Marina Operators of Lake Lanier has organized a full year of activities. The focal point—50 Days for 50 Years—will begin June 15 and culminate on National Marina Day, which is August 11, 2007. Special events, grand prize drawings, a photo con-

test and other activities will take place. See www.lakelanier50.com.

The festivities include the 5K Buford Dam Run, sailing regattas, a rubber duck derby, two Shore Sweep cleanups, a giant July 3 fireworks display and a Lighted Boat Parade in December. Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) will offer boat trips aboard our new catamaran "floating classroom," the *Chota Princess II*. In October, there will be a re-dedication of Buford Dam, to commemorate the October 9, 1957, ceremony which was performed using three Coca-Cola bottles filled with water from the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers.

See **Lake Lanier**, page 7

TEN YEARS IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE HEADWATERS

Several years after Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper established our Atlanta office in 1994, we received a grant from the U.S. EPA to conduct a major stream restoration project on the Left Fork of the Soque River—a tributary to the Chattahoochee in Habersham County.

This funding and other support helped us open a satellite office in Gainesville led by our first Headwaters Conservation Director, Katherine Baer, who now works for the national organization American Rivers. For the past five and a half years, **Darcie Holcomb**, a former watershed specialist with TVA, has held the position, working out of an office in the North Georgia Community Foundation building on Oak Street.

Additional grants and local support have kept this office functioning for more than ten years with strategic programs to focus river advocacy and education on the 1000-square mile watershed that drains into Lake Lanier. This fast-growing area includes large portions of Hall, Habersham, White and Lumpkin Counties and a small part of Dawson County.

Critical Local Presence

UCR's presence in this important part of the Chattahoochee watershed is critical. We have helped make a real difference in the area in terms of river awareness, reduction of illegal wastewater discharges, restoration and cleanup projects, and citizen involvement.

In addition to the highly successful restoration project on the Soque, UCR established a floating classroom on Lake Lanier; conducted an assessment of a drinking water supply watershed in Habersham County; and organized a year-long river education program for Hispanic students in the Gainesville-Hall area. Annually, our Headwaters office fields close to 100 citizen Hotline calls from citizens concerned about water pollution problems in their communities.

Currently, we are monitoring the quality of the water in Lake Lanier, working on a restoration project with Hall County on the West Fork of the Little River, and conducting a feasibility study of a proposed paddling trail, or blueway, on the Chattahoochee above Lake Lanier. This work is



Darcie Holcomb uses a secchi disk to assess water clarity.

in addition to other general "riverkeeping" activities. For more information or to volunteer, call Darcie Holcomb at 770-531-1064 or see www.chattahoochee.org/programs4.htm.

Riverkeeper Staff

Alexandra Adams
Policy Director

Sally Bethea
Executive Director and Riverkeeper

Birgit Bolton
Programs Coordinator

Alice Champagne
Technical Programs Director

Bill Crawford
Business Manager

Mary O. Harrison
Development Associate

Darcie Holcomb
Headwaters Conservation Director

Mary Manson
Receptionist

Elizabeth Nicholas
General Counsel

DJ Strickland
Development Director

Harlan Trammell
Boat Captain

Board of Directors

Sonny Cohen

Denise Donahue

Mike Eckert

Gary Gaines

Billy Hall

Richard Jacobson

Ben Jordan

Dave Kirkpatrick

Kay Lee

Jim McCaffrey

Elena Mola

Steve O'Day

J. Rutherford Seydel II, Chair

David Shaffer

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

ATLANTA OFFICE
3 Puritan Mill
916 Joseph Lowery Blvd.
Atlanta, GA 30318
404-352-9828

GAINSVILLE OFFICE
615 F Oak Street
Suite 1000
Gainesville, GA 30501
770-531-1064

www.chattahoochee.org
www.getthedirtout.org

REFLECTIONS

Laura Hanson Wahl was a lifelong lover of nature, according to her friend Betsy Hodges. When their children were young, Laura and Betsy would take them to the Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell to explore the river and wildlife.

During the past eight years, as she fought a long and courageous battle with cancer, Laura often visited the Chattahoochee, which flows near her home in Atlanta. Even when her health had deteriorated to the point that she was unable to walk, she still made it to the river in her wheelchair before her death in March at the age of 48. Laura's husband, Brad, believes that she "found her peace" at the river.

A Macon native, Laura earned a law degree from Vanderbilt Law School and practiced law in New York City before devoting herself to children and community activities in Atlanta.

Gift of Clean Water for Future Generations

The staff and board of Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper unfortunately did not know Laura, however, our work is benefiting from her love for the Chattahoochee and her



Photo credit: Beiq Honarvar/
Atlanta Journal Constitution

concern for its protection through gifts made to us by her friends and family in her memory

We will be using the dozens of contributions that honor Laura's memory to support two of our most important initiatives: our Floating Classroom Program to educate future generations of rivers lovers, and our Hotline Program to help citizens respond to water pollution problems in their communities.

Planned Giving

An important way to give back to the river that gives life to all of us is through planned giving. By including Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper in your estate plans, either through your will, a living trust or other estate plan, you will help ensure our long-term ability to achieve our goal of protecting the Chattahoochee, its tributaries and watershed for the people and wildlife that rely on the river for drinking water, recreation and habitat.

If you'd like more information about planned giving, see www.chattahoochee.org/getinvolved8.htm or contact D.J. Strickland at djstrickland@ucriverkeeper.org or 404-352-9828, ext 19.

Sally Bethea

WELCOME TO NEW UCR BOARD MEMBERS

Dave Kirkpatrick has a love of philanthropy that comes from his family's longtime commitment to community service. He has been involved with Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper for the past several years, as a strong supporter of our floating classroom program on Lake Lanier and as a co-chair of our annual River Revival with his wife, Mary Jane.

Dave is the Vice President, Non-Apparel Marketing, for The Collegiate Licensing Company. In this position, he is responsible for management strategy and developing new business for company clients, as well as sister company Licensing Partners International whose clients include The PGA Tour, The Canadian Football League, Churchill Downs and Petty Enterprises.



Mary Jane and Dave Kirkpatrick, new UCR board member, served as co-chairs for our 11th Annual River Revival in early May.

Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. has been a major sponsor of UCR programs for many years. We are very pleased to welcome **Jim McCaffrey** to our board. Jim is the Executive Vice President of Operations and Strategy for TBS. In this capacity, he leads a team of senior executives responsible for managing Turner Strategic Planning, Network Operations, Turner Studios and Technology Development, and the CNN Systems, Technology and Engineering units, among other divisions.



Jim McCaffrey

Jim serves on the board of trustees of the Atlanta Botanical Gardens and the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, in addition to his new role with Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.



PONTOON BOAT FOR SALE!

With our new catamaran arriving soon (see *Captain's Corner*, page 6), the pontoon boat that we have used for our floating classroom program on Lake Lanier for the past seven years is up for sale.

The *Chota Princess* is a 2000 40'x10' Crest pontoon boat made by Maurell with extensive custom additions. Features include: beautiful, removable, custom-made cypress seating, dive ladder, drop-down curtains, head, p.a., vhf radio, GPS, depth sounder, and courtesy lights. The power is twin Honda bf90 90 horsepower outboards with approximately 850 hours. This boat was built compliant with 46cfr subchapter, so there is good potential for commercial use for research, excursion, workboat, dive boat, eco tours, or recreational use.

Fuel capacity is 54 gallons total and both engines, batter-



The Chota Princess!

ies, and fuel systems are completely independent for redundancy. This boat has seen seven years of gentle freshwater service and has been meticulously maintained for commercial and recreational use by a fully-trained Honda outboard technician with a master Coast Guard captain's license.

This dependable vessel has a current survey and a stability test for 19 passengers and the carrying volume is rated at 3.8 gross tons. It is clean and ready to go, right now. Just turn the keys and be on your way to fun this boating season with plenty of room for you and your friends or family. The quiet, fuel efficient, Honda motors burn only 12 gallons per hour at a cruise speed of 20 mph. For a sea trial, please call Capt. Harlan Trammell 404-290-1113. It can be easily shipped anywhere.



IMPACTS TO SWEETWATER CREEK FROM MASSIVE WAREHOUSE

For the past year, UCR has worked with the Register Nelson consulting firm to minimize the impacts of the piping and filling of *more than a mile* of stream in Douglas County's Sweetwater Creek watershed for the construction of a 2.1 million square foot warehouse. The **IDI Development** site, which covers 172-acres adjacent to Sweetwater Creek State Park and the Chattahoochee, is located just upstream of the drinking water intake for the city of East Point. We initially provided comments outlining our concerns to the Corps of Engineers, but were denied our request for a public hearing. We also provided comments to the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD), urging improvements to the proposed post-stormwater management plans for the development, as well as the involvement of Douglas County on IDI's request for variances from buffer protection regulations. All permits have now been issued for this project. Although we were able to obtain some improvements, such as sand filtration best management practices, we still believe that this development will negatively impact the Chattahoochee watershed. UCR will monitor the project as it progresses to ensure compliance with stormwater laws and permit requirements.



DAHLONEGA SEEKS WITHDRAWAL PERMIT FROM YAHOOOLA RESERVOIR

The Yahooola Creek Reservoir in Dahlonega was at the center of last year's legislative battle over buffer protections for drinking water supply watersheds. This reservoir has a long and complicated history, rife with compliance problems, including the failure by the city and the county to adopt watershed protection ordinances. Because Dahlonega and Lumpkin had not adopted the required ordinance to protect its new water supply source, the state EPD refused to issue a permit to withdraw water from the reservoir. Rather than pass the required laws, the local governments went to their legislators and sought to change the law—an effort that ultimately failed during last year's legislative session. Perhaps bowing to political pressure, EPD recently proposed to issue a water withdrawal permit to the city, despite the continued failures to comply with requirements. Working with the **Turner Environmental Law Clinic**, UCR submitted a comment letter opposing the water withdrawal permit, until all legal requirements have been satisfied.



INDUSTRIAL RIVER SECTION IN COBB COUNTY COMES CLEAN

It's been a long time coming—the removal of industrial waste, junk and debris from a mile-long section of Cobb riverbank between I-285 and I-20, where the Chattahoochee creates the border between Cobb and Fulton Counties.

UCR first observed the junkyards and industrial operations illegally perched at the edge of the riverbank more than 10 years ago. We were unable to make any progress, however, until we took Cobb County **Commission Chair Sam Olens** and other county officials on the river in our patrol boat in March 2004 to observe the ugly and polluting mess firsthand. Violating both state and local laws, the various businesses in the river corridor had placed or dumped the following material on the riverbank: junk cars, tires, pipes, concrete, waste barrels, fuel tanks, and piles of trash.

For the past three years, Cobb officials have been working with the 18 landowners on Riverview Road to clean up their properties and remove all material from within the 150-foot state-protected buffer. Some of these industrial facilities must also come into compliance with the industrial stormwater law to control runoff from the sites.

Compliance Work Making Real Progress

Most of the property owners removed their material from the riverbank when Cobb County notified them of the vio-

On Patrol



FORSYTH FINED \$150,000 FOR BUFFER VIOLATIONS

UCR submitted comments to EPD last year concerning a proposed 55-acre shopping center that would impact close to 2,000 linear feet of stream, 1.6 acres of wetlands and 2.2 acres of stream buffer in Forsyth County—all of which drain directly into Lake Lanier. Despite our concerns, **The Sembler Company** received permits from the Corps of Engineers and the state EPD to construct a 280,000 square foot shopping mall. Predictably, stormwater problems began once land clearing was initiated. We worked with a citizen who serves on the County Planning Commission and met with concerned homeowners in February, after they alerted us to stream buffer violations and sediment flowing into a small lake. While building a road to access the mall, Forsyth violated buffer protection laws and also cleared vegetation designated for the mitigation of other environmental impacts. In April EPD and the county signed a consent decree requiring Forsyth to pay a \$150,000 fine and remove the road from the buffer. This large fine reflects the state's long-standing frustration with Forsyth's poor record of complying with clean water laws.



METRO ATLANTA PREPARES TO RE-VISIT WATER PLANS

The **North Georgia Metropolitan Water Planning District** was created by state legislative action in 2001 to foster regional water management planning in the 16-county metro Atlanta area. The District devoted two years and \$8.5 million to create three water plans addressing water supply, wastewater and watershed protections through 2030. The Plans were adopted in 2003 and have, for the first time in the state, created regional cooperation on critical water management decisions. At the same time, the District's board unfortunately decided to weaken several important watershed protection components of the plans and delayed adoption of water efficiency and monitoring programs. The District is now preparing for its first official 5-Year Plan Update, which offers an opportunity to improve the Plans for long-term regional sustainability. We will be urging the District staff and board to use this process to *improve* water quality in the region and not to further weaken the Plans.

Upper
Chattahoochee
Basin

Helen



Lake
Lanier

Buford
Dam



Atlanta



West
Point
Lake

West Point
Dam



Dozens of junk cars line the top of the riverbank in Cobb County.

lations; however, half a dozen sites are still non-compliant. For the past several months, UCR's Technical Programs Director, Alice Champagne, and **Rob Hosack**, Director of Cobb Community Development, have visited the remaining sites every two weeks to check on compliance efforts. In one instance, the county has had to file a lawsuit because the landowner refused to comply with the law.

At **M and R Used Auto Parts**, operator Mr. Zee Taher is in the process of removing about 50 cars from the riverbank, however, we have had to visit this property repeatedly to make sure that progress is continuing to remove the junk cars and implement a stormwater control plan. Cobb County has agreed to help Mr. Taher clean up the large mound of old tires, concrete and trash also collected at this site.

In the next phase of this cleanup and restoration, UCR plans to work with Cobb County to stabilize and restore the riverbank with vegetation, especially in areas where the removal of tons of pipes, concrete, and vehicles have left the buffer bare. Cobb has already agreed to supply trees for this project.

PROTECTING THE CHATTAHOOCHEE FROM THE AIR WITH SOUTHWINGS

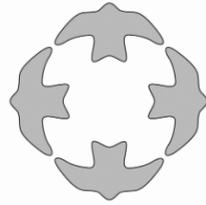
On a clear day in March, a small Southwings plane took off from Charlie Brown Airport in Fulton County and headed south to Heard County to investigate reports of a major buffer violation on the river.

As the plane flew closer to the Chattahoochee, a freshly bulldozed road could be seen running along the edge of the riverbank for *at least* two miles—an obvious violation of the state's stream buffer protection law. Not only had the road been constructed within the 25-foot buffer, there were no best management practices to keep dirt from the road out of the river during storms.

A UCR volunteer who frequently paddles this remote section of the river downstream of Atlanta found the violation, but it took an aerial perspective to understand the extent of the problem. After we reported the buffer damage to the Georgia EPD, the agency moved quickly to investigate the matter and initiate an enforcement action.

Rip-Rap in the Soque River

Known for its excellent trout fishing, the Soque River flows through rural Habersham County prior to entering the Chattahoochee above Lake Lanier. In late 2006, UCR learned that a landowner had rip-rapped sections of the



SOUTHWINGS
CONSERVATION THROUGH AVIATION
www.southwings.org

riverbank and used construction equipment in the river to remove sediment and place large boulders—all without any permits from the state EPD or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

UCR's Headwaters Conservation Director, Darcie Holcomb, flew over this relatively inaccessible section of the Soque in late January. She photographed the damage and provided this information to EPD to aid in the agency's

investigation of the site and its preparation of an enforcement action against the landowner.

Conservation through Aviation

UCR and other conservation groups are able to take flights to investigate remote sites such as those described above thanks to the services of **SouthWings**, a nonprofit organization that provides skilled pilots and aerial education.

Headquartered in Asheville, North Carolina SouthWings works in eleven states to educate community leaders, policy makers, and the media and collect scientific data on the globally significant ecosystems of the Southeast. SouthWings is supported by donations from individuals, foundations and the generous contributions of volunteers, including pilots. *For more information, visit www.southwings.org*

RIVER RESCUE DAY AT EAST PALISADES

The day began with rain, but ended with sunshine and the completion of hundreds of hours of volunteer service to help heal the Chattahoochee River and the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area (NRA). More than 100 volunteers from **Trout Unlimited**, the **National Park Service** (NPS), and UCR participated in the fourth annual River Rescue Day held on March 10 and organized by TU's **Bruce Rickey**.

A New Path, Bridges, and Hundreds of Tennis Balls

While some volunteers helped the state DNR stock trout in the river, others created a new foot path along the river and built several suspension bridges across tributaries to connect sections of the path. Still others



Some of the cleanup crew used kayaks to tackle trash in the river.

removed the invasive privet that grows profusely along the riverbank and planted native trees and shrubs—while UCR concentrated on the removal of trash from a massive log jam between the riverbank and a small island. UCR volunteer **Bonny Putney** led an on-the-water contingent of volunteers from Powers Island to East Palisades, picking up floating trash along the way.



UCR staff even climbed out on the log jam to remove garbage.

Wearing waders, UCR staff and several volunteers removed hundreds of tennis balls, dozens of plastic drinking water bottles and an astounding number of shoes from the log pile in the river. UCR also provided a one-year membership to each volunteer and helped support the event financially. Thanks to NPS **Superintendent Kevin Cheri** and his staff for providing the leadership for this annual event and to all the other volunteers. Special thanks to **John and Beverly Baker** who have supported our cleanup of the East Palisades area for several years.

CLIMATE CHANGE WATCH COMPACT FLUORESCENT LIGHT BULBS AND MERCURY

A recent story on National Public Radio had UCR staff and members wondering about the disposal of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), since they contain mercury. This toxic substance has been found in high levels in fish tissue in the Chattahoochee, resulting in state fish consumption guidelines.

On the positive side, one 13-watt CFL lasts 10,000 hours—a much longer life than the standard 1,500-hour life of a 60 watt incandescent bulb. The lower wattage means the same light for less electricity, making up the difference in purchase price. Since much of this electricity is generated at coal-fired power plants that emit the greenhouse gas



Earth's 911
www.1800CLEANUP.org
1-800-CLEANUP

carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, reduced electricity use will also lessen climate change.

Far Less Mercury than Thermometers

According to the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, using CFLs still prevents tons of mercury air pollution that would be released from coal in coal burning power plants, despite the fact that they contain mercury. In fact, they contain far less mercury than thermometers.

To dispose of a CFL bulb in your trash, you should wrap it in newspaper to lessen the danger of mercury exposure. Or, you can take advantage of one of the household hazardous waste disposal options in Georgia. In the metro Atlanta area, IKEA stores currently accept CFLs for disposal and city of Atlanta residents can take them to the Hartsfield Incinerator site. *For more information on disposal options throughout the state, go to www.earth911.org.*



UCR Intern Mike Pope samples at the river

"As a UCR Intern, I've gained an insight into all the hard work that goes into keeping our rivers clean. I've had a chance to help out with the sampling program, which is a joint effort with several government agencies that monitor water quality. My responsibilities are to take a sample from the footbridge near Vinings three days a week. Once the sample is collected, it is taken to a laboratory and checked for everything from bacteria to turbidity. I have truly enjoyed my time at UCR. One would be hard-pressed to find a more noble organization with a more supportive staff."

Mike Pope

FORMER LEGISLATOR WADE MILAM FOUGHT FOR WEST POINT LAKE

On June 25, the state legislator who fought and won important battles to protect West Point Lake will turn 89; however, he still remembers the legislative debate and votes on his water legislation as though they occurred yesterday. The improving water quality in the lake located 65 miles downstream of Atlanta is due in no small part to the efforts of **Wade Milam**, an insurance salesman who represented the LaGrange area in the Georgia House for a decade (1985-1994).



Thanks to Wade Milam's efforts, Georgia became the 11th state in the country to ban phosphates. He also helped get Kennesaw State University to conduct the first economic study of the lake, estimating its impact, more than 15 year ago, at \$125 million.

Galvanized Downstream Communities

After he retired from the legislature, Milam helped Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper galvanize communities downstream of Atlanta to file a lawsuit in federal court against the city for decades of sewage pollution affecting the river and West Point Lake. His work included getting these cities and counties to provide some funding for the legal action.

With the lawsuit settled and the city of Atlanta making good progress to fix its sewers and with the greatly improved lake water quality, Wade Milam can celebrate another birthday knowing that he has cleaned up his hometown lake.

"We were told it would be a dead lake in 10 years if we didn't do something," said Milam, who introduced a bill to ban laundry detergent phosphates. Excess nutrients, such as phosphorus, can create algae blooms in lakes and rob the water of oxygen.



BOY SCOUTS TACKLE EXOTIC PLANTS ALONG THE RIVER

On Saturday March 24, hundreds of Boy Scouts, their adult leaders, and **National Park Service** staff assembled at the Powers Island Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreational Area to eradicate alien plant species from along the river's edge. Chinese Privet, Bamboo, Elaeagnus and English Ivy were the main targets.



Boy Scouts learn how to identify alien plant species.

The Boy Scouts were taught how to identify the invasive plants and why these plants can be harmful to native flora including wildflowers like Trillium and Bloodroot. Significant participation in the event came from **Scout**

Troops 463 (Sandy Springs), 26 (Norcross), 787 (Atlanta), and 77 (Decatur) and **Scout Packs** 40 (Roswell) and 459 (Alpharetta).

Chinese Privet Presents Removal Challenges

Exotic plants flourish because they are very adaptable and fast-growing, have no natural enemies, and thrive in the warm southern climate. The Chinese Privet is considered



ONE TOUGH RIVER TRIP!

On the first day of March, four intrepid kayakers—**Joel Walberg, Doc Stevens, Ray Cvelbar** and river guide **Richard Grove**—set out to paddle 116 miles down the Chattahoochee River in three days and three nights. The kayakers' vessels were loaded with food and camping gear when they set out at Buford Dam for the long trip downstream to Franklin, Georgia.



Rain pelts the river and the paddlers on their One Tough Trip!

deciduous and remains green during winter, which gives these invasive plants an earlier growing start in the spring. As a result, they squeeze neighboring native plants out of sunlight. Birds



This is how to eradicate privet!

Photo credit: Tom Wilson

love privet berries which aids in the wide dispersal of the berry seeds to new growing areas. Finally, the privet root system is very resilient and prolific; plants will grow back easily, even after being pulled or uprooted.

Even though "privet pulls" occur numerous times during the year throughout the National Recreation Area, there are always many non-native plants remaining! A big thank you to the 261 Boy Scouts and other folks involved in helping rid the Powers Island area of alien plants so that native plants better suited for the river's ecosystem can thrive.

For more information on NPS privet pulls and other volunteer opportunities with the Trail Blazers program, call 678.538.1200 and ask for the volunteer coordinator.

This is the second year that Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has offered the *Chattahoochee Challenger Series*, which consists of ten canoeing and kayaking events from May through August. The events range from novice paddling trips to extreme trips such as this "One Tough Trip". And, this trip was certainly tough! These river enthusiasts experienced constant rain during the day and below zero temperatures at night, but they all finished strong.

Organizer and guide, Richard Grove, is working with UCR to help get people back on the Chattahoochee River to enjoy this wonderful natural resource. The *Challenger Series* is non-competitive with a goal of producing smiles, camaraderie and a chance to see and enjoy the river. Don't miss out on the rest of the 2007 paddles.

For more information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or visit the River Adventures section of our website at: <http://www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm>

National River Cleanup Week June 2-10, 2007

National River Cleanup Week, presented by American Rivers, kicks off a series of community-based stream cleanups nationwide beginning the week of June 2-10. See www.nationalrivercleanup.org

UCR is seeking volunteers to help clean up the Upper Chattahoochee above Lake Lanier, since a healthier river makes for a healthier community. Efforts will focus on a specific segment of the river on each of the following four days: June 2 and 3 and June 9 and 10th. For more information contact **Bonny Putney** at bpputney@bellsouth.net or by phone at 404.216.9351. You may also call **Carl Kirkpatrick** at 706.865.4451.

Dirt in our streams is the number one water pollution problem in Georgia, according to the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Not surprisingly, the number one citizen complaint received by the state (and by Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper) is silt running off during land clearing into streams and ponds or onto neighboring properties.

As illustrated by UCR's *Get the Dirt Out* Project (www.getthedirtout.org), irresponsible and untrained developers are degrading, destroying and piping our waterways with cut and run development that does not adequately protect our waterways. At two-thirds of the construction sites investigated by UCR and project partners, major violations of best management practices were observed.

Education Requirements Critical

The people who work on construction sites must have adequate education and training about erosion and sediment control in order to minimize runoff. These education requirements were part of a broad compromise between developers and the environmental community that was passed in 2003 by the state legislature.

Barely a month past the December 31, 2006 deadline for certification, a bill (**HB 463**) was introduced that would have effectively *removed* the education requirements for 95% of the people engaged in land disturbance activities. The bill contained additional provisions that could have further weakened the state's erosion control program.

UCR and other members of the **Georgia Water Coalition** testified against HB 463, as did EPD. We worked for weeks with legislators and representatives of the development community in an effort to confirm and then deal with several real problems with the education requirement in a way that did not jeopardize the entire program.

On legislative "cross-over" day, a compromise was finally reached that satisfied both the developers and the conser-

vation groups. UCR's general counsel Betsy Nicholas and Technical Programs Director Alice Champagne played key roles in developing this consensus.

The Importance of Supervisor Elections

Another bill that could have negatively affected Georgia's erosion control program was introduced at the request of the state Soil and Water Conservation Commission. **SB 263** would have eliminated the election of Soil and Water District Supervisors—individuals who help oversee and administer the state's erosion control program.

Georgia has 370 District Supervisors, 195 of whom are elected by the people who live in the 40 Soil and Water Districts. Another 175 are appointed by the Commission, headquartered in Athens, with the advice of the elected supervisors. Each of our 159 counties elects at least one supervisor; until recently, this occurred in relatively obscure elections held at each county courthouse.

This antiquated system ended a few years ago when the NAACP filed suit against the Commission in DeKalb County and the elections for District Supervisor were placed on the General Election ballot with all the other elective offices. Because each District had set its own election day to suit its area, the terms of the various Supervisors around the state are not consistent, and the shift to the General Election Ballot

makes such consistency a requirement.

Instead of fixing the problem by simply adjusting the terms to fit the new schedules for election, the Commission decided to get rid of the elections all together and have all the Supervisors appointed.

Fortunately, Soil and Water Supervisors from metro Atlanta, including UCR's Alice Champagne, led a successful protest and SB 263 was ultimately amended so that it only deals with the needed adjustments to the Supervisor terms. *For more information about Soil and Water Supervisors and how you can be involved, go to www.gswcc.org and click on News and Events.*



Silt fence full of mud at a subdivision site constitutes an erosion violation.



UCR's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER NEW CATAMARAN IN SERVICE BY MAY!

Corinthian Catamarans of Tarpon Springs, FL is building a new 40' catamaran for UCR's floating classroom program, which promises to take it to a new level not seen by any other similar program in the state of Georgia.

This is a boat built for what we do. With its 49-passenger capacity, there will be plenty of room for an entire class plus teachers and parents with uncluttered perimeter seating. The catamaran will be two feet wider than the pontoon boat that we've been using for this program. It will feature twin dependable Honda 225 horsepower outboards (450 hp total), which will give the boat a 20 knot loaded cruise speed with a ride that will be nice and smooth in most wind. Unlike a displacement, cylindrical hulled pontoon boat, this is a hard-chined, planing catamaran—one of the most stable passenger vessel designs available with years of proven offshore and coastwise safe service histories from the Florida Keys to Hawaii.

Underwater Viewing

In order to check out water quality in the lake, it helps to

be able to see what's down there, so we had a glass bottom built into the boat so the students can see underwater. There will be a large box approximately 7 feet by 2 feet that will contain a lexan view window. As visibilities in the lower portions of the lake can often reach 20 feet, there be several areas near shore where fish, bottom structure and other features can be seen through the window.

I will also implement a new, updated crew training program so that all the crew will be sharp, safe and comfortable while working aboard. With the boat's efficient design and easy loading and cleanup, we are looking forward to years of dependable service from this fine vessel.

The selection, design, certification, and rigging of this Coast Guard certified vessel to maximize performance for our program has been quite an undertaking. Special thanks to **John Fulcher** and **Honda Marine** for their generous contributions, **Neil Mullen** for rigging consultation and assistance and **Larry Threlkeld** and **Strike Zone Charters** of Big Pine Key, FL for rigging, design, certification and compliance consultation.

LAKE LANIER

Continued from page 1

Valuable Resource with Management Challenges

Although Buford Dam flooded thousands of acres of forest and farmland and changed the flow of the Chattahoochee River, Lake Lanier has many benefits that include hydropower, water supply, flood protection, navigation, recreational opportunities for millions of users, and wildlife habitat.

Since its creation, Lake Lanier has served as a catalyst for growth in the north Georgia region. In 2004, the total carrying capacity for private docks was set at 10,615; there are already 9,920 docks and 10 marinas on the lake.

As one of the most heavily-visited Corps of Engineers lakes in the nation, Lanier is enjoyed by 7.5 million people every year. With its close proximity to Atlanta, as well as unprecedented growth in north Georgia, the Lake Lanier Basin faces increasing pressure on its water resources.

Some of the factors that contribute to the difficulty in managing and protecting Lake Lanier include:

- Continuing disputes between Georgia, Alabama and Florida over the allocation of the water stored in the lake,
- Fluctuating lake levels due to droughts and downstream demands, including metro Atlanta's expanding population,
- Wastewater disposal needs for the growing communities around the lake, and
- Polluted stormwater runoff associated with construction and permanent impervious surfaces in the Lanier watershed.

Turning Point for Lanier

Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) ended a 15-year moratorium prohibiting new discharges of treated wastewater (or sewage) into Lake Lanier in 2000—in order to consider a permit application from Gwinnett County to discharge 40 million gallons of per day into the lake. At that time, a total of 18 MGD of treated sewage was being discharged into Lanier.

Gwinnett's discharge permit was finally issued in 2006, after years of litigation in which UCR, **Lake Lanier Association** and others challenged the pollution limits in the original permit. The Georgia Supreme Court ruled in our favor, finding that the permit should reflect the highest and best level of treatment available under existing technology. The final permit contains

stricter standards which we believe should be met by other local governments wishing to use the lake for any new discharge of treated sewage.

Water Quality Problems, Monitoring Needed

The Georgia Board of Natural Resources adopted additional water quality standards for the lake in 2000 to protect it from excess levels of nutrients that can cause algal blooms and impact the fishery and property values. Five years of EPD monitoring data have indicated degradation of water quality with chlorophyll *a* violations at most of the lake's standard monitoring stations during consecutive years.

The U.S. EPA is currently reviewing EPD's proposal to officially list portions of Lake Lanier as "impaired" because of these violations. The state legislature has been asked to consider a significant funding request to support additional monitoring and a cleanup plan to improve lake water quality and reduce pollution from development and other activities in the watershed. UCR staff will also be monitoring Lanier this summer, thanks to grants from **Patagonia** and a private foundation.

For more information about UCR's Lake Lanier Programs, contact Darcie Holcomb, Headwaters Conservation Director at dholcomb@ucriverkeeper.org.



Aerial view of Sluice concrete progress in May 1954.

Photo credit: Corps of Engineers



\$1 MILLION ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE OFFERED IN DAM RE-LICENSING

Georgia Power's license to generate electricity at **Morgan Falls Dam** for the next three to five decades is up for renewal. The dam, which is located in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) downstream of Buford Dam, forms Bull Sluice Lake.

Hydropower licenses are regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) through a process that generally takes three to seven years. In 2002, FERC developed a new Integrated Licensing Process (ILP) and Georgia Power decided to use it at Morgan Falls Dam.



During migration, endangered whooping cranes visited Bull Sluice Lake in 2006.

Photo credit: Chris Hughes, National Park Service

UCR has participated in every step of the ILP for the past three years, due to its precedent-setting nature. We have worked with the **National Park Service (NPS)**, **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, **Georgia Wildlife Resources Division**, and interested resource and

recreation groups, including the national groups **American Rivers** and the **Hydropower Reform Coalition**.

Significant Process Improvements

Initially, Georgia Power (GP) demonstrated an unwillingness to communicate or collaborate with all partners in the proceedings. We were unable to secure sufficient information and the company produced inadequate study plans. Our continued discussions, letters and comments to FERC and GP ultimately resulted in significant improvements in the process. GP estab-

lished a detailed project website and provided additional meetings and advanced notice to participants including UCR. This collaboration led to the development of a substantial environmental enhancement proposal that GP included in the filing of its license application to FERC in February.

One of the principal issues identified through the evaluation of project impacts was erosion and sedimentation. The fluctuations of the lake levels caused by the hydropower operations of both Morgan Falls and Buford Dams create erosion along the shoreline upstream and downstream of the dam. The structure of the dam also serves as a sediment trap, holding sediment from shoreline erosion and upstream development in Bull Sluice Lake. The accumulation of the sediment in the lake also impacts fish species, such as the rare Shoal Bass that is native to the area.

Environmental Mitigation Proposal

To address some of these impacts, GP has proposed a robust environment mitigation and enhancement package in excess of \$1 million dollars. This package includes shoreline stabilization at the Island Ford and Gold Branch Units of the CRNRA, support for UCR's *Get the Dirt Out* program about construction stormwater control and management, and a comprehensive plan to assist the NPS in the study and management of the Shoal Bass.

The enhancement package also includes recreational improvements at the boat access point downstream of the dam, work with the Chattahoochee Nature Center to rebuild its wetlands boardwalk, removal of invasive and exotic species in the project area, and cultural and historic interpretation at the Ivey Mills and Laurel Mills historic sites within the CRNRA.

This enhancement proposal will go a long way to mitigate the impacts of the dam. While the process had a difficult start, we are pleased with the progress we have made and believe that the precedent-setting ILP licensing has been a good learning experience for UCR, GP and other involved parties.

**BIGGEST AND BEST RACE TO DATE!
5TH ANNUAL BACK TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER RACE & FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 2007**

It's time for paddlers of all ages and skills to sign up for the 5th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee Race and Festival! As in previous years, the event will be held on the river near Roswell with the 8-mile race course running from Garrard Landing Park to Riverside Park for recreational boaters. Your hosts—city of **Roswell, National Park Service, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and Fulton County**—are planning for the biggest and best race and festival to date.



Father and daughter team finish with a big smile.

New Race Master **Larry Castillo** has divided race categories this year by boat type and construction. New race timers from the **Lake Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club** will ensure speedy end-of-race calculations.

You may register with:

- a credit card on-line at: www.chattahoochee.org or
- a credit card by fax (404-352-8676) or phone (404-352-9828), or
- a check by mail (see address below).



Festival attendees enjoy environmental exhibits, music and good food.

Holiday Vote-a-thon Helps Protect the River!

Many THANKS to those of you who participated in the CONTECH Stormwater Solutions Holiday Giving Campaign at the end of 2006. In lieu of sending holiday cards, CONTECH provided an opportunity for supporters to vote for one of a dozen environmental organizations. We asked you to go online and vote for UCR and you did! Out of over 4,300 votes cast, UCR came in second and received \$6,000 from CONTECH! Thanks to all of you for giving your time, energy, and contributions to UCR.

The race brochure and entry form can be found on our website. Select your event, food and t-shirt size and remember to enter your company or school name for the Corporate Challenge, if appropriate.

Through May 31, your registration will be acknowledged with a postcard showing boat number, check-in sequence at Garrard Landing start and race rules. Please note: **Double bladed paddles will not be allowed in the canoe division.**

Check-in and late registrations will occur between 6:30AM and 8AM on June 9; the first race event starts at 9AM. All boats should be in the water by 10AM and across the finish line at Riverside Park by Noon in time for lunch and the environmental festival which ends at 2PM. The festival will offer lunch, bluegrass music, dozens of exhibits, a scavenger hunt and a demonstration K-1 Sprint Race.



Solo kayaking is one of the most popular categories.

Got Questions About...

Event categories/Boat construction? Call Larry Castillo at 404-406-7367.

The Festival? Call Birgit Bolton at 404-352-9828, ext 24.

General Registration? Call Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828, ext 14.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING TOP EVENT SPONSORS:

- Chevron
- City of Atlanta
- Georgia Transmission Corp.
- The Coca-Cola Company
- The Weather Channel
- Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.
- 99X Radio Station

Other sponsors include: Amana Academy, Brown & Caldwell, CH2MHill, Harry's Farmers Market, High Country Outfitters, and SweetWater Brewing Co.

River Matters

Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **May 26**
Buford Dam to Medlock Bridge
For information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm

Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **June 2**
Medlock Bridge to Roswell (Azalea) Park
For information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm

National River Cleanup Week **June 2-10**
For more information, visit www.nationalrivercleanup.org.

5th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival **June 9**
For information, visit: www.ucriverkeeper.org/community5.htm

Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **June 16**
Roswell (Azalea) Park to Paces Mill
For information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm

Paddle Georgia 2007 **June 23-29**
Monticello to Hawkinsville on the Ocmulgee River
115 Miles, 7 Days, 1 Great Time
A Project of Georgia River Network: www.garivers.org
For information, contact Joe Cook at 706-235-1170 or www.joecook.net

Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **July 7**
Buford Dam to Roswell (Azalea) Park
For information, please contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm

Environmental Education Training Course **July 11 & 12 or July 18 & 19**
Wonders of Wetlands Learning Techniques and Strategies
Chattahoochee River Educational Center
To obtain a registration form and for information, call Jerry Hightower at: 678-538-1245.

Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **July 21**
Medlock Bridge to Paces Mill
For information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm

Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **July 28 & 29**
Overnight Canoe/Kayak Camping Trip on the Metro Chattahoochee
For information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm

Paddle Mania Chattahoochee River Challenger Series **August 11**
For information, contact Richard Grove at 404-545-6633 or regroveatl@comcast.net or visit www.ucriverkeeper.org/community4.htm



Keeping Watch Over Our Waters

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

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

Address Service Requested

