

# RIVER CHAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER  
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## A LESSON IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

# GOVERNOR BARNES VETOES HOUSE BILL 1182

by Neill Herring

In Georgia and across the nation, there is a major emphasis on testing students to measure their performance against both average and absolute standards. Recently, Georgia environmentalists have also been subjected to a performance test, but unlike their young student counterparts, they may not have known they were taking an exam.

What was this test for Georgia's environmentalists? It can be reduced to a single question: Could we persuade **Governor Roy Barnes**, who was elected with our enthusiastic support based on his environmental legislative record, to veto House Bill 1182?

### Unconstitutional Bill Threatened Water Quality Regulations

H.B. 1182 would have allowed the Georgia Legislature to veto any water quality rules affecting agriculture that it could be persuaded were not in the best interest of the state, or, more likely, not in the best interest of certain influential lobbyists. That such a law is clearly a violation of the separation of powers clause of the Georgia Constitution is beside the point, although it gave the Governor another reason to reject the bill.

What point is raised by this testing analogy? For many reasons, Georgians have been unsuccessful at convincing their Legislature that environmental issues, from air and water quality, to water supply, land use planning, to preservation of threatened species, are

of the first order in political importance. The election of Roy Barnes—an openly pro-environmental Governor—was seen as a



way to overcome the difficulties presented by a Legislature that has historically focused on other issues.

In light of his vigorous first two legislative sessions, featuring the creation of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority and the startup of the Georgia Greenspace Commission, environmental votes were well-cast for Barnes. He has continued to deliver for us.

### An Indifferent, Often Hostile, Legislature

Yet the problem of a Legislature that has been either indifferent to, or, at leadership levels (e.g., committee chairs), actively hostile to environmental concerns remains to be overcome. However, it must be overcome if the success that Barnes can bring to our issues is to be fully realized. That is what is meant by this test of the veto of H.B. 1182.

Environmentalists were subjected to the test posed by H.B. 1182 and the need for a gubernatorial veto by our collective failure to stop its passage in the first place in the Legislature. We are like the students who didn't have grades high enough to exempt the final exams. An example of another failure in this "course": Sen. Majority Leader Charles Walker was able to pass S.B. 473, which would have required meaningful public disclosure of a variety of water quality facts, by a vote of 51-0—yet the bill failed to even get a hearing in Rep. Bob Hanner's House Natural Resources Committee.

## THE RIVER MATTERS

For Additional Information Check Our OnLine Calendar

WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG

### Chestatee River Canoe Trip

Call 404-352-9828 for info.

June 10

### Citizen Soil Watch Workshops

Gwinnett County

Hall County Alliance

Call 404-352-9828, ext. 16 to register

May 17

May 30

### 1st Annual Golf Tournament

Call 404-352-9828, ext. 14 for info.

June 27

### Adventure Outings (See Insert)

Hike the River's Gorge

Canoe the Chattahoochee below Atlanta

July 15

September 16



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

See *Environmental Politics*, page 6

# Reflections

For the past five years, Riverkeeper has patrolled the shallow, often murky, waters of the Chattahoochee, keeping a vigilant eye on the river's condition and monitoring pollution sources. With hundreds of unidentified pipes lining the banks of the river and its tributaries, this has been no small task.

Several states have passed laws that require industries and local governments to post or otherwise label their discharge pipes with information that identifies the source and lists emergency phone numbers. **Sen. Charles Walker** (D-Augusta) championed similar legislation for Georgia (SB 473) in the 2000 General Assembly. In addition to requiring that discharge pipes be posted, this bill would have established a process for citizen stream monitoring data to be used in state reports and decision-making.

Although the Senate passed this important public disclosure bill with a near unanimous vote, **Rep. Bob Haner** (D-Parrot), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, failed to even allow a hearing for SB 473. Thus, it died.

Why would a bill so very clearly in the public's best interest fail to gain the support of our legislature? Politics as usual.

Lobbyists for the textile and pulp and paper industries succeeded in killing the bill with unfounded claims that requirements to label outfall pipes and make real use of citizen data would automatically result in trespass, vandalism, industrial espionage, multiple lawsuits and other unlikely events.

As evidenced by the huge success of local and state adopt-a-stream programs, the public wants to be involved with protecting and restoring the waterways that run through their backyards and communities.

When the Barnes Administration turns its thoughts to the 2001 General Assembly, we hope that legislation such as that advocated by Sen. Charles Walker will be at the top of its environmental agenda.

*Sally Bethea*  
Riverkeeper

## SUCCESSFUL RIVER REVIVAL RAISES FUNDS FOR WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Due to its attractive setting and nearby environmental success story, **Park Tavern** on the edge of Atlanta's historic Piedmont Park served as the perfect venue for Riverkeeper's 4th Annual River Revival celebration held May 4.

Instead of viewing an open, channelized ditch that during rainstorms flowed for decades with raw sewage and polluted runoff as one of the city's combined sewer overflow (CSO) sites, those attending the Revival enjoyed a view of Midtown's skyline with a beautiful green field in the foreground. A box culvert now carries the polluted water underground to a treatment facility outside the park that discharges into Clear Creek, a tributary to Peachtree Creek. Riverkeeper's successful lawsuit against the city, settled in 1998, requires this facility to be significantly upgraded in order to meet all water quality standards in Clear Creek.

### Thanks to Event Organizers and Donors

Chaired once again by our faithful **Lael Seydel, Chrissy Sapp** and **Gannon and Beau Turner**, the Revival raised \$56,000 to expand Riverkeeper's river monitoring programs. Steering committee members included **Wendy Staton Burge, Jennifer Davidson, Beth Gottlieb, Wynne Jarboe, Amy Shulman** and **Andrew Sugrue**. Lively entertainment was provided by The Malesmen.



Enjoying the River Revival are (from left) Gannon Turner, Katherine Baer and Sally Bethea

Many thanks to **Paul Smith**, owner of Park Tavern, for generously donating the venue, party food and brewery beer for the evening! The huge success of this event is the result of our many loyal sponsors, especially our lead sponsor **Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.** Further kudos to our media sponsor Radio Station **Z93**, to **Georgia Power** for printing services, and **Mitch Rood** for design services.

**River Protector Sponsors:** Gannon and Beau Turner; Watts & Browning Engineers, Inc.

**River Guardian Sponsors:** Jennie and Peek Garlington; Georgia Pacific; Newfields; The Coca-Cola Company; Angela and Rhett Turner.

**River Sponsors:** AGL Resources; Donaldson & Co., Incorporated; Interface Research; Habersham Investment & Development Corp; Jordan, Jones & Goulding; Rochester & Associates, Inc.; Laura and Rutherford Seydel; Southwire.

**Friends of the River Sponsors:** Brown and Caldwell; CH2M Hill; Hooked on the Outdoors Magazine; The Lovett School; The Seydel Companies; Travis Pruitt & Associates, Inc.; Leslie and Teddy Turner.

### THE RIVERKEEPER STAFF

www.chattahoochee.org

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## NEW POWER PLANTS IN HEARD COUNTY

**Heard County Power (HCP)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Dynegy**, plans to construct a 500-megawatt natural gas power generation facility in Heard County, immediately adjacent to the Coweta County line. Initially, HCP will generate power using only a simple cycle method of power production, but has plans to convert the facility into a much larger combined cycle operation within 2-3 years. HCP originally applied for a permit from the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to discharge evaporative cooling water from the Plant into a small unnamed tributary to **Hilly Mill Creek**. HCP's discharge would have increased dramatically from 7,200 gallons per day (gpd) to 375,800 gpd, upon upgrading from simple to combined cycle process. State biologists expressed concern that the increased discharge from the combined cycle process could harm aquatic life in the creek. Riverkeeper recently learned that, presumably due to community pressure, HCP has withdrawn its discharge permit application and plans, instead, to recycle all of its evaporative cooling water.

(**Tenaska**, a separate power generation company, has already obtained all necessary permits to construct a similar power generation plant within a mile of the proposed HCP facility.)

## STATE PROPOSES TO WEAKEN LOCKHEED PERMIT

Historically, **Lockheed** has discharged treated wastewater from its airplane manufacturing plant into **Nickajack Creek** in violation of several of its permit limits. In 1998, EPD proposed a revised permit for Lockheed, which contained less-stringent site-specific criteria for copper, cadmium and lead. Riverkeeper vehemently objected to the proposed 1998 version of the permit. In response to our objections, and concerns raised by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPD extended the expiration date of Lockheed's existing permit, pending further study of Lockheed's proposed weaker criteria. Now, two years later, EPD again proposes to reissue Lockheed's permit

with less stringent site-specific limitations. Riverkeeper submitted an extensive comment letter on the new draft permit, raising legal and technical deficiencies with the proposed permit. If EPD issues the permit with the weaker standards, Riverkeeper has 30 days under the Georgia Administrative Procedures Act to challenge this action.

## NEW DIRT REGULATION-EIGHT YEARS IN THE MAKING

For eight years the conservation community, led by Gwinnett activist Terry Hughey, has pushed the state EPD to issue a strong and effective regulation, known as the **General Storm Water Permit for Construction Activities**, to control the discharge of sediment-laden storm water from the thousands of construction sites throughout Georgia. Last summer, EPD finally issued a General Permit that the conservation community supported, only to have it challenged by the regulated community as overly burdensome and costly. Their challenge, however, prompted the first-ever collective effort between environmentalists, regulators and developers to craft a permit that all sides could support.

Riverkeeper is proud to report that the collaborative process worked. At the end of last year, all parties agreed upon the terms of arguably the strongest General Permit in the country. EPD published the General Permit for public notice and comment in February. We hope, and expect, that this version will go unchallenged and become effective by early summer when it will become a powerful tool to help keep eroded soil out of our rivers and lakes.

## RIVER PATROL DISCOVERS COBB SEWAGE SPILL

On Sunday, April 23, Riverkeeper's **Captain Harlan Trammell** conducted a routine river patrol on the Chattahoochee downstream of Atlanta and discovered a significant spill from a Cobb County sanitary sewage line. After observing gray water laden with toilet trash flowing directly into the river from an unnamed tributary, Trammell found a County employee at the nearby South

Cobb sewage treatment plant and took him by boat to the spill site. The state Emergency Response Division was also notified of the problem. An 8-inch sewage line leading to the treatment plant had caved in and raw sewage was gushing directly into the river in an area that is rarely frequented by boats and anglers—in other words, the spill could have flowed unabated for an extended period before being discovered. Within 24 hours, Cobb County had conducted a massive excavation and repaired the line, but more than 70,000 gallons of raw sewage had entered the Chattahoochee. An enforcement action will be taken by the state against the County for the spill.



## Water Allocation Negotiations in ACF/ACT Basins Extended

At the end of April, the Governors of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia agreed to extend the water allocation negotiations in the **Apalachicola-Chattahoochee Flint (ACF)** and **Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT)** River Basins an additional 90 days, thus forestalling the expiration of the ACF/ACT Compacts and a dissolution of the negotiating process. The states now have until August 1, 2000 to develop allocation formulae for the Basins, and are currently exploring mediation in an attempt to resolve the outstanding conceptual and technical issues that have hampered progress toward an agreement. Riverkeeper, in cooperation with our 35 partner groups in the **Tri-state Conservation Coalition**, continue to advocate for a negotiated settlement in both the ACF and ACT that protects water quality, biodiversity and recreation. Riverkeeper and the Coalition believe that the water allocation process remains an excellent opportunity to address the problems facing these important river basins, which were recently identified by American Rivers as among the most "endangered" in the United States.

# So... EXACTLY HOW DID WE FARE IN THE 2000 GENERAL ASSEMBLY?

## *Not too badly, now that the dust has settled.*

**The State Budget: New Positions for EPD** The state's "Big Budget" passed with 55 additional positions for EPD, 37 of which are scheduled for water programs. The environmental community has long advocated more staff for EPD, and this addition is the first of several necessary to attain the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) goal of 214 more staff to protect the state's vital natural areas.

**Senate Bill 399 PASSED: Greenspace Initiative** The Governor's Greenspace Initiative, which easily passed the Legislature, affects some 40 urban and urbanizing counties, with that number expected to increase when the 2000 census data is compiled. A state fund, starting with \$30 million in this year's budget, is provided to help counties and cities acquire undeveloped property for permanent preservation. The lands can either be acquired outright or they can be conveyed in the form of conservation easements dedicated to the local governments.

**Contact your county commissioners now and urge them to get Greenspace Ordinances in place to join the new program as quickly as possible.**

**House Bill 1182 VETOED: Legislative Override for Water Quality Regulations** Furious about last year's strong swine regulations adopted by the Board of the Department of Natural Resources and anticipating new

poultry waste management rules this year, the **Georgia Farm Bureau** (GFB) and **Georgia Poultry Federation** (GPF) joined in a thinly veiled attempt to override any water quality regulations that they might not like with the passage of H.B. 1182. Although it did pass on the last day of the legisla-

tive session, this clearly unconstitutional and potentially dangerous bill was vetoed by Governor Roy Barnes on April 28 (see cover story) after an alliance of environmentalists and poultry growers prevailed in their efforts to defeat the bill.

**Write Governor Barnes and thank him for vetoing this anti-environmental bill:** Gov. Barnes The State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30303.

**Senate Bill 473 DEFEATED: Water Quality Information Disclosure** Sen. Charles Walker introduced and passed through the Senate, S.B. 473, a bill that would have required persons discharging into streams to put up emergency phone numbers at their discharge pipes; that the DNR set standards for acceptance of water quality samples; that the DNR measure salt water penetration into coastal waters; that EPD report on all interbasin transfers of water in the state and finally that EPD provide a narrative annual report on the progress it is making on monitoring Georgia's 70,000 miles of

streams. This bill was killed by pulp and paper and textile lobbyists in the House Natural Resources Committee, chaired by Bob Rep. Hanner (D-Parrot). (see *Reflections*, pg 2)

**House Bill 1426 PASSED: Trout Stream Buffers and Other Things** The so-called "Stream Squeezer" bill passed on the last day of the session after much debate and the adoption of a strengthening amendment promoted by Sen. Charles Walker. **The bad news:** a fifty percent reduction in buffer widths (from 100 to 50' along trout waters) and an allowance for piping small spring-head streams under certain conditions. **The good news:** buffers are *finally* defined as naturally vegetated, forestry exemption loopholes are closed, stop work orders and larger fines are now mandatory for erosion violations, and rules will be adopted that govern the issuance of variances to buffer requirements. A 7-person technical committee, including Sierra Club's Glynn Groszman and UGA's Seth Wenger, was recently appointed to develop the variance criteria for presentation to the DNR by July 1, 2000. (See Action Alert, pg 6)

*\*\*For the record, Riverkeeper never supported this bill. Sally Bethea, Riverkeeper's Director and member of the DNR Board, was asked by Gov. Barnes to work with a small group on a "compromise" to*

*settle the long-standing dispute between mountain developers and bankers, and environmentalists on trout stream buffers. Her individual agreement, as a DNR Board member, to the compromise that led to H.B. 1426 did not result in support of this bill by the Riverkeeper organization.*

**House Bill 1362 PASSED: Flint River Drought Protection** Sponsored by local legislators **Richard Royal** and **Bob Hanner**, this bill pays permittees of irrigation wells in the Flint River basin not to use their wells if EPD finds (by March 1 of any year) that there is to be a drought that year. The purpose: maintenance of instream flows in the Flint River for

a variety of purposes, some obvious and some not so obvious. The permittees/farmers will be allowed to bid their acreages into the program and payments are expected to run at about cropland rental rates—\$100 per acre. Riverkeeper tried in vain to secure clarifying amendments to ensure adequate flows for aquatic habitat, metering of water use by farmers, and other positive amendments. Keep an eye on this one!

**Senate Bill 524 PASSED: DOT Erosion Control** This bill, amended with suggestions from Riverkeeper, requires that larger DOT construction contracts will henceforth include a much needed new component to separately bid for erosion and sedimentation control. If this new approach works, one of the greatest sources of dirt in Georgia streams highways may finally be brought under control.



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# RIVER RESTORATION ON THE LEFT FORK OF THE SOQUE

## Final Phase – Replanting the Buffer Zone

Re-establishing the riparian (stream-side) buffer zone has been the final phase of Riverkeeper's Soque River Restoration project. The project, which is the cornerstone of our educational efforts in the Chattahoochee Headwaters, was installed in October 1998 (see *RiverChat* Winter '99).

Some of the primary restoration goals included 1) preventing further erosion and contribution of sediment to the Soque River (a major Chattahoochee tributary), and 2) improving fish habitat and stream health. While the first phase of the project focused on recreating a healthy channel by altering stream dimensions (such as width, depth and degree of curvature), this second phase has involved community volunteers to help replant the riparian zone that had been cleared for agricultural use many years ago.

Over the course of two winters, a total of 70 volunteers, from a variety of groups including the **Soque River Watershed Association**, **UGA American Fisheries Society Chapter**, **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**, and **Gainesville College Environmental Club**, have come to the site and planted a total of 666 native trees and shrubs, such as river birch, red maple, and sycamore. Native plant species are important because local birds and animals have often come to depend on these natives. This newly established vegetation, funded by a grant from the **U.S. Fish**

**and Wildlife Service**, will help finalize Riverkeeper's goals for the site. Although riparian vegetation is well known for its pollution filtration abilities, these buffer zones also provide bank stabilization, which decreases bank erosion, as well as providing a shade and habitat material for aquatic organisms. Riverkeeper will continue to monitor the Soque site to help quantify the benefits of restoration work as well as to provide educational tours to interested groups (to schedule a site tour call Riverkeeper's Headwaters office at 770-538-2619).

### **Soque Video and Resource Materials Now Available!**

For those members interested in learning more about river restoration and riparian zones, Riverkeeper now has two excellent resources available. Our award-winning *Soque Diary* video, produced by

Fran Burst of **Burst Video-Film**, chronicles both river restoration and



**Restoration Volunteer - Jane Harrison**

Riverkeeper member and Gainesville resident **Jane Harrison** single-handedly amassed all of the plants that were used as part of the Soque Restoration project. Native plants are not always easy to find - but our list was complete and ready for each volunteer planting day. Calling nurseries and native plant societies across the southeast, and then driving from Ellijay to Conyers to Jonesboro to pick-up carefully selected tree and shrubs, Jane has been an invaluable volunteer for Riverkeeper's Headwaters office.

community watershed protection efforts in the Chattahoochee Headwaters. The video traces the Soque Restoration Project, from its inception and site selection, through fieldwork, implementation and post-construction community involvement to replant the riparian zone. ***Soque Diary* is available for \$10.95 by calling 404-352-9828 x12 or you can download the order form from our website ([www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)).**

*The Soque Restoration Project Resource Kit*, produced by Mary Vachon of **Mary Vachon Design** and printed courtesy of **Scientific Games International**, provides in-depth information about the Soque Project and also includes advice on riparian zone re-establishment, potential funding sources for restoration projects, and a restoration bibliography for further reading.

**To order a copy of the Soque Restoration Project Resource Kit, please call Riverkeeper's Headwaters office at 770-538-2619 or via email at [kriverkeeper@mindspring.com](mailto:kriverkeeper@mindspring.com).**

## **Flea Market Eyesore in the Headwaters**

Anglers cast their fly rods into the clear Chattahoochee, just north of Robertstown in White County seeking rainbow, brown and brook trout. Rather than standing beside a natural vegetated riverbank, however, their view is one of woody debris piles mixed with trash, loose soil, discarded cement stones, and little if any vegetation, thanks to a local flea market and tubing business. Instead of protecting and preserving the riverbank, the owner of **Flea Market Tubing** appears to be littering the river's banks with trash, yard debris, concrete and dirt. This source of pollution has prompted many calls from our members over the years. We wrote to White County officials, asking them to investigate this site and take action to stop further damage to the river. At a minimum, the property owner should remove the trash and re-vegetate the banks to help stabilize the banks, filter storm water runoff and create a natural barrier between the river and the flea market. White County officials and a state EPD representative recently advised the owner of the property to remove all the debris out of the buffer. Riverkeeper will keep an eye on this eyesore.

# ACTION ALERT

## STREAM PROTECTION RULES TO BE DECIDED

### ASK DNR TO ADOPT STRONG AND SCIENTIFICALLY SOUND RULES

**House Bill 1426**, which passed through the General Assembly this year, will make many changes (some good, some bad) to Georgia's Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act. While sections of the bill make direct statutory changes to the law (e.g., H.B. 1426 will create a definition of a buffer as stream banks in a "natural state of vegetation"), other portions of the bill will be refined through the rulemaking process by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Board. H.B. 1426 directs the Board to make rules concerning *buffer variances* and the methodology for piping small streams.

**Write DNR Commissioner and DNR Board Chair to advocate the following:**

#### Buffer Variance Criteria

Currently, variances to required buffer setbacks are routinely granted by the state. This is, in part, because there are no *written criteria* guiding this process. Ask DNR to establish buffer variance criteria that make buffer variances the exception, and not the rule. Criteria that should be considered when evaluating a buffer variance application include:

- *Slope* - in steep areas buffers need to be wider, not narrower, to be protective.
- *Floodplains* - Because floodplains provide many important functions such as protecting downstream property from floods, variances should not be allowed in floodplains.
- *Site Review* - All buffer variance applications must require on-site inspections as part of the evaluation process.
- *Mitigation* - In the case where a buffer variance is granted, there must be additional measures, such as stormwater control or buffer enhancement, to ensure that the variance is still protective of stream quality.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

*Continued from page 1*

As the lobbyist for both Riverkeeper and the GA Sierra Club, I acknowledge my personal responsibility in this bill's legislative outcome, but I was not alone in my failure. The Department of Natural Resources, specifically asked by **Speaker Tom Murphy** about H.B. 1182, decided it could "live with" the bill, mainly because of fear that needed additional staff might not be funded if DNR opposed the bill. Given the signal, the skeptical Murphy let the bill go on through the House.

#### **Lt. Governor Promoted H.B. 1182**

Thus enabled, **Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor** decided he would "help the farmers," and forced the bill through the Senate. Some farmers, poultry growers, actually *opposed* the bill—they figured it would be used by agribusiness poultry *integrators* (e.g., Tyson and Gold Kist) against rules that might help them pay to clean up chicken waste. To its credit, the Senate Natural Resources Committee, in a wholly bipartisan act, made the bill harmless before passing it, and Sen. Charles Walker was able to pass the version through the Senate.

On the final day of the Legislature, however, when confusion and bad intentions reign in the Capitol, a miserable version of the

#### Piping Criteria

Although H.B. 1426 will allow the piping of some first-order trout streams with flow of <25 gallons per minute, the DNR Board must establish a general procedure governing this process. Request that DNR include the following limitations to ensure some protection of our headwater streams:

- *Hardship cases* - Because piping of headwater tributaries is detrimental to the entire aquatic ecosystem, piping should only be allowed in absolute hardship cases.
- *Length of piping* - piping length should be minimized and there should be a minimum of 1000 feet between any two piped sections to allow for some organic matter input into streams.
- *Public notice* - Piping of trout streams now requires notification to the Corps of Engineers and any permit application to EPD for stream piping should be made available for public comment.
- *Mitigation requirements* - Establish mitigation requirements consistent with new federal wetland permits for any project piping more than 100 feet of trout streams.

*Send your letters to:*

Lonice C. Barrett, Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
205 Butler St., S.E. East Floyd Tower  
Atlanta, GA 30334

Sara S. Clark, Chair  
Board of Natural Resources  
230 Dapplegate Way  
Alpharetta, GA 30201

**To read a full version of HB 1426 go to:**  
<http://www.ganet.org/services/leg>

bill passed both House and Senate as a Conference Committee Report. This project was entirely the work of the Lt. Governor Mark Taylor, whose role should be remembered when environmentalists have to take another test.

In the end, we (environmentalists) passed this test of environmental politics. Gov. Barnes vetoed H.B.1182 on April 28, and the Legislature now knows that this Governor means it when he says he wants to protect the environment.

For too long, however, Georgia environmentalists have been happy to hear office seekers *say* the right thing, only to let those they have elected *behave* as they liked after they were sworn into office. It is this test we must stop failing, if we truly intend to protect our natural resources for future Georgians.

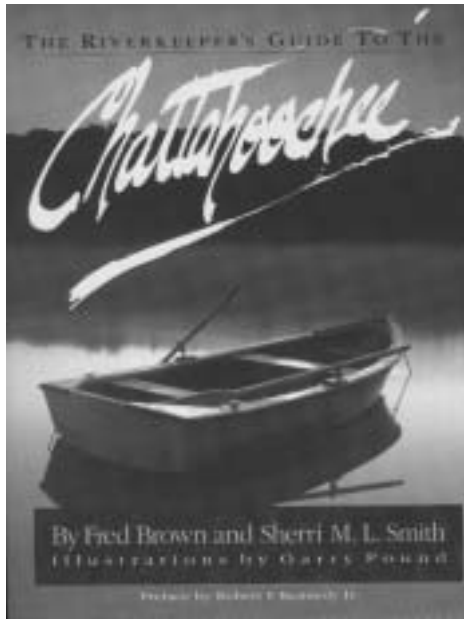
*Herring, a lobbyist for Riverkeeper and other environmental and labor organizations, has monitored the Georgia Legislature for more than two decades.*

# Cool Fun in the Summer Time

The Chattahoochee River is a mystical place full of new sights at every bend. In particular, metro Atlanta offers many special places a short distance from home. With summer close at hand, this is one of the best times of year to take advantage of scenic sightseeing that is sure to bring even the novice explorer one step closer to our river.

## A Tranquil Urban Forest, Close to the River

One of the more special places in the urban Chattahoochee watershed that you can visit is **Big Trees Forest Preserve**. This sanctuary full of pristine old growth trees is tucked away from all the hustle and bustle in Sandy Springs off Roswell Road. Powers Branch, a tributary of the Chattahoochee River, runs through the preserve and is a popular Riverkeeper site for water quality monitoring and watershed education. Despite industrial and urban abuse that the Chattahoochee and surrounding greenways encounter, Big Trees Forest Preserve's unique large and abundant trees help protect this stream and its watershed from pollution.



## Where to Find More Adventures...

If you are interested in finding other parks, hiking trails or recreational areas along the Chattahoochee River, "*The Riverkeeper's Guide to the Chattahoochee*" is an excellent resource that will help you determine the nearest haven to you. This guidebook starts at the Chattahoochee's headwaters in Helen and takes the reader downstream 542 miles to Apalachicola Bay in Florida where the Chattahoochee flows into the Gulf of Mexico. This guidebook is also full of insightful historical information and short bios on individuals who are dedicated to preserving and protecting the Chattahoochee River.

Exploring the parklands along the river is certain to provide you with first hand evidence of the importance of the Chattahoochee. Stayed tuned for our summer newsletter detailing other delightful sanctuaries or for more suggestions, you may purchase "*The Riverkeeper's Guide to the Chattahoochee*" for \$18.95 at local bookstores, on our website ([www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)), or by calling Susan Smith (404-352-9828/14).

## AWARD-WINNING "TROUT STREAMS OF GEORGIA" MAP AVAILABLE

Anglers looking for a good place to fish for trout can log on to the Georgia DNR website at [www.ganet.org/dnr/wild](http://www.ganet.org/dnr/wild) and view county maps of trout streams. Select "Fishing Regulations" from the Homepage for DNR's Wildlife Resources Division and then select "Trout Fishing". Trout streams are listed by county and each county name is linked to its trout stream map.

Membership up for renewal? Please send it in today!

## BECOME A MEMBER OF THE UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

- \$10 Student
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- Please make a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or reserve membership for the person(s) listed below.  
(A card will be sent notifying the recipient(s) of your gift.)
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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (Fax)  
 email \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to volunteer my time to help the Riverkeeper. Please get in touch with me.  
 Please make checks payable to: **Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper**  
 Contributions to the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund are tax-deductible.  
 Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) organization. Quarterly newsletters are provided to members and other subscribers.

- Please send \_\_\_\_\_  
 Riverkeeper caps  
 at \$18.00 each (includes shipping)
- Please send \_\_\_\_\_ large  
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 Riverkeeper t-shirts  
 at \$18.50 each (includes shipping)  
**Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper**  
 1900 Emory St. Suite 450  
 Atlanta, GA 30318

# VETERAN LAWMAKER AND "GREEN" VOICE RETIRES

For the environmental movement, the 2000 Georgia General Assembly will be remembered as one pocked by a backlash of environmentally unfriendly legislation. It will also be remembered as the last session in which conservationists had **Senator Mike Egan** on their side.

A 22-year veteran of the General Assembly and long-time supporter of conservation legislation, Egan retired at the session's end, departing as perhaps the only champion of the environment in the Georgia Senate.

"When I leave this Senate," said the Republican from Sandy Springs, "I can't think of another environmentalist in the Senate."

Egan's career in politics began in the late 1960s with the environmental movement still in its embryonic stage in Georgia. As House Minority Leader in the mid-1970s, he helped push through bills like the groundbreaking Metropolitan River Protection Act. He later worked in the Carter administration and returned to the Senate in 1989 where he became one of the first urban legislators appointed to the Natural Resources Committee and was honored by the Georgia Environmental Council as its Conservation Legislator of the Year.

During his years at the Capitol, he's seen the environmental lobby grow from a small vocal group into a highly successful movement. He characterized the anti-environment bills of the 2000 session as a backlash against that success.

"I think that's a sign of its success," he said. "The movement as a whole has advanced so far they're beginning to be a pain to

the other side. It's a good thing. The movement needs to keep advancing. Some groups are doing a good job of bringing business and industry along, and that is necessary. But sometimes you've got to kick them to get their attention. That's the trouble."

Egan is cautiously optimistic about future legislation. Population pressures will continue to push the issues of clean air and water to the forefront of public opinion, he said. On the other hand, he warned that passing a law is worthless unless the law is properly implemented and enforced.

"You can pass a law easy, but nothing happens until you get something on the ground," he said. As for his affiliation with a party traditionally viewed as less-environmentally sensitive, he just laughs and jokes: "Remember there are some good Republicans. Look at Teddy Roosevelt. He was a great conservationist...God, do you have to go that far back to find one."

*Contributed by Joe Cook*



*Senator Mike Egan*



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