

## AT CRITICAL JUNCTION IN THE CHATTAHOOCHEE, FLOW IS NOT BEING MEASURED...

For over a thousand years, the confluence of the Chattahoochee River and Peachtree Creek in Atlanta has served as a critically important location on the river—from the time when the nearby Creek village of Standing Peachtree marked the boundary between the Creek and Cherokee tribes, until the present day when the tributary serves as a blue line separating Atlanta's drinking water intake and its wastewater discharge pipe. The intake is located a few hundred yards upstream of the mouth of the creek and the discharge pipe about a quarter mile downstream.

### Dilution the Solution

Since the 1970s, the state of Georgia has had a rule requiring that the flow of water in the Chattahoochee above the confluence with Peachtree Creek, and below the city's water intake, be at least 485 millions gallons per day, or 750 cubic feet per second (cfs).

This volume was determined necessary to help assimilate (dilute) the treated wastewater and industrial process water discharged into the river daily by metro municipalities, including the city of Atlanta, Cobb County, and others. In fact, all of the discharge permits issued by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to these various utilities contain pollutant limits that assume this flow will be maintained.



Jason Ulseth, UCR Watershed Protection Specialist, measures dissolved oxygen downstream of Peachtree Creek aboard our patrol boat.

Water released from upstream dams, Morgan Falls and Buford, determines the flow in the Chattahoochee at Peachtree Creek. The flow volume is also affected by upstream withdrawals of water for metro Atlanta supply, as well as rainfall—or more recently, drought.

But, there is one major problem. There is currently no way to instantaneously measure the flow in the river at Peachtree Creek. In other words, state and federal agencies have been managing the Chattahoochee for decades assuming they were meeting the flow target of 750 cfs, but they have been unable (or unwilling) to confirm in real-time that they were actually meeting this goal. This has become a significant problem during recent dry periods, when the metro region's growing population has steadily increased demand for water, making every drop count.

### 30-Year Old Flow Standard Waived

In February, EPD Director Carol Couch asked the Corps of Engineers to reduce its releases at Buford Dam, so that the minimum flow at Peachtree Creek could be lowered by 65 million gallons per day to 650 cfs, thereby allowing more water to stay in Lake Lanier during the spring for use later in the summer.

Working with the **Southern Environmental Law Center**, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) submitted a letter to the Corps objecting to this flow reduction because of obvious concerns about the quality of the

see **Flow Monitoring**, page 7

## THIRD CONSECUTIVE SUMMER OF DROUGHT TAKES TOLL IN NORTH GEORGIA

This June, northeast Georgia entered its *third consecutive* summer of drought, and state climatologist David Stooksbury announced that only five counties (all in southeast Georgia) were not abnormally dry or experiencing drought conditions.

As reported in the *Gainesville Times* (June 24, 2008), Stooksbury also explained how drought can create more drought due to the lack of moisture in the soil. If the sun's energy isn't being used to evaporate moisture, then it goes toward heating surfaces, which then reflects that heat into the air. That means less moisture in the air and fewer afternoon thunderstorms to relieve the summer's heat.



Lake Lanier was 13 feet below normal pool going into this summer.

Photo Credit: Bob Woodhead / Flight Courtesy of SouthWings

At the start of summer, Lake Lanier was the lowest it has ever been for that time of year at 13 feet below normal pool. Army Corps of Engineers personnel predicted a further 2-6 foot drop by September, depending on rainfall.

Some relief will likely come in the form of tropical disturbances, which should become active in late summer, but there is no way to be certain that an active hurricane season will arrive or end Georgia's drought. When we do receive heavy rains, given the ever-increasing hard surface areas in metro Atlanta (55 acres added per day), much of that stormwater rushes across pavement into our rivers and streams without being absorbed into the soil to become the baseflow that is essential during dry periods.

### What the Numbers Tell Us

If we are to take comfort in statistics, droughts typically last 2-3 years, and the third year's summer is usually less severe than the second year's.

Other statistics should galvanize us to step up conservation efforts: Indoor water use in metro Atlanta averages 69 gallons per capita per day. Conserving should reduce individual use to 45 gallons per day.

While most local governments in metro Atlanta are working on leak detection and repair, our region still has an extremely high average rate of water loss due to system leaks (close to 20%), and there are no mandates to reduce these losses.

For more information on what you can do to promote water efficiency efforts, go to [www.chattahoochee.org/notimetowaste](http://www.chattahoochee.org/notimetowaste).

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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

The wind blowing across my face felt like an ocean breeze, strong and fresh, rippling the blue-green water in front of my kayak. But, I was hundreds of miles from the sea, paddling downstream on the hardest-working river in Georgia—our home river, the Chattahoochee.

It was early June when I joined UCR staffers Tammy Morrissey and Bonny Putney on a 13-mile practice run from Buford Dam to Abbots Bridge to scout the area for the first trip of our River Discovery Series, a new partnership program with the National Park Service.

I hadn't paddled the cold waters that flow directly from the bottom of Lake Lanier for several years, and I had forgotten the incredible beauty of this section of the river that divides Forsyth and Gwinnett Counties, a place where you can see every water-worn stone on the bottom of the river through crystal clear water.

Thanks to vigilant protection efforts from nonprofit organizations and investments by government agencies in land acquisition, the riverbanks in this section of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) are still green and fairly well protected, even from the huge subdivisions with river names that have sprouted in the area in the past decade. But, other threats loom, including a proposed discharge of treated sewage into this recreational paradise. (see page 3)



Photo Credit: Betty Honarvar/  
Atlanta Journal Constitution

## River Discovery Paddle Series

A wonderful gift from a local family foundation allowed UCR to purchase our first canoe and kayak trailer and several boats this year to support our River Discovery Paddle Series—five consecutive trips that cover 37 miles within the CRNRA from Buford Dam to Paces Mill. For each river segment, a National Park Service guide is available to point out key natural, cultural and historical features on the river. Those paddlers who complete all five segments will receive a special gift.

On June 21, twelve boats with 17 paddlers were launched into the early morning river mist at Buford Dam for an easy five-mile paddle to Settles Bridge, the first leg of the Discovery Series. Thanks to The Dam Store, owned by longtime UCR supporter George Floyd, for providing the shuttle and several boats, free of charge. The final trip of the season within the national recreation area takes place on August 23; however, several other trips in the headwaters region above Lake Lanier are planned for the fall.

Come join us on the river—we'll make it easy for you, even if you've never paddled a recreational kayak before. Check our website at [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) and also sign up for our bi-weekly RiverFLASH e-blast, which includes all the latest river news and opportunities to volunteer to help our river.

*Sally Bethea*

## WHOLE FOODS MARKET HOLDS 5% COMMUNITY DAY FOR UCR

On June 18, Whole Foods Market held a 5% community day for UCR, designating 5% of the sales at all seven Atlanta area Whole Foods Market and Harry's Farmers Market stores to **SweetWater Brewery's Save the Hooch campaign**. Representatives from UCR were present at participating stores to educate shoppers about the campaign and encourage their support while SweetWater employees offered beer samples. The result? A check for **\$23,645** presented by Whole Foods Market to UCR to support river patrol and water quality monitoring. Associate Marketing Coordinator for Whole Foods Market, Emily Broad, said, "With our current water crisis in Georgia, we thought a citywide 5% Community Day was a great way for Whole Foods Market customers to help Save the Hooch. SweetWater is a terrific local company, and we are happy to partner with them and support UCR in this program."

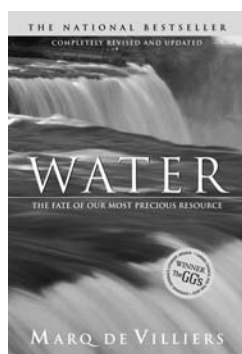
Thanks so much to Whole Foods Market, SweetWater Brewery, and all the shoppers who came out that day to support UCR. Look for the final results of this year's Save the Hooch campaign in the fall issue of *RiverCHAT*.



Jessica Gearhart of SweetWater Brewery encourages Whole Foods shoppers to Save the Hooch!

## BEACH READING ON WATER: THE FATE OF OUR MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE

While the problems facing any given watershed are unique, the world is full of examples of what happens when we ignore the signs of trouble. In his book, *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource*, Marq De Villiers writes about what has happened to countries who have failed to adequately address their water problems.



The starkest example of water mismanagement in this book involves the disappearance of the Aral Sea. Starting in the 1950's, the Soviet Union began transforming the land around the Aral Sea into an agricultural region through irrigation and other water projects. The Aral Sea started out just a little smaller than the state of South Carolina—now it is one-fourth of its original size. The

amount of irrigated land is shrinking each year with no end in sight. By taking out more water than was flowing in, the Soviets set themselves up for tragedy.

De Villiers's book goes beyond the technical problems of water management and gives examples of how political pressures and competition between nations add complexity to any water management problem. For example, the Nile is an essential source of water for Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, but competition between these countries has led to conflict and has stifled cooperative solutions. The problems faced by overuse of a resource like the Aral Sea become even more difficult when there are many users who rely on the same source of water.

In the last chapter of his book, De Villiers argues that the countries with the most success in water management have focused on efficiency. Through leadership, technology, and making users pay the real costs of water consumption, countries like Israel have stretched their supplies beyond what many thought was possible. In what could be mistaken as a joke for readers in Georgia or Tennessee, De Villiers notes that stealing water from others has not been a successful long-term strategy...

*Marq de Villiers is a Canadian journalist and author living in Nova Scotia.*



## EPD ISSUES ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER TO RESTORE TROUT STREAM

Two years ago, we received HOTLINE calls from citizens complaining of land disturbance activities occurring in and along the banks of the **Soque River** in Habersham County, near a stream restoration project that UCR completed more than a decade ago. Upon investigation, it became clear that **Janice Lovell**, an adjacent property owner, had constructed a gravel road within the protected 50-foot stream buffer, rip-rapped a significant length of stream bank, and used heavy equipment to dig out pools for “trout habitat”—all without the appropriate permits. In the absence of any effective action by the Corps of Engineers, the Georgia EPD began to investigate the matter and UCR took a flight with **SouthWings** to obtain aerial video documentation of stream impacts. Largely because Ms. Lovell failed to cooperate, a year and a half passed without any resolution. In June, EPD issued an administrative order requiring Ms. Lovell to file the proper paper work, pay fees, and file a corrective action plan for the site within 30 days; she responded by appealing the order. UCR fully supports EPD’s efforts to enforce the law to protect this important north Georgia trout stream.



## SUGAR HILL SHUTS DOWN PROPOSED KROGER SITE, PENDING COMPLIANCE

UCR received a HOTLINE call regarding erosion and sediment violations at a commercial project in the city of **Sugar Hill** near Georgia Hwy 20. We visited the site with a city inspector and concluded that the 30-acre development had numerous violations that were seriously impacting an adjacent stream. Many of the required best management practices had not been properly installed and muddy water was flowing into the stream every time it rained. After the joint inspection, the city issued a stop-work order at our request, requiring that all necessary management practices be installed and that the impacted stream be restored. We recently inspected the site and determined that three temporary sediment basins, additional silt fence and stabilization measures had been installed and that the developer is working to restore the stream with the assistance of environmental consultants. Work on this development will not be allowed to continue until the stream has been fully restored.



## TROUT WATERS THREATENED BY DISCHARGE OF TREATED SEWAGE

The cold, clear water from the bottom of Lake Lanier is released through the turbines of Buford Dam into the Chattahoochee River as it flows between Forsyth and Gwinnett Counties. For dozens of miles, the typically jade green water sustains aquatic life, including rainbow and brown trout, and provides excellent boating and fishing in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.

Forsyth County has asked the state for permission to discharge up to 6 million gallons of treated sewage per day into this section of the river from the **Fowler and Shakerag** wastewater treatment plants to support the county’s growing population.

When the Fowler plant began operation in January 2004, it was Forsyth’s first wastewater treatment facility. The rest of the county used conventional septic systems or sent sewage to a plant in neighboring Fulton County. With its membrane bioreactor (MBR) technology, the Fowler plant was designed to produce high quality water that could be used to irrigate agricultural areas, golf courses and parks. The county recently applied to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) for a permit to discharge the treated effluent into the Chattahoochee.

### Limits in Proposed State Permit Too Weak

Despite the apparent treatment capabilities of the Fowler and Shakerag plants, the draft permit issued by the state EPD for the combined discharge does not include limits

# On Patrol



## EAST POINT SEWERS CONTINUE TO SPILL INTO NEIGHBORHOOD STREAMS

Four years after UCR threatened to sue the city of **East Point** for violating the federal Clean Water Act, the municipality is still spilling raw sewage from its century-old pipes. In December 2004, the Georgia EPD negotiated a consent order with East Point to repair or replace miles of its sewage collection system by 2014. After failing to meet interim deadlines and continuing to spill sewage from its pipes, the city recently agreed to pay a \$170,000 fine to the state and spend at least \$150,000 to restore streams. East Point reported 158 sewage spills from late 2004 to March 2008, about half of which were considered major, at more than 10,000 gallons each. In fact, four spills in 2005 totaled 6.2 million gallons into Camp Creek, a tributary to the Chattahoochee. Population growth in the city is further straining the ancient, leaking sewer lines. Due to the city’s major budget crisis, EPD was fairly lenient, given the seriousness of these violations. UCR is urging the state to hold firm in the future and demand strict compliance.



## ASPHALT PLANT ON PROCTOR CREEK BEGINS CLEANUP

In April, UCR wrote a letter to the president of **Bankhead Contracting** regarding its closed asphalt recycling plant that straddles Proctor Creek, a major tributary to the Chattahoochee in the city of Atlanta. UCR discovered the site last March while investigating the area and noted hundreds of tires, 55-gallon barrels, leaking machinery and vehicles and piles of asphalt and other materials, many of which are on the edge of the creek. The company responded to our letter, saying that they would work cooperatively with EPD to clean up the site and bring it into compliance with clean water laws. With the city taking steps to fix its sewage leaks and the combined sewer overflows that have long plagued Proctor Creek, there is hope that this urban stream will someday be restored to its former glory. UCR will continue to monitor this site which has made good progress in its cleanup efforts to date.



that reflect the ability of the plants, as designed, to reduce pollution loads. Therefore, we do not believe that the permit meets the “highest statutory and regulatory requirements”, pursuant to Georgia’s anti-degradation laws.

UCR submitted a detailed comment letter to EPD in February, which requested a public hearing, and met with agency representatives in May. Our concerns include the potential for increased levels of phosphorus, bacteria, and water temperature, among other issues. Phosphorus is a nutrient that can cause excessive algal and weed growth in the river. Increases in water temperature can have devastating effects on the river including die offs of trout populations. The proposed permit fails to require adequate monitoring to ensure that the discharge does not overly heat the cold river water critical to trout habitat.

Should EPD issue the proposed Fowler/Shakerag discharge permit as currently written, UCR will consider all options to ensure that this wastewater permit is sufficiently protective of the Chattahoochee and the national recreation area.



Rainbow Trout are highly sensitive and require clean, cold water to survive.

© iStockphoto.com/gmrcoop

# River Stewardship

## BACK TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RACE AND FESTIVAL A SUCCESS FOR THE SIXTH YEAR

Even with incredibly low water levels, 334 paddlers of all ages and skill levels (259 boats) took to the water at Garrard's Landing Park on June 14, 2008, to start the 6th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival. The skies were overcast, which made for perfect weather in navigating the shoals. At the end of the 8-mile recreational and 10-mile open course, racers were greeted by UCR's pontoon boat, *The Molly B.*, offering complimentary SweetWater Beer and Coca-Cola products.



Father-daughter teams made a splash at the race.

Make sure to save the date for the 7th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race & Festival—to be held June 13, 2009.

The Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival is organized by Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, National Park Service, Fulton County and the city of Roswell.

If you're interested in becoming a sponsor for next year's event, please contact Tammy

Morrissey at [tmorrissey@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:tmorrissey@ucriverkeeper.org) or 404.352.9828/ext. 12.



Festival-goers enjoyed environmental exhibits at Roswell's Riverside Park.

Photo Credit: Tom Wilson



A four-legged captain steers his owner's boat to shore.

Photo Credit: Tom Wilson

### Attendance Largest Yet at Family-Friendly Festival

Well over 1500 spectators, paddlers and river enthusiasts came out to enjoy the family-friendly festival at Riverside Park, featuring live music from Gareth Asher, The Vagabonds and the Bitsyland String Band, and an array of environmental exhibitors—including the Riverside Farmers Market showcasing a wide variety of locally grown or made agricultural products. And there was an abundance of children's activities such as strolling magicians, face painting, a bouncy room, and REI's PEAK Program (Promoting Environmental Awareness in Kids).



The main stage featured performances by the Vagabonds (pictured above) and Gareth Asher.

Photo Credit: Kent Ruby

Medals were presented during the festival to the top finishers in each category, including following winners of the Georgia Flatwater Series: C1 Men, Larry Castillo; C1 Men's Master, Jim Normandin; K1 Men, Javier Comelli; K1 Men's Master, Carl Moore; K1 Men's Touring, Robert Osborne; K1 Men's Touring Master, Bill Beavers; and C2 Men's, Rod Price and Allen McAdams.

Congratulations to these and all our race winners and competitors! All race results are posted on the UCR website. Special recognition and thanks go to the Georgia Canoeing Association for providing the team to time the event.

Thank you to our 2008 River Race & Festival Sponsors!

#### Presenting Sponsor

Rock100.5 Atlanta's Rock Station

#### River Benefactor

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

#### River Defender

Chevron, Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., The Coca-Cola Company, city of Atlanta. RIOT Atlanta

**And our other Sponsors...** Harry's Farmers Market, SweetWater Brewing Co., SignUp4, Georgia Canoeing Association, Georgia Transmission Corp., Lipton, Keystone Press, Inc., Tom's of Maine, Brown & Caldwell, Smith's Olde Bar, Coca-Cola Enterprises.



Boats lined up at the put-in.

Photo Credit: Tom Wilson

# Ray's ON THE RIVER®

## Ray's to Hold Seafood Festival!

Ray's Restaurants will hold its inaugural Seafood Festival on Saturday, October 4, 2008, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Ray's on the River on the banks of the Chattahoochee.

The event will feature an array of hot and cold seafood fare along with demonstrations from the dining chain's award-winning chefs, live entertainment, fun children's activities and more. UCR is the designated non-profit organization for the event. The NOAA Fisheries Service will also support the Festival with its involvement.

Look for more information coming soon on [www.raysrestaurants.com](http://www.raysrestaurants.com).

## FRAN BURST: TELLING THE STORY OF WATER IN FILM

When Fran Burst was growing up in the 50s and 60s on twelve acres of land just outside of Dallas, Texas, she watched the creek running through her family's property rise and fall. "Water was the thing we were most conscious of growing up," she says. And she was aware of its limits. "I knew things were limited," says Fran.

Years later, living in Atlanta with a successful career as an Emmy-award winning producer well in place, Fran realized that though she had worked with many companies and nonprofits, she hadn't addressed her long-felt passion for the environment in film. She found the Georgia Conservancy and met Sally Bethea in her pre-UCR life. One result was the video *Stream of Conscience: Natural Solutions for Clean Water*. Another result was a collaboration which led to Fran's unofficial role as UCR videographer and river storyteller.

### A Creative Messenger for Healthy Waterways

Through her work, Fran encourages viewers "to think about water as the incredibly precious resource that it is." She has documented the importance of erosion and sediment control for UCR's *Get the Dirt Out* program, helped to educate students about water quality through the *Waters to the Sea* interactive CD-Rom, told the story of UCR's history and mission, and produced PSAs for UCR's annual river race and festival. One of her favorite projects was creating the video diary for the Soque River Restoration project in the Chattahoochee's headwaters. Fran has also created videos for Georgia Adopt-a-Stream and the Georgia Water Management Campaign, as well as many other



Photo Credit: Scott Sonnenberg

Fran Burst filming in Santa Monica, CA, with Televent, Inc., for Habitat for Humanity International.

clients working to protect our natural resources.

What no list of credits will say about Fran Burst is that she is all about relationships. She will drop whatever she is doing to help someone who needs her to lend a hand. After her son Joe left the nest, Fran happened into teaching. An inspired and inspiring educator, Fran has been named the **Art Institute of Atlanta's 2008 Faculty Member of the Year**. She has also mentored more than 100 interns and apprentices during her film career.

It was a lucky day for UCR and the Chattahoochee when Fran's passions for film and water collided, and she and her team at **Burst Video/Film, Inc.**, continue to provide support for UCR's video projects.

*Fran Burst-Terranella and her husband Tony Terranella live in Atlanta's Inman Park.*

## HI-TECH WATER CONSERVATION CENTER AT MANHEIM GEORGIA

Imagine a beaker of completely black water, impossible to see through, containing oil, grime, and chemicals from washing cars and cleaning engines, being transformed into crystal clear water via a highly-sophisticated water treatment process. That's what is happening at the **Manheim Georgia Water Conservation Center**.



Cox Enterprises' Chairman and CEO Jim Kennedy welcomes visitors to the opening of Manheim's water conservation facility.

Manheim, a subsidiary of **Cox Enterprises**, is the world's leading provider of vehicle remarketing services, services that require a lot of water: 15,000 gallons a day at the Georgia plant alone. Tasked with the goals of using less water and improving the quality of its wastewater, Manheim, in partner-

ship with Ashland, Inc., designed the state-of-the-art facility which opened this past June.

### Building a Better Grease Trap

In a multi-tiered process, wastewater from the vehicle detail operation is equalized and sent to a bioreactor tank where millions of micro-organisms consume soap, oil, grease and other organic material. Once the water travels through ultra-filtration and reverse osmosis membranes, the engineers at Manheim and Ashland have turned that black beaker of reject water into one that is almost clear. In addition, 60% of treated water is now high-quality reusable water (picture a crystal clear beaker) – a reduction in demand of 9,000 gallons of water per day.

Manheim's efforts are part of the Cox Conserves program, a national initiative launched in 2007 to enable and encourage Cox's 83,000 employees and their families to engage in eco-friendly practices that reduce energy use and promote sustainability. Cox Conserves' goal is to reduce its energy consumption by 20% by 2017.

To learn more visit [www.coxconserves.com](http://www.coxconserves.com).

## A NEW WAY TO COLLECT TRASH: LITTER TRAP MAKES DEBUT ON UPPER HOCH

Opinions are varied when it comes to categorizing litter as a form of water pollution, but any trash that is carelessly discarded on the land can be carried into our waterways by stormwater runoff. And while much of the debris may merely be unsightly, it takes less than a full quart container of used motor oil or household cleaning chemical to contaminate a stream or cause a fish kill. For this reason, it is important to keep all litter out of our waterways.

To help combat the trash problem this year, a floating litter trap has been installed in the upper Chattahoochee just south of the bridge at Edelwiss Strasse in Helen. This collection device, called the Band-along Litter Trap, is the first of its kind in North America. **Stormwater Systems** of Cleveland, GA, who designed and



SEAT Club members Elizabeth Brown and J.W. Goss demonstrate a litter characterization.

Photo Credit: Marc del Santro

installed the trap, is partnering with several community groups and organizations including UCR to promote this new concept for litter control. The floating device that sits on top of the water and collects trash and debris is positioned so it does not interrupt flow or hinder access to the river.

The Student Environmental Action Team (SEAT) Club from **White County Middle School** will be volunteering its time to remove the litter from the trap, sort the recyclables and then characterize the most prevalent types of items found in the river. The organizations

promoting the project hope to use this as an opportunity to not only help keep the river clean, but to also raise awareness about keeping litter out of the river.

## ACCOLADES TO OUR RIVERKEEPER!



On May 6, Sally Bethea was honored by the Georgia Center for Nonprofits with the Evelyn G. Ullman Innovative Leadership Award (and a \$15,000 check written to UCR!).

The award is given every other year to an outstanding leader addressing a critical community need.

# NEW RESERVOIRS: NO MAGIC BULLET FOR SOLVING WATER CRISIS

This May, Governor Perdue signed the Water Conservation and Drought Relief Act, a law intended to expedite the building of reservoirs in Georgia, saying, “After facing one of the worst droughts in our state’s history, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure an adequate water supply that meets future needs.”

The bill Perdue signed combined two different pieces of legislation, one of which represented a conservative approach to maximize the usage of *existing* lakes for water supply, a concept UCR supports. There are several dozen lakes large enough to serve as water supply sources, but which are not used for that purpose.

The second bill set up a new division in the GA Environmental Facilities Authority to expedite the construction of *new* reservoirs by local governments, regional groups of local governments, and the state. This new division will require hundreds of millions of dollars to build new



The new Hickory Log Creek Reservoir, which dams a tributary to the Etowah River in Canton, will cost more than \$100 million.

Photo Credit: Jeff Davis

impoundments, however those funds have not been appropriated as yet.

The potential benefits of any specific, proposed reservoir must be assessed individually. Reservoirs are also expensive to build: a typical water supply reservoir such as those being built by Cobb and Cherokee Counties costs more than \$100 million.

The pros and cons of building reservoirs in Georgia were explored extensively by water experts in a study published by the University of Georgia River Basin Center in

2002 (see below).

UCR is urging policymakers to invest in more cost-effective water efficiency measures first; these include reducing system leaks, improving the operation of existing reservoirs, and investing in other effective conservation programs.

## UGA’s River Basin Center on Reservoirs

Many existing reservoirs provide benefits of municipal and industrial water supply, navigation, and flood control. Lake Lanier is a vital source of drinking water and hydropower.

Reservoirs also can provide wonderful recreational benefits, including flatwater sport fisheries. Millions of people visit Lake Lanier each year to fish, boat, and swim. Smaller reservoirs, in addition, also provide water for agricultural purposes.

During droughts and typical late summer low flow periods, reservoirs can help ensure that municipal, industrial, and agricultural water demands can be met. While not a guarantee, greater storage volumes can decrease the chances of supply shortfalls.

### The Down-Side of Reservoirs

It is estimated that in Georgia we have more than 5,400 impoundments on our rivers and streams – indeed, almost all Georgia lakes are artificial. While many of them are vital to neighboring communities, some have come at a high price.

While reservoirs can provide a safety net when supplies are low, they result in a net loss of water from the entire river system, in part by increasing the rate of evaporation. Evaporation rates from a reservoir’s open water surface are greater than the loss of water from a flowing river and the surrounding land prior to inundation. Another problem with relying on reservoirs for water supply is that they become silted in over time, and storage capacity is lost. This limits the functional life of the reservoir or requires additional investment for dredging.

Looking at the overall river system, reservoirs are almost guaranteed to be detrimental to a river’s health. Rivers are self-purifying systems – not so for reservoirs. They can decrease a river system’s capacity to assimilate waste, creating water quality problems downstream. Dams create conditions that most native fish cannot tolerate. The impoundment of so many of Georgia’s waterways has endangered or threatened the existence of 50 of our native species of freshwater fish and mussels. Altered stream flows can also cause property damage downstream.

Information excerpted and paraphrased from *Reservoirs in Georgia: Meeting Water Supply Needs While Minimizing Impacts*, 2002, available at <http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu>.



UCR’s Boat Captain Harlan Trammell

## CAPTAIN’S CORNER THE VIEW FROM THE MOLLY B.

On a recent Saturday, I set up *The Molly B.*, our 22-foot pontoon boat, near the Roswell Road Bridge for UCR’s annual river race and festival. The morning was overcast and humid, but the cold river kept the air nice and cool. I picked up the good folks from SweetWater Brewery and proceeded to the finish line area where thirsty racers could paddle over for a variety of free, delicious beverages donated by **Coke** and **SweetWater**.

After dropping anchor and setting up for beverage service, an hour or so went by before the first pro racers began to appear. On-lookers began to gather as more paddlers and their colorful crafts completed the course. Racers were very glad to get a refreshing beverage from *The Molly B.* beer barge, tie up alongside, and relax a bit before hauling out their vessels and heading up to the festival.

### Sweet Time on the Water Had by All

As more recreational contestants arrived, a variety of paddlecraft anchored or tied up against a large tree in the water and alongside *The Molly B.* for relaxation after the strenuous trip. Boats from basic, plastic ones to hand-made wooden speedsters—and everything in between—

all sat around the boat as the SweetWater crew and UCR’s Jason Ulseth handed out beverages and water.

My nephew and brother-in-law arrived, so I turned the boat over to Captain Jason and bummed a canoe ride to shore to meet them and check out the festival. A quick view from the dock still showed a large portion of racers enjoying themselves at the *The Molly B.* The festival was well underway at the time with live music, vendors, and exhibitors.

Despite predictions of heavy rain and lightning, the weather continued to hold. My brother-in-law, my nephew, and I swam back out to the pontoon boat, which by now had a much shallower draft as the load had gotten lighter. The swim back out was refreshing and much-needed.

By now, the last racers had completed the course and it was time to start setting up for the awards ceremony. The timing was perfect as the supply of beverages was running out. One “last call” and I prepared for departure and then headed back to the boat ramp. A great time was had by all, whether working or racing. Special thanks go out to the crew at SweetWater and Coke!

# FLOW MONITORING

Continued from page 1

water in the river below Atlanta and in West Point Lake. It is our belief that the margin of safety for water quality is narrowing, threatening the river's health as metro growth advocates try to hold back every inch of water in Lanier.

In our letter, we also noted the inadequacy of the state's river monitoring. At the time, there was only one real-time monitoring station for water quality in the entire 65-mile section of the Chattahoochee from Peachtree Creek to West Point Lake, located near Fairburn and operated by the US Geological Survey (USGS).

After a public comment period, the Corps granted EPD's request, and from March through the end of May the low flow target was reduced. EPD did install a second monitoring station about ten miles downstream of the existing USGS station. Notably, in mid-April, this station registered a problem, when the dissolved oxygen level in the river dropped below the instream standard.

## River Monitoring, Advocacy for a Gauge

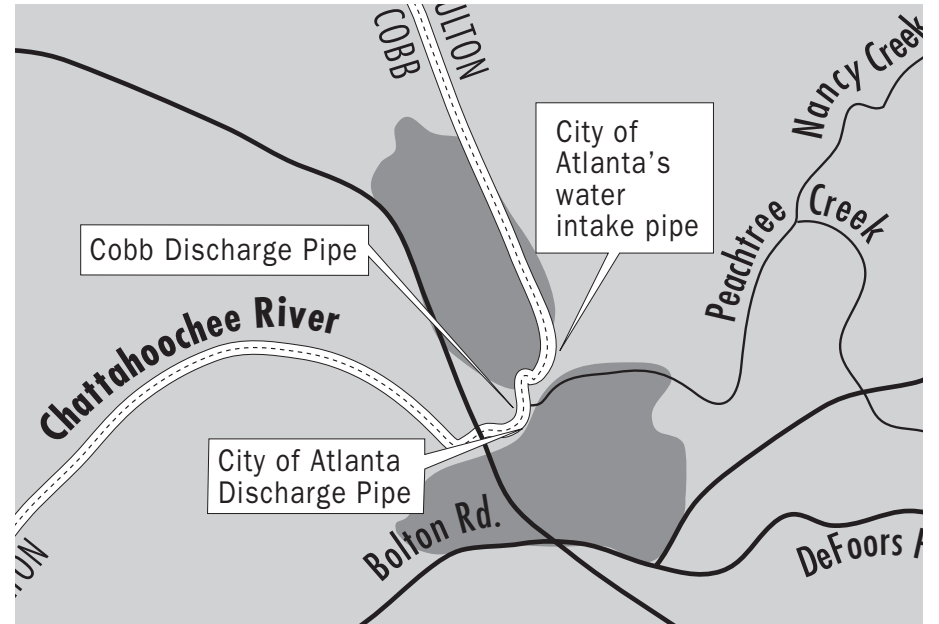
Because of our concerns about the lack of adequate monitoring, UCR has started monitoring at a dozen locations in the river; we will continue to monitor at least every two weeks throughout the warm summer months when pollution problems from low-flow conditions are more likely to occur. UCR is conducting the only routine on-the-water sampling in this critical section of the Chattahoochee River.

At the same time, we have repeatedly urged state and federal agencies to develop a mechanism to monitor the river flow at Peachtree Creek in real-time, so that necessary corrections can be made if the flow level gets too low. The USGS recently concluded that the installation of a monitoring device between the creek and Atlanta's water intake is not possible; there-

fore, other alternatives must be considered.

The Corps of Engineers suggested in a letter to EPD in May that a real-time monitoring station could be installed at the Atlanta intake for instantaneous withdrawal data; this data would be used in conjunction with data collected by the upstream USGS gauge at Vinings to calculate the flow at Peachtree Creek. To date, neither EPD nor federal agencies have pursued this or any other alternative.

Does Georgia intend to enforce regulations that protect its people and their resources, or does it plan to continue pretending that economic growth has no impact on water supplies, avoiding measures that threaten that fiction?



Confluence of Peachtree Creek and the Chattahoochee River.



## UCR HELPS MAKE STATE'S STORMWATER RULES SOME OF THE STRONGEST IN THE COUNTRY

Sediment from construction sites has been documented to be one of the leading sources of pollution to our rivers, lakes, and streams, also harming property values for landowners.

Muddy runoff from construction sites can be seen flowing through most waterways after heavy rainfalls. In an effort to minimize the sedimentation and the very real environmental and economic impacts, construction sites are regulated by the federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) with general construction stormwater permits.

These permits require that a developer install best management practices (BMPs) such as silt fences to minimize sediment loss and provide limits for how much sediment can be discharged during storm events. Since these permits dictate the actions of a developer on a construction site, the overall quality of these permits can be directly tied to the overall quality of our state waters.

### Riverkeepers Lead the Fight

The NPDES general construction stormwater permits expire and must be renewed every five years; the previous set of permits expired on July 31, 2008. The agency charged with updating and reissuing the permits is the Environmental Protection Division (EPD). In March, EPD convened a stakeholder group comprised of 27 industry professionals from across the state to negotiate permit revisions. These professionals represented all of the major sectors affected by the permits, including developers, home builders, public utilities, local government, state government, and the environmental community.

Three individuals were selected to represent the environmental community on the stakeholder group: Jason Ulseth, UCR's Watershed Protection Specialist; Betsy Nicholas, UCR's then general counsel (who moved to

Washington, D.C. in June to work for the US Department of Justice); and Chandra Brown, executive and riverkeeper for Ogeechee-Canoochee Riverkeeper based in Statesboro.

### Limit on Land Disturbance, Protection for Impaired Waters

The stakeholder group met over a period of two months, spending many long and grueling days negotiating permit revisions. Betsy, Jason, and Chandra were among the most vocal members of the group, fighting relentlessly to oppose any attempts to weaken the permits, while at the same time pushing to strengthen water quality protections within the permits. They secured several key victories in the stakeholder process that will help make Georgia's permits among the most stringent in the country and provide important new protections for our state's water resources.

A significant new requirement is the 50-acre limitation on the amount of land that may be disturbed at any one time, preventing developers from stripping the vegetation off large swaths of land and filling adjacent streams and rivers with sediment from large exposed areas. Another strengthening provision in the proposed permits will require additional protections on sites that could impact impaired streams—those waterways that have already been determined to have been harmed by sedimentation. This new requirement will help ensure that these

degraded streams will have a better chance to heal and return to a healthy state.

The revised permits contain many improvements that UCR and other river protection groups will be able to use to work with developers, local governments and state agencies to keep our waterways free from sediment pollution. For more information, contact Jason Ulseth at [julseth@ucriverkeeper.org](mailto:julseth@ucriverkeeper.org).



Construction activities can have devastating effects on nearby waterways.

## RIVER REVIVAL ROCKS WITH RECORD ATTENDANCE

May 15, 2008, brought much-needed rain to the downtown Atlanta area - but nothing could drown out the festive mood of over 700 people enjoying the sights and sounds of the 12th Annual River Revival. Hosted by UCR at **Park Tavern**, this year's party set all-time records—both in attendance and in funds raised... to the tune of \$80,000 net!



UCR Board members Steve O'Day and Dionne Driscoll.

With Ed Roland, Joel Koeshe, and Will Turpin of **Collective Soul** playing an acoustic set and **SweetWater Brewery** kicking off its annual Save the Hooch Campaign, we had a combination that couldn't lose. Kicking off the music program were Atlantans **Christopher Alan Yates** and **Gareth Asher** who performed opening sets.



Sold-out crowd fills the Park Tavern tent.

Admission included a low country boil from **Whole Foods Market** and other wonderful food, complimentary beer brewed by Park Tavern and SweetWater, wine and soft drinks, live and silent auctions, music (of course!), and a one-year membership in UCR.

Thanks to our fantastic host committee and its co-chairs: Missy & Clay Courts, Jennifer & Steve Farace, Lesley & Dan Flores, Mary Jane & Dave Kirkpatrick, Angela & Paul Smith, Andrew Sugrue, and Ralston Wells.



Keeping Watch Over Our Waters

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund, Inc.  
916 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. NW, Suite 3  
Atlanta, GA 30318-5280  
404-352-9828



a member of Earth Share  
OF GEORGIA



Ed Roland of Collective Soul.

Thanks also to our auction donors, volunteers, and the 2008 River Revival Sponsors:

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### River Benefactor

The Coca-Cola Company  
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RIOT Atlanta

### River Defender

Cox Enterprises, Inc.  
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**And our other sponsors...** esurance, Chevron, Montgomery Watson Harza / Kafra - A Joint Venture, Signup4, Southwire Company, SweetWater Brewing Co., Upper Chattahoochee Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Whole Foods Market, Friends of Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, Green Street Properties, Honda Marine, Lynwood Development Group, Turner Foundation, Allied Waste, Aquascape Environmental, Atlanta Fly Fishing Club, Brown & Caldwell, Gunn Construction & Development, Inc., Bobby Hogg, Marthasville Development, LLC, The Paradies Family, Southern Civil Engineers, Inc. and Karen & Angelo Varrone.



Party-goers show their enthusiasm for the river and the band.

All Photos Credit: Kent Ruby

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## River Matters

### River Discovery

**Trip - Segment 4 August 9**  
Jones Bridge to Island Ford

For more information visit  
[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

### Kids Fishing Event - Back to School August 9

Chattahoochee River  
National Recreation Area

For more information visit  
[www.nps.gov/chat/](http://www.nps.gov/chat/)

### River Discovery

**Trip - Segment 5 August 23**  
Morgan Falls Dam  
to Paces Mill

For more information visit  
[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

### Kids Fishing Event - Last Days of Summer September 20

Chattahoochee River  
National Recreation Area

For more information visit  
[www.nps.gov/chat/](http://www.nps.gov/chat/)

### 14th Annual

**Patron Dinner September 24**

For more information visit  
[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

### Sales Tax Holiday for Water/Energy Efficient Appliances October 2-5

For more information visit  
<http://www.etax.dor.ga.gov>

### Ray's Seafood

**Festival October 4**

Ray's on the River  
For more information visit  
[www.raysrestaurants.com](http://www.raysrestaurants.com)

### UCR Paddle Trip October 11

Flatwater Paddle  
on Tugaloo Lake,  
Tallulah Falls

For more information visit  
[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

### Adopt-A-Stream

**Workshop October 17-18**

Elachee Nature  
Science Center,  
Gainesville

Contact: Judith Cocus at  
770-535-1976 or  
[judith@elachee.org](mailto:judith@elachee.org)

### Soque River Ramble

**6K Run & Walk October 25**  
Batesville, GA

For more information visit  
[www.soqueriverramble.com](http://www.soqueriverramble.com)

### UCR Paddle

**Trip October 25-26**

Two-day paddle  
and camping trip

For more information visit  
[www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)

### Hemlockfest November 7-9

Starbridge near  
Dahlonega

For more information visit  
[www.lumpkincoalition.org/issues/hemlocks/hemlockfest/index.html](http://www.lumpkincoalition.org/issues/hemlocks/hemlockfest/index.html)



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