

ACROSS GEORGIA, GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT OPPOSES THE SALE OF WATER RESOURCES



The morning sun streams through trees on the Chattahoochee River

The movement to keep Georgia's water resources out of the marketplace has spread across the state. In recent months, 100 cities and counties from every corner of Georgia have passed resolutions opposing "water permit trading" and the privatization of Georgia's water resources. These resolutions also call on Governor Perdue and the Legislature to fully fund a comprehensive, scientific study of Georgia's water resources and future needs.

During the 2003 General Assembly, a bill championed by agribusiness, several pulp and paper companies, and other water speculators (HB 237), was defeated by a vote taken in the last hour on the last day of the session. If it had passed, this legislation would have transformed Georgia's water into a marketable commodity, allocated not according to need or plan, but only by the agreements of willing buyers and sellers.

"The water marketers would convert our rivers, streams and lakes into nothing but plumbing with pipelines run-



Sen. Carol Jackson receives award from Justin Ellis on behalf of Georgia Water Coalition.

ning from downstream to metro Atlanta and into Florida, where water would be sold to the highest bidder," said Claude Bell, President of Friends of the Chattahoochee, after the Early County Commission passed a resolution opposing the sale of water permits last October.

Savannah Mayor Floyd Adams, Jr. believes that "water rights should go back to the government rather than wealthy people being allowed to do what they want with them."

County and Municipal Associations Stand Strong

Now representing 160,000 citizens, the Georgia Water Coalition (GWC) is working to ensure that Georgia's surface and ground waters continue to be a public resource, managed in the public interest to meet Georgian's needs for water (www.georgiawater.org). Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) has served as a leader of the GWC, since its inception in 2002.

Last spring, the Association County Commissioners of

See **Grassroots**, page 7

CITY COUNCIL FINDS WAY OUT OF OWN MAZE AT LAST!

After the completion of a rate study last October, Mayor Shirley Franklin delivered the bad news. Without any other source of funding on the horizon, ratepayers would have to stomach a tripling of rates over five years, in order to meet federal mandates,

fund debt service on past bonds, and pay for needed improvements to the City's drinking water system.

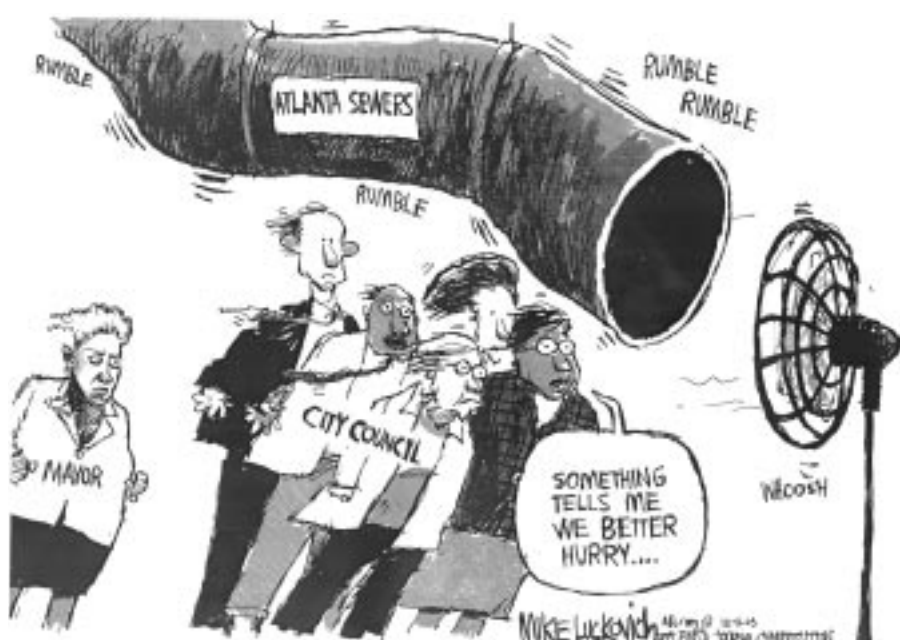
Mayor Franklin, the Atlanta City Council, the media, the business community, and the general public were suddenly, and *finally*, focused on one of the biggest financial and public health issues that the City has ever faced. A frenzy of questions, speeches, finger-pointing, as well as a delayed Council vote, occurred during November.

In an 8-7 vote during a marathon meeting on December 1, the Council refused to support the Mayor's proposed rate increases, approving instead a modified version, which was determined to

be insufficient to meet deadlines under federal consent decrees. The decrees settled two lawsuits for chronic violations of the federal Clean Water Act—UCR's lawsuit filed against the City in 1995, and a second suit filed by the U.S. EPA and Georgia EPD lawsuit in 1998. About half of the \$3.2 billion that the Mayor is seeking is needed for consent decree work.

This day of reckoning with the City's antiquated plumbing system has been coming for more than 30 years, ignored by half a dozen Atlanta Mayors and Councils who repeatedly refused to deal with the serious problems.

Mayor Franklin's honesty and tenacity, in seeking the needed funding for the cleanup projects, have been admirable. Her Clean Water Atlanta Program is a good plan and will result in the quickest water quality improvements for the Chattahoochee and its tributaries at the most reasonable costs. On January 5, the Atlanta City Council approved the necessary rate increase. See page 8 for more on sewer funding.



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

REFLECTIONS

In 1972, Governor Jimmy Carter reorganized state government to more efficiently deliver government services, minimize redundancies and allow for greater coordination of programs. The functions and responsibilities now contained within the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) were housed in more than 30 small agencies—all vying for a piece of the state budget.

During the reorganization, the Water Quality Control Board was folded into DNR's new Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and Leonard Ledbetter, a civil engineer, became its first Director.

Another engineer, Leonard's Assistant Director, Harold Reheis, succeeded him in 1991, becoming the Director of an agency with significant and growing regulatory authority over activities impacting the state's air, land and water.

Perennially under-funded and under-staffed, EPD has been the target of much criticism over the years from environmental groups and the general public. Part of the problem has been that the agency's engineers have never been sufficiently balanced with scientists, including biologists, chemists and ecologists. EPD decision-making has reflected this perspective and largely focused on a predictable, almost exclusive, emphasis on structural solu-



tions to resolve environmental problems and on the speedy issuance of individual permits. Any review or analysis of impacts taken from a natural systems viewpoint has been lacking.

Ecologist Named New EPD Director

On October 20, Governor Sonny Perdue unexpectedly announced that his choice to replace EPD Director Reheis, who retired last July, was **Dr. Carol Couch**, an ecologist trained at the University of Georgia. She left a post as chief of the Ecological Synthesis Program of the National Water Quality Assessment of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The DNR Board unanimously approved the nomination and Carol started her new job on November 18.

As a lead scientist for the USGS during the 1990s, Dr. Couch was very helpful in advising Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) staff on a variety of technical issues related to the quality of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries. Just recently, we watched an old educational video about the River that focused on stream monitoring projects with volunteers. To our surprise, there in the middle of a stream, in her waders, was our new EPD Director!

We welcome Carol Couch and look forward to the fair, balanced, and scientific perspective that she will undoubtedly bring to the major decisions that will affect Georgia's air, water and land resources for generations to come.

Sally Bethea

SPECTACULAR HOLIDAY EVENT BENEFITS CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The 9th Annual XMAS Party was held on December 5th at The Tabernacle in downtown Atlanta. Each year this party, the brainchild of **Laura Turner Seydel**, benefits children and the environment, including Captain Planet Foundation, Atlanta's Children Shelter, Inc., Elijay Wildlife Rehab Sanctuary, Georgia Kids Against Pollution, Our House, and Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper. Along with Laura, other Party Co-Chairs this year were Laura's husband, **Rutherford Seydel** and **Sue and Jeff Dunn**. Honorary Chairs were **Chantal and Tommy Bagwell**.

The crowd enjoyed delicious food catered by Canoe Restaurant and Ted's Montana Grill, and then danced past midnight to three different bands, including Morris Day & The Time!

Another highlight of the evening was the fabulous live and silent auctions, which featured a trip to the Sundance Film Festival, original artwork, and Broadway shows! Special thanks to Earth Sponsors: The **Coca-Cola Company**, **JST Foundation**, **Turner Foundation, Inc.**, as



(L to R) Jeff Dunn (X-MAS Party Co-Chair), Laura Seydel (Chairman, Captain Planet Foundation) Captain Planet (World's only Eco Superhero) Morris Day (Lead singer of Morris Day & The Time) Rutherford Seydel (UCR Board Chair) K.P. Hendry (Special Events Director, Captain Planet Foundation).

well as all the individual sponsors for delivering another spectacular holiday benefit!

ANNUAL MEETING HONORS SPECIAL VOLUNTEERS

UCR's 2003 Annual Membership meeting was held at our new offices at the re-developed Puritan Mill on Joseph Lowery Blvd. in the Proctor Creek watershed. It was a time for music, food and good conversation on a chilly evening in late November. Thirteen special volunteers were honored for their valuable assistance in 2003 and were presented with hand-painted Chattahoochee "river rocks" and UCR lapel pins by UCR staff. We are pleased to list these volunteers and their area of expertise:

Accounting/Finance: **David Brookes & Christine Hung**

Events: **Donna Smythe**

Photography: **Kent Ruby**

Lake Ecology: **Mary Mayhew**

Legal: **Kurt Ebersbach, Steve O'Day & Andy Thompson**

River Cleanups: **Orion Hanson**

River Race & Festival: **Sharon Cowden & Bill Sapp**

Water Monitoring: **Brandi Barlow & Capt. Rick Marton**

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS!

Thanks to all UCR members who completed the Member Survey that we sent out this past summer. Your response was overwhelming and the information you provided us will be invaluable. We learned that the three program areas of most interest are (1) strengthening local and state environmental laws and policies, (2) water quality monitoring, and (3) protecting greenspace. We were happy to hear that the vast majority of respondents feel that UCR is doing a good or excellent job! And, we were also very pleased to learn that most of those who responded have visited the River more than ten times in the past year!

Jerry Hagerty Memorial Fund

A memorial fund has been established in honor of long-time UCR member and river advocate, Jerrold Hagerty, who passed away on January 2. Among many other contributions to the environment, Jerry volunteered monthly to conduct water quality tests on Poplar Creek and worked diligently to get a broken sewer line repaired. We will miss him. To contribute, please visit our website at www.chattahoochee.org or call Page Gleason at 404-352-9828 ext. 15.

CLEANING UP SMALL SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS

In the Summer *RiverChat*, we described the **Cedar Village Manufactured Home Park** in Carroll County and the problems that downstream property owners have faced with sewage odors, trash, and the unregulated discharge of bacteria into Whooping Creek. The source: Cedar Village's outdated sewage treatment pond. Based on letters and comments from local residents, UCR, and others, the state EPD recognized the problem and sought to address it by requiring Cedar Village to be regulated under an "individual permit", with a two-year compliance deadline for the facility to meet the state's limit for bacteria. Concerned that the two-year compliance period was too lengthy, we met with EPD staff to discuss the options for Cedar Village and *two hundred* similar small private sewage discharges throughout the state. Recently, EPD announced that the facility will be required to meet water quality standards in just six months, a condition to be included in the facility's new permit. Additionally, EPD believes that Cedar Village may already be meeting the bacteria standard, thereby significantly reducing the threat to public health and the environment from this discharge.

HEADWATERS OF BEAR CREEK THREATENED WITH LANDFILL

A construction and demolition (C&D) landfill has been proposed on a 200-acre tract in the headwaters of Bear Creek, a tributary to the Chattahoochee in South Fulton County. Claiming a "hardship", the developer, **Soful Construction and Debris Landfill, Inc.**, applied for a variance from the state's stream buffer law to encroach within the 25-foot protected buffer, in order to construct the landfill. UCR reviewed the application, visited the site, and discovered that the proposed landfill would not only encroach within the protected stream buffer, but would actually be located on top of a 1,400-foot section of a live stream, which would be re-routed around the landfill. A second stream and wetlands complex would also be impacted by the proposed landfill. UCR submitted comment letters to the state EPD, outlining our concerns, including the apparent failure to meet the hardship criteria for issuance of a variance and potential water quality problems that could affect Bear Creek and a proposed downstream drinking water reservoir. EPD has asked the developer for more information and is now reviewing these materials prior to a final variance decision.

WATER QUANTITY AS CRITICAL AS WATER QUALITY FOR RIVER HEALTH

To date, efforts to restore and protect rivers have focused primarily on two goals—improving water quality and establishing minimum flow requirements so that rivers and streams do not run completely dry. During the past decade, scientists have amassed considerable evidence that a river's natural flow regime—its variable pattern of high and low flows—exerts great influence on river health. Restoring rivers now under heavy human control requires re-creating, to some degree, the natural flow pattern that drives so many ecological processes. (*Rivers for Life*, Postel and Richter, 2003)

Meeting the Water Needs of Humans and Rivers

Working to keep water *in* the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries is, therefore, as critical as ensuring that pollution stays *out*. The C.S. Mott Foundation has long-supported UCR's advocacy of instream flow protection. Recently, this work involved our organizing a workshop on ways in which the federal Clean Water Act, and other laws, can be used to protect instream flows and river ecology in Georgia, while ensuring adequate water supplies for people.

The federal Clean Water Act (CWA), passed by Congress in 1972, serves as the cornerstone for surface water protection in the United States. Its goal is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and *biological* integrity

On Patrol

MORGAN FALLS DAM UP FOR RELICENSING

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve fish and wildlife habitat and boost the quality of life for communities surrounding and downstream of Morgan Falls Dam has begun. **Georgia Power Company (GPC)** operates Morgan Falls Dam, which forms Bull Sluice Lake near Roswell, through a license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The current license expires in March 2009. GPC is now moving through the pre-licensing phase, which requires that they consult with state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, land management agencies, and state water quality agencies and then undertake all "reasonable and necessary studies" before presenting their plan to the public for review and comment. The renewed license for Morgan Falls will be in effect for the next *50 years*, so it is critical that management plans for the operation of this reservoir take into account environmental, fish, and wildlife needs as required by federal law. UCR began talking with GPC representatives last fall, and will be advocating for permit conditions and dam operations that improve water quality, ecology and recreation in the Lake and the River.

SEWAGE OVERFLOW PROBLEMS UPSET EAST POINT RESIDENTS

East Point citizens are frustrated by the failure of local and state officials to deal aggressively with sewage spills that have occurred for decades in backyards, on school grounds, and in parks throughout this Fulton County municipality. Last spring, UCR was contacted by a citizen who had tried to work through "government channels" to stop the pollution. After investigating the sewage spill in that individual's backyard and more than a dozen similar sites, we reviewed state files and discovered that, in the past four years alone, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has entered into *five* consent orders with **East Point** for serious water quality violations from sanitary sewer overflows. The City has failed, however, to comply with all the conditions of the EPD orders. In November, UCR wrote East Point's Mayor and City Council requesting a meeting to discuss these ongoing pollution problems, in hopes that further legal action will not be necessary. We have received no response to date.



of the nation's waters, so that they can support "the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water."

Led by Gayle Killam from the national organization River Network, two dozen workshop participants reviewed and discussed ways in which the CWA could prevent degradation to waters, the importance of flow regimes that protect current uses, the need for state water quality and quantity standards to be consistent within themselves and the CWA, and the opportunity available for citizens to work within the state planning process to clarify regulations and management approaches for comparability to the CWA.

This group plans to actively support scientific work to learn more about instream flow needs in Georgia's rivers and streams and advocate new measures to protect and restore flows that enhance biodiversity. The anticipated development of Georgia's first statewide water management plan over the next several years offers a perfect opportunity to make significant progress in this area. *For more information, contact UCR Policy Director Skelly Holmbeck-Pelham at 404-352-9828/19.*



UCR staffers Kristi Hastie and Bill Crawford enjoy a walk along Tanyard Creek.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

2ND ANNUAL BACK TO THE CHATTAHOOCHEE RACE & FESTIVAL SET FOR JUNE 12

Reserve Saturday, June 12, 2004, as the date to grab your paddles and head to the River for the 2nd Annual *Back to the Chattahoochee Race and Festival*. Along with the City of Roswell Recreation Department and the National Park Service, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) will again present this exciting event with help from many other environmental organizations and agencies. The race course will begin at



Roswell Mayor, Jere Wood (hat) and tandem partner Bobby Fierman ponder second place finish in the 2003 race. They will be back in 2004!

Garrard's Landing Park (Holcomb Bridge) and end at Roswell's Riverside Park (just upstream from the Roswell Road Bridge).

Race events will be similar to those offered in 2003. There will be "open", competitive events as well as many "recreational" categories for kayaks and canoes. The "open" events will have an added incentive this year in that participants can receive points leading to prizes in races on other Georgia rivers during 2004. **Chevron-Exaco** has again committed to being a major sponsor for the 2004 *Back to the Chattahoochee Race & Festival*. We are seeking additional sponsors who will receive recognition in all event materials, media coverage, our web site and at the race awards ceremony.

Adjacent to the race finish line, an Environmental Festival will also be held at Riverside Park, offering delicious food, fun, and enjoyable music, along with environmental displays and activities. Brochures will be mailed the first week in March and on-line registration will begin April 1. Check out www.chattahoochee.org for more information in the upcoming months.



HEALING A TROUT STREAM ON A BEAUTIFUL DECEMBER DAY

Five years after project implementation, a 1300-foot segment of the Left Fork of the Soque River, north of Batesville in Habersham County, now shows little sign of the instability that formerly caused tons of soil to erode into this north Georgia trout stream after every heavy rain. Stream channeling and decades-old bank destruction from cattle grazing had created serious problems for the stream's health and for the Savage family who now operate a chicken farm on the property. Many partners, including the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**, helped to make UCR's project a tremendous success and ongoing learning laboratory.

Meanders and instream structures constructed during the 1998 restoration project serve to regulate water velocity and divert erosive flows away from vulnerable banks. Natural vegetation helps to hold soil in place and create habitat for trout and other aquatic species. Trees growing in the riparian corridor filter pollutants from storm water runoff and help keep water temperatures cool by providing shade, as well as habitat for birds and other animals.

The majority of the trees and natural vegetation planted immediately after project construction have survived and flourished. Plants that perished during the drought were consumed by deer or served to sharpen the teeth of a resident beaver. In an effort to replace this vegetation



Volunteers take time out for a photo after planting willow stakes and trees along the Soque.

and ensure the riparian area continues to thrive, volunteers gathered at the restoration site in early December to plant willow stakes and additional trees and to discuss site signage and educational programs. EPA scientist Tony Able provided a presentation for members of the group who were not familiar with the project's history.

The Soque River Restoration Project is part of UCR's Headwaters Program, focusing on demonstrating natural restoration techniques and the value of functioning riparian zones. To obtain a copy of the video "Soque Diary: River Protection in the Chattahoochee Headwaters", or additional educational materials, contact Darcie Boden at 770-531-1064 or dboden@ucriverkeeper.org.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION ANOTHER BIG SUCCESS FOR RIVERS ALIVE

Last year was a banner year for Rivers Alive, the annual volunteer waterway cleanup event. In October, 180 groups—totalling more than 24,000 volunteers—collected 378,000 lbs of trash from 1,438 miles of Georgia waters.

UCR partnered with several local organizations and governments during October to clean up Proctor, South Fork of Peachtree, and Nancy Creeks along with the Chattahoochee River. In addition, UCR and volunteers from **Turner Broadcasting Systems, Inc.** spent a



Brandon Smith picks up trash at the Power's Island Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

day working to eradicate non-native plant species and plant trees along the River in the Chattahoochee National Park Recreation Area. A special thanks to all the dedicated volunteers who pitched in to help clean up our local waterways and make our River healthier and more enjoyable.

Planning is already underway for 2004—get involved and find out about our cleanup schedule on our website (www.chattahoochee.org), or by calling Kristi Hastie at 404-352-9828/17. See you out there on the River this year!

2004 RIVER CALENDAR NOW \$9!



Thanks to the generosity of the Chattahoochee River Crew, the 2004 calendar profits benefit UCR. Plus, it is a beautiful full color calendar with a variety of River pictures four of which come from the *Back to the Chattahoochee Race & Festival* (courtesy of Kent Ruby). Member price is now just \$9.00 with free shipping. To order, please call Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 x 14 or order on line at www.chattahoochee.org Volume prices are available.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AROUND THE WATERSHED....

HIGHLIGHTING THE COCHRAN MILL NATURE CENTER

Located in South Fulton County on 50 private acres, Cochran Mill Nature Center teaches the importance of respecting the Earth and each other through environmental education and conservation. Environmental education programs include native wildlife of Georgia, birds of prey, backyard habitats, conservation, ecology, native plants and much, much more. In addition, Cochran Mill Nature Center is a licensed rehabilitation facility and is the home to a variety of native wildlife species. Many of the animals are orphaned or permanently injured and are unable to survive in the wild. These animals are nurtured and cared for by the staff and volunteers and used in educational programs. *For more information on educational programs at Cochran Mill Nature Center, contact Mary Beth Wansley at 770-306-0914 or visit www.cochranmillnaturecenter.org*



Students learn about native wildlife.

WEBSITE CONNECTS TEACHERS, ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

EEinGEORGIA.org is the online clearinghouse for environmental education (EE) in Georgia. The goal of EEinGEORGIA.org is to build statewide capacity for environmental education by providing: EE lesson plans based on Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) standards, a searchable directory of Georgia's EE providers and their resources, a statewide calendar of EE events, EE news, and easy-to-access facts about Georgia's environment.



A collaborative project involving environmental educators throughout the state, EE is sponsored by the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD), in partnership with the Department of Community Affairs, Keep Georgia Beautiful Program, Department of Education, Georgia Learning Connections, and Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia. *Contact Kim Bailey at 404-362-2788 or kim@eeingeorgia.org for information.*

ATLANTA TO HOST NATIONAL SCIENCE TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION (NSTA) CONFERENCE

Sunshine, Southern hospitality, and dogwoods in bloom—Atlanta will provide the perfect spring setting for NSTA's 52nd National Convention this April at the World Congress Center. Join us for this exciting professional experience to learn something new, share your good ideas, and make a difference in the world of science education.

UCR will be presenting our newest educational product, an interactive CD-ROM entitled, *Waters to the Sea: The Chattahoochee River*, at the conference on Sunday, April 4 (8AM). In addition, UCR will be co-presenting *Using Adopt-A-Stream to Raise Watershed Awareness* with Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, Cobb, Gwinnett and Fulton Adopt-A-Stream programs on Saturday, April 3 (8AM). *For more info. and to register online, go to www.nsta.org.*

RIVERS ALIVE - TAKE YOUR STUDENTS' LEARNING FURTHER

Rivers Alive is Georgia's annual volunteer waterway cleanup event that targets all waterways in the State including streams, rivers, lakes, beaches, and wetlands. With over 180 groups registering 24,783 volunteers in over 100 counties and all 14 river basins, Georgia citizens were ready to make a difference in October. *For more information visit www.riversalive.org.*



Project WET's (Water Education for Teachers) Dragonfly Gazette interviewed Brenda Hunt, Life Science Teacher and Soque River Outdoor Classroom Coordinator at North Habersham Middle School in Clarkesville about her involvement in Rivers Alive.

Dragonfly Gazette: Where do you and your students participate in Rivers Alive?

Brenda Hunt: North Habersham Middle School and the Jackson Bridge area on Hwy 197 North - part of the Soque River watershed, which feeds into the Chattahoochee River.

DG: When do you do it?

BH: During and after school.

DG: Who participates?

BH: Myself, other teachers, Department of Natural Resources officers, parents, and five classes of life science students (135).

DG: Why do you do it?

BH: To create ownership and instill conservation practices in our students.

DG: Do you have safety concerns? If so, how do you minimize them?

BH: Working near the roadway at the bridge cleanup, I minimize risks by close adult supervision and low ratios of students/adults. The officers review safety precautions before we begin: wearing rubber gloves, watching for snakes, being careful of broken glass and sharp



metals and staying with your assigned adult.

DG: How does Rivers Alive support your curriculum? How do you integrate it into your lessons to meet State education standards?

BH: I have utilized the river cleanup to help students understand the nature of scientific inquiry (QCC 15). Students practice safety by wearing gloves and appropriate clothing, following procedures in collecting trash. We analyzed the trash collected using the scientific method to determine which type of trash occurred most frequently in our collection. There are other QCCs covered as we discover and discuss the diverse flora and fauna in our collections. We also discuss the impact that humans are having on the environment as an effect of the recreation and fishing that occur along the Soque. *Reprinted with permission from Georgia Project WET.*



CD ROM Debut Party

Waters to the Sea: The Chattahoochee River

Join us on Tuesday, February 24, at SciTrek to celebrate the debut of UCR's latest educational project, Waters to the Sea: The Chattahoochee River. This resource provides a virtual journey down the River for students to learn about water quality impacts, issues and solutions along the way. During 2004, the CD ROM project will be implemented in schools throughout the Upper Chattahoochee Watershed. This project was a partnership between UCR, Hamline University's Global Center for Environmental Education, Oxbow Meadows Learning Center and other local partners. Funding for this project was made possible by Coca-Cola North America, The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, Georgia Power Company, and UGA School of Forestry's Sustainable Forest Initiative.

For more information contact Kristi Hastie at 404-352-9828 (17) or khastie@ucriverkeeper.org.

MOST COMPREHENSIVE URBAN MONITORING PROGRAM IN THE COUNTRY

ATLANTA WORKS WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (USGS)

When Mayor Shirley Franklin announced her Clean Water Atlanta Program in October 2002, she asked Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR) to convene a technical advisory committee (TAC) to help oversee the City's work with the USGS to monitor water quality and quantity in City streams. Built on former mountain ridges, the City of Atlanta encompasses an area of approximately 134 square miles, including the headwaters for streams in the Chattahoochee and South River Basins.

Representatives from the U.S. EPA, state Environmental Protection Division, academic institutions, and several local governments (Gwinnett and Cobb) agreed to participate. Three TAC meetings, chaired by UCR's Sally Bethea, were held in 2003, along with several field trips, and recommendations have been made to the City and its consultants.

Atlanta's Long-term Monitoring Program is intended to create a water quality and quantity monitoring network that will establish current and on-going water quality constituent levels, permit the calculation of annual constituent loads, and facilitate the management of the major watersheds within City limits to improve stream health. In addition, the network will help evaluate the effectiveness of the City's capital improvements to its sewer system required by the consent decrees that settled lawsuits by UCR and regulatory agencies.

Fixed Monitoring Stations and Synoptic Sampling

The program design entails long-term monitoring at 21 fixed sites and one-time high-flow and low-flow synoptic (snapshot) programs at up to 40 additional stream sites throughout both River Basins. Ten real-time continuous

water quality and quantity stream flow stations have been installed on the major streams traversing the City and are collecting and recording continuous data on discharge, conductivity, temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, rainfall and turbidity. Continuous stage/discharge monitors have been installed at 2 additional stations (Sandy and Proctor Creeks) to facilitate the determination of discharge and movement of water associated with chemical constituents.

Lastly, 8 additional un-instrumented long-term quality and quantity sites have been established at key locations to help produce a comprehensive picture of the movement of water and chemical constituents. Representative water column samples are being collected at all 21 sites, on a hydrologically-based schedule, and analyzed for a variety of water quality parameters, including trace elements, nutrients, suspended sediment concentration, sewage tracers, and bacteria. The synoptic sampling program is already helping to identify localized sources of water quality impairment and will be used to provide a consistent

basinwide framework for evaluating data from the 21 fixed sites.

USGS District Chief Ed Martin says, "The City of Atlanta monitoring program is one of the, if not the, largest and most comprehensive urban water quality monitoring programs that the USGS has undertaken." Data collected is already being used to resolve site-specific pollution problems in City streams.

For more information, contact Sally Bethea at: sbethea@ucriverkeeper.org



USGS scientist Jacob LaFontaine collects a routine water quality sample.



Riverkeeper's Boat Captain Harlan Trammell.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

As reported in the Fall *RiverChat*, the City of Atlanta re-routed its discharge of "process water" from the construction of the Nancy Creek tunnel to the R.M. Clayton sewage plant for treatment in late September. During a routine river patrol last July, Sally and I discovered a stream of chalky water flowing from a 12" pipe down an embankment into Peachtree Creek, damaging the vegetated buffer along the Creek. City contractors had apparently not secured all necessary permits from the state and, wisely, decided to remove the discharge from the Creek. There is still work to be done, however, to restore the stream bank. Restoration plans have been approved and they are in the process of securing a sub-contractor for the necessary work. The restoration is expected to start in early January and should take about four weeks. The project will include removal of the old pipe and support structure, filling in the holes, and adding a wire mesh with native plants to prevent further erosion and stabilize the bank. I will be visiting this site during January to monitor the work.

New Fish Consumption Brochures Available

With UCR's fish consumption survey completed (see Summer *RiverChat*), I thought about some of the things that I learned. My on-the-water involvement with the sur-

vey, where I asked anglers a series of questions involving fish type/size and consumption, put a whole new style of fishing and a whole new style of eating in perspective for me. The interview questions were concise as it was important not to disturb anglers or fish. These questions provided a direct source of information that was integrated into a study completed by a University of Georgia ecologist about what the fishing community is doing on the Chattahoochee below Atlanta. While I catch and eat most of my fish in the Chattahoochee between Buford Dam and Morgan Falls Dam, certain demographic correlations were made below Atlanta and down to Franklin that involved anglers eating basically everything they caught, apparently without regard to possible health risks involved with eating certain types and sizes of fish. Now, we're working with the state EPD and public health officials to warn at-risk populations, such as pregnant and nursing women, about the problems associated with eating contaminated fish.

For copies of the new fish consumption brochure (available in English and Spanish), contact Birgit Bolton at bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org or 404-352-9828/24.

GRASSROOTS

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Georgia decided to oppose water permit trading and worked with the GWC and others to defeat HB 237, introduced by Rep. Bob Hanner from southwest Georgia. This past October, Rep. Hanner said that he would not push permit trading in the 2004 session of the Legislature. Despite this pronouncement, the Georgia Municipal Association took a strong stand, adopting a policy to flatly oppose any water permit trading. Those promoting water markets for Georgia have not retreated; they have only delayed and revised their plans, so this was a timely and courageous move by the GMA.

Governor Appoints Water Resources Council

On October 20, at the same time he announced his selection of Dr. Carol Couch as Georgia's new EPD Director (see *Reflections*, page 2), Governor Sonny Perdue created a Water Resources Council, chaired by Dr. Couch. He tasked the Council with providing recommendations for a water planning bill. Unlike many states, Georgia has never developed a comprehensive statewide water plan to guide its water protection and allocation decisions.

Despite the short, 45-day timeframe, the Council outlined the components for enabling legislation for a water planning process and also held public hearings, before presenting the final product to the Governor in early January. Dr. Couch has established herself as a person who does not waste time, placing the need for public participation in the water planning process at front and center.

The Governor's office has said that he will introduce a water planning bill during the early part of the legislative session which started on January 12. Funding for this multi-year planning process remains uncertain at this time, however, without adequate resources, Georgia's first water plan will not be able to meet our future needs and expectations.

Stem the Tide of Marketeers

Atlanta Journal/Constitution, Op/Ed, 10/30/03

By James E. Butler, Jr.



There's an old joke out West: "Water doesn't flow downhill. It flows uphill to money." But, water isn't the only thing that flows to big money; so does the loyalty of some state employees. Water marketeers, those who would privatize Georgia's most precious resource, have used tax money to commandeer the loyalties of state employees scattered throughout state government and the University System. Under water marketing, water would no longer belong to the people and be regulated by state government for their benefit. Instead, it would belong to whomever already had permits or got them in the future. Permits would be sold and water piped from poorer parts of the state to the booming Atlanta market.

...[After this marketing movement started in 1993], "water policy centers" sprang up in Atlanta, Albany and Statesboro... and millions of dollars in tax money flowed like a river to a variety of affiliated organizations, all apparently dedicated to privatizing Georgia's water. The money was channeled to the water marketeers through a variety of state agencies. Now it is nearly impossible to figure out how much money has gone where... It's time for an investigation to find out where all the millions have gone and who's really behind this waste of tax funds spent to steal Georgia's water from the people of this state.

For the full text of this Op/Ed, see www.gwf.org/gawater/oct30.html.

Mr. Butler is a Columbus lawyer who also serves on the Georgia Board of Natural Resources.



GREASE CAUSES MOST SEWER SYSTEM BLOCKAGES

Grease—the lard, oil and butter that make Southern cooking so delicious—is causing serious trouble for sewer systems around Georgia. Grease is found in meat fats, cooking oil, shortening, butter and margarine, food scraps, baked goods, sauces, and dairy products. In the 16-county metro Atlanta Water Planning District (District), it is estimated that grease causes *more than half* of the sewer system blockages.

When sewer lines are clogged with grease or debris, they can rupture and send untreated sewage directly into nearby streams or spewing out of manholes in 'fecal fountains'. Because they use gravity to move the sanitary waste downhill to treatment plants, sewer lines tend to run along streams and rivers, a proximity that can result in serious water quality problems.

Sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) from sewer pipes that are over-capacity or clogged with grease or other material cause significantly higher bacteria levels in the streams in the Chattahoochee River Basin. After a heavy rain, the bacteria levels in the Chattahoochee and many of its tributaries skyrocket. SSOs are a major contributor to these levels and are occurring in every local jurisdiction, not just within the City of Atlanta, which has well-known sewer problems. These overflows can also cause problems with sewer backups into homes and businesses or overflows into streets or yards.

The Role of Local Governments

Sewer system owners and operators spend substantial amounts of time and money unclogging and cleaning grease from their systems. The major grease dischargers include industrial facilities, commercial facilities like restaurants, multi-family residential units and schools. The cumulative effects of grease discharges from single-family residential units can also be considerable, especially in areas with 4 to 8 inch sewers.

Local governments in the District have incorporated grease trap requirements for commercial food establishments or processors that discharge a large volume of waste oils or tallow. Although these codes and ordinances in the District require the installation of grease traps, their maintenance is left to their owners, with little inspection. Many firms that offer "disposal" service have actually been pumping the grease from commercial traps directly into the sewers, and not into their truck tanks for transport to recovery plants for recycling.

The development and implementation of grease management programs by sewer system operators could stop the illegal transporters and would alleviate some of the maintenance challenges, reduce SSOs caused by blockages associated with grease accumulation in sewers, and improve water quality. The District's *Long-term Wastewater Management Plan*, officially adopted last September, requires each local government to develop a grease program, beginning in 2004. The expectation is that progress in this area will be enforced through the Georgia EPD's permitting process, and a possible tightening of state law in this area may occur in the 2004 legislature.

Greasy Tips for Your Own Home

Stop pouring grease down the sink. Instead, cool it, contain it (in a can that you can keep near the stove), and throw it in the trash. Home garbage disposals do not keep grease out of the city's plumbing system. Commercial additives, including detergents that claim to dissolve grease, may only pass the grease down the line and cause problems in other areas.

Sources: "City aims for fat-free sewers", By Mary Landers, *Savannah Morning News* (10/29/03); *Long-term Wastewater Management Plan*, North Georgia Metropolitan Water Planning District (September, 2003).



Photo by John Covington/Savannah Morning News
A wastewater vacuum truck operator inspects a trap which has collected grease from Savannah's sewer system.

ACTION ALERT

CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FEDS NEED TO DO THEIR PART TO HELP FIX ATLANTA'S SEWER WOES

On Christmas Eve, the City of Atlanta got a present that put a big smile on the face of Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin and others struggling to secure funding to fix the City's polluting sewer system and clean up the Chattahoochee and South Rivers. **Governor Sonny Perdue** announced the state would change its policy on low-interest loans to local governments, allowing the City to access up to \$50 million per year to help fund Mayor's Franklin's \$3 billion Clean Water Atlanta Program.

In addition, **Senate Majority Leader Eric Johnson** (R-Savannah) announced that he would introduce municipal option sales tax (MOST) legislation to allow the City to hold a referendum on an additional one-cent sales tax to help fund water and sewer work without approval from Fulton County. Despite repeated pleas from the Mayor, the Fulton County Commission has rejected Franklin's request for a sales tax referendum, a requirement under current state law.

Federal Funds Help Other Cities---Why Not Atlanta?

In order to fully fund the City's water and sewer work, to meet deadlines under federal consent decrees (see *Council*, page 1), multiple revenue sources must be tapped—to supplement, and reduce, rate increases. On January 5, the Atlanta City Council finally approved a revised version of Mayor Franklin's proposed five-year plan, which will result in significant rate increases by



Photo courtesy of Atlanta Journal and Constitution by David Tulis

2008, unless additional sources (e.g., state loans, penny sales tax, federal assistance, etc.) become available.

The state is now offering real support for Atlanta's sewers, but where are Georgia's federal representatives? To date, only a few million in federal funds have come to the City for its massive public works project, yet other cities like San Diego and Boston have received hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade their water and sewer systems.

Congressman John Lewis "is doing all he can to make sure that the burden on Atlanta ratepayers will be as low as possible," said Lewis' special assistant George Dusenberry. **Rep. Jack Kingston** (R-Savannah) is on House Appropriations and could be very helpful. Fixing Atlanta

sewers is not just a local issue. The rivers that begin in the Atlanta area flow through the entire state and are regionally important.

CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE:

Rep. Sanford Bishop (202) 225-3631	Rep. Max Burns (202) 225-2823
Rep. Mac Collins (202) 225-5901	Rep. Nathan Deal (202) 225-5211
Rep. Phil Gingrey (202) 225-2931	Rep. Jack Kingston (202) 225-5831
Rep. John Lewis (202) 225-3801	Rep. John Linder (202) 225-4272
Rep. Johnny Isakson (202) 225-4501	Rep. Jim Marshall (202) 225-6531
Rep. Denise Majette (202) 225-1605	Rep. David Scott (202) 225-4628
Rep. Charlie Norwood (202) 225-4101	

FOR EMAIL ADDRESSES, SEE [HTTP://WWW.VISI.COM/JUAN/CONGRESS/CGI-BIN/NEWSEEK.CGI?SITE=CTC&STATE=GA](http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/cgi-bin/newseek.cgi?site=ctc&state=ga)

2004: OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR!

Turner and Kennedy to be Honored on September 17

We are very pleased to be celebrating Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's 10th Anniversary this year. Stay tuned for special events and announcements that will culminate in a gala celebration on September 17, 2004, honoring **Ted Turner** and **Robert Kennedy Jr.** for their encouragement and vision in support of our work. This special evening will take place at The Foundry at Puritan Mill, featuring an elegant dinner, music and awards ceremony. We will also honor and thank all of our supporters who are the reason for our success. Ticket prices and sponsorship information will be available as the date draws closer, so check our website for details.



The way we were in 1994---(L to R) Susan Smith, Chris Thompson, Alice Champagne, Sally Bethea and Glynn Groszmann

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RIVERKEEPER

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River Matters

Georgia River Network Annual Conference February 6-8

Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, GA
To register go to www.garivers.org

CD Rom Debut Party February 24
Scitrek
See page 5

Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia Annual Conference March 12-14
Lake Blackshear in Cordele, Georgia
Check out www.eealliance.org for more details

River Cleanup March 27
East Palisades Unit of the NPS
Contact Kristi Hastie at 404-352-9828 ext. 17

National Science Teachers Association's 52nd Annual Convention April 1-4
Georgia World Congress Center
For details go to www.nsta.org

Practice Run for Back to the Chattahoochee Race April 10
Meet at Garrard's Landing Park (Holcomb Bridge, Roswell) at 9 am. For information call Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 x14
See article, Page 4

9th Annual River Revival May 6
Park Tavern
Contact Page Gleason at 404-352-9828 ext. 15

Practice Run for Back to the Chattahoochee Race May 8
Meet at Garrard's Landing Park (Holcomb Bridge, Roswell) at 9 am. For information call Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 x 14
See article, Page 4

Hike the Headwaters May 8
For information or to sign up contact Birgit Bolton at 404-352-9828 x 24 or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org

River Network's River Rally May 21-25
Wintergreen Resort, VA
Go to www.rivernetwork.org for more information or to register

2nd Annual Back to the Chattahoochee Race and Festival June 12
For Race details, contact Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 ext. 14 and for Festival details contact Kristi Hastie at 404-352-9828 ext. 17



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