

GEORGIA WATER MONITORING PROGRAMS CHRONICALLY UNDERFUNDED



Photo by: Adrian Fusinaz

With only a few weeks left in the 2006 session of the Georgia Legislature, a curious thing happened. Senator Tommy Williams (R-Lyons), a member of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, eliminated the funding for the state's stream flow gauging and monitoring network, just two months before the beginning of hurricane season.

Sen. Williams' action was apparently motivated by his squabbles with the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) over matters not related to the monitoring program. It reflects, however, a much larger problem—the continuing failure of state leaders to understand the critical need for a comprehensive and continuing water monitoring program in Georgia to protect citizens and property.

The \$400,000 item deleted by Sen. Williams was ultimately restored in the final version of the 2007 state budget, and the federal government matched this amount dollar for dollar. Yet, this funding level represents a fraction of the resources that are needed to adequately assess the quality of our waters and predict floods for public safety.



National Park Service Biologist Dave Lairson draws water samples from the Chattahoochee River.

We in Georgia are blessed with 70,000 miles of streams, 100 miles of coastline, 850 square miles of estuaries, and 425,000 acres of public lakes. However, only a very small percentage of these waterways are monitored to ensure that they are safe for recreation, fishing and drinking water supplies. EPD has never been given the resources to operate the kind of program that Georgians deserve and need, in order to plan for their communities and families, and that other states provide their environmental agencies.

Cooperative Program Threatened

Working with local and state agencies, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) provides reliable scientific information to describe and understand our water; to minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; and to enhance and protect our

quality of life. Unfortunately, USGS budgets are being threatened not just in Georgia, but nationwide. (See article below.)

As part of a cooperative program with EPD, USGS operates a network of 45 river stream gauges and 64 groundwater

See *State Water Monitoring*, page 7

CUTS THREATEN NATIONAL STREAM GAUGES

River flooding kills about 125 people each year and costs billions of dollars in property damage. Much of this damage can be avoided when rivers are monitored by stream gauges that help warn a flood is on the way so people can move to higher ground.

While the data from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauges are best known for alerting people to floods, the devices serve many other purposes: forecasting droughts, managing hydropower production, and ensuring the safe design and maintenance of public infrastructure including bridges and dams. This data also helps determine the 100-year flood measurements that figures into flood insurance policies and construction regulations.

USGS operates and maintains the nation's stream gauge network, a critical system for monitoring America's water resources, with extensive cooperation from other federal agen-

cies, state agencies, interstate organizations, tribal and local governments, and many non-governmental organizations.

Quality of Basic Data in Serious Jeopardy

Despite the critical importance of the stream gauge network, the program has been severely under-funded. The monitoring program is being squeezed to the point where the quality of basic data is in serious jeopardy and an increasing number of stream gauges are no longer being maintained or operated. The national network lost about 50 gauges in 2005 and another 200 gauges are threatened by budget cuts at some level this year.

In response to this threat, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper joined an effort led by the Hydropower Reform Coalition to request budget increases to support the monitoring network. The groups sent letters to the members of the



Sope Creek in Cobb County after a rain event.

Photo by: Andrew Hickey

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

REFLECTIONS

Perhaps it reflects the old nursery rhyme, "April showers bring May flowers" that makes the month of May always seem a time for inspiration. We start it with our annual River Revival celebration (page 8) and continue with spring river trips and last-minute planning for our early June River Race and Festival. More than 300 paddlers participated in this year's event (page 4)!

I can always count on inspiration at the National River Rally each May, which alternates between conference centers on the East and West coasts. **River Network**, the organizer of the Rally and on whose board I have served for seven years, drew more than 500 river conservationists from all over the country to the spectacular Mt. Washington Hotel in New Hampshire this year.

Climate Change on the Agenda

For the first time, the River Rally focused on what is probably the most important environmental issue of our time—climate change—and the very likely implications for our children and the world in which they will live. River Network's president, **Don Elder**, spoke eloquently about the situation and the critical role that our community of freshwater organizations *must* play to prepare for, and work to minimize, the effects of climate change.

The current scientific consensus is that in order to stabilize the climate at some new, much warmer level by the end of the 21st century, we must reduce current greenhouse emissions by 70% by mid-century, and that we must get a very good start on those reductions in the next ten years.



Photo credit: Beig Honorar/
Atlanta Journal Constitution

We need fundamental change in how we produce and use energy on this planet, and fast.

The Energy, Water Connection

One of the first things that we, river advocates, can do is to make the connection between water conservation and energy conservation. Saving water is always important in its own right, but saving water also turns out to be one of the best ways to save *energy*, too. We need to conserve water because it keeps water in our streams where it is needed - *and* because it saves energy.

We have barely scratched the surface of what is possible in this country in terms of reducing per capita water use. Almost every city in America is sitting on a huge reservoir of already-developed, already-delivered, and already-treated water simply waiting to be tapped through greater water efficiency.

We must also continue our traditional work of protection and restoration, watershed by watershed. It's more important today than ever, because our waters must be healthy and resilient enough to withstand the new stresses that climate change is bringing. In the fall issue of *RiverChat*, we'll explore other ways that UCR members and supporters can help make the fundamental changes that are needed.

To quote my friend Don: "Our species cannot put this genie completely back in the bottle, but if we act boldly and quickly, we can still make an enormous difference."

Sally Bethea

NEW BOARD MEMBER AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR JOIN UCR

Two years ago, **Mike Eckert** and his wife Janis joined a small group of UCR members to hike cross-country through the Chattahoochee National Forest, searching for Eastern Hemlocks and the deadly Wooley Adelgid that is moving into north Georgia and killing these trees. Scrambling down slopes and crossing small headwater streams, the Eckerts learned about UCR's programs and challenges.



Mike Eckert

In 2005, Mike became a member of our Development Committee and is now the newest member of our Board of Directors. As former CEO of The Weather Channel and now CEO of Pathfire, Inc., he brings a great deal of business savvy and strategic thinking to our fundraising and conservation work.

Mike says, "As an avid fly fisherman, I spend much time in and around rivers and streams in north Georgia, particularly the Chattahoochee River system. The work of UCR is so very important at this particular time, as our region

deals with unbridled growth, special interests with short term objectives and little concern about water purity and conservation for future generations, disjointed governmental policies, and climate change."

Experienced Fundraiser Started in April

D.J. Strickland spent eight years fundraising in Atlanta working for organizations such as Legal Aid, EXODUS Cities in Schools, Hands on Atlanta and Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. The Florida native then moved out West to Colorado and Wyoming where she handled fundraising activities for a number of environmental organizations, including Western Resource Advocates and the Wyoming Outdoor Council.

During the last five years, D.J. has also become an avid hunter. Her time away from Atlanta has



D.J. Strickland

helped her to appreciate the simpler things in life as well as appreciating our natural resources. When asked why she came back to Atlanta and specifically to UCR, D.J. said the following: "During the late eighties and early nineties I spent a great deal of time on the Chattahoochee and Lake Lanier. What an amazing resource Atlantans have running through one of the largest metropolitan cities in the US! By the time I left Atlanta people were afraid to get near the river. I want people to realize that thanks to UCR and others there are safe places to enjoy on the river again - and there will be even more in the future.

12th

Save the Date
Thursday, September 21st

The 12th Annual Patron Appreciation Dinner will take place on September 21, 2006 at

The Foundry at Puritan Mill in Atlanta.

This year's honorees are Steve O'Day, Senator Seth Harp, Pete Frost, and Mildred Burdette. Co-chairs are Mary Jo and Larry McDaniel. The dinner promises to be another great celebration of those who love and protect our river.

For more information, contact Magnus Christon at 404-352-9828 ext. 12 or mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org



WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS PROTECTED IN POWDER SPRINGS

The **James Group** and **Vision 278, LLC** are finally completing tasks they agreed to perform more than 16 months ago pursuant to a settlement agreement between the parties and Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR). Three constructed wetlands, two water quality ponds and one bio-retention cell are roughed in and will be finished as homebuilders complete the rest of the development. Twenty-two acres of wetlands and floodplains will also be permanently protected through a conservation easement to be held by the city of **Powder Springs**. UCR negotiated all of these terms to resolve claims of erosion and sedimentation violations at the site, which contains multiple springs that flow into Powder Springs Creek. UCR and stormwater expert, **Larry Weidmann**, worked with the developer and performed regular inspections throughout 2005, yet little progress was made. By the end of the year, we became very concerned that the terms of the agreement had not been fulfilled and expressed our intent to bring legal action to enforce its terms and conditions. Ultimately, the parties developed a revised settlement agreement and substantial progress has been made to stop the flow of polluted stormwater from the site.



MASSIVE WAREHOUSE PROPOSED ON SWEETWATER CREEK

In May, UCR sent a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asking the federal agency to deny a request for a permit to pipe and fill over 6,500 linear feet of streams and wetlands in **Douglas County**. The permit request came from **IDI Development** which is proposing to construct 2.1 million square feet of warehousing space, roads and truck docking along Sweetwater Creek. The project site, which covers 172-acres immediately adjacent to the Sweetwater Creek State Park and the Chattahoochee River, is just upstream of the drinking water intake for the city of East Point. Due to the size of this project and the extent of potential impacts to Sweetwater Creek, the state park and the Chattahoochee River, UCR asked the Corps to require a full analysis of the environmental impacts of the project. We also requested a more thorough evaluation and consideration of alternative sites and project designs, in order to mitigate for the impacts to the waterways.



LOW LAKE LEVELS FUEL THE EAST'S LONGEST RUNNING WATER WAR

A 16-year battle over Southeastern water rights escalated into a flurry of angry letters, litigation threats, and even name-calling by elected officials in June. Fueling the anger and getting most of the heat has been the Corps of Engineers, which is required to manage the dams on the Chattahoochee to distribute a finite amount of water among a growing number of consumers in Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

As the Corps seeks to adapt its decades-old water control plan to meet changing conditions and increased regional water demand, long-standing tensions within and between the three states, the federal government, and stakeholder groups boiled over into a public dispute.

Drought Warnings and Model Interpretations

Last spring, the Corps stopped storing water flowing into reservoirs such as Lake Lanier and West Point Lake—claiming that it was to provide sufficient flows to support the endangered Gulf sturgeon and several mussel species in the downstream Apalachicola River. This interim operation plan, designed by the Corps in consultation with federal biologists, deviates from the long-standing water control plan that the Corps is poised to finally revise.

Weather forecasters noted the likely beginning of a drought, as rainfall levels were down 45%. In early June, West Point Lake was four feet below its normal summer pool and Lanier was three to five feet below. Concerned



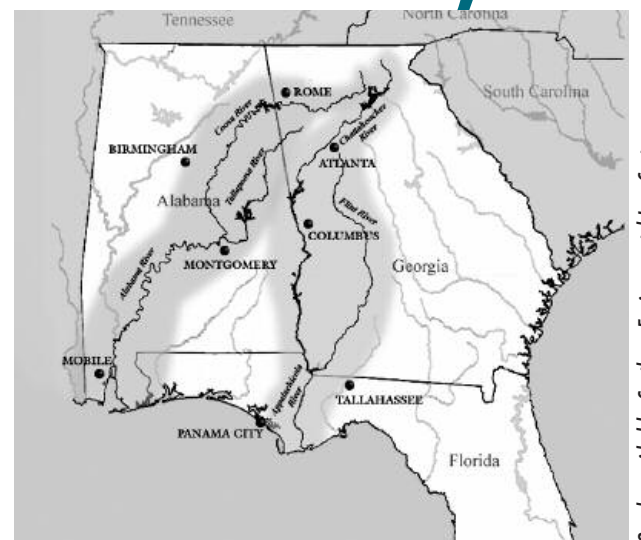
STATE ADDRESSES STREAM BUFFER VIOLATIONS IN HELEN

Last year, UCR asked the **Georgia EPD** to initiate a de-certification investigation of the **city of Helen** after repeated requests to the city to enforce the provisions of erosion and buffer laws produced no visible results. Upon receiving our request, EPD conducted an overview of the city's erosion and sedimentation program and agreed that the city has consistently failed to meet its obligations as a local issuing authority; the city's issuing certification was revoked by the state. In April, EPD conducted site visits at ten Helen locations where it found numerous problems including buffer encroachments; land disturbing activities without proper permits, fees or erosion control; the construction of a parking lot in the 50-foot buffer zone along the river; piping of a stream; and water quality impacts in a small stream, due to improper installation of a creek crossing. In response to these violations, EPD drafted several consent orders and is currently taking action to address the other problems.



METRO DISTRICT ROLLS BACK WATER PROTECTIONS

The Board of the **Metro Water Planning District** met in February and passed weakening amendments to the long-term water management plans that it approved less than three years ago for the 16-county metro Atlanta region. Among the rollbacks were: abandonment of the plumbing retrofit on resale initiative, a weaker model floodplain ordinance, and delays in water quality monitoring and stormwater management schedules. The Board did not adopt the proposed amendment to weaken stream buffer regulations within the District, thanks to the efforts of UCR and our colleagues and the comments of concern from EPD. As some local government representatives continue to complain about water plan requirements, the District staff and a majority of the board appear ready and willing to change mandates to voluntary initiatives. Yet, every year, 100,000 people move into the metro region and every day, 28 acres of land are covered with hard surfaces—making it increasingly difficult to maintain, much less improve, the quality of the water in our rivers, streams and lakes.



Graph provided by Southern Environmental Law Center

False Characterization

Some Georgia officials and the metro Atlanta growth industry immediately characterized the situation as being “seven fish vs. four million people”—a false and ideological misrepresentation of the water allocation dilemma. The “elephant-in-the-room” in this debate has been, and continues to be, the refusal of state and local officials and metro leaders to mandate real water conservation by metro residents and businesses.

Until Atlanta controls its demand for non-essential water uses, like landscaping irrigation, golf courses, swimming pools, and other amenities, the recreational lakes on the Chattahoochee and the health of the river system in general will needlessly suffer during droughts. See *Greenwire*, 6/14/06, for in-depth coverage of the tristate debate.

310 PADDLERS RACE DOWNRIVER IN 194 CANOES AND KAYAKS!

Our 4th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee Race brought participants not only from nearby Roswell and Sandy Springs, but also from downtown Atlanta and all over Georgia and the Southeast. This year, we had 194 boats with 310 paddlers of all ages racing to the finish. The festival crowd was estimated at 650. As usual, our event partners—**National Park Service (NPS)** and the **city of Roswell**—did an excellent job organizing a safe and enjoyable river race.



Canoes and kayaks of all colors and sizes sit at Garrard Landing before the race.

The Corporate Challenge created a lot of interest this year with the **Arbor Montessori School** of Decatur entering 13 boats followed closely by NPS with 10 boats. The Neil Harkins Trophy was presented this year by his family to the winner of the parent-child tandem canoe event. Neil had paddled this event in the past with his son Ian. His family felt this trophy a fitting tribute to their father, husband, outdoorsman and friend.



UCR Board Chair Rutherford Seydel and Richard Courts relax after their victory.

The fastest time for the ten-mile "Open" was 1:02:24 recorded by **Barend Spies** in the Men's Kayak event. The fastest time for the eight-mile "Recreation" race was 1:02:55 recorded by **Belton Dykes** in the Men's Kayak event. The *Georgia Flatwater Race Series* was again won by "**Iron Man**" **Larry Castillo** of Marietta, Georgia. Larry has raced in all of our Back to the

Chattahoochee Races. All race times are posted on www.chattahoochee.org. For event photos, visit <http://kent-photo.photorelect.com>.

While the race start went well and was smoother than in previous years, we apologize for the problems at the end

of the race with the time calculations, which significantly delayed the awards ceremony. We promise to have the kinks worked out next year for the 5th Annual Race and Festival on **June 9, 2007!**

If you have comments or suggestions to make, or would like to volunteer to help with the event next year, please contact **Birgit Bolton** at bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org or call 404-352-9828, ext. 24.

Post-Race Festival

This year's diverse group of festival exhibitors included the Buford Dam Trout Hatchery and SelwynMedia, Inc., showing the 2005 Paddle Georgia DVD, available at www.ucriverkeeper.org/getinvolved9.htm. For the second year in a row, the festival offered a boat swap where racers and festival goers could bring their used equipment to sell or trade.



He leaps tall buildings in a single bound - Richard Grove, UCR volunteer and river guide!

96 Rock entertained the crowd with its music before Tom &

Julie, a blue grass group, played. The always-excellent barbecue served by Roswell's Swallow in the Hollow was included in the race fee, along with a goodie bag that included *The Riverkeeper's Guide to the Chattahoochee*.



Fulton County's Sharon Smith draws young river enthusiasts to her festival table to learn about water.

Thanks to our event sponsors!

96Rock, Brown and Caldwell, Chevron, Harry's Farmers Market, High Country Outfitters, The Coca-Cola Company, The Roswell Neighbor, and The Sunday Paper.

Photo credits: Kent Ruby and Jeff Kulliver

Earth Day Cleanup



Jeff Roman with Interface stands by his son Alec, obviously proud of the job accomplished.

Since 2004, UCR members **John and Beverly Baker** have supported an annual cleanup at the **East Palisades Unit of the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area**. Employees of **Interface** and **Starbucks Coffee** have joined the effort for the past two years. The successful event was led by UCR's **Bill Crawford** and the "**Duke**" park rangers (**Susan & Claude Duke**).

SOUTH RIVER, MONASTERY BENEFIT FROM ATLANTA'S GREENWAY PROGRAM

In April, Sally Bethea joined Mayor Shirley Franklin, Archbishop Wilton Gregory, local officials and the monks of the **Monastery of the Holy Spirit** in an Earth Day celebration marking the acquisition of a conservation easement on property owned by the Monastery in Rockdale County.

Working with the Monastery, the city paid \$760,000 to purchase land that was threatened by development. The conservation easement will protect 135 acres at the confluence of Honey Creek and South River, an area identified in the city's Greenway Acquisition Plan as one of the top priori-



Atlanta Mayor, Shirley Franklin listens as Monastery Abbot, Francis Michael Stiteler, explains the acquisition acreage from maps.

ties for protection because of its undeveloped forests, floodplains and wetlands.

Atlanta's Greenway Acquisition Program was established under the federal consent decree that settled UCR's 1995 lawsuit against the city for violating the federal Clean Water Act by discharging raw and partially treated sewage into city streams and the river. To date, the city has acquired more than 1,100 acres of land along urban streams that

will be protected from development in perpetuity. For more information, see www.cleanwateratlanta.org.

Photo by: JOHN SPINK/Atlanta Journal-Constitution

DRINK, USE, PROTECT...COOL WATERS!

This summer, over 40 Georgia teachers attended *Cool Waters*, a fun-filled, three-day water workshop in Gainesville. Designed to enhance water environmental education for years to come, *Cool Waters* offered educators the opportunity to learn water resource curricula directly from water professionals and to receive information and practical hands-on applications for classroom use about important water quality and water resource issues facing Georgia today.



Alex Schwartz tests lake water on the Chota Princess.

were certified as Adopt-A-Stream volunteers and even spent time doing a macroinvertebrate survey in the creek.

Each teacher left the workshop with a host of water related resources for use in their classrooms, including the Water Sourcebook CD-Rom, the Healthy Water Healthy People Activity Guide and Testing Kit Manual, the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Educator's Guide, and numerous other water quality resources. This workshop is sponsored every year by the Georgia

Association of Water Professionals in conjunction with **Fulton County, Cobb County, City of Gainesville, and City of Marietta.**

Classroom teachers and non-formal educators are encouraged to participate in next year's *Cool Waters* workshop, which will be held in the summer of 2007.

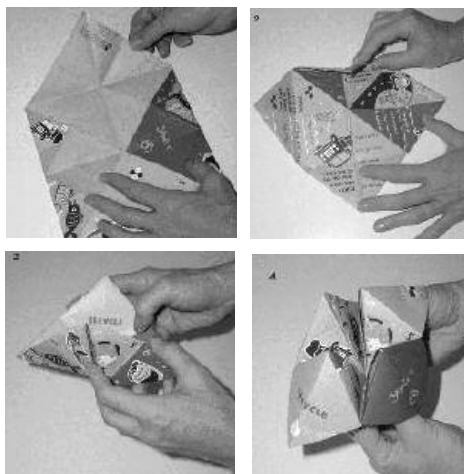
For more information please contact Sharon Smith at sharon.smith@co.fulton.ga.us or 404-730-8006.

Each day of the workshop featured a different theme (*Drink, Use, Protect*) and began with a field trip. Day one, *Drink*, started with a visit to the Lakeside Drinking Water Treatment Facility. Day two, *Use*, began with a tour of the Flat Creek Water Reclamation Facility (wastewater treatment plant). On day three, *Protect*, the teachers took a field trip to Elachee Nature Science Center where they

By the side of the river, the Mole trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories.

When tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

The Wind and the Willows
By Kenneth Grahame



The Amazing Used Oil Recycling Game

This game is for two players.

Cut out the game around the dotted line. Turn over and fold as in the diagrams.

Put the game on your hands and ask your friend to pick one of the solid squares, for example "Recycle." Open and close the game in an alternating direction for each letter of the word: R-e-c-y-c-l-e.

Have your friend pick a number and try to guess how the picture relates to used oil.

Lift the flap to find the answer.

Now give the game to your friend and it's your turn to guess!

Reprinted from earth911.org

GEORGIA'S NEW WATER PLAN: IS IT WORTH THE TIME AND TROUBLE?

The answer to this question is a resounding YES! As a leader of the **Georgia Water Coalition** (GWC), UCR is committed to participating in the development of the state's first-ever water plan which must be completed by July 2007 for submission to the Georgia Legislature in 2008. Georgia's future requires sustainable management and protection of the state's limited water supplies.

The 2004 Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Planning Act, supported by the GWC, mandates the development of a statewide water plan that supports a far-reaching vision for water resource management.

Four Major Water Management Objectives

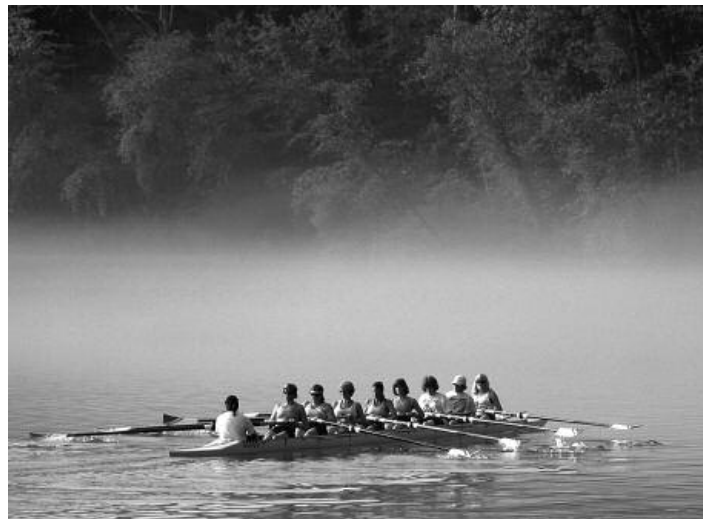
EPD and the Water Council that was created by the 2004 legislation have prioritized four major water management objectives to guide the research and planning strategies for the initial plan development:

- *Minimize withdrawals* of water by increasing conservation, reuse, and efficiency;
- *Maximize returns* to the basin by managing interbasin transfers and using on-site sewage disposal systems and land application where water quantity is limited;
- *Meet instream and off-stream demands* for water through surface storage, aquifer management and reducing water demands;
- *Protect water quality* by reducing discharges of pollutants to streams and runoff from land.

The Georgia Water Coalition has developed white papers and fact sheets on these issues and is actively working with all stakeholders. See www.gawater.org.

Town Hall Meetings Begin Regional Discussions

In mid-July, EPD held a first round of town hall meetings in Marietta, Macon, Tifton, and Savannah. UCR and the GWC have urged the state to hold meetings in more cities, so that more concerned citizens will have the opportunity to



Recreation on Georgia's waterways is an important use that needs to be factored into the statewide water plan. Photo by: Tom Wilson

testify about the issues of concern in their watersheds—from leaking septic and land application systems, to the piping of water from one river basin to another (interbasin transfers), to recreational uses of lakes and rivers, to declining freshwater inflows to coastal estuaries.

The first phase of the plan—the development of water policies—will *not* include the actual development of regional and basin water management strategies. It will:

- Evaluate water trends and conditions to determine the types of challenges that the state may face in advancing its management objectives;
- Evaluate legal/management structure (i.e., statutes, rules, programs, policies);
- Identify gaps and other weaknesses in Georgia's current management approach;
- Identify options for addressing gaps and weaknesses;
- Outline guidance for region-specific water management strategies.

In 2008, we must urge our state legislators to strongly support and adequately fund the second phase of state water planning—the development of regional plans aligned with river basins.

How to Handle Metro Atlanta?

A key question, yet to be answered, is how the water plans for the 16-county metro Atlanta area will fit into the statewide water plan. Already concerned that they may have to share water resources with downstream communities, thereby admitting that there is a limit to growth in Atlanta, metro boosters have called for a “water czar” to make decisions and claimed, with misleading data, that the region has little, if any, impact on downstream waters.

UCR and GWC leaders are working with USGS scientists and others to provide the facts, based on actual monitoring data, and to remove the misrepresentations from the debate. For more information, contact Alex Adams at aadams@ucriverkeeper.org.



UCR's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER INTERNS ON THE RIVER

Many interns have passed through the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper office over the years. During their time with us, these high school, college and graduate school students have the opportunity to participate in river patrols aboard our boat, the “Sweet Virginia”. Most have never seen the remote areas of the river that are only accessible by boat. They also get to see, first hand, just exactly what is really going on in the river, in and below Atlanta. Many features such as wastewater treatment plants, drinking water intakes, sand dredges, and trash jams are visible from the boat, but inaccessible from land.

The interns get to actually see that this is a working river and that it does not take many miles to dramatically change, either. What we usually look for are land disturbance activities, broken pipes, and anything out of the ordinary (I have been on this river a while and can recognize what's right and what's not). We will often take a Hydrolab and test for parameters, such as dissolved oxygen, conductivity, turbidity, etc. Levels are recorded and anything unusual is noted and photographed.

The Grand Tour

I had the pleasure of taking four interns out in mid-June for the “grand tour” (Cochran Shoals to Buzzard Roost Island). From Georgia Power's Plant McDonough we went upstream past the city's R.M. Clayton sewage treatment plant, Cobb's Sutton treatment plant, Atlanta's drinking water intake and into Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. The river transformed from an industrial park to a national park in just a few hundred yards.

We ran under the I-75 Bridge to Cochran Shoals and then headed back south towards Six Flags. Many different odors were also noted, as we motored downstream past the Sutton plant, under I-285 and past the South Cobb treatment plant. We stopped and looked at the roller coasters on the river and continued on to the city's newly-rebuilt Utoy plant outfall, then past the South River discharge and around both sides of Buzzard Roost Island. We stopped and then headed back upstream.

A great experience was had by all in a location that very few people ever see. We saw big fish, an assortment of wildlife, and industrial activity. We appreciate the interns' participation here at UCR. We look forward to new interns each year, and wish our former interns the best of luck wherever they go.

STATE WATER MONITORING

Continued from page 1

monitoring wells in Georgia. The most urgent use of these networks is real-time flood warning and monitoring. Communities and the state also use information from these networks for water resources planning, drought management, flood vulnerability delineation, and managing the state's aquifers.

Without these funds and the monitoring stations, federal, state and local emergency response agencies will be less able to respond quickly and appropriately to flooding from hurricanes and tropical storms that climatologists predict will increase in the coming decades because of global warming.

Bare Bones Funding Support

Largely because of a strong kick in the pants from the federal court (the "TMDL" case), EPD contracted with USGS in 1997 to conduct more comprehensive water quality monitoring, rotating every year to one of the five major river basins. (See Figure 1) This program found some waters cleaner than expected, while others were dirtier. Most importantly, better local and state decisions could be made because of the information that the monitoring stations provide.

For the past three or more years, the state has moved in the wrong direction with regard to its monitoring programs.

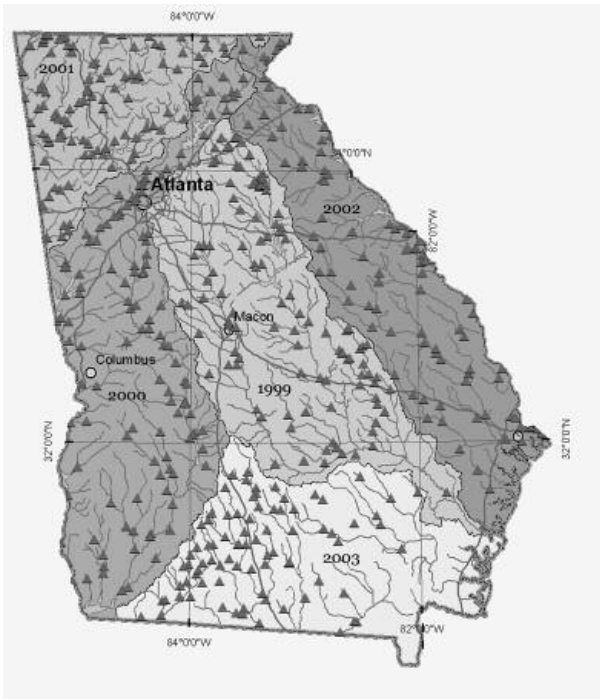


Figure 1

The state legislature has continually reduced funding levels for water quality monitoring. The state money now available—\$750,000, or a little over \$10 per stream mile—represents the absolute minimum that is needed to continue 50 “core” sampling stations throughout the entire state of Georgia. (See Figure 2) USGS will provide about one-third of the cost of this bare-bones \$1 million monitoring program.

Going Blind Slowly

During the 2006 legislative session, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper urged key state legislators to add another \$600,000 in the FY 2007 budget to continue comprehensive water quality monitoring; we highlighted the fact that EPD must conduct a statewide monitoring program that is acceptable to the U.S. EPA—in order to continue to issue water permits in accordance with the federal Clean Water Act. These unpleasant facts were ignored.

Last year, the Georgia EPD developed a good long-term monitoring strategy document, as required by EPA. It is uncertain how EPA will view these current significant steps backward in Georgia's water quality monitoring efforts. What is certain is the fact that the state of Georgia is not doing a good job of testing the health of the waters upon which we all depend.

A USGS official characterized the situation quite well: “If you don't know the past, you can't tell your future. It's like going blind, slowly.”

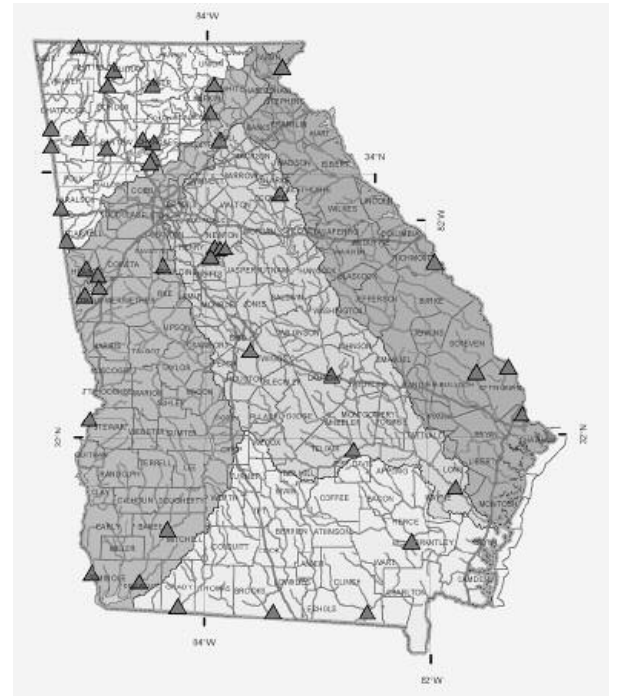


Figure 2

HILL COUNTRY FOCUSES ON WATERSHED PROTECTION

The Chattahoochee Hill Country Conservancy (CHCC) is creating new ways to manage growth and preserve the environment in a 65,000-acre area in south Fulton, Coweta, eastern Carroll and eastern Douglas Counties that drains into the Chattahoochee River.

With innovative land use tools that include the creation of an overlay district, transfer of development rights, fee simple purchases by conservation buyer and federal farm programs, the CHCC is working to protect the region's rural character—as developers eye the attractive property within 45 minutes of Atlanta.

A Snapshot of Existing Conditions

In 2005, the CHCC asked Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper to help the organization conduct an assessment of the Hill Country's water resources. We developed the watershed assessment in the format of a “working manual” that contains information on the existing condition of sub-watersheds, such as Bear, White Oak, Pea, Wolf and Cedar Creeks and the Dog River, and offers specific recommendations for protection and improvement as development occurs.

Our recommendations were designed to help the CHCC realize its vision of healthy watersheds, sustainable villages, and preserved green space around the villages. UCR evaluated current and future land use, existing water quality data, pollution sources, water supply and wastewater treatment issues, laws and ordinances that regulate watershed activities, as well as the ability of government agencies to implement watershed plans.

Some Streams Already Impacted

Not surprisingly, UCR discovered that stormwater runoff—from construction activities, agriculture, forestry, and unpaved roads—is degrading the water-



Little Bear Creek in South Fulton County

ways within the Hill Country; there are very few permitted wastewater discharges. All streams in the CHC region are classified by the state as “fishing” waters, meaning that they should be clean enough to support the propagation of fish and other aquatic life.

Based on limited data, it appears that a number of Hill Country streams are only “partially supporting” or are “not supporting” their state-designated uses. As in most rural areas of Georgia, water quality monitoring efforts are virtually non-existent—another problem that must be remedied if the CHCC is to achieve its vision. Some waters may be cleaner and others dirtier than currently believed.

The City of Chattahoochee Hill Country?

With the passage of SB 553 during the 2006 legislative session, the CHCC and area residents may have an even greater opportunity to influence their future. This bill requires Fulton County to hold a special election in June 2007 to offer voters the opportunity to support or reject the incorporation of the city of Chattahoochee Hill Country.

The incorporation of the Chattahoochee Hill Country would necessitate the development and adoption of new regulations for zoning, erosion and stormwater control, and other watershed protection measures, which could go *well beyond* existing protections in unincorporated South Fulton County. UCR developed its recommendations to the CHCC with this opportunity in mind.

For more information, contact Alex Adams at aadams@ucriverkeeper.org or visit www.chatthillcountry.org.

REVIVAL KEEPS ROLLING ALONG...THE RIVER! 10TH ANNUAL NETS \$69,000

As the popular Atlanta band *Kingsized* rocked 'Proud Mary' before a crowded dance floor at Park Tavern, it was clear that our annual River Revival continues to roll along just like the Chattahoochee. Ten years ago, this event was first held at Atlanta's Trolley Barn with the goal of attracting new members, including young professionals, in the fight to protect the river.



UCR founder Laura Seydel (r) shares a moment with a friend.

Our **10th Anniversary River Revival**, which was held on May 3, attracted nearly 600 attendees—over 250 of whom are brand-new UCR members. We also netted \$69,000 to support our mission of keeping our water safe and clean!



UCR board member and TBS executive Norm Bellingham shares a laugh with Rosina Seydel

"Denim & Blues" was the theme for this year's event and guests were asked to wear their funkier jeans. The *Apostles of Bluegrass* and *Kingsized* entertained the crowd with their tunes. The always dazzling *Dames Aflame* dancers got the guests in the mood to groove with the bluesy, juke joint theme.

This year's event had 'star power', thanks to special guest host **Patrick Kerney**. An eight-year veteran with the Atlanta Falcons, Patrick graciously added his time and energy to the festivities. His live auction donation of an aerial tour of the Chattahoochee watershed in his private plane—Patrick is a licensed pilot—



Host committee members, UCR staff, and members of *Kingsized* and *Dames Aflame*

garnered much interest, particularly from his many female fans.

THANKS to Co-Hosts and Sponsors

We express sincere appreciation to our terrific River Revival Host Committee, Co-Chairs **Lesley & Dan Flores, Mary Jane & Dave Kirkpatrick, Angela & Paul Smith**, and **Andrew Sugrue**, and to the many volunteers and guests who helped fill the Park Tavern and whose infectious enthusiasm made this event so successful! Additional thanks to our auction donors who made this year's live and silent auctions the



Angela and Paul Smith, owners of Park Tavern, dance the night away.



Patrick Kerney, Sally Bethea, Dave Kirkpatrick, Magnus Christon, Alice Champagne.

most successful Revival auction to date. Finally, a very special thanks to our River Revival Sponsors:

- Presenting Sponsor:** Turner Broadcasting System
- River Benefactor Sponsor:** The Coca-Cola Company
- River Defender Sponsors:** Park Tavern, ProductionPeople Inc., Whole Foods Market
- River Advocate Sponsors:** Stephanie & Arthur Blank, ChevronTexaco, Georgia Power, Southwire, Trout Unlimited
- River Sponsor Sponsors:** EarthShare of Georgia, Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta, Innovative Water Solutions, Pacific Group, Pratt Recycling Industries, SweetWater Brewing Co.
- Friends of the River Sponsors:** Aquascape Environmental, Atlanta Fly Fishing Club, CB Richard Ellis, Ecological Solutions, Southern Civil Engineers
- Radio Sponsor:** 96Rock
- Media Sponsor:** Creative Loafing

Photos by: Kent Ruby

River Matters

Ruins and Rapids Full Moon Hike August 9

Sweetwater Creek State Park
Call 770-732-5871 for more information.

River Challenger Series August 12

24 Hour Paddle Mania - Be tough or stay home!
Contact Richard Grove at regroveatl@adelphia.net

First Saturday Hike September 2

Chicopee Woods Preserve
For more information contact Elachee Nature Science Center at 770-535-1976

Patron Appreciation Dinner September 21

Contact Magnus Christon at 404-352-9828/12 or mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org

Lake Lanier Shore Sweep September 30

Call 770-503-7757 for information.

Hike Buck Shoals State Park October 7

Contact Gary Gaines for information at 770-654-5501. To sign up, contact Birgit Bolton at bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Two-Day Paddle with Joe Cook October 28-29

Canoe from McIntosh Reserve to Franklin, camping at Hilly Mill. To sign up, contact Birgit Bolton at bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

Annual Membership Meeting November 2

Margaret Mitchell House, Atlanta
National award-winning author and photographer, Tim Palmer, will present his most recent publication, *Rivers of America* — a "remarkable celebration of America in photographs and in words." Contact Magnus Christon at mchriston@ucriverkeeper.org or 404-352-9828 ext 12.