

RIVER CHAT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER
WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG

STREAM MONITORING AS A KEY TOOL FOR MANAGEMENT

TAKING THE PULSE OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

Y2K has arrived and the Chattahoochee River is still flowing! The dawn of the new millenium seems a fitting time to pause and examine the state of our river. What is the condition of the Chattahoochee? How do we assess existing and emerging threats to the river?

The first step in answering such questions is to determine what we do know about the Chattahoochee. Specifically, who is collecting data and where, and are those data sufficient to form a basis for making sound policy decisions affecting the river?

While monitoring may seem mundane compared to prosecuting polluters, it is in fact one of the most effective river protection tools available to citizens, scientists and officials. Through data collection and analysis, we can gauge the "behavior" of the Chattahoochee, consider short and long-term trends, and make sound management decisions based on the best available understanding of the river system.

ABCs of Stream Monitoring

The goal of the 1972 federal Clean Water Act is "to restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters." Accordingly, to measure this goal, the chemical, physical and biological parameters of water must all be monitored.

Chemical monitoring focuses on chemical parameters in the water such as pesticides, metals, and nutrients, all of which may

adversely affect our waters. An example of *physical monitoring* includes stream temperature or flow regime (or pattern). Heated water, for instance, entering a stream from warmed pavement or from a power plant, is considered "thermal" pollution, which can



Citizen monitoring group nets biological data in Rottenwood Creek

affect the type and success of aquatic life living in a stream or river as well as certain chemical reactions.

Biological monitoring directly samples the organisms (or "critters") that live in a stream as an indicator of continuous instream conditions. Like a "canary in a coal mine," fish or aquatic insects can be sampled to represent the integrated physical and chemical conditions in a waterway, and provide clues to the condition of a stream that may be overlooked by periodic chemical and physical monitoring. A *comprehensive* monitoring program examines chemical, physical and biological parameters.

See *Taking the Pulse*, page 6

THE RIVER MATTERS

For Additional Information Check Our OnLine Calendar

WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG

Citizen Soil Watch Workshops

City of Dahlonega
Cobb County
Douglas County
Call 404-352-9828, ext. 16.

Tree Planting at Soque River Restoration Site
In Habersham County. Call 770-538-2619.

4th Saturday River Cleanups with Capt. Harlan Trammell.
Call 404-352-9828, ext. 29

Community Watershed Workshop
Contact Alice Champagne — call 404-352-9828, ext. 16

Southeastern Lakes Management Conference
Columbus, GA — call 770-427-8794.

River Adventure Outings for Members
Check our web page and Spring *RiverChat* for details.

Feb. 24
March 30
April 25

March 11

Mar-Nov

March 14

March 22-25

April-Nov



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

DON'T MISS

99X 5TH ANNUAL
CHINESE NEW YEAR CONCERT

February 26
at the FOX

Reflections

Little more than a week after I signed the "oath book", swearing my allegiance to the Georgia Constitution as a new member of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Board, I received a personal call from **Governor Barnes**.

An advisory committee established to deal with the contentious issue of buffers along Georgia's trout streams could not agree. Should these buffers remain at 100', as required by state law for a decade, or be narrowed for developers? How should variances for encroachments be granted, if at all, to allow land disturbances within these greenways? Headwater streams for Georgia's drinking water sources, these areas are critical to the protection of trout and other aquatic species.

The Governor asked new DNR Board members **Pierre Howard** and me to meet with two designated negotiators, **Lamar Paris** and **W.C. Nelson**, representing the interests and of the North Georgia development community. The Governor's charge: reach agreement on a three-year trial trout stream protection plan to take to the 2000 General Assembly—with no negative impact on his proposed Greenspace bill.

With **DNR Commissioner Lonice Barrett** and **UGA's Dr. Jim Kundell** facilitating the sessions, we met repeatedly and talked by phone and fax.

I found Lamar and W.C. to be as nice as any two people you'll ever meet. I also found, not surprisingly, that we disagreed almost completely on the width of trout stream buffers, the science supporting the need for buffers, enforcement and other matters. But, the Governor wanted a settlement.

No river-related matter has ever had me in such mental and emotional knots, as has this trout stream issue. I felt compelled to "deal", which meant giving up some protections under the current law. At the same time, there was the opportunity to secure much-needed improvements: a definition in the law that buffers are *natural, vegetated* areas adjacent to streams (i.e., no chain saws allowed), the closing of loopholes, stronger penalties for violations... A fragile deal is close to agreement. I hope Gov. Barnes will be pleased. I hope I am pleased as well—along with our friends, allies and, yes, the wildlife.

Sally Bethea

BENEFITING ATLANTA'S YOUTH — X-MAS PARTY 1999

Riverkeeper was delighted to be a beneficiary of X-MAS Party 1999 held in December at the **Coca-Cola Roxy** in Buckhead. The evening was a twilight phenomenon of dining, live music and a silent auction to benefit Atlanta's children at the holidays and throughout the year. Thanks to **Laura Seydel**, **The Turner Foundation**, the Host Committee, sponsors and individual

supporters, this year's event raised over \$105,000 for Atlanta's Children's Shelter, Our House, the YWCA of Cobb County, Hands On Atlanta, and **Riverkeeper's Stream Monitoring Network**. We will use the funds raised for our Network to teach more children about the importance of protecting the Chattahoochee and how to monitor the streams in their neighborhoods.

Annual Meeting

Over fifty members were captivated by writer/photographer **Tim Palmer's** slide show and eloquent message at Riverkeeper's Annual Meeting held at Patagonia last November.

Tim Palmer, author of *Life-lines: The Case for River Conservation* and a dozen other river books, discussed the fate of America's waterways from a national perspective. Executive Director, **Sally Bethea**, described Riverkeeper's upcoming challenges and specific



Author and river conservationist **Tim Palmer** at Patagonia

action steps that members could take to protect their community streams that flow into the Chattahoochee River.

2nd Annual Phi Gamma Delta Run for the River

The Phi Gamma Delta Run for the River, coordinated by the Gamma Tau and Kappa Deuteron chapters of **Georgia Tech** and **University of Georgia**, has raised more than \$6,500 for Riverkeeper's programs. On November 26th the day before the UGA vs. Georgia Tech match-up, the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity brothers ran the game ball in relay fashion along Highway 78 from Athens to Atlanta. Special thanks to the Phi Gamma Delta brothers and the sponsors who both contributed to another successful event!

THE RIVERKEEPER STAFF

www.chattahoochee.org

Sally Bethea - Executive Director and Riverkeeper
Michelle Fried - General Counsel
Katherine Baer - Director Headwaters Conservation
Alice Champagne - Watershed Protection Specialist
Matt Kales - Program Manager for River Basin Protection
Kristi Rose - Director Watershed Monitoring & Education
Susan Smith - Office Manager
Birgit Bolton - Administrative Assistant
Sandy Layton - Special Events
Harlan Trammell - Boat Captain
Mary Manson - Receptionist

Phone 404-352-9828 FAX 404-352-8676
Email rivrkeep@mindspring.com

MARK YOUR CALENDARS 4th Annual River Revival!

Join Riverkeeper members and Co-Chairs **Chrissy Sapp**, **Lael Seydel** and **Gannon & Beau Turner** on Thursday, May 4, 2000 at Park Tavern at Piedmont Park for specialty foods and beer, live music and auction. Call **Sandy Layton** (404-352-9828/12) for tickets and sponsorship information.



ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST GEORGIA POWER FOR FISH KILL

Exacerbated by last summer's hot temperatures and low river levels, discharges of extremely hot water from **Georgia Power's Plant Yates** in Coweta County killed thousands of fish in a 22-mile stretch of the Chattahoochee between the coal-fired power plant and the City of Franklin near the headwaters of West Point Lake. Calls to Riverkeeper's HOTLINE and to the state's Department of Natural Resources resulted in an investigation that revealed instream temperatures of *over 100 degrees* and the resulting mortality of bass, gar, carp, and catfish, some as large as 3' in length. Riverkeeper has encouraged the state and Georgia Power to act proactively to prevent another similar disaster when the weather heats up again next summer. To that end, the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has proposed a consent order with Georgia Power that will require it to aggressively monitor not only its discharges at Plant Yates, but also river and weather conditions to prevent another fish kill. Additionally, the consent order will require Georgia Power to study long-term operational changes at Plant Yates, such as installing a cooling tower or reducing power production at the plant in order to protect the Chattahoochee.

WHO'S MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION OF ATLANTA'S SEWAGE CONSENT DECREES?

Last December, the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** and the **state EPD** sent a letter to the **City of Atlanta**, demanding \$2.8 million in stipulated penalties for the City's alleged violation of the federal consent decrees negotiated by Riverkeeper and the regulatory agencies to clean up Atlanta's sewer problems. The City vehemently disagrees with the government's allegations and has invoked its right to dispute resolution under the consent decrees. This process will involve a series of meetings with all parties, including Riverkeeper, in which the City will present its arguments against the alleged violations. EPA/EPD will then evaluate the City's positions and

decide whether to withdraw any of the demanded penalties. Regardless of the merit of the City's arguments, this process has illuminated the City's lack of a clear chain of responsibility for the implementation of the consent decrees. Ultimately, a Court-appointed special master may be required to oversee the City's 14-year compliance schedule.

NOTE: In more positive news, the City is on-schedule to meet its December 2000 deadline to complete a \$300 million upgrade of its R.M. Clayton sewage plant.

FATE OF CONNALLY NATURE PARK REMAINS UNCERTAIN

Last fall, Riverkeeper and citizens of the **City of East Point** successfully defeated the **Fulton County Board of Education's** attempt to pipe nearly 500-feet of a tributary to Utoy Creek. The Board originally sought and obtained a variance to the state's 25-foot stream buffer requirement to pipe and cover the tributary as part of its plans to build a new elementary school on the 26-acre heavily wooded lot known as the Connally Nature Park. The variance lawsuit motivated the Board to think creatively. It offered to redesign the school and playground away from the stream and its valuable buffer, adjust the driveway and parking lot to protect old growth trees on the site, and preserve a 2-acre parcel on the site as a nature park. Final details of the settlement with the Board are yet to be confirmed. Additionally, a separate group of East Point citizens have filed another lawsuit challenging the City's sale of land to the Board as illegal. The new lawsuit could halt any construction on the site pending its resolution.

MARTA REDUCES STREAM IMPACTS AT LINDBERGH

As previously reported, **MARTA** and **Carter & Associates** plan to build a mixed-use development at the site of the Lindbergh Drive MARTA station. MARTA has promoted this development as a solution to sprawl as it encourages people to live and work near public transportation. River-

keeper has met several times with MARTA over the last year to discuss the details of the development and, particularly, MARTA's original plans to pipe approximately 850 feet of a tributary to Peachtree Creek. Several well-organized neighborhood associations aggressively challenged MARTA's proposal, not only on the potential environmental impacts, but also traffic and other related impacts to the communities. Riverkeeper and the communities' pressures finally paid off, as MARTA has amended its plans to reduce the piping of the tributary almost by half. MARTA has also agreed to fund and implement two streambank restoration projects as mitigation for its environmental impacts.

NORTH FULTON'S SEWAGE PLANTS FINALLY UNDER CONSENT ORDER

Fulton County's **John's Creek** and **Big Creek sewage treatment plants** have long been near or over capacity, causing chronic exceedences of their permitted discharge limits. The John's Creek Plant has also experienced several overflows of raw sewage into the river due to its highly stressed capacity. Compounding the problem, the John's Creek plant discharges upstream of a heavily-used section of the **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA)**, creating a threat to public health every time a sewage spill occurs. Riverkeeper and the National Park Service have voiced strong concerns to the state EPD that Fulton County's non-compliance should be taken very seriously. Recently, and at long last, EPD issued a consent order against the County, which imposes a moratorium on sewer connections and mandates a long-term solution to the County's capacity problems. EPD has ignored, however, the Park Service's legitimate requests that the consent order require immediate notification of future spills and compensate the Service for any damages arising out of such spills.



CRACKDOWN ON SEVERE EROSION SITES

Riverkeeper's Soil Erosion Control Campaign in Action

After *months* of filing erosion and sedimentation complaints, Riverkeeper and concerned citizens are finally seeing improvements at the **Bear Creek Golf Course development**, in Douglas County and at several sites in the **City of Dahlonega**. Unfortunately, some developments, such as the **Birch River Golf Course Community** on the Chestatee River in Lumpkin County still leave a lot to be desired.

Improvements (Finally) at Douglas County's Bear Creek Golf Course

After 18 months of discussions, letters and site visits, Riverkeeper and **Georgia's Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC)**, the state agency established to advise local governments on ways to improve their erosion inspection programs, finally got fed-up with violations at the 500-acre **Bear Creek Golf Course in Douglas County**. GSWCC and Riverkeeper sent strong letters, urging the developers to take the erosion and sedimentation violations seriously, otherwise they would face possible enforcement action by the state EPD. During site visits last December, GSWCC and Riverkeeper determined that erosion violations had finally been corrected. The question remains: can, and will, Douglas County properly enforce erosion control regulations at other construction sites before another problem like the Bear Creek Golf Course occurs?

Oversight of City of Dahlonega Erosion Program Produces Results

Riverkeeper has a strong group of members and concerned citizens in the **City of Dahlonega**. After attending our Citizen Soil Watch Workshop last year, sponsored locally by the **Yahoola Creek Watershed Project**, they began to alert us to erosion problems within the City. In August 1999, Riverkeeper attended an evaluation and site review for the City's erosion inspection program conducted by the District Assessment Team. It was determined at that time that there were *numerous* sites which were not in compliance with erosion regulations. In response to

the report, Riverkeeper conducted its own investigation at several of the problem sites, including the Birch River Golf Course site (see below), and confirmed that violations were occurring. To the City's credit, it recently hired **Bryan Sorohan** as a new erosion control inspector and the program seems to be receiving a higher priority within the City administration. Additional enforcement actions, however, will clearly be needed before the development community realizes that it must take erosion control regulations seriously.

Impacting the Chestatee: Birch River Golf Course and Development

For more than a year, Riverkeeper has been following the progress of the **Birch River Golf Course** along the Chestatee River in Dahlonega. We met with one of the primary developers of the site, **Pete Calabro** of **Habersham Investments**, prior to construction to discuss his "environmentally friendly"

development concepts. Mr. Calabro assured Riverkeeper that the site was designed to have a minimal impact on the many streams and the Chestatee River, a major tributary to the Chattahoochee in Lumpkin County that bisects the site. In reality, the site has been "environmentally unfriendly", causing sedimentation to flow into the Chestatee and its tributaries. Soon after initial grading, Riverkeeper began to receive complaints from members in Dahlonega about red mud running into the Chestatee. Riverkeeper has visited the site four times since its initial meeting with Mr. Calabro and alerted the City and Mr. Calabro to the erosion control problems on the site each time, but to no avail. If we see no improvement at this development in the next several weeks, Riverkeeper may investigate possible legal actions to stop the pollution and may seek withdrawal of the City's authority to review and approve land disturbance permits.



Tony Gonzalez, a Riverkeeper member, stirs the high levels of sediment found down stream of Bear Creek Golf Course and Development

2000 Citizen Soil Watch Workshops
See Calendar/Page 1 for Dates

streams, rivers and lakes. Workshop participants will be briefed on the basics of the law and mandated best management practices. Each participant can receive a free erosion patrol "kit" that includes a site "report" card, a sample letter to local authorities and a watershed contact list to ensure follow-up with the appropriate officials. *To register for a Soil Watch Workshop, call Alice Champagne at 404-352-9828, ext. 16*



Concerned about muddy water in your neighborhood streams? Come to a free workshop and JOIN the RIVERKEEPER EROSION PATROL. This workshop is designed for the average citizen to learn how to evaluate land-disturbing activities that are contributing sediment to Georgia's

WOODRUFF GRANT FUELS NEW ENVIRONMENTAL ED PROGRAM

With funding from the **Robert W. Woodruff Foundation** and the arrival of **Kristi Rose**, our new Director of Watershed Monitoring and Education, Riverkeeper's education programs are taking a major leap forward.

The **Lanier Aquatic Learning Center**, developed in partnership with the **Elachee Nature Center** in Gainesville, will serve as the centerpiece of our expanded education program. Woodruff has allowed Riverkeeper to purchase a 44-person pontoon boat, the *Chota Princess*, to be moored at the Clarkes' Bridge Olympic Venue managed by **Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club**, also a project partner. A lakeside "wet lab" will offer students the opportunity to test water samples.

With Riverkeeper's **Capt. Harlan Trammell** at the helm and Elachee naturalists on board, we anticipate that the *Chota Princess* will set sail this April.

The Woodruff grant will also allow Riverkeeper to expand our pontoon programs on Bull Sluice Lake near Roswell (see photo), in cooperation with the **Chattahoochee Nature Center**, and to increase participation in our Stream Monitoring Network. Existing grants from the **Arthur Blank Foundation**, **The Community Foun-**

dation of Atlanta and **Urban Resources Partnership** continue to support the fostering of 40+ adopt-a-stream programs in schools, on-the-water field trips, storm-drain stenciling projects, community

group. The **Captain Planet Foundation** agreed to provide small grants to schools that participated in Riverkeeper's Stream Monitoring Network. The **Kids Downstream** at Hollis Hand Elementary School in LaGrange helped fund water education programs at six Troup County schools. More recently, a **Fulton County** grant is supporting our work in a dozen County schools.

Balancing multiple school programs, complicated grants, dozens of special projects and other challenges, Dana singlehandedly created Riverkeeper's emerging reputation as a player in the environmental education community. In December, Dana decided to pursue a career as a veterinarian at UGA. **Kristi Rose**, our new

Director of Watershed Monitoring and Education, has a masters degree in environmental science with an undergraduate degree in elementary education. As an employee of the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission, she coordinated a volunteer monitoring program of schools along the Ohio River, developed science curriculum and technical materials, and taught environmental education courses.



Students enjoy a pontoon outing on Bull Sluice lake.

workshops, cleanups, and the creation of an internet stream monitoring database.

An Evolutionary Process

By hiring outdoor educator **Dana Poole** in 1996, Riverkeeper began to develop K-12 environmental programs for Chattahoochee basin schools. In Atlanta's Proctor Creek watershed, we offered river curriculum and water quality sampling equipment to schools and a community

LAKE LANIER BULLETIN

Legislator Releases Lake Recommendations

In November, **Rep. Carl Rogers** released a set of findings from the **Lanier Water Quality Study Committee** (see *RiverChat* Fall '99), some of which, such as degradation from non-point source pollution and the need for increased environmental inspectors, are consistent with Riverkeeper's view. Its main recommendation, however, is the creation of a "Lake Sidney Lanier Watershed Governance Council", described as local government representatives promoting "regional water quality planning, cooperation, and coordination". As an appointed committee member, Riverkeeper believes that the proposed Coun-

cil will *not* move towards significant improvements in Lanier water quality. Riverkeeper is committed to finding an effective mechanism to protect water quality throughout the Lanier watershed.

Lanier Water Quality Standards Adopted by DNR Board

Water quality standards for Lake Lanier were originally scheduled for adoption by the Department of Natural Resources Board in December (see *RiverChat* Fall '99). Because of concerns expressed by the **Lake Lanier Association** and Riverkeeper, the Board voted to postpone adoption until its January meeting pending additional review by EPD. The re-released standards were exactly the same. In January, EPD made available information detailing the calcula-

tions used to establish the proposed standards. The phosphorus standard was based upon selecting the *highest loading value* from each lake tributary over a 12-year period, yielding the *absolute maximum* the lake could have received over a dozen years. We requested a delay in the adoption of lake standards to revise the phosphorus loading numbers and also urged EPD to commit to more monitoring locations and to return to the Board within a set time period to establish additional standards at the confluence of important tributaries.

The DNR Board voted unanimously to approve EPD's proposed lake standards without modification. EPD Director Harold Reheis *did* commit to a more aggressive monitoring program on Lanier, *if* EPD receives additional financial support (see page 8)

TAKING THE PULSE

Continued from page 1

Who's Collecting What, Where...?

At present, numerous entities, ranging from governmental agencies to citizen groups, are actively monitoring the Chattahoochee River. For example, the **U.S. Geologic Survey** is undertaking a 3-year, \$900,000 study to assess the impact of lawn care chemicals, such as nutrients and pesticides, on aquatic ecosystems in suburban watersheds (north Fulton and Forsyth Counties). At the state level, the **Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)** is sampling for multiple water quality parameters in the Chattahoochee, including dissolved oxygen, temperature and pH. DNR is also conducting biological analyses such as trout fishery research (see below).

One of the state's more advanced monitoring projects is EPD's **Chattahoochee River Modeling Project**, a time-variable hydrodynamic water quality model for the river reach between Buford Dam and the headwaters of West Point Lake. This model will support regulatory activities, such as the development of "wasteload allocations" for sewage treatment plants discharging into the river.

Citizen groups are also involved with monitoring the Chattahoochee, through programs such as **GA Adopt-A-Stream** and **GA Adopt-A-Lake**. In addition to conducting our own water quality testing, Riverkeeper maintains a Stream Monitoring Network, available to certified citizen groups who collect water quality data within the Upper Chattahoochee watershed. Groups can enter their data into Riverkeeper's on-line database at www.streamdata.org, and then track and analyze water quality trends in watersheds throughout the Basin.

An Incomplete Picture?

Consistency in water quality monitoring is essential to understanding the overall system. When samples are taken at different locations or with varying methods, data sets may be incomparable. On Lake Lanier, for example, data has been collected for many years, but often at different locations, by different groups and for varying parameters. Like taking a patient's blood pressure one year, temperature the next, and throat culture the next, it is difficult to truly detect trends and determine associations between cause and effect.

Clearly, a diverse group of agencies, organizations and individuals are actively monitoring the Chattahoochee's health. Yet it is equally as clear that such activities must be *integrated* and *coordinated* to avoid redundancy, make best available use of funds and resources, and build the most accurate picture of our river. New tools such as geographic information systems (GIS), which organize, analyze and represent spatially-based information, should be used in decision-making. Data sets, much like acetate overlays, can then be combined to better understand and analyze relationships between different factors.

SURF THE WEB FOR MONITORING DATA

U.S. Geological Survey National Water Quality Assessment Program
<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/nawqa/>

U.S. Geological Survey Microbial Contamination of Water Resources in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area
<http://ga.water.usgs.gov/projects/chatm/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Surf Your Watershed
<http://www.epa.gov/surf3/hucs/>

GA Environmental Protection Division
<http://www.ganet.org/dnr/environ/>
Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
<http://www.streamdata.org>

While monitoring activities in our basin are numerous and diverse, scientists such as DNR biologist **Lisa Klein** (see below) note that we still need more complete analysis of several water quality parameters, particularly comprehensive macroinvertebrate studies.

Recommendations

Georgia's DNR *must* make water quality monitoring and data analysis a priority activity in the management of the Chattahoochee River basin by:

- **Increasing funding for environmental staff (see page 8) and more sampling stations throughout the river basin,**
- **Officially accepting qualified citizen data for use in reports such as the state's "305(b) Water Quality Report" and trend monitoring, and**
- **Involving the academic community in sampling and advice to the state on "cutting-edge" monitoring protocols.**

Then, perhaps, citizens in Y3K can celebrate both a new millenium and a cleaner and safer Chattahoochee.

Investigating Natural Reproduction of Brown Trout

Over the past several months, the **Wildlife Resource Division (WRD)** of the **Georgia Department of Natural Resources** has been looking closely at the aquatic ecosystem in the Chattahoochee River reach below Buford Dam. The purpose of this study, led by WRD fisheries biologist **Lisa Klein**, is to develop a better picture of ecological trends in this part of the river, in turn enabling WRD to better manage the popular tailwater trout fishery downstream of Buford Dam. Because trout serve as an indicator species for the health of the system, a key aspect of the WRD project focuses on the natural reproduction of brown trout in the river. The tailwater fishery has historically been considered a "put and take" fishery, meaning that WRD stocks the stream each season with hatchery-reared fish to replenish the fishery. However, recent data collected by Klein indicates that there are in fact naturally reproducing brown trout in the river – "holdovers" from a previous stocking that have survived, even prospered, over multiple seasons and are now populating the river with offspring bred in the "wild." This development may hold implications for management of the fishery and the river as a whole, and provides an excellent example of the interface between biological monitoring and natural resource management.

Tracing Metals through the Food Web

For two years, Riverkeeper has been working with scientists at the **University of Georgia** and the **University of Alabama** on a study to determine the ecological effects of trace metals (such as chromium, zinc and copper – all found in the Chattahoochee) on aquatic life and food webs. Led by new Riverkeeper Board member **Dr. Judy Meyer**, **Dr. Barry Lyons** and graduate student **Emma Rosi**, and funded by **The Turner Foundation**, the study is examining the effect of metal-contaminated food particles in the river on the larger food web by feeding such particles to aquatic insects and recording their growth rate response. The group will also analyze fish tissue to see if metals are being passed up through the food chain. Riverkeeper is surveying local fishermen to find out how many and what type of fish people are actually consuming. Together, the two parts of the study may have an impact on the way metal standards are set and the way the state notifies anglers regarding the health risks of the fish they eat.

ACF "Water War" Negotiations Extended

In late December 1999, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, along with the federal government, agreed to extend the allocation formula negotiation deadline for the **Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin** an additional 120 days, until May 1, 2000. Despite the extension, it is uncertain whether the states, specifically Georgia and Florida, will reach an agreement. In negotiating sessions just prior to the extension, Georgia appeared unwilling to grant any substantive concessions to Florida on key issues such as minimum instream flow provisions on the Flint River.

Florida has already yielded many points to Georgia, and further compromise by Florida may adversely affect environmental quality in the reaches downstream from metropolitan Atlanta.

A strong, cohesive conservation presence in the ACF water allocation process is critical at this time. Riverkeeper, in coordination with its partners in the **Tristate Conservation Coalition**, will continue to advocate for the protection of water quality, wildlife, and recreation interests in the allocations, and are looking at our long-term options for achieving our objectives.

Riverkeeper Sweeps GA Adopt-A-Stream Awards

- Special Recognition:** Dana Poole (Staff)
Volunteer of the Year: Jerry Hagerty (Member)
Best Brochure: Friends of Nancy Creek
Best Stream Video: *Soque Diary*

For copies of our Nancy Creek brochure and Soque Diary video, call 404-352-9828/14.

For a copy of Riverkeeper's 5th Anniversary Report, call or email our office.

NEW GRANT WILL ADDRESS HYDROPOWER RELICENSING

Riverkeeper received a grant from the **Hydropower Reform Coalition** (Coalition), a national network of river conservation organizations working to restore riverine resources degraded by hydropower dams, to support our participation in Georgia Power's Middle Chattahoochee (MidChat) relicensing process. The **MidChat Hydropower Project** consists of three dams, Goat Rock, Oliver, and North Highlands, built in

1912, 1959, and 10898, respectively, and located on the Chattahoochee between West Point Lake and Columbus.

Georgia Power will not apply for its license renewal from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) until 2002, and its existing license will not expire until 2005. The company is, however, currently conducting field studies to collect data that will be presented in a preliminary draft environmental impact statement,

scheduled for release in March 2001. While lengthy and complex, the relicensing process provides an excellent opportunity to improve flows, water quality, habitat, and recreational access in the river sections affected by hydropower operations. We will coordinate our efforts on the relicensing process with several partner organizations, including the **Chattahoochee Riverkeeper** in Columbus and the **Alabama Rivers Alliance**.

Membership up for renewal? Please send it in today!

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

- \$10 Student \$35 Family \$500 Lifetime
 \$25 Individual \$100 Contributor Other \$ _____
 Please make a contribution of \$ _____ or reserve membership for the person(s) listed below.
(A card will be sent notifying the recipient(s) of your gift.)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ (H) _____ (W) _____ (Fax)

email _____

- I would like to volunteer my time to help the Riverkeeper. Please get in touch with me.

Please make checks payable to: **Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper**

Contributions to the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Fund are tax-deductible.

Riverkeeper is a 501(c)(3) organization. Quarterly newsletters are provided to members and other subscribers.

- Please send _____
Riverkeeper caps
at \$18.00 each (includes shipping)

- Please send _____ large
_____ x-large

Riverkeeper t-shirts
at \$18.50 each (includes shipping)

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
1900 Emery St. Suite 450
Atlanta, GA 30318

ACTION ALERT

WRITE YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVES TODAY

Gov. BARNES' BUDGET SUPPORTS 60 NEW EPD POSITIONS!

When compared to other southeastern states, Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is near the bottom of the list in terms of adequate staffing levels for state environmental agencies — a fact which has historically resulted in lax enforcement of clean water laws, limited water quality monitoring statewide and internal frustration within the agency.

Last fall, **EPD Director Harold Reheis** unveiled an aggressive, but eminently justifiable, five-year plan to add a total of 214 much-needed new positions. Forty-six of the 60 new hires for the first year would be placed in water quality and water resource programs, focusing on compliance and monitoring, the development of total maximum daily loads, stormwater permitting and other important agency responsibilities.

Barnes Makes Good on Promise — We Need to Help Him

Gov. Roy Barnes has made good on his promise to boost EPD's performance by placing \$2.2 million in his proposed FY 2001 budget to fund the 60 new positions for the agency. Unfortunately, there are legislators who do not want to see a stronger, more effective EPD and strong competition for state dollars may diminish legislative support for EPD.

We urge you to contact your state senator and state representative as soon as possible. Let them know that you want staffing increases for EPD and that you strongly support the \$2.2 million appropriation. A short letter or even postcard is sufficient, but make sure to include your name and address. Your legislators' votes on EPD staffing levels will clearly reflect whether or not clean water, clean air and other environmental protections are a high priority to them.

To identify your state representatives, call your county voter registration office.

Address: The Honorable _____
State Capitol Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: Senate Info: 404-656-0028 House Info: 404-656-5082
Web Site: <http://www.ganet.org/services/leg>

If you would like to be on a SPECIAL ACTIVIST EMAIL LIST for periodic legislative updates, please send your email address to Birgit at bbriverkeeper@mindspring.com



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

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