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**Georgia Riverkeepers Present Solutions to Tri-State Water War:
*Charting a New Course for Georgia's Water Security***

July 15 - Atlanta, GA – Today, three environmental groups charged with protecting Georgia's Chattahoochee, Coosa, and Flint Rivers issued a call to action to the state's gubernatorial candidates, **insisting on the need for a change of course in resolving the Tri-State Water Wars and providing for metro Atlanta's water supply.** The Coosa Riverkeeper, Flint Riverkeeper, and Chattahoochee Riverkeeper – with the support of riverkeeper groups throughout the state – issued a three-point plan entitled *Charting a New Course for Georgia's Water Security* (attached).

On July 17, 2009, the Judge Paul Magnuson ruled that Lake Lanier is not authorized for metro Atlanta water supply and gave Georgia three years to reach an agreement with Alabama and Florida on how to allocate water use in the lake. Speaking at today's Media Briefing, Sally Bethea, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, said, "Unless we change course soon, Georgia faces a major water security crisis in two years. Our next governor and state leaders must break the deadlock which has marked the last 20 years of this conflict."

By most accounts, negotiations between the three states are apparently at a standstill, and various costly solutions have been posed to supply metro Atlanta with water, such as transferring water from other rivers. According to Gordon Rogers, Flint Riverkeeper, "Based on our decades of experience protecting Georgia's waterways, we believe Georgia and its neighbors can reach a mutually beneficial water-sharing agreement without sacrificing our communities or the rivers they depend upon."

The riverkeeper's plan has three main components – the three Rs: **RESPECT, REVEAL, and REDUCE**. Speaking at today's briefing, Joe Cook of the Coosa River Basin Initiative (and Coosa Riverkeeper) elaborated on the first point in the plan: **RESPECT**. "For too long," he said, "many of our leaders have pitted the needs of metro Atlanta against the needs of everyone downstream, in Georgia and beyond. We must demonstrate respect for downstream communities, including respecting their rights to enough clean water, a sustainable environment, and future prosperity."

The plan also calls on Georgia's next governor to reject secrecy and confidentiality agreements, and engage Georgia's stakeholders openly and fully in the negotiating process - **REVEAL**.

Finally, the groups say we must do much more to **REDUCE** our water demand, especially in metro Atlanta, including leak detection and repair, conservation pricing mechanisms, retrofits, and energy efficiency programs.

Other riverkeepers present at today's event included Savannah Riverkeeper, Tonya Bonitatibus, who said, "The riverkeepers have come up with viable solutions, and we encourage our next Governor to ensure a solution for metro Atlanta doesn't come at the expense of the rest of the state."

The media briefing was held today, July 15, at 1:30 pm at Trees Atlanta's Kendeda Center, 225 Chester Avenue, Atlanta, GA. Trees Atlanta's Kendeda Center is a platinum LEED center. B

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