

MAINSTREAM

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Coosa River Basin Initiative/Upper Coosa RIVERKEEPER®



Court Decisions Rock Water Wars, But Nothing Settled

Two separate court decisions in June rocked the two-decade-long water dispute between Georgia, Alabama and Florida, but did little to settle the ultimate question about how much water from the Chattahoochee and Coosa river systems each state is entitled.

On June 25, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal of a lower court decision that affirmed Atlanta's right to use water from Lake Lanier on the Chattahoochee River. Three days later, a U.S. District Judge in Alabama dismissed that state's lawsuit aimed at preventing Atlanta from siphoning more water from Lake Allatoona and the Coosa system.

While Georgia leaders heralded both decisions as victories, the decisions do not settle the ongoing water disputes.

Chattahoochee Decision

The Supreme Court's decision sets the playing field for negotiations between the states. The Court agreed that Congress intended Lake Lanier to be used for water supply. Now, the much thornier question of how much water metro Atlanta can take from the river must be answered.



Recent court decisions do little to settle how much water Metro Atlanta and the rest of Georgia can remove from Lake Allatoona and the Coosa River system.

That question is in the hands of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) which manages Lake Lanier and other reservoirs on the Chattahoochee. At stake is a request by Georgia to use as much as 705 million gallons a day from the lake and the Chattahoochee River. In a press release following the Supreme Court action, the Corps stated that the legal opinion "does not in any manner indicate the Corps must, should or will" meet Georgia's entire request.

It may take the Corps as many as three years to complete studies to determine if the lake can sustain such an allocation, and then more legal challenges may ensue.

Coosa Decision

In the Coosa dispute, U.S. District Judge Karon Bowdre's ruled that Alabama's allegations that the Corps was improperly controlling flows in the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa river system were premature because at the time the suit was filed in 1990 the Corps had not taken any official action allocating water to metro Atlanta.

see Court Decisions, page 6

Amos' Odyssey: 200 Miles, 3 Rivers, 1 Goal

On Aug. 25, CRBI Program Coordinator, Amos Tuck, will embark on a 21-day, 200-mile journey through the Upper Coosa River Basin. The goal is to raise awareness of the treasure trove of biodiversity that is the Upper Coosa River Basin.

Tuck will begin at the headwaters of the Conasauga in the Cohutta Wilderness where he will back-pack along the Jacks River for three days. He will then spend eight days navigating Georgia's most biologically diverse river – the Conasauga. The Conasauga will lead him to the mussel beds of the Oostanaula. Following the Oostanaula he will reach the Coosa in downtown Rome that will carry him to Weiss Lake.



Amos Tuck with a gar fish. Tuck will explore the Upper Coosa River Basin from its headwaters to Weiss Lake.

During the trip, Tuck will post regular updates on CRBI's Musselhead Blog, www.coosa.wordpress.com featuring photos, video

see Amos' Odyssey, page 6

CRBI halts Burwell Creek wetlands development...for now

Four years of work by CRBI to stop a 60-acre retail development on floodplain and wetlands in Rome along the Oostanaula River have resulted in the temporary halt to the development.

On May 2, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers suspended the permit for the Citi Center project; two weeks later, the developer, Ledbetter Properties, withdrew its permit application for the project.

The suspension came after CRBI petitioned the Corps to reevaluate the permit because of opposition to the project from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and because the developer had made significant changes to the project since the permit was issued in June 2008. The developer is expected to re-apply



Shorter College students assist with a biological survey of Burwell Creek in April. The findings of the survey show Burwell Creek to be in fair health.

see Burwell Creek, page 7

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CRBI is a grassroots environmental organization that works to inform and empower citizens to preserve, protect and restore North America's most biologically diverse river basin.

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Important Work: Protecting Wetlands & Changing Lives

In March, two headlines ran on opposite pages in the *Rome News-Tribune*. One dealt with CRBI's fight to stop the ill-conceived plan to build a shopping center on 50 acres of floodplain and wetlands in Rome. On the facing page, a headline announced CRBI's paddle workshops for persons with disabilities.

While we applauded the suspension of the permit for the shopping center (see story page 1), I believe our biggest thrill of the Spring and Summer was seeing the results of our paddle workshops (see story page 7).

During these workshops we taught several persons with disabilities how to safely maneuver their kayaks. We worked with paraplegics as well as persons recovering from strokes and dealing with cerebral palsy. And, through a grant from the **Outdoor Foundation**, we taught youth from Rome's Open Door Home how to paddle.

The goal was for these new paddlers to compete in WATERFEST XII's 13-mile canoe and kayak race on the Oostanaula. And, compete, they did, with heart-warming results.

Jake Bloodworth, a paraplegic from Rome, wore a tired, but very large smile after his 13-mile



Joe Cook

adventure. Likewise, **Robert Hill** of Rome, who has cerebral palsy, completed the trip with his son **Trevor**. Hill joined the workshops because he wanted to find a physical activity that he could do with his family.

The youth also left the river with a tremendous sense of accomplishment. Said one afterwards: "The canoe trip was amazingly awesome!

Going down the river for six hours was wreckless; I mean 13 miles was...OMG, fun!"

They weren't the only ones inspired. **John Crowley**, a physical therapist with **Redmond Regional Medical Center** who assisted with the workshops, got the bug to outfit kayaks with special adaptations for those with physical disabilities. After the workshops, he involved Redmond Regional, **Wolf Medical Supply** in Rome and **Cedar Creek Park** in Cave Spring to secure two adaptive kayaks for CRBI's rental fleet. Those kayaks will soon be available on a regular basis for our guided paddle trips.

Changing the decisions of federal bureaucracies like the Corps of Engineers is important work; equally important is changing lives by getting people on our rivers.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT The Last Child in the River

In his famous book, *Last Child in the Woods*, **Richard Louv** discusses the growing epidemic of what he calls "nature deficit disorder." Louv suggests that a lack of physical and emotional connection to nature contributes to difficulties like obesity and attention deficit disorder.

A professor I had in college called it the "Kroger Syndrome." If you ask children where meat comes from, they say Kroger. Similarly, if you ask them where water comes from, they say the faucet. It is apparent that there is an ever-growing disconnect between children and the natural world.

Many complain about the prominence of computers, and we are quick to blame modern technology for our youth's a lack of interest in nature. However, recent experiences have me questioning if the computer is truly the culprit.

At our summer camps this year we had the privilege of reaching both kids who loved nature and kids who had little to no experience in nature. It was amazing to see the transformations.

On the first day, some were afraid to visit Burwell Creek because of the recent bear appearance in the vicinity, but later those same children were



Amos Tuck

begging to hold the northern water-snake we found in the same creek.

My favorite moment was when a camper got excited about correctly identifying a belted kingfisher flying over the Coosa River. In just five days, many of the campers went from having a nature deficit to being nature obsessed.

At no point did any camper beg to play on a computer. But they did beg to get in the water. I believe that children's lack of interest in nature is not a "computer > nature" equation. The real problem is a lack of knowledge and opportunity.

If you want a kid to know where water truly comes from, take them to the river. A short trip to a river can be pivotal moment in the life of child and their views on their local environment.

My father was an avid angler when I was a child. Taking me fishing must have been a no brainer for him, but those seemingly small moments have shaped my career and life past, present, and future.

Children want to experience nature; they just need you to show it to them.

Dozens Win Big at WATERFEST XII

CRBI's 12th annual paddle-sports and environmental education extravaganza held May 4-5 at Ridge Ferry Park generated more than \$23,000 for river protection thanks to our sponsors, participants and volunteers. The event involved nearly 200 paddlers and 1,000 visitors who attended the Environmental Fair.

In the 13-mile Oostanaula River canoe and kayak race, **Richard Stewart** of Decatur clocked the fastest time: 1 hour and 26 minutes. Twenty youth from Rome's **Open Door Home** and three persons with physical disabilities also participated in the race.



Paddlers face off in the Canoe Tug-O-Wars.

The **Cedar Creek Park-Johnson Outdoors** Tug-O-War pool hosted 122 competitors including a record 18 Canoe Tug-O-War teams. While WATERFEST sponsor **Scott Logistics** fielded the most teams, long-time supporter **AMEC** won the big gaudy trophy and \$200 cash prize. AMEC's team included **Tanya Kinnard, David Gazda, Mark Prytula** and **Rani Parks**.



Children play in water balls at the WATERFEST.

Park. **Sheila Cox** set a one-person fundraising record of \$1835 and won a five-day vacation at the **Villas At Coosawattee** in Ellijay. **Mike McCarthy** (\$1000) won an Old Town Canoe from Johnson Outdoors. **Jeremy Harrison** (\$600) won a five-day vacation at the Villas at Coosawattee. **Karissa Stewart** (\$310) won a Patagonia gift package and **Tod Wheeler** (\$135) won a framed photograph from Joe Cook.

A record ten schools participated in CRBI's Environmental Quiz Bowl, involving more than 80 students and teachers.

Armuchee Elementary edged out four-time reigning champion, **East Central Elementary**. The Armuchee Elementary team, coached by **Terrell Shaw & Jaki Day** consisted of **Caroline Atkins, Kasey Barnett, Steven Kight, Brendan Kinsey, Abby Murphy, Alex Mutchler, Shiloh St. Clair** and **Ben Stewart**. East Central Elementary was coached by **Gary Jones**. **Pam Williams'** team from West End Elementary took third place.

Armuchee secured a grant of up to \$2500 from the **Captain Planet Foundation** for an environmental project at the school's campus.

Ryan Rogers of Marietta was the winner in the Blue Sky Outfitter Kayak Raffle, taking home a Crescent Splash kayak.

Pig Paddle & Party Highlights Etowah

Some 50 patrons enjoyed the charms of the Etowah during the third annual Pig Paddle & Party hosted by **Todd & Dale Carroll** of Rome. The event generated nearly \$4000 for CRBI programs and efforts to create a 160-mile-long Etowah River Water Trail.

CRBI thanks event sponsors **North Georgia Distributing, Old Havana Cigar Co., Cedar Creek Park, River City Bank, Johnny Mitchell's Smokehouse, Bill & Leigh Dupre** and the **Miller Martin PLLC's Sustainability Practice Group**.

CRBI and Rome/Floyd ECO Center Hold Summer Camps

In June, elementary-age children from across Floyd County got the opportunity to learn more about their local environment through two, week-long day camps sponsored by CRBI and the Rome-Floyd ECO River Center at Ridge Ferry Park.



Amos Tuck explores Burwell Creek with students during a nature camp at the Rome-Floyd ECO River Center.

Forty students in grades 3-5, including 20 children from the Boys & Girls Club of Rome, participated in the camps led by CRBI Program Coordinator, Amos Tuck, and Rome/Floyd Environmental Services Director, Eric Lindberg.

Each day focused on a new theme including water, fish and wildlife, conservation, and river history. Highlights included catching snakes and crayfish in Burwell Creek, searching for aquatic insects and an Oostanaula-Coosa river tour on the Roman Holiday.

Plans are in the works for camps in summer 2013. The camps were made possible, in part, through a grant from Wells Fargo.

Cedartown Citizens "Go Green" and Still Keep Green Lawns



A rain barrel at a Polk County residence.

In May, CRBI and Keep Polk Beautiful organized a rain barrel workshop for Cedartown residents led by Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Outreach Manager, Bonny Putney who discussed the importance of practicing water conservation in the home and how to best utilize rain barrels.

Those attending the meeting received a rain barrel to install at their residence. The barrel collects rain water that falls on the rooftops. One inch of rainfall on a 100 square-foot rooftop can yield over 60 gallons of water! People utilizing rain barrels commonly use their harvested rain to water their lawn and gardens during dry periods.

Rain barrels allow home owners to conserve water by eliminating the need to use tap water for outdoor watering. They also reduce stormwater run off. Rain flowing off impervious surfaces like rooftops can contribute to excessive stormwater run off that can damage streams and contribute to flooding.

A Money Pit: Deal To Dole Out Tax Dollars for Unnecessary Dams

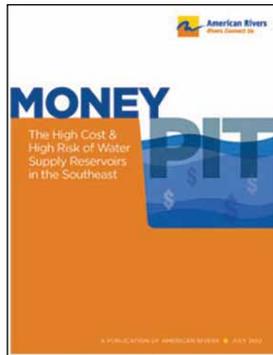
Dam builders in the Etowah River Basin are vying for almost half of the \$120 million in state funds available this year through Gov. Nathan Deal's Water Supply Program in hopes of building reservoirs on Richland Creek in Paulding County and Shoal Creek in Dawson County.

The Paulding County Commission applied for \$46.4 million in grants and loans from the state to construct its Richland Creek reservoir while the Etowah Water & Sewer Authority asked for \$3 million for "pre-development activities" associated with its Shoal Creek reservoir project.

The Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) is expected to announce the recipients of loans and grants from the Governor's Water Supply Program in August. GEFA received 15 applications from local communities seeking \$195.6 million in state funding.

The Water Supply Program is expected to funnel \$300 million to local governments over the next three years. The Richland Creek reservoir is expected to cost \$86.4 million while the cost of the Shoal Creek reservoir is estimated at \$650 million.

CRBI urged GEFA and Gov. Deal to include water conservation and efficiency projects in the \$300 million program, but late last year a Governor-appointed task force refused to make such projects eligible for funding.



American Rivers recent report on reservoirs in Georgia can be viewed at www.americanrivers.org/newsroom.

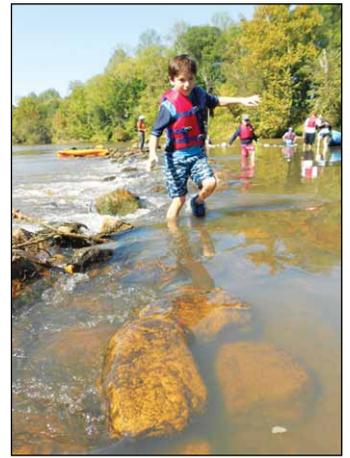
Proponents of the Richland Creek Reservoir contend that Paulding County will need 47 million gallons a day (MGD) by 2035, but a CRBI analysis of the county's population projections and water conservation efforts show that actual 2035 water demand could be as low as 24 MGD.

Meanwhile, the Etowah Water & Sewer's Shoal Creek project, which involves a partnership with the private water services giant, American Water, currently has no definite customers and appears to be wholly speculative, assuming future water shortfalls in metro Atlanta.

Both projects would impact federally protected fish species and flows on the Etowah River through water withdrawals and inter-basin transfers.

In July, American Rivers released an in depth report on Georgia's rush to build reservoirs and the associated financial pitfalls. *Money Pit: The High Cost and High Risk of Water Supply Reservoirs in the Southeast* urges local leaders to think twice before investing in reservoir projects. It estimates the collective cost of reservoir proposals in Georgia at \$10 billion in taxpayer and ratepayer dollars.

The full report can be read at <http://www.americanrivers.org/assets/pdfs/reports-and-publications/money-pit-report.pdf>



Proposed dams on tributaries of the Etowah River in Dawson and Paulding counties could impact downstream flows on the river.

State Stream Buffer Variance Rules to Be Altered

State rules protecting land next to streams and rivers are set for revision later this Fall after a year-long flap between Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK).

The controversy erupted when EPD granted a variance to Fulton County that would have allowed the County to remove 20 acres of trees along the Chattahoochee River and Sandy Creek to comply with federal air safety regulations at the county's Charlie Brown Airport. CRK appealed the permit because EPD did not require the county to mitigate for the loss of nearly three miles of buffers along the river and creek.

EPD withdrew the permit late last year and earlier this year initiated a stakeholder process to re-write the stream buffer variance rules. CRBI participated along with CRK in this stakeholder group.

State laws prohibit disturbing land and removing vegetation within 25 feet of rivers and streams except in special situations. In such situations, property owners must apply for a "variance" to the buffer laws.



New state stream buffer variance rules will require property owners that cause major changes to vegetation along our rivers and streams to mitigate for lost buffer functions.

The new buffer variance rules hammered out through several meetings of stakeholders representing utilities, local governments, developers and environmental groups offer new definitions for what constitutes a "major buffer impact" requiring mitigation or compensation for the loss of buffer functions.

The proposed rule changes would result in Fulton County mitigating for the loss of the buffer functions provided by trees at Charlie Brown Airport.

While CRBI and CRK's participation improved EPD's initially weak proposals, the final rules are expected to give

EPD much latitude in determining what is sufficient mitigation for intrusions into the buffer.

Vegetated buffers along rivers and stream filter pollutants keeping them from reaching the water, help prevent bank erosion, maintain proper stream temperatures and provide habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife.

The new variance rules will be submitted for public review in September. In October, the Department of Natural Resources Board will vote on the changes.

Dallas Wastewater Woes Continue

Nearly two years after CRBI first raised concerns with the City of Dallas over its troubled sewer system, the City still has not begun construction on upgrades to its wastewater treatment facilities and it continues to be cited for sewage spills into creeks feeding the Etowah River.



Lawrence Creek, a tributary of Pumpkinvine Creek in Paulding County, receives the discharge from the City of Dallas' wastewater treatment plant. The City has been fined repeatedly by Georgia's Environmental Protection Division for sewage spills into the creek.

The City's efforts to secure loans and grants for the upgrades estimated at \$29 million have failed, and through 2011, the water and sewer department continued to operate at a deficit.

CRBI, with assistance from GreenLaw, has been tracking the city's wastewater violations and is considering legal action to force the city to make improvements necessary to protect Lawrence and Pumpkinvine creeks and the Etowah River.

Anheuser-Busch Employees Clean Up Etowah

CRBI and employees from the Anheuser-Busch Brewery in Cartersville teamed up June 2 to clean up a six-mile section of the Etowah River, including land slated for development into a public parking area and boat launch at U.S. 411 near Kingston.

The group of about 20 Anheuser-Busch employees paddled from Hardin Bridge Road to U.S. 411 while another 10 employees cleaned up the land around U.S. 411.

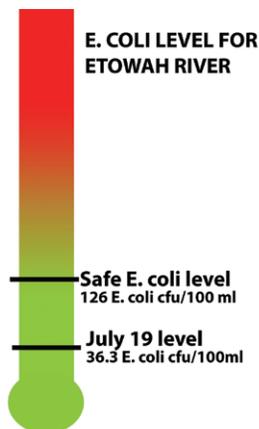
The clean up was part of the brewery's participation in the United Nation's World Environment Day. CRBI applauds Anheuser-Busch and its employees for supporting efforts to protect the Etowah and promote recreational use of the river.

Etowah River Bacteria Monitoring Program Continues

For the second year, CRBI is collecting water samples on the Etowah River and measuring bacteria levels in an effort to inform river users about the health of the river and the risks associated with swimming in the river.

Georgia's Environmental Protection Division has identified significant portions of the Etowah as "polluted" due to high bacteria levels. Last year, CRBI collected and tested 81 water samples; the results show that bacteria levels spiked after heavy rains when polluted stormwater enters the river.

Weekly monitoring reports can be viewed at www.coosa.org and are also published in the Rome News-Tribune and Cartersville Daily Tribune News.



Etowah River bacteria monitoring results are published weekly on the CRBI website and in local newspapers.

Citizen, CRBI, Floyd County Animal Control get dogs out of Silver Creek

A pair of dogs and Silver Creek got a reprieve thanks to a concerned Lindale citizen who witnessed the dogs leashed along the creek and defecating in it.

CRBI responded to the citizen complaint by inspecting the site and notifying Floyd County Animal Control of the danger to the dogs and the health of Silver Creek.



Dogs and a dog house litter Silver Creek in Lindale.

Dogs were found to be leashed to trees along the creek and a dog house was found sitting in the creek itself. The dogs were being allowed to defecate in the creek and the banks of the creek showed signs of erosion.

Floyd County authorities forced the pet owner to remove the dog house from the creek and leash the dogs further away from the creek.

Pet waste can be a major contributor to elevated bacteria and nutrient levels in streams.

Polk County Road Crossing Harms Fish Creek, Downstream Property Owners

Responding to a citizen complaint, CRBI investigated a stream crossing on Sorrells Road in Polk County. The county road crosses through Fish Creek, and vehicle and recreational off-road vehicle traffic is contributing to significant sediment in the creek, spoiling the stream for downstream property owners.



This ford of Fish Creek on Sorrells Road in Polk County is contributing sediment to the stream and harming downstream property owners.

Fish Creek, a tributary of Euharlee Creek which flows to the Etowah, has historic records of the federally threatened fine-lined pocketbook mussels.

Driving vehicles across stream beds can destroy bank structures and cause excessive erosion. When bridges are impractical and fords are necessary, best management practices can be used to minimize their impacts on downstream habitat.

This road crossing services only a limited number of residences, all of which have alternative road access that does not involve fording the creek.

CRBI is working with the Polk County Commission to resolve this problem.

Etowah Water Trail Website Launched

In early August, CRBI launched its Etowah River Water Trail website, a comprehensive, interactive website, providing visitors with information about how to explore the 160-mile river from its headwaters in Lumpkin County to its confluence with the Oostanaula River in Rome.

The site, www.etowahwatertrail.org, was made possible through a \$10,000 grant from the Lyndhurst Foundation.



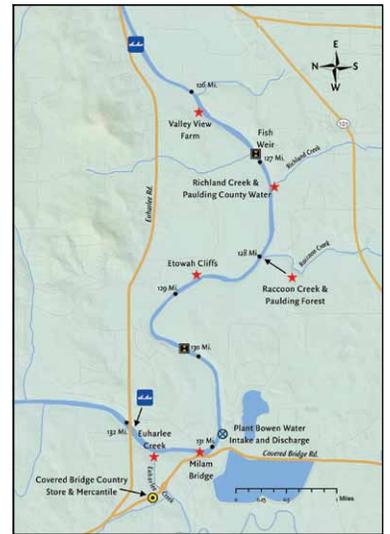
Paddlers navigate through a Native American fish weir on the Etowah River. The Water Trail website will promote recreational use of the river.

Under development since fall 2011, the site features an interactive map of the river in which users can click on points of interest along the river and read historic or natural history facts associated with each specific location. More than 150 sites are noted on the map.

From Camp Merrill, the U.S. Army Ranger Camp in the river's headwaters, to Myrtle Hill Cemetery in Rome, each of the river's

unique sites is highlighted. The website also provides details about public access points, fishing, campgrounds, safety and places to rent canoes and kayaks. While the interactive map can be accessed via computers and mobile devices, the site also provides river maps and descriptions of points of interest that can be printed and taken on river.

The information included on the website will be compiled in a guidebook being published by the University of Georgia Press due to be released in Spring 2013. It will be the first in a series of guides to Georgia rivers organized by Georgia River Network. CRBI Executive Director Joe Cook will author the series.



Maps like these will be available on the Etowah River Water Trail website.

Court Decision, continued from page 1

Thus, this ruling merely postpones Alabama's lawsuit. A spokesman for Gov. Robert Bentley's office said after the ruling that Alabama "will be ready to re-file claims as soon as the law permits."

The Corps is in the midst of re-writing its control manual for Lake Allatoona and the Coosa River system. The outcome of this process would likely trigger legal action by Alabama. Metro Atlanta has long sought additional withdrawals from Lake Allatoona to supplement withdrawals from the Chattahoochee. Much of these withdrawals involve water transfers which permanently remove water from the Coosa system.

What Do the Decisions Mean for the Coosa?

That question is a matter of much speculation. That Metro Atlanta is now assured some use of Lake Lanier should take the starch out of the sails of new reservoirs in North Georgia, but the same proponents that touted these projects as solutions to the legal uncertainty over Lanier's water are now holding fast to their necessity.

With their stubbornness, millions in tax dollars may be wasted. The Glades Reservoir upstream of Lanier, along with the proposed Shoal Creek and Calhoun Creek reservoirs in the Etowah River Basin, have a combined price tag of about \$1 billion. Developers of the Calhoun Creek reservoir have already filed paperwork with Georgia's Environmental Protection Division seeking water withdrawal permits.

The Shoal Creek and Calhoun Creek reservoirs would divert water from the Coosa system through interbasin transfers, threatening downstream flows and would destroy habitat for federally protected fish species.

Alabama's response to the District Court ruling shows clearly that more legal disputes are in store on the Coosa. The Supreme Court action also suggests that the courts will rule that Lake Allatoona is authorized by Congress for water supply.

Amos' Odyssey, continued from page 1

and stories from the river.

If following Amos' Odyssey via the internet won't satisfy your taste for adventure, CRBI is offering multiple opportunities to join him on the river and learn more about North America's most biologically diverse basin.

On Aug. 25, CRBI will host a snorkel trip on the Conasauga River in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The river's crystal clear water will give you the opportunity to see some of the river's 90 fish species, including federally protected Conasauga logperches and blue shiners.

On Sept. 2, you can join Tuck and University of Georgia biologists to seine for fish on the Conasauga River near Dalton during a short paddle trip. This is a rare opportunity to learn about the basin's fish from some of the state's leading experts.

Then on Sept. 9, you can catch up with Tuck on the Oostanaula River for a mussel hunt to learn about the Coosa Basin's 27 freshwater mussel species. With any luck, you'll find a wartyback or a washboard!

Finally, on Sept. 15, we'll welcome Tuck to Weiss Lake with a River's End Celebration in Cedar Bluff.

Details and registration information for these educational, adventure trips will be available at www.coosa.org

Tuck's goal for the trip is to raise more than \$5000 for river protection and enlist more than 100 new CRBI members. You can make donations through Amos' firstgiving page at <http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/amostuck/amos-odessey>. All donations made through this site earn raffle tickets to win a Wilderness Systems Tarpon 100 in the Cedar Creek Park Kayak Raffle. Donations of \$35 or more include a year's membership in CRBI and five raffle tickets.

Workshops Lead to Kayak Fleet for Persons With Disabilities

A series of paddling workshops hosted by CRBI in April enabled more than 20 youth and several individuals with physical disabilities to learn canoe and kayak skills and participate in CRBI's WATERFEST XII May 4-5. They also inspired a permanent fleet of CRBI kayaks modified to allow persons with disabilities to enjoy our guided paddle trips.

The workshops consisted of four, hour-and-a-half sessions, starting in pools and lakes and graduating to moving water.

Residents of Rome's Open Door Home and individuals suffering from paralysis, strokes and cerebral palsy participated.

The project was made possible through funding from the **Outdoor Foundation, Walker Orthotics & Prosthetics and Brinson, Askew, Berry, Seigler, Richardson and Davis LLP.**



CRBI volunteer Larry Castillo works with Robert Hill on paddle strokes at the Rome YMCA pool during CRBI's paddle workshop for persons with disabilities.

CRBI volunteer **Larry Castillo**, an American Canoe Association-certified canoe instructor, led the workshops, and **John Crowley**, a physical therapist with Redmond Regional Medical Center, led a team from the medical center to assist persons with disabilities and modify kayaks to improve paddling efficiency.

The **Rome YMCA** and **Georgia Highlands College** provided facilities to make the workshops possible and **Cedar Creek Park** in Cave Spring provided kayaks.

The results of the workshop and participation in WATERFEST were profound. Children from the Open Door Home completed the 13-mile Oostanaula race at WATERFEST, a monumental accomplishment for young, novice paddlers. Likewise, Robert Hill of Rome, a cerebral palsy patient, and Jake Bloodworth of Rome, a paraplegic, accomplished the feat. For both, it was their first paddling experience.

The success of the program inspired Crowley to seek support from **Wolf Medical Supply** in Rome, **Cedar Creek Park** and **Redmond Regional** to create a two-vessel fleet of kayaks specially-modified for persons with disabilities. These boats will be available on CRBI's guided paddle trips beginning in September.

Species Spotlight: Bronze Darter

The bronze darter, *Percina palmaris*, is native to the Mobile-Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa River Basin and is typically found above the fall line in North Alabama and North Georgia. In the Upper Coosa River Basin, the bronze darter is most commonly found in the Conasauga, Coosawattee, and Etowah River systems. They inhabit medium-sized streams and are found in swift waters over rocky stream beds. Their common name comes from the male of the species which develop a distinct bronze body with orange markings on their dorsal fin during the breeding season. The species belongs to the perch family, Percidae, along with other darters, logperch, perch, and walleye.



Often, bronze darters are associated with river weed which grows atop rocks along the streambed. We are familiar with this plant because the fibrous network it forms on rocks provides sure footing amongst otherwise slick rocks; the bronze darter especially likes this plant because it provides habitat for the aquatic insects that the fish eats.

Burwell Creek, continued from page 1

for a new permit. This time, the permit process should include a public review and comment period (an important procedure that the developer by-passed to secure its original permit).

Ledbetter Properties initially touted the project as a Brownfield development--a designation that comes with state and federal tax benefits for the developer.

The plan included capping an abandoned city landfill on the site and relocating and restoring a half-mile section of Burwell Creek.

However, EPA has repeatedly refused to endorse the project as a Brownfield development, and since securing the permit, Ledbetter Properties has abandoned its plans to relocate and restore Burwell Creek.

CRBI opposes the project because it would result in filling some 50 acres of floodplain and destroying four acres of wetlands. The land slated for development has also been considered as part of the city's master plan to create a "Central Park" stretching from the Oostanaula River to historic Jackson Hill.

CRBI questions the need to cap the landfill and relocate the creek. Extensive tests of soil and sediment around the landfill show no significant contamination, and while the developer contends that Burwell Creek is being polluted by leachate from the landfill, the company has never conducted tests to prove this claim.

CRBI tests of sediment in the creek show no contamination. Likewise, biological monitoring conducted by CRBI on the creek in April showed that the creek was in fair condition, with a diversity of aquatic insects typical of an urban stream.

These tests suggest that capping the landfill will not significantly improve the health of Burwell Creek, but construction activity associated with the project and polluted run-off from the completed development will significantly impact the creek's health.

In June, CRBI made presentations to the City of Rome's Redevelopment Committee, urging them to consider preserving the land as a public park. CRBI also offered alternative development plans that would preserve significant portions of the wetlands, better protect Burwell Creek and incorporate additional recreational paths along the creek and adjacent wetlands.

CRBI has initiated a new online petition where those opposed to the Citi Center development can sign electronically. When a signature is received, e-mails are automatically sent to Rome's City Commissioners. Since April 3, more than 400 people have signed the petition, generating more than 3,000 e-mails to commissioners. The petition can be accessed via www.coosa.org

Rafts, canoes, kayaks, ducks converge at River Revelry Aug. 18

Rafts, canoes, kayaks and even rubber ducks will float down Rome's rivers Aug. 18 during River Revelry — A Biodiversity Bash at Heritage Park in downtown Rome.



Participants in the Blue Sky Outfitter Recycled Raft Race stroke toward the finish line.

CRBI's annual celebration of North America's most biologically diverse river basin will include the Blue Sky Outfitter Recycled Raft Race on the Oostanaula River, a Cancer Navigators' canoe and kayak paddle on the Etowah River and the Seven Hills Rotary Club Ducky Derby.

All of these events will converge on Heritage Park where more than 400 patrons are expected. River Revelry will also feature live music from Jerry on the Moon,

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Learn more on our calendar of events at www.coosa.org

- Aug. 4**
Etowah River Paddle
- Aug. 11**
Oostanaula River Paddle
- Aug. 18**
River Revelry—A Biodiversity Bash
- Aug. 25**
Amos'Odyssey Kick Off Snorkel
- Sept. 1**
Chattooga River Paddle
- Sept. 2**
Amos' Odyssey Conasauga Fish Finder
- Sept. 8**
Etowah River Paddle
- Sept. 9**
Amos' Odyssey Oostanaula Mussel Hunt
- Sept. 15**
Amos' Odyssey River's End Celebration in Cedar Bluff
- Sept. 22**
7 Hills 3 Rivers Adventure Race
- Sept. 29**
Coosa River Harvest Moon Paddle

boat rides on the Roman Holiday and CRBI's Ar-nemetia patrol boat, silent and live auctions, beer from New Belgium Brewing Company, wine from Barefoot Wine & Bubbly and the Barbecue Battle in which professional and

backyard barbecuers will compete for a \$900 cash purse and the title of "Best Barbecue in the Coosa Basin."

Gates open at 6 p.m. and the revelry continues until 11 o'clock. Tickets are available online at www.coosa.org for \$40 or \$35 each for two or more.

In the Blue Sky Outfitter's Recycled Raft Race, teams will compete for a \$200 cash purse and prizes from Blue Sky Outfitter. Vessels must be constructed mostly of recycled materials. Entry fee is \$50 per raft, with the raft captain receiving a complimentary ticket to River Revelry.

The Cancer Navigator's Survivor's Cast off for Cancer Patients is a six-mile paddle from Grizzard Park to Heritage Park to raise money to assist individuals undergoing cancer treatments. Entry fee is \$40 and includes boat rental and shuttle service.

A \$500 cash prize will be up for grabs in the Seven Hills Rotary Club Ducky Derby as hundreds of yellow rubber ducks will be released off the Robert Redden Footbridge over the Oostanaula.

Cedar Creek Park Donates Kayak for Raffle

A Wilderness Systems Tarp 100 sit-on-top kayak from Cedar Creek Park in Cave Spring will be up for grabs in the CRBI-Cedar Creek Park kayak raffle. This \$699 boat is a great all-purpose recreational kayak for exploring the Coosa Basin's rivers and streams. Raffle tickets are \$5 or 5 for \$20 and can be purchased at CRBI, Cedar Creek Park or online at www.coosa.org. The drawing for the raffle will be held at the CRBI Fish Fry set for Nov. 10 at Rome First United Methodist Church.



7 Hills 3 Rivers Adventure Race on Tap for Sept. 22

Mud-splattered, swamp-slimed cyclists, runners and paddlers will once again descend on Rome Saturday, Sept. 22, for CRBI's 7 Hills 3 Rivers Adventure Race.

The Race will include approximately five miles of foot travel, 12 miles on bike and four miles of paddling. Designed for three-person teams, various "challenges" will test the teamwork of each group. Tandem and solo teams may also participate.



A 7 Hills 3 Rivers racer slogs through the Silver Creek swamp during the 2011 race.

A Family Challenge for team of parents and children age 7-14 will also be held, featuring a four miles on bike, one mile on foot, a cross-river swim and a one mile paddle.

Registration fees are \$60 per person for the adult race and \$37 per person for the Family Challenge. A \$10 late registration fee will be assessed on all entries received after Sept. 5.

During the event, participants in the adult race will ascend all of Rome's famous seven hills and paddle on all three of its rivers. They will also slog through swamps, creeks and all manner of mud.

Proceeds from the event support CRBI's efforts to protect North America's most biologically diverse river basin. To learn more about the event visit www.7hills3rivers.net.