

NEIGHBORHOOD WATER WATCH STRENGTHENS COMMUNITY

When **Amanda Mayberry** moved to the intown Atlanta neighborhood known as Collier Hills two years ago, she was thrilled that her street bordered Tanyard Park and its babbling creek.

To get more involved in her community, Amanda attended a meeting of the **Collier Hills Civic Association** where UCR Technical Programs Director Jason Ulseth was a speaker. He talked about our new **Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) Program** and cited the results of samples already taken from the creek.

“I was pretty horrified at the numbers of the *E. coli* bacteria that Jason said they were pulling out of the creek,” said Mayberry. “This is our neighborhood’s creek; the neighbors are down here on the path every day ... and I really didn’t want to have such a polluted creek right here around us.”



Water quality in Tanyard Creek improved after the city of Atlanta fixed a sewer blockage identified through UCR’s volunteer monitoring program.

High levels of bacteria found in some urban creeks, such as Tanyard, can come from cracked and overflowing sewers, failing septic systems and polluted stormwater runoff. High bacteria levels can indicate sewage leaks and spills, posing a serious health risk.

The long-term data compiled by UCR is used to determine if local bacterial contamination is occurring – and in some cases, where it’s coming from. Results collected as part of the NWW Program also are entered into **Georgia’s Adopt-A-Stream (AAS)** database.

AAS is Georgia’s volunteer water quality monitoring program, which currently has 188 active groups across the state. For the second year

in a row, UCR was named the most active AAS group in the state with 366 water samples collected and analyzed in 2011. We were honored to receive this year’s AAS Watershed Award.

Contamination sources found in Atlanta streams

Once high levels of bacteria were confirmed in **Tanyard Creek**, UCR worked closely with the city to locate an outfall pipe or storm drain into the creek and upstream of the park, which was a likely source. After an extensive investigation by the city, the culprit was found — a clogged sewer line causing sewage to flow into the storm drain and the creek. The city fixed the problem and tests have revealed improved water quality.

“This is a great example of a collaborative partnership among residents, a nonprofit and a local government,” Ulseth said.

In **Proctor Creek**, samples collected by **West Atlanta Watershed Alliance’s Darryl Haddock** have shown continuous high bacteria levels. The primary source appears to be in the area of the city’s de-commissioned Greensferry Combined Sewer Overflow facility, according to a joint monitoring effort among the Atlanta Regional Commission, Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division, the city and UCR.

“The city is in the process of tracking this source through a series of underground pipes,” Ulseth said, “and we anticipate the problem will be found and fixed in the near future.”

In a stream flowing through **Atlanta’s Ansley Park** neighborhood, local residents have been pleasantly surprised to learn that the bacteria levels were much lower than expected.



Volunteer Amanda Mayberry pulls a water sample from Tanyard Creek in Atlanta’s Collier Hills neighborhood.

Monitoring program expands to Gainesville

In January, UCR purchased an additional *E. coli* laboratory for our Headwaters office in Gainesville, with funding support from LUSH Cosmetics. We are currently working to build new partnerships with community members in the area, which has several streams with potentially high levels of bacteria.

Flat Creek, a tributary to Lake Lanier in Gainesville, has been designated “impaired” by the state for failure to meet bacteria standards. Students from **Gainesville State College** have agreed to partner with UCR to monitor Flat Creek, as part of a class watershed project.

If you would like to volunteer with UCR for the NWW Program, please contact Jason Ulseth at julseth@ucriverkeeper.org.

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

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Reflections

Forty years ago, a scrappy group of self-designated “river rats” undertook local sewer, zoning and development battles to protect the Chattahoochee River they loved — on behalf of paddlers, fishermen, birders, and other nature lovers.

They were inspired by the first Earth Day which had occurred just a year before in 1970, and they believed their river was a national treasure. They were right.

This past March, a decades-old vision was realized when U.S. Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar announced that the **Chattahoochee River Water Trail**, flowing 48 miles through the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (Buford Dam to Atlanta), would be the first river designated as a national water trail under a new National Water Trails System.

One of those original river rats, **Roger Buerki**, now 71, said: “This national water trail designation confirms the vision and ability of ordinary citizens to overcome politically-powerful opposition to save the Chattahoochee River for the future.”

In fact, the water trail is a living monument to the memory of local conservation heroes such as **Roy Wood, Jane Yarn, James Mackey, Dan Sweat, Al Burruss** and **Paul Coverdell**, who fought to protect the river that supplies millions of Georgians with drinking water while also providing outstanding recreational opportunities.



I was in the second wave of river rats. A newbie who joined the ranks of the **Sierra Club** in the mid-1970s, met Roger and other local environmental activists — and then, in 1979, worked on the first general management plan for the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) as a graduate student at Georgia Tech.

The CRNRA had been established in 1978 when President Jimmy Carter signed the bill creating the national river park at a ceremony in the Rose Garden, with members of **Friends of the River**, including my friend and mentor, Roger Buerki, in attendance.

When Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper was created in 1994, it was with the support and guidance of leaders of Friends of the River, which had ended its successful and vigilant watch over the Chattahoochee in the 1980s.

More water trails

The creation of the Chattahoochee River Water Trail in Atlanta is just the beginning for water trails in our state. **Georgia River Network** (www.garivers.org) and other groups are actively working to establish more of these trails.

UCR has promoted the 39-mile Upper Chattahoochee River Water Trail from Sautee Creek downstream of Helen to Lake Lanier for many years through a feasibility study, collaborative partnerships and a new video. There is also strong interest in creating water trails on the Chattahoochee below Atlanta.

As our nation opens a new chapter on rivers, it's fitting that the Chattahoochee River Water Trail helps lead the way.

Sally Bethea
Executive Director and Riverkeeper

Watershed Moment

My Watershed Moment was when I realized that paddlers are my kind of people — when we floated the Chattahoochee from Settles Bridge to Abbotts Bridge, as part of UCR's River Discovery Series (pictured). Paddlers value and protect the water. They value the connection. They value the camaraderie. They have a sense of adventure. They understand that the only way down the river is with your own paddle at your own pace. They are stewards of the environment. They know the importance of pushing off from the bank, dipping the paddle in the water and enjoying one of the most rewarding and important experiences to be had on this planet.

— Alan Kendall, Dawsonville



On Patrol

For further details on UCR's investigations and enforcement actions, go to www.chattahoochee.org/on-patrol.

PROGRESS MADE MONITORING FLOW, WATER QUALITY IN THE RIVER AT ATLANTA

Since the 1970s, the **Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD)** has relied on a flow of 750 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the Chattahoochee River at Peachtree Creek to help dilute treated wastewater and other discharges from metro Atlanta. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must operate Lake Lanier's Buford Dam to help meet this standard. EPD has issued water withdrawal and wastewater discharge permits based on the assumption that the 750 cfs flow standard is met at all times.

Last November, as we experienced another drought and Lanier's pool began to drop, the state requested and the Corps granted a reduction in the flow requirement, lowering Chattahoochee flows to 650 cfs at Peachtree Creek. Also in November, the **Georgia Water Coalition** released the "**Dirty Dozen**": a list of EPD's top 12 environmental failures for 2011. This list exposed some of the worst offenses to Georgia's waters, including EPD's failure to monitor flows and water quality in the Chattahoochee at Peachtree Creek.

In response to our advocacy, the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** convened a meeting last December with other federal, state and local officials to discuss UCR's concerns over insufficient water quality monitoring and compliance with the 750 cfs standard. At the meeting, we received firm commitments from our agency partners to work toward more consistent compliance with the 750 cfs standard, as well as a reassessment of its adequacy for protecting all designated uses in the Chattahoochee.

To learn more about the Georgia Water Coalition's "**Dirty Dozen**" campaign, see www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm.



UCR measures for dissolved oxygen downstream of Peachtree Creek, where low flows can cause water quality problems.

Mercury rule approved, appealed by industry

Along with hundreds of other environmental and public health organizations around the nation, UCR supported a new rule to limit the release of mercury and other air toxics from coal- and oil-fired power plant emissions. Mercury emitted from power plants contaminates water when rain washes toxins in the air into water bodies on the ground, including the Chattahoochee River. The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** adopted the rule in late 2011 — an action hailed by many as a strong protection against pollutants that are linked to developmental disorders and childhood asthma. Almost immediately after the rule was announced, industry groups filed appeals in federal court and legislative bills have been proposed in Congress to overturn the regulation.

Atlanta voters overwhelmingly approve MOST

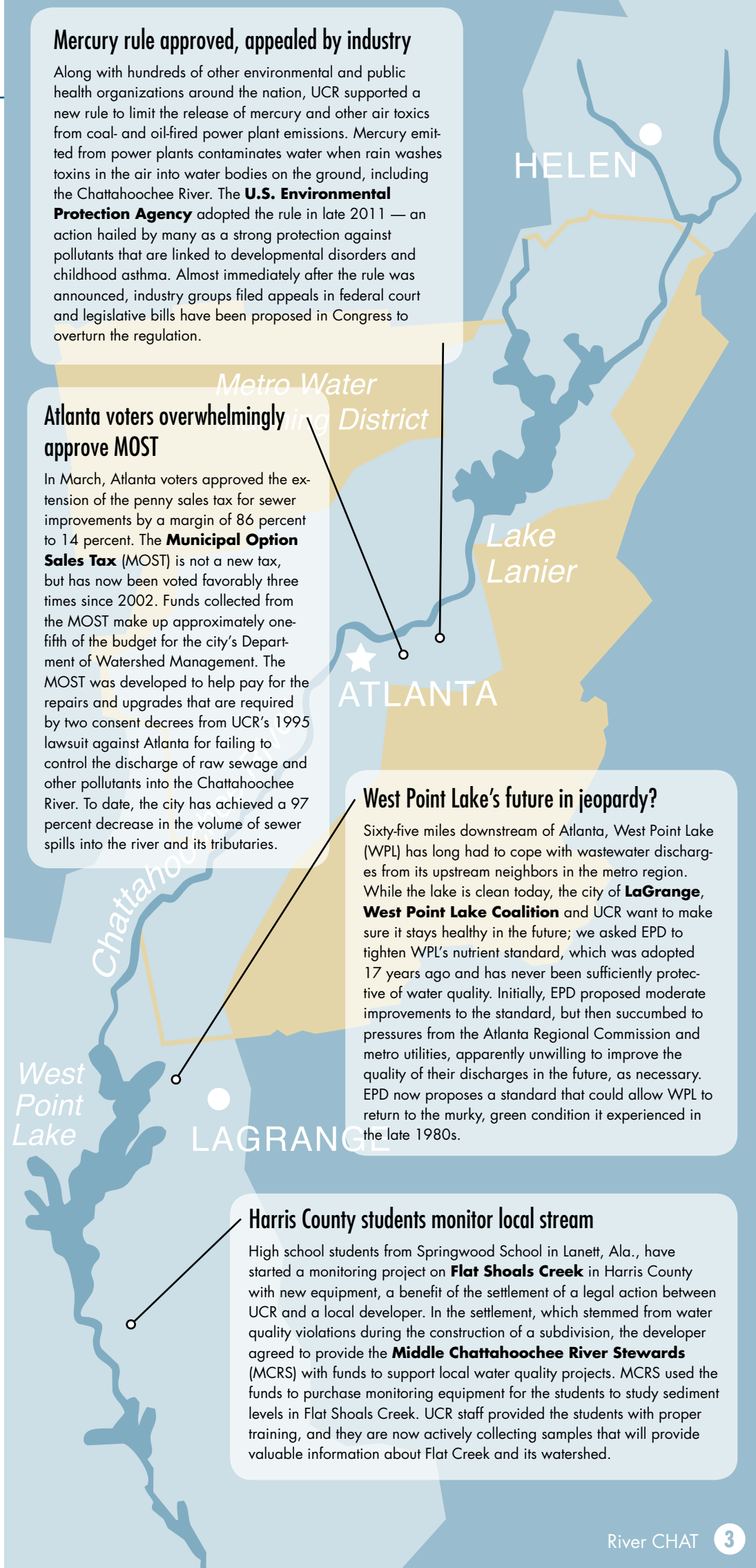
In March, Atlanta voters approved the extension of the penny sales tax for sewer improvements by a margin of 86 percent to 14 percent. The **Municipal Option Sales Tax (MOST)** is not a new tax, but has now been voted favorably three times since 2002. Funds collected from the MOST make up approximately one-fifth of the budget for the city's Department of Watershed Management. The MOST was developed to help pay for the repairs and upgrades that are required by two consent decrees from UCR's 1995 lawsuit against Atlanta for failing to control the discharge of raw sewage and other pollutants into the Chattahoochee River. To date, the city has achieved a 97 percent decrease in the volume of sewer spills into the river and its tributaries.

West Point Lake's future in jeopardy?

Sixty-five miles downstream of Atlanta, West Point Lake (WPL) has long had to cope with wastewater discharges from its upstream neighbors in the metro region. While the lake is clean today, the city of **LaGrange**, **West Point Lake Coalition** and UCR want to make sure it stays healthy in the future; we asked EPD to tighten WPL's nutrient standard, which was adopted 17 years ago and has never been sufficiently protective of water quality. Initially, EPD proposed moderate improvements to the standard, but then succumbed to pressures from the Atlanta Regional Commission and metro utilities, apparently unwilling to improve the quality of their discharges in the future, as necessary. EPD now proposes a standard that could allow WPL to return to the murky, green condition it experienced in the late 1980s.

Harris County students monitor local stream

High school students from Springwood School in Lanett, Ala., have started a monitoring project on **Flat Shoals Creek** in Harris County with new equipment, a benefit of the settlement of a legal action between UCR and a local developer. In the settlement, which stemmed from water quality violations during the construction of a subdivision, the developer agreed to provide the **Middle Chattahoochee River Stewards (MCRS)** with funds to support local water quality projects. MCRS used the funds to purchase monitoring equipment for the students to study sediment levels in Flat Shoals Creek. UCR staff provided the students with proper training, and they are now actively collecting samples that will provide valuable information about Flat Creek and its watershed.



River Stewardship

WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL SELLS OUT FOR FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

With a new venue and a diverse lineup, the 5th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival sold out once again, continuing a winning streak that started with its inception. More than 300 guests filled the Landmark Midtown Art Cinema on March 11 for the festival, co-sponsored by UCR, **Georgia ForestWatch** and **Georgia River Network**.

Viewers watched short films that spanned the spectrum of nature and activism — from energy, food systems, biodiversity and climate change to the protection and restoration of wild lands and waters.

There was also a strong local component. North Georgia paddler and budding filmmaker Jamie Higgins (below) offered a sneak preview from her film about the Upper Chattahoochee River Water Trail, including a hilarious blooper reel during



The Colorado River cuts through the Grand Canyon, as shown in Peter McBride's "Chasing Water."

the closing credits. And, Atlanta's Rhett Turner returned with "Bhutan: Land of the Black Necked Crane."

"We're pleased that the Wild & Scenic Film Festival has struck such a chord with our community," said UCR's Sally Bethea. "Many of our attendees have joined us for multiple years. The festival practically sells itself and is an informative and entertaining way to inspire and activate everyone who attends."

This is the touring version of the national Wild & Scenic Film Festival, the largest environmental film festival in North America, held annually in Nevada City, California.

We'd like to thank our local sponsors: **Turner Broadcasting System, 99X Foundation, SweetWater Brewery, Turner Foundation, Patagonia Atlanta, REI Atlanta, and Smith, Gambrell & Russell.**

LOCAL PADDLER JAMIE HIGGINS FILMS THE RIVERS SHE LOVES

Jamie Higgins, a videographer and avid paddler, spent a year filming and editing a new video about the Upper Chattahoochee River Water Trail from the confluence of Sautee Creek and the river in White County downstream to Lake Lanier. Not yet a state or federally designated water trail, this 39-mile river section connects several state parks and is enjoyed annually by thousands of paddlers.

The hour-long film, a portion of which was screened at UCR's 2012 Wild



"I'd only paddled two sections of the river, and I was pleasantly surprised at how lovely the entire river is above Lake Lanier," Jamie Higgins says about the making of her documentary.

and Scenic Film Festival in March, covers the history of the Upper Chattahoochee River, its people and the creation of the new paddle trail.

Catching the filmmaking bug

This isn't the first film work by Higgins, who is a longtime supporter of environmental issues that focus mainly on impacts to rivers and paddling access. Her previous films include "Save the French Broad: A Paddling Adventure," and a film about the Ocmulgee River Blue Trail that aired on Georgia Public Broadcasting's "Georgia Outdoors" in 2011.

Higgins caught the filmmaking bug when she helped organize and film a memorial paddling event in 2009, after a close friend died in a paddling accident.

"I enjoyed it so much that I decided to video all the rivers and events I paddle as way to educate and inspire others to appreciate both the river and paddling," says Higgins, who works for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 4 office in Atlanta.

For Higgins, documenting the new paddling trail in the Chattahoochee above Lake Lanier was as educational as it was inspiring.

"I'd only paddled two sections of the river, and I was pleasantly surprised at how lovely the entire river is above Lake Lanier," she says. "I also learned so much about the history of the Hooch and how very important a role the river has played in the shaping of history. I particularly was fascinated with the Native American history and was personally moved by the story of the Trail of Tears. I hope that comes across in the film."

UCR's online events calendar will post future viewings of the river video when scheduled at www.chattahoochee.org/calendar.

CAPITOL CONSERVATION DAY HIGHLIGHTS WATER ISSUES

The **Georgia Water Coalition (GWC)**, a consortium of more than 180 organizations — including UCR and representing more than 250,000 Georgians — held its annual Capitol Conservation Day in late February to bring members throughout the state to meet their legislators and share their concern for protecting our environment and state waters.

The day started with a Legislative Breakfast organized by Georgia Conservation Voters. State **Sen. Jack Hill** (R-4th District) and **Reps. Stacey Abrams** (D-84th District) and **Debbie Buckner** (D-130th District) spoke to the crowd of coalition members and state legislators about the legislative measures poised to affect environmental protection authorities and funding.

Sen. Hill was invited to speak about the Ogeechee River legislative delegation's efforts to secure additional protections for the river since the largest fish kill in the state's history was caused by illegal discharges from an industrial discharger in the spring of 2011. The Ogeechee River disaster was named the worst threat to Georgia's water in the GWC's Dirty Dozen report.

Working the ropes

Following the breakfast, more than 70 coalition members stayed for a legislative briefing from experienced lobbyists and issues experts. **Gordon Rogers**, Flint Riverkeeper, educated attendees



Capitol Conservation Day drew more than 100 Georgia Water Coalition members to learn how to advocate their issues and concerns to state legislators.

about several bills that would affect the state's natural resources including one bill (SB 360) that would reclassify three species of tilapia from exotic to domestic and allow the stocking of these invasive fish in private ponds.

Neill Herring of the Georgia Sierra Club spoke about HB 811, which was intended to stop the diversion of funds from programs designed to clean up solid waste and hazardous waste sites. Between 2004 and 2012, more than \$120 million intended for the Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Trust Funds has been redirected to other purposes in the state budget.

Following the briefing on environmental bills moving through the General Assembly, the participants met with their elected representatives under the Gold Dome to urge them to take action on these and other bills. With advocacy tips provided by **Jennette Gayer** of Environment Georgia, coalition members worked the ropes outside the Senate and House floors alongside hundreds of other state activists visiting the Capitol that day lobbying for animal rights, immigration reform and a host of other issues.

"Capitol Conservation Day was a great success because citizens personally communicated to their legislators the importance of the laws that protect clean and plentiful water for them and their families," said **Juliet Cohen**, general counsel for UCR and registered lobbyist.

SALLY BETHEA NAMED A 'HERO OF THE NEW SOUTH'

Sally Bethea was honored by *Southern Living* magazine as one of its "Heroes of the New South" in a special profile in its March issue. Bethea, who helped co-found UCR in 1994, won in the "Eco-Preservation" category "as an individual recognized for fighting tirelessly to preserve the beauty of the region's natural resources," the magazine said.

"I am very honored by this recognition and pleased to accept it as one of the 200 waterkeepers around the world who are working daily for clean, healthy waterways in their communities," Bethea said.



Photo courtesy of Robbie Caponetto/Southern Living

Winners were chosen by the magazine and a panel of jurors, based on the following criteria: contribution to Southern culture, innovation, impact on the community, scope of reach, and how their contributions will impact future generations.

River Matters

For information on these and other river-related events, visit www.chattahoochee.org/calendar

May 19-20
Water Trail Camping and Paddle Trip
Sauttee Creek to Belton Bridge

June 2
Clean the Race Course Paddle Cleanup
In advance of the Back to the Chattahoochee River Race & Festival (June 9).

June 9
10th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race & Festival
Garrard Landing (river race) & Riverside Landing in Roswell (festival)

June 23
River Discovery Series begins!
Segment 1: Buford Dam to Settles Bridge (5 miles).
Other scheduled trips in the series: July 7, July 21, Aug. 4, Aug. 18.

Sept. 8
Paddle Trip
Chestatee River

September 13
Patron Appreciation Dinner
The Foundry

Contest produces winning member T-shirt design



For his winning design in UCR's member T-Shirt Design Contest, **Matthew Albert** had to just close his eyes for inspiration. "I love the Chattahoochee River, and think that it's our most beautiful and precious waterway," said the 27-year-old Albert, the art director at MLT Creative.

Albert's sophisticated and referential design was among the top vote-getters in an online contest held in January on Facebook. The finalists were then graded by a panel of celebrated judges: Freddy Bensch, Big Kahuna, SweetWater Brewery; Catherine Fox, executive director/editor, ArtsATL.com; Felicia Feaster, visual arts critic; and Emily Kate Boyd, musician.

BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES LOSES 'GREEN CONSERVATIVE'

(Editor's note: This article is an abbreviated version of Tom Crawford's column for *The Georgia Report* on Jan. 27, 2012, <http://gareport.com/>, and is reprinted with permission.)

The Georgia Board of Natural Resources completed a historic changeover in January as it said goodbye to an environmental advocate and installed in one of its top positions a lobbyist whose firm's clients include a utility that is one of Georgia's largest sources of air pollution.



Warren Budd was removed from the DNR Board because he was not a "team player."

Board members voted formally to elect **Philip Watt**, a non-practicing physician from Thomasville, as their new chairman. They also elected **Rob Leebern**, a lobbyist with Troutman Sanders Strategies, as the new vice chairman.

Watt replaces **Earl Barrs**, the board chairman in 2011 who was removed from the panel when Gov. Nathan Deal decided not to reappoint him. **Warren Budd**, last year's vice chairman who normally would have rotated to the chairmanship, was also ousted from the panel when Deal refused to reappoint him to another term as well.

Budd was booted from the board after he spoke out against two initiatives that are important to Deal.

Budd expressed skepticism about Deal's proposals to build more reservoirs in North Georgia and he also criticized the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) for imposing a miniscule fine of only \$1 million on a textile company that discharged chemicals into the Ogeechee River, causing the largest fish kill in Georgia's history (the company could have been subject to fines of more than \$90 million).

Told to 'hush up'

"I was told to hush up on both of them," Budd said. "I was warned and I didn't do it, and that is why I'm off."

When reporters contacted the governor's office about Budd's removal from the board, Deal's spokesman issued this reply: "If anyone on any board considers himself indispensable, this is what educators call a 'teachable moment.' It takes an eyebrow-raising amount

of self-regard for someone to suggest publicly that, out of 10 million Georgians, only he or she brings a diverse viewpoint to a board."

He added that the governor wanted to appoint board members "who are excited team players ready to carry out his agenda for our state."

Removal of Budd a 'watershed moment'

The removal of Budd from the Board of Natural Resources is a watershed moment, if you'll pardon the expression, for the board that oversees and sets policy for both the Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Division.

Budd was one of the few remaining board members who could realistically be considered a conservationist dedicated to protecting the state's environment and natural resources.

Deal has made it clear that environmental protection is not the primary mission of either DNR or EPD anymore. Both agencies are now expected to advance the cause of economic development and job creation, even though state government already has a Department of Economic Development ...

The change in mission is vividly illustrated by the installation of Rob Leebern as the new vice chairman in place of Budd ... Leebern is a skilled political operative who's been working inside the Washington beltway for years ... more recently with the Washington office of Troutman Sanders.

One of Troutman Sanders' biggest clients over the years has been Georgia Power, which operates two coal-fired power generation facilities in Georgia, Plant Scherer and Plant Bowen, that are ranked by the EPA as America's largest sources of greenhouse gases ...

Board change started when Perdue took office

When Sonny Perdue was first sworn in as the state's chief executive in 2003, there were three prominent environmental advocates on the DNR board: former lieutenant governor **Pierre Howard**, Columbus attorney **Jim Butler** and **Sally Bethea**, director of the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. All three of those people were removed from the board during the course of Perdue's administration.

Howard was the first to go. In 2003, the Republicans who assumed control of the Georgia Senate refused to confirm nearly 180 people who had been appointed to state boards and commissions by former governor Roy Barnes, a Democrat, during his last year in office (2002). Howard was among that mass of people removed from state boards.

Perdue tried to replace Butler on the DNR board in 2003 before Butler's term had expired. Butler promptly sued the governor in Fulton County Superior Court, where a judge ordered Butler's reinstatement to the board. When Butler's term expired two years later, Perdue then was legally allowed to appoint a replacement.

Perdue did reappoint Bethea to the DNR board, but she was removed from the panel in the same manner as Howard when the Republican majority in the Georgia Senate declined to confirm her reappointment.

... Budd is a lifelong Republican who invokes Teddy Roosevelt as the kind of Republican who believed in conservation. He says his interest in environmental issues was sparked as a young man when his father, Methodist minister Candler Budd, gave him copies of the Rachel Carson books *Silent Spring* and *The Sea Around Us*.

"That's true conservatism," Budd said. "Conservatism is conserving what's good." ...

DNR Board Members

<i>First District</i> Loyce W. Turner	<i>Tenth District</i> Joseph "Joe" M. Hatfield
<i>Second District</i> Philip C. Watt	<i>Eleventh District</i> William A. "Bill" Carruth
<i>Third District</i> Aaron McWhorter	<i>Twelfth District</i> Mabel C. Jenkins
<i>Fourth District</i> Philip A. Wilheit, Jr.	<i>Thirteenth District</i> Walter A. Hudson
<i>Fifth District</i> Robert D. Leebern, Jr.	<i>Coastal District</i> Mark V. Smith
<i>Sixth District</i> Steven R. Woodruff	<i>Member-At-Large</i> Jim Walters
<i>Seventh District</i> J. Dennis Billew	<i>Member-At-Large</i> Phyllis T. Johnson
<i>Eighth District</i> J. Mark Mobley, Jr.	<i>Member-At-Large</i> Duncan N. Johnson
<i>Ninth District</i> William Bagwell, Jr.	<i>Member-At-Large</i> Ray P. Lambert, Jr.

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CONSERVATIONISTS FROM THREE STATES DISCUSS WATER-SHARING PLANS

Last November, UCR and Alabama Rivers Alliance co-hosted the 2011 meeting of the **Tri-State Conservation Coalition**. Representatives from two dozen organizations across the Southeast gathered at Historic Banning Mills near Whitesburg to elect new leadership and identify priorities for 2012. UCR and **Alabama Rivers Alliance** served as the meeting's co-hosts, facilitated by Diana Toledo of the **River Network**.

At the meeting, Coalition members approved a new strategic plan and leadership team. The Coalition is now governed by a Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from organizations in Alabama, Georgia, and Florida: **Coosa Riverkeeper**, **Georgia River Network** and **Apalachicola Riverkeeper**.

The meeting agenda included updates on Coalition core issues, including instream flow protection, inter-basin transfer (IBT) regulation, water and energy efficiency, water quality, and government affairs.

We were joined by a representatives from the **U.S. Geological Survey** (USGS), who provided an update on their new WaterSMART Initiative. The USGS initiative will involve the collection and dissemination of water quality, flow, and ecological data for the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river basin. (See www.doi.gov/watersmart/html/ for more information.)



The historic Banning Mills Retreat and Conservation Center in Carroll County was the perfect setting to convene the leadership of the Tri-State Coalition.

Reservoirs and conservation remain top priorities

During the breakout sessions, Coalition members identified action items on which the Coalition will focus in 2012. Our highest priority is to respond rapidly and uniformly to public notices seeking input on proposed reservoirs in both the ACF and Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) river basins.

Currently, Coalition members are focused on the proposed Richland Creek (ACT basin) and Glades (ACF basin) reservoirs. In both cases, the Coalition is advocating for more aggressive water conservation mea-

sures and better use of existing reservoirs, as more sustainable ways to meet future water supply needs.

Thanks to the generous support of the C.S. Mott Foundation and other funders over the past decade, the Coalition has grown to 40 member organizations representing more than 700,000 people throughout the Southeast.

The Coalition is dedicated to the protection and restoration of water quality, biodiversity, and recreation in the ACF and ACT river basins.

To learn more about the TSCC and how UCR is helping to resolve the tri-state water conflict, visit <http://www.ucriverkeeper.org/tri-state-issues.php>

RECLAMATION AIDS DOUGLAS COUNTY WATER SUPPLY

Twenty years ago, Douglas County built the Dog River Reservoir Dam, impounding a tributary of the Chattahoochee River. The project cost \$7.7 million and provided 6 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to customers of the **Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority** (DDCWSA). Over time, permitted withdrawals increased, reaching 16 MGD in the late 1990s.

Also in the late '90s, Chattahoochee flows were lower than normal due to a severe drought in north Georgia. As a result, the Dog River tributary no longer benefitted from Chattahoochee water backing up into it; the tributary's flows dropped as well.

Lower river flows posed a recurring problem for DDCWSA, because federal and state agencies require the release of at least 6 MGD of water from the Dog River Reservoir to protect stream health. During the exceptional drought of 2006-09, DDCWSA again faced supply challenges, purchasing as much as 60 percent of its water from Cobb County during the height of the drought.

DDCWSA needed a long-term solution to satisfy future water demands.

Innovative engineering solution

Although a 1998 engineering study determined that raising the height of the dam 10 feet could secure 23 MGD of water, DDCWSA still had to ensure at least 6 MGD was available to release to protect the Dog River tributary.

DDCWSA came up with an innovative solution: divert 6 MGD of

reclaimed wastewater from its South Central Wastewater Treatment Plant to replenish Dog River flows. It took \$5 million and three years to lay three miles of pipe extending from the treatment plant to the base of the Dog River Reservoir Dam.

Because the treatment plant is at a higher elevation than the dam, gravity does all the work of moving the treated wastewater, saving energy expenses. The project ultimately provides more water during drought. The project also lowers costs by reducing reliance on other utilities and reducing the need for new reservoirs.

In 2011, UCR recognized the DDCWSA as "Best in Class" for innovative land use practices that protect the Dog River Reservoir. *For more information, read our report: "Filling the Water Gap: Conservation Successes and Missed Opportunities in Metro Atlanta," available at <http://www.ucriverkeeper.org/filling-the-water-gap-report.php>.*



Douglas County now diverts 6 million gallons of reclaimed wastewater daily from a treatment plant to augment Dog River flows.

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF BACK TO THE CHATT RIVER RACES AND FUN!

REGISTER NOW FOR JUNE 9 EVENT

This year, we will celebrate a decade of coming “Back to the Chatt” with our **10th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race & Festival**, on June 9. Paddlers of all ages and skill levels are welcome to join in on the race, which starts at **Garrard Landing Park** on Holcomb Bridge Road. The race ends at **Riverside Park in Roswell**, the site of the FREE family-friendly festival, music and awards presentation.

Registration runs through June 4 for the race, which is organized and presented by UCR in partnership with the **National Park Service, Fulton County**, and the **city of Roswell**. We present this event to celebrate the Chattahoochee and foster a sense of community around the river that serves millions of Georgians with drinking water and outstanding recreation.

Recreational and competitive divisions offered

The race begins at 9 a.m. and includes open and recreational categories, various age divisions, solo and tandem canoe divisions, as well as kayak and sea kayak divisions. Paddlers wanting a competitive race will traverse the ten-mile course, while recreational paddlers will take the 8-mile course. Both include exciting Class III rapids and conclude at Riverside Park. Timing officials will be provided by **Georgia Canoeing Association**.

The festival at Riverside Park, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., is free and family friendly. Racers and others will enjoy live music plus Riverside Park’s “spray ground,” face painting, balloon artists and other family-friendly activities, as well as vendors and an array of environmental exhibits.

Awards will be presented in all categories at the conclusion of the race, including awards for **Best Costume** and **Best Boat Decoration**. The race also includes a **Team Challenge** as a way to build pride, morale and camaraderie among groups such as companies, schools, and clubs. Race fans can cheer on their favorite crafts from several locations: Island Ford, Don White Park and the takeout at the park.



Some of the highlights of the River Race are awards for Best Costume and Best Boat Decoration.



Keeping Watch Over Our Waters

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As a special treat for racers only, paddlers will be greeted at the end of the course by the **SweetWater Beer Barge** (UCR’s own pontoon boat). Paddlers can enjoy sodas, water, or a SweetWater brew (for patrons 21 and over carrying a valid ID) before going ashore.

Advanced registration is available for the fee of \$40 for solo boats and \$60 for tandem boats. After June 4, onsite registration costs are \$50 for solo and \$70 for tandem boats and will be available based on capacity. All registered paddlers will receive a gift bag, a race T-shirt, a boxed lunch, and a one-year membership in UCR. Proceeds go to support UCR’s mission to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River system for the people and wildlife that depend upon it.

Interested in sponsoring this event or other UCR events? Please contact Tammy Bates at tbates@ucriverkeeper.org or (404) 352-9828, ext. 12.

The River Race & Festival is a family-friendly event.

