

# Mainstream

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Coosa River Basin Initiative

Upper Coosa RIVERKEEPER®

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## MORE DAMS THE ANSWER TO WATER WOES? OTHER OPTIONS COST LESS, PROTECT OUR RIVERS

In the heat of drought as communities face a 2008 with more water restrictions, the cries from all corners of North Georgia get louder: "Build more reservoirs!!"

During the first weeks of Georgia's legislative session, our Governor and lawmakers responded with a host of proposals, including a plan to let loose \$70 million in low interest loans and grants, some of which could be used to assist local communities with reservoir projects.

Sen. Chip Pearson (Dawsonville) introduced a measure, SB 342, questionably titled the "Water Conservation and Drought Relief Act" which provides state funding to assist with the construction of new reservoirs and retrofitting already existing reservoirs. It does not, however, include any conservation measures.

Closer to home, the Northwest Georgia Water Resource Partnership in December unveiled a study of potential reservoir sites in North Georgia. The report included analysis of some 28 sites including one in Haywood Valley of North Floyd and Chattooga counties that has had CRBI's phone ringing off the hook.

Already in the fast-growing Etowah River Basin, there are three reservoirs that are either nearing completion or in the planning phases.

In Dawson County, the Etowah Water & Sewer Authority (EWSA) plans to expand an already existing reservoir and utilize it to store water pumped from the Etowah River. In Cherokee County, the Hickory Log Creek Reservoir will also be filled with water pumped from the Etowah once it comes on line within the year and in Paulding County, officials have begun applying for environmental permits to build a 305-acre reservoir on Richland Creek, a tributary of the Etowah in Bartow County. Together, these facilities propose to pump at least 90 million gallons a day from the Etowah, either shifting storage capacity away from Lake Allatoona or potentially reducing flows downstream from Allatoona Dam.

Each of these facilities will cost millions, impact downstream flows on the Etowah, take valuable property from historic landowners and wipe out populations of federally protected fish species.

see **DAMS**, page 6

## WATERFEST VIII JOINS ROME'S RIVER DAYS

CRBI's 8th annual paddling and environmental education event, WATERFEST, will be held April 25-26, coinciding with the City of Rome's River Days, a week-long series of "green" events focusing on Rome's Rivers.

River Days includes the Rome International Festival, the Clocktower Classic Hand-cycling Race, Chieftain's Museum Herb Sale, Bass Pro Shop's Big Cat Quest Catfish Tournament, WATERFEST VIII and a River Days Concert.

River Days is a joint project of participating organizations and the Rome Convention & Visitors Bureau, Rome-Floyd County Parks and Recreation Authority and the City of Rome. A full slate of activities can be found at <http://www.rome.org/index.asp?NID=474>.

Johnson Outdoors returns as WATERFEST's lead sponsor. With the boat and outdoor gear manufacturer comes the giant tug-o-war pool. This year, CRBI will host four-person team canoe tug-o-war contests all day Saturday, April 26. Solo and tandem kayak tug-o-wars will be held Friday evening, April 25.

see **WATERFEST**, page 8

## WATER PLAN PASSES, WATER TRANSFER THREAT REMAINS

Over the objections of environmentalists and downstream legislators across the state, Georgia's first-ever comprehensive statewide water plan sailed through the General Assembly in just five days and was signed by Gov. Sonny Perdue Feb. 6.

The quick passage of the resolution means that Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) will begin an important three-year process of collecting needed stream flow and water quality data that will be used to develop water plans for 11 different regions across the state.

However, the plan may mean little else. Handcuffed by the initial bill mandating the creation of the plan and railroaded through the General Assembly by leadership that wanted to avoid any serious debate, the plan fails to create any new protections against interbasin transfers for the Coosa River Basin; sets up planning districts based on political boundaries rather than watershed boundaries; and leaves in tact the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District.

CRBI and the Georgia Water Coalition had lobbied lawmakers to create a statutory water plan with the force of law behind it, but we are now working with legislators from Northwest Georgia and other areas downstream from Metro Atlanta to introduce legislation that would correct the most glaring shortcomings of the state plan.

Sen. Preston Smith (Rome) and Reps. Katie Dempsey (Rome), Rick Crawford (Cedartown), Barbara Massey Reece (Menlo) and Barry Loudermilk (Cartersville) all voted against the plan. Rep. John Meadows from Calhoun was absent on the day of the vote, but opposed the measure.

Notably, Rep. Jeff Lewis (Cartersville) and Sen. Bill Heath (Bremen) who both represent portions of Bartow County, as well as Rep. Tom Graves



CRBI volunteers wait for Gov. Sonny Perdue at the Cartersville Airport before the Governor's pre-legislative press conference. Volunteers asked the Governor to protect Northwest Georgia's economic muscle by passing a state water plan that included restrictions on interbasin transfers. The Gov. signed the water plan Feb. 6 without such restrictions.

(Ranger), voted for the plan. Likewise, the entire legislative delegation from Cherokee County voted for the plan. These legislators represent areas of the Coosa Basin, including Lake Allatoona, that stand to lose the most if water transfers from Lake Allatoona and the Etowah are permitted to escalate.

While the plan does include some recommendations that "should" be considered before interbasin transfers are permitted, none of these provisions have the force of law, and the only way they can become law is for the Department of Natural Resources Board to adopt them as rules and regulations.

see **WATER PLAN**, page 5

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Contact us via e-mail at [info@coosa.org](mailto:info@coosa.org) visit us on our website at [www.coosa.org](http://www.coosa.org) or call us at (706) 232-CRBI(2724).

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*CRBI is a grassroots environmental organization that works to inform and empower citizens so that they may become involved in the process of creating a clean, healthy and more economically viable Coosa River Basin.*

CRBI is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

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## ENOUGH CLEAN WATER—A LEGACY WORTH FIGHTING FOR



### Director's Report

by Joe Cook

On Jan. 17, CRBI and the Coosa River lost one of its greatest advocates. Board member Ray Kelley died after a long battle with cancer. A native of Gaylesville, Ray became an advocate for the Coosa and Weiss Lake when his fishing grounds on the Chattooga River became so polluted from industrial discharges upstream that the fish he wanted to catch were instead floating to the surface dead. In 1962, he told environmental investigators simply, "We just want clean water, so that our fish will live."

For the next 46 years, he continued his fight for Weiss Lake and the Coosa, and he left a legacy of cleaner water. In considering Ray's life, I'm reminded of how far we have come. By and large, the industrial and municipal polluters that wreaked such havoc on our rivers and streams during Ray's lifetime have cleaned up their acts, in large part because of people like Ray.

Now and in the future, the battles to protect our rivers will be as much about water quantity as water quality. Population growth—especially population growth in areas without adequate freshwater—in combination with increasing water demands for food and energy production pose a serious threat to the health of our rivers.

Globally, already existing water transfers and proposed water transfers make the Coosa's battle over water transfers to Metro Atlanta seem like a pillow fight.

In Australia, a 60-year-old project to divert water from the Snowy River to serve agricultural and municipal needs in an adjacent basin decimated the Snowy and its estuary. Today, only one percent of the Snowy's natural flow remains.

Closer to home, the Colorado River is diverted to serve the needs of Denver and Southern California. As a result the river's delta now receives less than 1 billion cubic meters of water each year, compared with as much as 18 billion cubic meters during the earlier part of the 20th century.

Likewise, the Sacramento River in California is robbed of 50 percent of its flow through a transfer that sends water to Southern California.

Most of these transfer schemes are a result of having large population and agricultural centers located in water poor regions. With a current global population of 6 billion people and growing, there is a staggering need to develop ways to meet human demands while also protecting river flows.

Is transferring water from water rich regions the answer? If the examples above are any indication, the answer is a resounding, "NO!" The ecological consequences for donor rivers and the saltwater estuaries they feed are simply too great.

Thus, here in Northwest Georgia and Northeast Alabama, we find ourselves at the epicenter of the interbasin transfer debate. If we follow Ray's example and fight tenaciously for policy that restricts interbasin transfers then we can save the Coosa and set an example for other rivers facing similar fates—that's a legacy that will have Ray smiling down upon us.

## A BUSY FIRST THREE MONTHS ON THE JOB



### Program Coordinator's Report

By David Promis

Has it really been only three months since I signed on with CRBI and hit the water oaring right away?

I have learned so much from Joe, Katie, Mark Lamade, and others who have made me feel like a part of a growing family who truly care about our water resources. How lucky I am to be working at a job where I get compensated for helping to educate others, advocate for change and restore our waterways.

It's been a busy three months, and there's more activities on the way.

Feb. 1, we had our first stream clean up on Little Dry Creek in which we recovered several hundred pounds of recyclables and removed hundreds of pounds of trash. Meanwhile, Rome's Southeast Elementary, has agreed to adopt a section of Silver Creek and conduct water monitoring and trash removal. Local college students are also getting in the act, assisting with water monitoring and office chores.

## Foundation support boosts CRBI programs

In late 2007, CRBI received major grants from the Sapelo Foundation, Turner Foundation and the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation.

The Brunswick-based Sapelo Foundation awarded CRBI a \$15,000 grant in December to support our work with the Georgia Water Coalition and efforts to address point-source and non-point source pollution. The Foundation promotes social change affecting vulnerable populations, rural communities and environment in Georgia.

The Turner Foundation, through a grant program administered by Georgia River Network, awarded CRBI a \$10,000 grant in October to assist CRBI with its Get the Dirt Out programs. The Foundation, founded by Ted Turner in 1990, is committed to preventing damage to the natural systems on which all life depends.

The Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation awarded CRBI with a \$1500 grant to support educational activities associated with WATERFEST VIII. Keep Georgia Beautiful supports educational programs that enhance the environment and the quality of life in Georgia.

On Jan. 26, we held our first Get The Dirt Out (GTDO) workshop of the year in Calhoun which turned out 16 participants representing law firms, developers and local citizens. GTDO shows citizens how they can use clean water laws to force builders and developers to prevent mud from entering our streams and rivers. The next GTDO workshop will be held in Dalton this spring. Check [www.coosa.org](http://www.coosa.org) for details on this and other workshops.

I'm also working on collaborative efforts with Alabama environmental groups including Alabama Water Watch (AWW) and Alabama Rivers Alliance (ARA). An AWW workshop at Weiss Lake will be held April 19, and a GTDO workshop with ARA in the Weiss Lake area is in the works.

Another responsibility of CRBI is to follow up on complaints about degradation of local water ways. In this issue of the Mainstream we report on our response to calls to our water pollution prevention hotline, including issues on Dozier and Woodward creeks.

These calls prove that one of our best tools for keeping our streams and rivers healthy is the eyes of our citizens. If you see a pollution problem, have an interest in monitoring a stream near your home or want to learn more about our GTDO workshops, give me a call at 706-232-2724 or e-mail at [dpromis@coosa.org](mailto:dpromis@coosa.org).

### STAY INFORMED Send us your E-mail address!

Want to stay better informed about CRBI issues and activities? With your e-mail address, we can send you notices about CRBI paddle trips and volunteer opportunities as well as timely action alerts about important decisions being made about your river. Contact us at [jcook@coosa.org](mailto:jcook@coosa.org) or give us a call at 706-232-2724.

Become a member of the Georgia Environmental Action Network. It costs nothing and allows you to send messages to your legislators with the click of a button. Sign up at [www.protectgeorgia.net](http://www.protectgeorgia.net).

## BOARD MEMBER RAY KELLEY LEAVES CLEAN WATER LEGACY

On Jan. 17, founding member of CRBI and past board president, Ray Kelley of Gaylesville died after a long battle with cancer. He was 77. Among his greatest legacies will be his nearly 50-year battle to restore the Coosa and Weiss Lake.

Ray was raised on the Chattooga River in Gaylesville and as a young man he saw the health of his river decline as a result of upstream pollution. What had been his fishing and hunting grounds became a dumping ground. In a 1962 hearing to address water pollution flowing to his Alabama home, Ray told officials simply: "All we want is clean water down there, where our fish will live."

For the next 46 years, without fail, that is what Ray fought for with a tenaciousness and steadfastness that became legendary among environmental regulators and activists in both Alabama and Georgia. Debby Berry, founder and president of the Smith Lake Preservation Committee, said that Ray could be like a "bulldog without a bone!" and Weiss Lake Improvement Association president Carolyn Landrem added, "When he got his teeth into something; he hung onto it."

In the early 1990s Ray helped found Alabama Water Watch and CRBI. He later served as CRBI board president for several years, and served on both CRBI and AWW boards until his death.

In the early days of AWW, he volunteered up to 20 weekends a year traveling around the state teaching citizens how to monitor the streams in their communities and even during his long illness, he rarely missed AWW or CRBI board meetings.

Ray became an advocate because when he saw a problem, he didn't sit on his haunches and expect others to solve it. Instead, he leapt at the problem and sunk his teeth into it like the bulldog that he was.

Ray will be missed, but his legacy of a cleaner Coosa and Weiss Lake remain and inspire all of us who care for these special places.

Ray is survived by his wife, Betty Meers Kelley; a daughter, Gail Strawn (Paul) Daniel of Centre; a brother, Wayne (Brenda) Kelley of Gaylesville and several nieces and nephews.

## ANNUAL MEETING PUTS WATER ISSUES, VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The state water plan, interbasin transfers and new reservoirs all came under fire during CRBI's Water Crisis Forum at the annual membership meeting held Jan. 28 at Shorter College.

Long-time environmental lobbyist Neill Herring called the water plan a "disaster" and called on Georgia legislators to adopt laws mandating water planning districts based on watershed boundaries and restricting interbasin transfers. Benita Dodd of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation raised concerns about funding for water infrastructure and conservation; while engineer and water expert Mark Crisp questioned the wisdom of relying on interbasin transfers and reservoirs to solve growing water needs.

"Any depletion is a problem," Crisp said of water transfers from the Etowah basin.

The forum, mediated by board president Tom Farmer, provided more than an hour of lively debate and information sharing on Georgia's pressing water issues. About 75 people attended the meeting.

CRBI also recognized key supporters and volunteers at the meeting and paid tribute to long-time board member Ray Kelley who died Jan. 17.

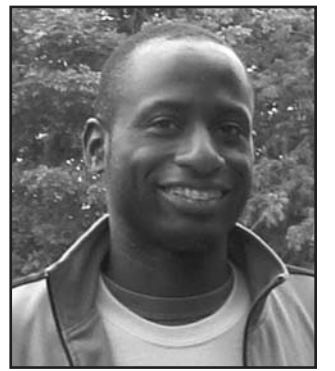
John Fichera and his sons Salvatore and Eric were honored as Water Monitors of the Year for their efforts in collecting water quality data on Little Cedar Creek in Cave Spring. An avid fisherman, Fichera and his family have been monitoring the creek since the mid-90s.



Sunny Shropshire Marceau

Sunny Shropshire Marceau was honored as the Ray Kelley Volunteer of the Year. Sunny, and her children Matthew and Eugenia, volunteered at every CRBI function during 2007. In addition, Sunny, a biology student at Shorter College, has been assisting Program Coordinator David Promis with bacteria monitoring on area streams.

Gary Jones, a fourth-grade teacher at East Central Elementary, was given CRBI's Environmental Educator Award. Jones organizes East Central's Environmental Quiz Bowl team each year and uses his classroom to engage his students in understanding the environment and actively protecting the places where they live.



Gary Jones



**YAMAHA**

Yamaha Marine Group was honored as CRBI's Corporate

Citizen in 2007. Based in Kennesaw, Yamaha Marine Group in May donated a new G-3, Yamaha-powered johnboat to CRBI. Since May, the \$20,000 boat has been a workhorse at clean ups; enabled us to take media and major supporters on our rivers and greatly enhanced our monitoring programs on the Coosa, Etowah and Oostanaula rivers.

## FISH FRY SETS RECORDS

The 6th Annual Northwest Georgia Credit Union-CRBI Fish Fry left more than 30 CRBI volunteers greasy and sweaty, but once again set fundraising records.

Some 1400 catfish filets and hushpuppies and 35 pounds of cheese grits were served up to more than 700 patrons, helping CRBI generate a record-setting \$11,000 for CRBI advocacy, education, water monitoring and restoration programs. More than 900 tickets to the event were sold by CRBI staff, board members and volunteers.

CRBI thanks Northwest Georgia Credit Union for joining the event this year as our lead sponsor. Other sponsors included Southeastern Mills, Montessori School of Rome, One World Sustainable and Southern Pride Catfish. Sam's Club, Wal-mart, Mrs. Winners, Long John Silvers, Publix, Kroger, Chick-Fil-A and St. Peters Episcopal Church also provided in kind donations of food, condiments and cooking utensils.

Thanks to all these supporters and the dedicated mussel-head volunteers who make this event happen each year.



Mark Lamade, Ben Harrison and David Ashbaugh man the fryers at The Forum

## DON'T MESS WITH OUR MUSSEL A HIT AT TU CHILI COOK OFF

CRBI volunteers Jack & Penny Martischnig's Don't Mess With Our Mussel Chili won a judge's choice award at the 12th Annual Coosa Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited Chili Cookoff Oct. 13 at Ridge Ferry Park.

The Martischnig's chili placed 12th out of more than 100 recipes sampled by the judges. Jack & Penny responded to a CRBI e-mail call for chili cooks, donating the ingredients and arriving at the park before sunrise to begin cooking their prize-winning concoction.

During the event, CRBI volunteers, wearing Don't Mess With Our Mussel hats, distributed information about the Coosa's tremendous diversity of mussel species as well as chili samples. CRBI volunteers also assisted Trout Unlimited members by emptying trash cans throughout the day.

CRBI thanks the Martischnigs and our volunteers. The Coosa Valley Chapter works to preserve, protect and restore cold water streams throughout Georgia, and annually makes a major contribution to CRBI to support our efforts.

To learn more, visit <http://coosavalleytu.org/index.html>



CRBI volunteers don "Don't Mess With Our Mussel Hats" at the Trout Unlimited Chili Cookoff

# CRBI ADDRESSES POLLUTION TRADING SCHEME IN CHEROKEE COUNTY

In January, CRBI asked Georgia's Environmental Protection Division to rescind a wastewater discharge permit issued to the Pilgrim's Pride chicken rendering plant located on the Etowah River in Cherokee County because a pollution trading scheme associated with this permit will result in increased pollution of the Etowah River and Lake Allatoona and saddle Cherokee County water customers with an unnecessary debt.

In June, EPD issued a permit to the facility, allowing the discharge of 3,000 pounds of phosphorus to the Etowah annually. Phosphorus is the primary cause of high chlorophyll a levels on Lake Allatoona. These levels indicate unsafe algae levels that could lead to oxygen depletion and fish kills.

In August, Pilgrim's Pride agreed to relinquish

its permit to EPD, thus allowing the Cherokee County Water & Sewer Authority (CCWSA) to construct a new wastewater treatment facility to serve the county's growing population.

This so-called pollution allocation trading plan will ultimately lead to increased phosphorus loading in Lake Allatoona. Furthermore, because CCWSA has agreed to pay Pilgrim's Pride \$6 million for relinquishing its permit, the plan represents what CRBI believes is the unconstitutional use of state-issued wastewater discharge permits.

Georgia's Attorney General has issued an opinion against the buying and selling of state-issued water withdrawal permits, and EPD claims that wastewater discharge permits cannot be bought or sold. However, in this case the trading scheme constitutes the purchase of a

permit.

Rather than forcing Pilgrim's Pride to reduce its phosphorus discharge by issuing a more stringent permit, EPD issued a permit that allows the facility to discharge three times the amount of phosphorus it currently releases to the river.

Pilgrim's Pride, CCWSA, the City of Canton and others lobbied EPD heavily to issue a permit allowing high levels of phosphorus discharges, knowing the decision would impact the value of the permit and the capacity of CCWSA's proposed wastewater treatment facility that would utilize Pilgrim's Pride's relinquished permit.

Prior to issuing the permit, EPD participated in numerous meetings with the various entities involved and was aware of the trading scheme.

# WOODWARD CREEK TARGETED FOR BACTERIA STUDY

Responding to complaints from anglers fishing Floyd County's Woodward Creek, in December CRBI began an investigation of pollution problems on the creek, including high bacteria levels as a result of upstream agricultural practices and erosion and sedimentation problems.

Program Coordinator David Promis and Shorter College biology student, Sunny Shropshire Marceau, are now conducting fecal bacteria monitoring, using equipment obtained last year through a grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

Data is being collected from several points along the creek to determine the source and extent of bacteria contamination.

Initial tests indicate that agricultural practices are contributing significantly to unsafe bacteria levels. One primary source appears to be the University of Georgia's Northwest Bull Experiment Station where cattle have full access to the creek.



*Cows from the Northwest Georgia Bull Experiment Station roam through Woodward Creek*

While collecting water quality data, Promis and Shropshire witnessed cattle roaming freely and defecating in the creek. Agricultural best management practices recommend fencing cattle out of streams and rivers to reduce the risk of fecal matter entering the waterways.

Visits to the creek also revealed an erosion and sedimentation problem resulting from the excavation of a hillside adjacent to the creek at the Experiment Station.

CRBI is now encouraging the facility to prevent further sediment deposition to the creek by installing erosion control measures and revegetating the exposed, steeply sloped hillside.

Bacteria monitoring will continue on the creek to determine the impact of the Experiment Station's cattle on the creek and pinpoint other sources of bacteria contamination within the Woodward Creek watershed.

If you see a pollution problem on your creek, contact David Promis at [dpromis@coosa.org](mailto:dpromis@coosa.org) or call 706-232-2724.

# FT. ATTAWAY SOCIETY, BERRY STUDENTS, OPEN DOOR HOME TEAM UP FOR LITTLE DRY CREEK

In an effort to rid Little Dry Creek of unsightly refuse and improve water quality, 22 volunteers spent close to three hours on Feb. 1 removing glass, plastic, metal and even a few appliances from along the banks of Little Dry Creek between Martha Berry Blvd. and the Oostanaula River. In the end, more than 1500 pounds of refuse and recyclables were removed from the area.

Volunteers from the Fort Attaway Preservation Society, Berry College's Athletes Bettering the Community, The Open Door Home and CRBI rolled up their sleeves and removed a trailer load of trash and sent 338 pounds of recyclables to the Rome-Floyd County Recycling Center. This included 164 lbs of glass, 66 lbs of plastic and 108 lbs of tires.

The clean up was instigated by Cailey Chase who called CRBI seeking assistance cleaning up the creek where she and her dog take daily walks. The natural area which has been impacted heavily by nearby changes to the landscape has historic significance and provides refuge for foxes, deer and other wildlife.

Thanks to Mary Hardin Thorton of Keep Rome/Floyd Beautiful for assisting with roll off dumpsters and all the volunteers who made the first CRBI-sponsored clean up of the year a great success.

If you know of a site along a local stream or river that needs to be cleaned up, contact Program Coordinator David Promis at [dpromis@coosa.org](mailto:dpromis@coosa.org) or call 706-232-2724.



*Program Coordinator David Promis, far left, and Berry College student athletes round up a load of trash from Little Dry Creek, including a large refrigerator (foreground).*

# FULL SLATE OF PADDLE TRIPS ON TAP IN 2008

In 2007, some 600 people enjoyed CRBI's paddling events, learning about our rivers first hand and having a great time doing it. With assistance from Adventure Rome 'N Around and the City of Rome, in 2008, our paddle trip schedule offers even more opportunities to experience the Coosa and its tributaries.

These trips will be guided by CRBI staff and volunteers. Shuttle services and boat rentals are provided through Adventure Rome 'N Around and CRBI. CRBI members participate for free and receive discounts on boat rentals.



*This view of the rock cliffs at Resaca on the Oostanaula River is just one of the sites to see during CRBI's 2008 paddle trips.*

To register for one of the following trips or rent a canoe, call 706-232-2724 or e-mail Joe Cook at [jcook@coosa.org](mailto:jcook@coosa.org). Adventure Rome 'N Around offers boat rentals and shuttles year round by calling Jim Hunter at 706-252-4785 or e-mail him at [info@adventurerome.com](mailto:info@adventurerome.com).

## March 15: Cherokee County (GA) Fish Weir Paddle

This 15-mile paddle on the Etowah takes you through the heart of Cherokee County and the former haunts of the Cherokee Indians. You'll paddle over several fish weirs on this ride through a surprisingly wild landscape in this fast-growing county.

## April 19: Earth Day Paddle on the Etowah

What better way to spend Earth Day than discovering what is arguably the Etowah's most picturesque six-mile stretch. This is a great paddle for families and children with plenty of play places, beautiful scenery and plentiful Native American fish weirs as the river winds through rural Bartow County.

## May 10: NERA Paddle on the Conasauga

Take a trip with New Echota Rivers Alliance on the Coosa Basin's most biologically diverse tributary located in Whitfield and Gordon counties. The trip ends where the Oostanaula begins near the Conasauga's confluence with the Coosawattee at New Echota.

## May 17: Terrapin Creek Paddle

Join CRBI for an exploration of this beautiful creek which feeds the Coosa River at Weiss Lake in Alabama. A long-time paddling destination, Terrapin Outdoor Center will host this trip with canoe rentals available.

## May 31: Major Ridge's Paddle on the Oostanaula River

This paddle will take you on a 13-mile journey through history with stops as historic sites including U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wing dams, a Native American fish weir and Chieftain's Museum.

## June 14: Family Paddle on Etowah

A pre-Father's Day paddle, but mothers and daughters are welcome too for this 10-mile paddle that begins in the shadows of Euharlee's historic covered bridge and ends at US 411. This is the first installment in the Etowah Adventurer series.

## June 21: NERA's Oostanaula Birthplace Paddle

See where the Oostanaula begins on this 13-mile paddle from New Echota to Calhoun. The paddle features a little of everything-from fish weirs and mussel shell hunting to cliff jumping (for the daring).

## Aug. 2: NERA's Coosawattee Paddle

Join NERA for an exploration of the Coosawattee below Carter's Dam in Gordon County.

## Aug. 9: Indian Mound Paddle

The second in the Etowah Adventurer series, this trip takes you from Allatoona Dam to Euharlee on a 17-mile course through history. Portage around Cartersville's old Thompson-Weinman Dam and paddle past the Indian Mounds and Antebellum Plantations.

## Sept. 6: Fish Weir Paddle

This annual paddle has become increasingly popular and represents the third leg of the Etowah Adventurer series. A 17-mile course from US 411 to Grizzard Park provides access to the best of the Etowah's fish weirs and other historic sites.

## Sept. 22: NERA Oostanaula Paddle

Traverse a remote section of the Oostanaula between Calhoun and Armuchee and see first-hand the tremendous diversity of mussels on the Oostanaula. If you're lucky you'll find some mammoth washboard mussels.

## Nov. 8: Fall Foliage Paddle

The final leg of the Etowah Adventurer series, this 12-mile trip takes you from Grizzard Park on Rome's outskirts, through the heart of the city and on to historic Lock and Dam Park on the Coosa.

Don't miss these opportunities to fall in love with your rivers.

# SEWAGE SPILL RUINS WATER PLAYGROUND ON DOZIER CREEK

A sewage spill on Floyd County's Dozier Creek in January illustrates the need for involved citizens and improved maintenance of our sewer systems.

Property owners Jerry and Lewis Johnston reported the spill to Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and CRBI on Jan. 28 after finding their creek coated in a white, greasy sludge and tracing its source to an abandoned City of Rome sewer line near Ga. 53. When the sewer line was abandoned in the 1990s the pipe crossing the creek was removed, leaving the open lines on either bank of the creek.

The Johnstons, whose family has lived, worked and played along Dozier Creek for more than 200 years, then went a step further, tracing the abandoned line to the source of the leak near West Hermitage Road.

The spill was caused by a faulty Rome Water & Sewer Dept. manhole that connected the abandoned line with the active line. The resulting discharge consisted primarily of wastewater and chicken protein from the U.S. Biofuels facility on West Hermitage Road which produces biodiesel using chicken byproducts.

A Sewer Dept. crew capped the spill eight hours after receiving the report, and as required by state law, reported to EPD a spill of 7200 gallons, though acknowledging the spill may have been larger and ongoing over an unknown period.

The Johnstons said they first noticed the greasy film in their creek in late December, and began investigating the source when the condition worsened in January. CRBI took measurements of the spill and estimated a discharge of 900 gallons per hour. If the discharge was ongoing at this level over a period of several weeks, this illegal discharge represents a major Clean Water Act violation.

Following the spill, CRBI Program Coordinator David Promis documented

the condition of the creek and performed water monitoring to assess the spill's impact.

With the help of Dr. Richard Pirkle with the Shorter College biology department, we also obtained a chemical analysis of the discharge. The analysis confirmed that the solids covering the creek consisted of chicken protein. Though visually unpleasant, the proteins are readily broken down by bacteria in the stream and may not impact the stream ecosystem. Dissolved oxygen levels in the creek, which plummeted during the discharge, improved in the days after the spill was stopped. A heavy rain also flushed much of the sludge downstream, reducing the risk of fish kills.



*Sewage flows from an uncapped, abandoned City of Rome sewer line into Dozier Creek.*

CRBI filed a report with EPD questioning whether the spill was a one-time incident and outlining the Johnston's belief that the spill was ongoing over a period of several weeks.

The Sewer Dept. has repaired the leaks and filled manholes on the abandoned line to prevent any additional discharges.

For the Johnston's, however, the damage has been done. Jerry Johnston said his grandchildren will not swim and fish in the creek this spring and summer as usual.

## DAMS, *continued from page 1*

Hickory Log's price tag is \$100 million. Paulding County has already spent \$2.5 million just obtaining necessary permits.

Given these costs, local leaders would be wise to carefully considering all their water supply options before lining up before the attorneys and consultants that are clamoring to secure lucrative dam-building contracts.

CRBI advocates first considering water conservation options. Georgia's Environmental Protection Division estimates that every 1000 gallons of water saved through conservation measures costs communities between 50 cents and \$1.40. It costs \$4000 to secure the same 1000 gallons by building a dam.

Water suppliers should implement aggressive pricing that encourages conservation, assist homeowners and businesses with replacing old water-wasting plumbing and repair leaking water supply lines along with a whole tool box of other measures before rushing to build a

reservoir.

Alternatives to damming pristine streams should also be considered. For instance, Paulding County plans to dam Richland Creek just a mile upstream from an already existing reservoir that could be expanded to meet the county's water supply needs, perhaps saving the county's taxpayers millions and causing less environmental damage.

This reservoir, located in Bartow County, was ruled out, officials said, because they erroneously claim they do not have eminent domain authority outside Paulding County. The County also failed to consider numerous other already existing reservoirs within the county.

In Dawson County, EWSA will likely utilize some of the state funds that might be freed up by Pearson's reservoir-building bill to turn an already existing Natural Resources Conservation Service pond into a water supply reservoir.

There are more than 300 NRCS dams across Georgia-most built between 1950 and 1970 for flood control purposes. Utilizing these reservoirs could reduce the destruction of important aquatic habitat and assist in the repair of aging dams. If communities must secure adequate water supplies, these existing reservoirs should always be a first option.

While North Georgia's growing population will demand more water from our rivers and streams in the future, the exorbitant financial, environmental and property rights costs of dam projects suggests that every possible alternative should be weighed before pouring concrete.

To obtain a copy of the Northwest Georgia Regional Water Partnership Reservoir Study, including maps of the proposed Haywood Valley Reservoir, contact CRBI at 706-232-2724 or [jcook@coosa.org](mailto:jcook@coosa.org)

## GET THE DIRT OUT WORKSHOP A SUCCESS

CRBI chapter organization, New Echota Rivers Alliance, hosted a *Get The Dirt Out* workshop in Calhoun Jan. 26 for 16 participants including developers, lawyers and local citizens.



Participants learned about Georgia's erosion and sedimentation laws and how they can use these laws to prevent muddy stormwater run off from construction sites from fouling our streams and damaging property. The workshop concluded with a tour of erosion and sedimentation controls at the City of Calhoun's new recreation facility along Oothcalooga Creek.

NERA volunteer, David Harrison, has begun assessing construction sites and other land-disturbing activities in Calhoun and will conduct water quality monitoring in the Oothcalooga Creek watershed utilizing equipment secured through a grant from the Sapelo Foundation.

Look for NERA at the Taste of Calhoun celebration April 26 and sign up to join NERA on its May 10 paddle trip down the Conasauga River. For information about NERA activities, contact David Harrison at 770-547-2275.



*Get the Dirt Out workshop participants tour a construction site in Calhoun.*

## ALABAMA WATER AGENDA MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 2007, the Alabama River Alliance officially launched the Alabama Water Agenda, a multi-year statewide campaign to address the greatest threats to Alabama's rivers and water resources. To date it has been endorsed by more than 350 individuals and more than thirty organizations.

The Water Agenda addresses six priority threats to our state's waters. In this first year, we focused on Instream Flow, working with state agencies, concerned citizens, and the media to bring the lack of statewide water policy to the forefront of conversations regarding the drought, future water needs, and water wars.

To learn more and sign up to endorse the agenda, visit the website at [www.AlabamaWaterAgenda.com](http://www.AlabamaWaterAgenda.com) for more information on instream flow and Agenda action alerts. You can also sign up as a volunteer.

### ***Alliance contributes to important victory against carcinogens in Alabama's Waterways***

On December 14, Alabama environmental regulators voted to move forward and initiate rule-making regarding the allowable level of carcinogens in Alabama waterways, a first step toward making water cleaner and safer across Alabama.

While cancer is currently the second leading cause of death in our state, killing about one in five of every Alabamian who dies each year, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) still issues permits allowing industries to discharge cancer-causing chemicals into our

waterways at a rate ten times higher than our neighboring states. Thanks to the efforts of ARA and the other organizations that brought this situation into the public view, ADEM has agreed to revisit this policy.

### ***Alliance wins court case, sets statewide precedent***

After more than six years of administrative appeals and court battles, the Alliance and partner organization Friends of Hurricane Creek have achieved another victory for Alabama's waters.

In December, the Alabama Court of Civil Appeals upheld an April 2006 ruling of the Montgomery Circuit Court that overturned the decision of ADEM to issue an NPDES permit authorizing the discharge of pollutants into tributaries of Hurricane Creek.

The permit was initially appealed on the grounds that ADEM cannot issue a discharge permit to a water body that is already impaired for the pollutant proposed in the discharge. In the case of the permit for Tuscaloosa Resources Inc, ADEM had issued a permit to the coal mining operation that would allow discharges of metals to a stream already polluted with aluminum and iron. This ruling in the appeals court helps protect impaired waters from becoming more polluted. The Alliance is currently appealing the second permit ADEM has issued to this facility.

To become a member of Alabama Rivers Alliance, visit [www.alabamarivers.org](http://www.alabamarivers.org)



Alabama Rivers Alliance  
*Water Is Life*

## NEWS

# Fish still biting in the winter



## Coosa River Fishing

by Paul DiPrima

Many anglers in Georgia may stay huddled close to the fireplace on winter weekends. If you're one of those, you're missing out on some fishing opportunities and a chance to enjoy nature during the shorter days of the year.

I fish throughout the winter and have found that although many of the fish are not as aggressive on cold days, most fish will still eat. Many fish eat less because their metabolism slows as the water temperature drops. Sunfish such as Bluegill and Shell Crackers are primarily insectivores that rely on bugs as a primary food source. These fish go almost dormant in

the winter because their food source is also dormant. However, Bass, crappie and trout along with the striped bass family and catfish will take well-presented baits or lures in the winter.

On warm sunny days fishing can be outstanding for bass in our larger lakes. With Weiss and Allatoona being extremely low, the shallow bays and inlets will warm quickly on sunny afternoons and if the wind is blowing toward the cove, food that bait-fish eat will be blown into the cove also. Walking the shoreline with a shallow running lure and tossing it toward any surface movement that you notice can usually result in a strike. Largemouth Bass, White Bass and stripers all feed on the shad and other minnows that are found in our lakes.

As a kid I fished many a cold night from a boat or dock at Allatoona. Our target was crappie. It was as simple as bringing a bucket of minnows, a car battery and an old headlight off a car. We

would attach the headlight on a cane pole so that the light would float on the water about ten feet from the boat and shine downward. The light would attract bait-fish and the crappie would follow. It was rare that we didn't catch our limit.

By far, my favorite time to fish for trout is the winter. Especially rewarding is fishing creeks with snow covered banks. Winter trout fishing is not without its priorities. First and foremost is dressing properly in warm neoprene waders and layered clothing. Be sure to fish slow and deep in search of trout. They will lay motionless on the bottom waiting patiently for a meal to come to them.

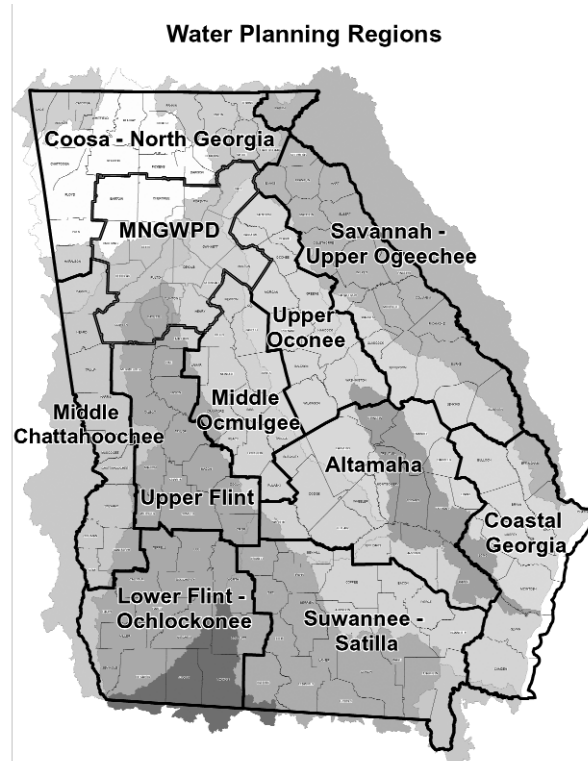
Catfish in winter are sluggish but can be caught. This time of year a large bait in a deep hole in the river is a good bet for catfish. The stinkier the bait the more successful you can be.

## WATER PLAN, *continued from page 1*

Though EPD Director Carol Couch has said that is her intention, there is nothing in the Plan that mandates such steps, and there is no guarantee the DNR Board will adopt those interbasin transfer provisions as presented. In recent years, the Board has been stripped of its few environmental voices by the Governor and Senate who appoint members to the Board.

The planning districts finalized in the state plan disregard watershed boundaries almost entirely. For instance, the North Georgia-Coosa Planning District stretches across five watersheds from the South Carolina to the Alabama state line, but two counties that sit entirely within the Coosa Basin (Bartow and Cherokee) are left out of the District. Instead, those two counties remain a part of the already existing Metro District.

Unless the 16-county Metro District is forced to adhere to the provisions outlined in the



Planning districts outlined in the State Water Plan do not follow watershed boundaries (shown in varying shades of gray)

state plan, then Metro Atlanta will be allowed to operate under different rules than the other planning districts. While EPD has offered assurances that everyone will ultimately "play by the same rules," it remains unclear how this will unfold given the Metro District's statutory authority.

CRBI encourages its members to contact your legislators and express your support for legislative measures that protect downstream communities from interbasin transfers and that require water planning based on watershed boundaries, not political boundaries.

Until hydrologically connected communities like Rome, Cartersville, Marietta, Dallas and Canton sit down at the same table to figure how to share our water resources we will continue to see intrastate conflicts that divide our state and decimate our rivers.

To view the state water plan in its entirety, visit <http://www.gadnr.org/gswp/>

## FERRY NAMES A LINK TO THE PAST

While rivers could serve as thoroughfares for freight and passengers wanting to travel downstream they could also be serious obstacles to citizens who wished to merely get to the other side.



### ROME AREA HISTORY MUSEUM

By Dennis Nordeman  
Courtesy of the Rome Area History Museum  
[www.RomeHistoryMuseum.com](http://www.RomeHistoryMuseum.com)

In the early days of settlement in the Coosa River Basin, bridges were practically non-existent. Crossings would normally have to take place at shallow areas or shoals. (Look for road names like Shallowford for hints where the river was shallow enough you could ford it.)

Ferries offered another alternative and were quite common on the rivers in this area. They continued to operate even into the 1950's. In fact, one ferry still operates across the Coosa River near Hoke's Bluff, Alabama.

While today ferries are large motor driven vessels carrying many vehicles. The ferries crossing our rivers in the early 1800's were probably big enough for one wagon and its passengers. There was no mechanical means of propelling the ferry except perhaps an oar used by the operator. The current of the stream was also used to propel the ferry from one side of the river and back. These ferries are called reaction ferries.

The ferry generally consists of two pontoons with a deck bridging them. They operate faster and more effectively in rivers with strong currents. These vessels require overhead cables suspended from towers anchored on either bank of the river. A "traveller" is installed on the cable and the ferry is

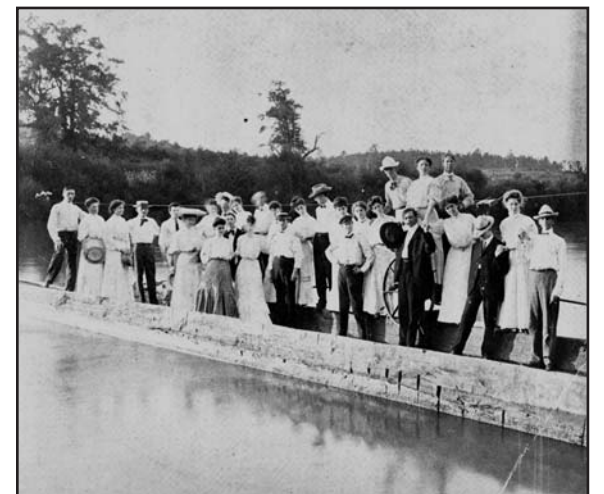
attached to the traveller by a bridle cable. To operate the ferry the bridle cable is adjusted so that the pontoons are angled into the current, causing the force of the current to move the ferry across the river.

Every community within the Coosa River basin has roads that point to where these crossings were located. In Rome we have Burnett Ferry and Bells Ferry. In Canton we also have Bells Ferry Road.

Two ferries operated within what is now Rome. Just north of downtown, near his home, Major Ridge, a Cherokee Chief, operated a ferry as one of his many enterprises.

At the confluence of the Oostanaula and Etowah Rivers, John Ross, another Cherokee Chief, operated a ferry that allowed travelers to cross any of the three rivers.

With the Cherokee evacuation, the ferries were taken over by the new settlers. Some ownership disagreements and considerable fighting resulted until claims of ownership were settled.



# CRBI WATERFEST VIII



Ridge Ferry Park

Friday, April 25 & Saturday, April 26

Register Now at [www.coosa.org](http://www.coosa.org) or call 706-232-2724

Don't miss this wet, wild two-day recreational, educational extravaganza featuring...

- A 13-mile Canoe-a-thon and Race on the Oostanaula River as part of the Georgia Flatwater Canoe & Kayak Race Series
- Canoe and Kayak Tug-O-War Tournaments for children and adults in a mammoth 30x60 pool
- Snakes of Georgia shows by Jason Clark of Southeastern Reptile Rescue
- Canoe and kayak test rides and demos
- Environmental Quiz Bowl Competition for area elementary schools
- Environmental Fair with a scavenger hunt for kids, exhibits, live animals and prizes.

And, following WATERFEST: Southern Thunder, Peachtree Station & T. Graham Brown in concert on the Ridge Ferry Park stage

More than \$2,000 in prizes will be awarded to the participants generating the most money for CRBI through the Canoe-thon, including:

- A canoe from Old Town
- A 2-night mountain getaway from Snowbird Mountain Lodge
- A kayak from Terrapin Outdoor Center
- Clothing from Patagonia
- And much more!

## WATERFEST, *continued from page 1*

The Canoe-a-thon & Race will return to its 13-mile course on the Oostanaula River as part of the Georgia Flatwater Canoe & Kayak Race Series. Winners will be recognized in all paddling divisions, and an Old Town canoe from Johnson Outdoors and a recreational kayak from Terrapin Outdoor Center will be given to the individuals raising the most money through the Canoe-a-thon.

The Environmental Fair will feature exhibits and a live snake show from Jason Clark of Southeastern Reptile Rescue. The Environmental Scavenger Hunt and the Environmental Quiz Bowl also return to hone children and adult's woods and water wits.

A concert featuring Southern Thunder, Peachtree Station and T. Graham Brown will wrap up the WATERFEST festivities Saturday evening at Ridge Ferry Park.

Don't miss this exciting weekend in Rome. You can register online to participate in the Canoe-a-thon, Race and Tug-O-War at [www.coosa.org](http://www.coosa.org).



Canoe and Kayak Tug-O-Wars will be the centerpiece of the Environmental Fair April 26

## Calendar of Events

- »» Mar. 15 Fish Weir Paddle/Etowah River in Canton
- »» Mar. 22 GA Flatwater Canoe & Kayak Race at Lake Lanier, [www.lckc.org](http://www.lckc.org)
- »» Apr. 5 Canoochee River Race in Claxton [www.ogeecheecanoocheeriverkeeper.org](http://www.ogeecheecanoocheeriverkeeper.org)
- »» Apr. 19 Alabama Water Watch Training at Weiss Lake
- »» Apr. 19 Earth Day Paddle Trip/ Etowah River near Euharlee
- »» Apr. 25-26 WATERFEST VIII
- »» May 10 NERA Paddle on the Conasauga River
- »» May 17 Terrapin Creek Paddle in Piedmont, AL
- »» May 31 Major Ridge's Paddle/ Oostanaula River in Rome
- »» June 14 Chattahoochee Race in Roswell [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org)
- »» June 14 Family Paddle Trip/ Etowah River near Euharlee
- »» June 21 NERA Paddle on the Oostanaula River in Calhoun

For details on listed events, call 706-232-2724 or visit [www.coosa.org](http://www.coosa.org)

Coosa River Basin Initiative  
408 Broad Street  
Rome, GA 30161

*"When things get so far gone as to attract their notice, the citizens, when well informed, can be relied upon to set them right." - Thomas Jefferson*  
To volunteer, please call 706-232-CRBI (2724).



Be a part of the solution!  
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