

Mainstream

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Coosa River Basin Initiative

Upper Coosa RIVERKEEPER®

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CRBI, GWC PUSH INTERBASIN TRANSFERS INTO LEGISLATIVE SPOTLIGHT

A firestorm of opposition to interbasin water transfers prompted by Gov. Sonny Perdue's Water Contingency Task Force has spilled over into the 2010 Georgia General Assembly session and CRBI and other Georgia Water Coalition (GWC) members are poised to push the contentious issue to the forefront of public debate.

The Task Force was formed in September by Gov. Perdue in response to a federal court ruling that gives Georgia until July 2012 to reach a water sharing agreement with Alabama and Florida and then convince Congress to authorize Lake Lanier as a water supply reservoir. Should the state fail in this endeavor, Lake Lanier would essentially be off limits to Metro Atlanta, leaving the region to scramble for other water sources.

**SIGN THE GEORGIA WATER COALITION
PETITION TO PROTECT COMMUNITIES
FROM WATER TRANSFERS**



Visit: www.nowatergrabs.com

The Task Force was charged with finding these other sources and suggested numerous proposals involving long-distance water transfers from lakes Burton and Hartwell in the Savannah River Basin, the Tennessee River and even from wells in South Georgia.

State legislators from outside Metro Atlanta responded strongly to these proposals and the Savannah-Upper Ogeechee Regional Water Planning Council adopted a resolution calling on state leaders to prohibit interbasin transfers (IBTs). Members of other planning councils from across the state also expressed opposition.

The Coosa River and Coosa Valley communities are threatened by a transfer that removes water from Lake Allatoona and the Etowah River and pumps it to Metro Atlanta communities. An estimated 17 million gallons a day is currently lost through this transfer, though Metro Atlanta water plans call for it to more than double in the future.

CRBI and GWC have responded by creating an online petition at www.nowatergrabs.com which calls on Gov. Perdue and the General Assembly to adopt IBT regulations. Through early March, more than

see **TRANSFERS**, page 5

GOV. PERDUE ACTS ON WATER CONSERVATION...FINALLY!

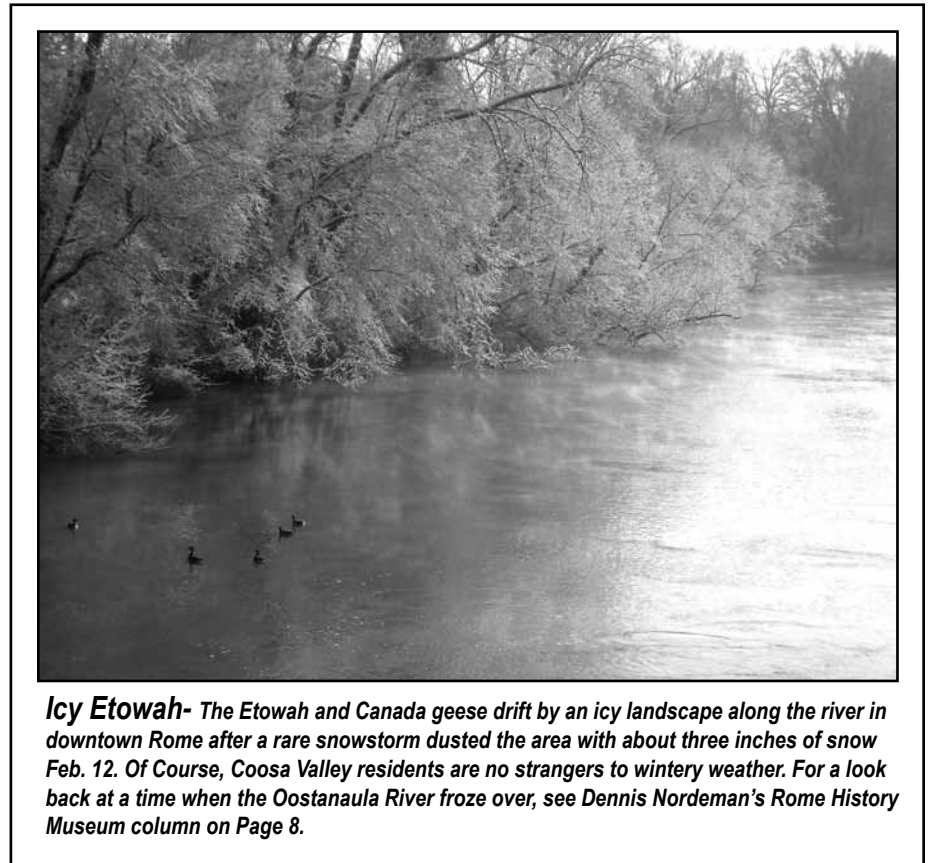
Prompted by last year's federal court ruling and acting on recommendations of his own Water Contingency Task Force, Gov. Sonny Perdue in February introduced his Water Stewardship Act of 2010, a bill that would mandate some new water conservation measures and require state agencies to come up with plans to encourage voluntary conservation.

The bill is supported by CRBI and the Georgia Water Coalition.

It would require:

- high efficiency toilets and other conservation plumbing in new construction after July 2012 as well as high efficiency heating and cooling units.
- individual water meters on each unit in multi-unit residential and commercial developments after July 2012
- local water systems to report leak rates to the state starting January 2012
- outdoor watering only between 4 p.m. and 10 a.m., prohibiting watering during the daylight hours in which most irrigation water evaporates.

The legislation also requires state agencies to develop programs that would encourage voluntary water conservation measures including retrofit of old plumbing fixtures, eliminating leaks in water supply lines, efficient land-



Icy Etowah- The Etowah and Canada geese drift by an icy landscape along the river in downtown Rome after a rare snowstorm dusted the area with about three inches of snow Feb. 12. Of course, Coosa Valley residents are no strangers to wintery weather. For a look back at a time when the Oostanaula River froze over, see Dennis Nordeman's Rome History Museum column on Page 8.

NEW CRBI LOGO USHERS IN NEW WEBSITE, PROGRAMS

In February, CRBI unveiled a new logo to coincide with the launching of a new website, the creation of new educational material and the introduction of our new recreational outreach program.

The logo features a stylized version of two tributaries--the Etowah and Oostanaula--joining to form a larger river--the Coosa. The logo emphasizes the organization's belief that just as many streams come together to form a mighty river so to do individuals come together to form a mighty movement.



see **NEW LOGO**, page 6

scape irrigation, water efficient landscaping, rainwater collection and gray water systems and water pricing.

These ideas have all been advanced by Georgia's conservation community for years. While CRBI supports the bill, we feel it falls short of what is needed to secure Georgia's water future. It is a good first step, but giant leaps are needed.

Given the continued water negotiations with neighboring states and the threat of long-distance water transfers to meet Metro Atlanta demands, more aggressive water conservation, including mandates and goals, are in order.

Action to aggressively implement water conservation measures, particularly in Metro Atlanta, would assure Alabama and Florida that Georgia is acting in good faith to wisely manage its water resources.

Aggressive water conservation also reduces reliance on water transfers. Due to drought-related watering restrictions and successful conservation efforts in Cobb County, the Etowah-to-Chattahoochee water transfer dropped to an average of 17 million gallons per day (MGD) in 2008 from 23 MGD in 2006.

Another provision in the Governor's see **GOVERNOR**, page 5

Mainstream is published four times a year by Coosa River Basin Initiative. To join, visit our website at www.coosa.org or call us at 706-232-CRBI (2724).

Contact us via e-mail at info@coosa.org
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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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WATER TRANSFERS—THE CHRISTIAN THING TO DO?

If you had water in abundance and your neighbor was in need, would you share your abundance with your neighbor?

Not long ago I asked that question to groups at two local churches. You'd be surprised at the responses...

The question was part of a talk I often give. I explain how Metro Atlanta with its more than four million residents depends upon the Chattahoochee River as its primary water supply. In the little Chattahoochee, Metro Atlanta has on average about 1.6 billion gallons of water flowing by it each day. The area uses about 500-600 million gallons a day.

In Rome, with a population of about 100,000 people, we are blessed with three rivers that deliver about 4.4 billion gallons of water each day. We use about 10 million gallons a day.

In the Coosa River Basin, we have water in abundance. Across the ridgeline in the Chattahoochee River Basin, Metro Atlanta, with its massive population, isn't so lucky.

One Wednesday night, I explained this to a group at a Methodist church, asking for a show of hands as to how many would share their abundance with their less fortunate neighbors. Sharing, after all, is the Christian thing to do.

About half the audience raised their hands.

Later I made the same presentation to a group at a Baptist church and asked the same question. This group of retirees was less generous. No one raised their hands.



Director's Report

by Joe Cook

I made a crack about Baptists being tougher on Atlanta than the Methodists, to which a man in the back responded, "Yeah, but we need more water for our Baptisms than the Methodists do."

The punchline says much about the issue of interbasin transfers—the process of removing water from one river to fuel economic growth in communities around another river. Water transfers prevent downstream communities along the donor river from utilizing that water for their economic growth and prosperity.

And across the state, be you Methodist, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim or otherwise, there is a growing fear that Metro Atlanta aims to suck up all the state's water. Given recent proposals from state leadership that involve piping water hundreds of miles to the big city, the fears are not unfounded.

But, the real reason good Baptists in Rome, Georgia (and elsewhere) are unwilling to share their abundance is that our state

has utterly failed to assure them that their water resources will be shared equitably. Current state law includes only one additional hoop that must be jumped through to get a water withdrawal permit involving an interbasin transfer: Georgia's Environmental Protection Division must issue a press release to newspapers in communities impacted by the transfer seven days prior to issuing the permit.

Until state leaders recognize the failings of existing interbasin transfer laws, they can expect resistance to grow and the real water wars in these parts will not be with neighboring states, but between communities within our state.

Oddly enough, the front line soldiers in these wars might be good Christians needing water for their baptismal pools. It's not that they don't want to share; they just want to make sure their water is shared fairly. It's time the state gave those assurances and adopted laws regulating water transfers.



A sportsman signs petitions opposing interbasin transfers at the CRBI booth during the Georgia Wildlife Federation's Great Outdoor Show.

THE EMPEROR HAS NEW CLOTHES...

Remember the Grimm brothers fable about an Emperor who cares for nothing but his wardrobe and hires two weavers who promise him the finest suit of clothes from a fabric invisible to anyone who is stupid. The Emperor cannot see the cloth himself, but pretends that he can for fear of appearing stupid; his ministers do the same.

Well the modern version could have the emperor portrayed by Metro Atlanta, the weavers could be represented by developers, the ministers could be many local leaders and the invisible clothes the lack of adequate water resources. Everyone in the fable is willing to adhere to the lie as long as the emperor is appeased. Only one problem: a child sees the emperor and hollers that the "emperor has no clothes".

Well, Atlanta you don't have enough water, and all the cleverly weaved excuses from the metro growth industry can not cover up the obvious...Atlanta's uncontrolled growth has striped its water resources and it is showing!



Program Coordinator's Report

by David Promis

One of the main reasons we work so hard to conserve water is to ensure there is enough water to support the environment that supports us. There are many negative effects of excessive water consumption such as: destruction of wilderness for dams, degradation of water bodies due to excessive water

withdrawals, and the alteration of the natural water cycle which is needed for cleansing and recharging of our water resources.

It's time for the Emperor Atlanta to learn how to conserve water so the rest of the kingdom does not have to be subjected to the lewdness of its bare greediness!

Studies have shown that Metro Atlanta communities could save between 130 and 210 million gallons per day by implementing aggressive water conservation measures, and where communities have gotten serious about water conservation, those efforts have reduced water withdrawals from our rivers, including reductions in water transfers from the Coosa River Basin to Metro Atlanta.

CRBI RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM SAPELO FOUNDATION, PATAGONIA

The Sapelo Foundation and Patagonia renewed their long-standing support of CRBI with recent grants totaling \$17,500. These grants will support CRBI's advocacy, education, water monitoring and restoration programs.



The Sapelo Foundation specifically funds CRBI to assist with state water policy through the Georgia Water Coalition. CRBI serves on the GWC leadership, communications and legislative teams.

CRBI thanks Patagonia and the Sapelo Foundation for their continued support.

MUSSELHEAD HEADLINES

GEORGIA RIVER NETWORK TAPS CRBI AS WATERSHED GROUP OF THE YEAR

Georgia River Network honored CRBI with its Watershed Group of the Year award at its Annual Conference Feb. 19 at Jekyll Island.

CRBI was chosen because its advocacy, education, restoration and water monitoring programs have helped improve water quality in the Coosa River Basin and have helped citizens better understand water resource issues.

Georgia River Network cited CRBI's success in winning a \$500,000 settlement against the developer of a retail development in Canton, its efforts in educating nearly 3000 children in 2009, its successful recreational outreach program and its record of engaging citizens in water monitoring.

There are more than 60 regional watershed organizations in Georgia along with some 16 statewide conservation organizations working to protect Georgia's waterways.

Georgia River Network works to increase the effectiveness of local watershed groups and promote state policies that protect our rivers.

CRBI A STATE LEADER IN CITIZEN WATER MONITORING

Only one other organization in the state out-monitored CRBI in 2009. CRBI submitted 71 reports to Adopt-A-Stream, one less than state leader, McIntosh High School.

Program Coordinator David Promis manages CRBI's water monitoring program, enlisting volunteers including Bonner Scholar students from Berry College.



David Promis and Mark Lamade perform water quality tests on the Coosa River. CRBI ranked second among water monitoring groups in Georgia for the number of stream health reports sent to Georgia Adopt-A-Stream.

Including reports submitted by chapter organization, New Echota Rivers Alliance in Calhoun, CRBI and NERA together far surpassed all other groups with 108 monitoring events!

FISH FRY ANOTHER GREASY, GOOD AND "GREEN" TIME

Some 50 CRBI Musselhead volunteers fried up and served more than 1400 catfish filets and hushpuppies along with mountains of cole slaw and cheese grits at the 8th Annual CRBI-Northwest Georgia Credit Union Fish Fry held Nov. 7 at Rome First United Methodist Church.

And thanks to our Green Expo vendors, our patrons had the opportunity to learn about everything from honey bees to vegetable-oil powered vehicles. The fundraiser generated more than \$10,000 for CRBI programs.

CRBI thanks its patrons, volunteers and sponsors including Northwest Georgia Credit Union, Georgia Power, SCANA Energy, Allied Foods, The Ridge 95.7, WLAQ and Cedar Creek Park.

MEMBER ACCOMPLISHMENTS HIGHLIGHT ANNUAL MEETING

CRBI recognized key volunteers and supporters at its annual membership meeting held Jan. 26 at Berry College.

Alan Crawford was honored as the Ray Kelley Volunteer of the Year. Crawford assists CRBI with its recreational outreach program and for the past two years has played a key role in registering participants and organizing our guided paddle trips.

In 2009, he also became the first paraplegic to participate in and complete Paddle Georgia, the week-long canoe and kayak trip organized by Georgia River Network. Crawford, who resides in Silver Creek, paddled all seven days of the trip and inspired many with his good humor and perseverance.

Eagle Rock Distributing was recognized with the 2009 Corporate Citizen Award. Eagle Rock provided beverages for River Revelry – A Biodiversity Bash and promoted the event with in-store displays. The beer distributor also donated a portion of its August sales of New Belgium Brewing Co. products to CRBI and assisted with printing River Revelry promotional material.

Stephanie Guyant, a teacher at Southeast Elementary in Rome, was recognized with CRBI's Environmental Educator Award. Guyant started an after-school science club and engaged children in clean up, restoration and water



Alan Crawford, Ray Kelley Volunteer of the Year, receives his award from Joe Cook.

CHRISTMAS PARADE FLOAT WINS HONORS

CRBI placed third in the adult division of the annual Rome Christmas parade. CRBI's float featured our Yamaha-powered G3 patrolboat, Arnetmetia, decked out in holiday finery and playing on the parade's theme of 150 years of Christmas in Rome.



Dennis Knott portrays Popeye as he sits in the driver's seat of Arnetmetia during the Rome Christmas Parade. The creator of Popeye drew from stories he heard while growing up on the Coosa River.

CRBI Membership Coordinator Sherry Akins organized the float with help from volunteer Alan Crawford and family.

The float featured a Christmas tree, endemic fish, cotton bales and Akins as a "lady of the river" and Dennis Knott as Popeye. Volunteer Boat Captain Jamie Taylor pulled the float in his pick up and Crawford brought up the rear in his holiday-bedecked wheelchair and kayak.

BOARD WELCOMES NEW FACES

In December the CRBI Board of Directors welcomed Ed Bostick of Catersville, Richard Lindsay of Armuchee, Carol McNavish of Woodstock and Terrell Shaw of Rome as new board members.

Bostick is a retired biology professor from Kennesaw State University and is active in greenspace protection in Bartow County. Lindsay is a retired educator from the Trion schools system and frequent paddler of the Chattooga River. McNavish is a community volunteer from Cherokee County and an avid paddler of Lake Allatoona and other waterways. Shaw is a fourth grade teacher at Armuchee Elementary and is active in the school environmental education/outdoor classroom efforts.

CRBI MEMBER WINS CEDAR CREEK PARK KAYAK

Long-time CRBI supporter and member Jane Wentworth was the winner of a Wilderness Systems Kayak donated by Cedar Creek Park in Cave Spring. CRBI sold raffle tickets for the kayak at several fall events and announced the winner at the Walkin' Jim Stoltz Concert Nov. 14 at the Berry College Chapel.

The kayak raffle generated more than \$1000 for CRBI programs. Thanks to Cedar Creek Park for their generous support.

WALKIN' JIM STOLTZ DELIVERS WILDERNESS MESSAGE THROUGH SONG, PHOTOS

Helena, Montana-based folk musician, wilderness walker and photographer brought a message of wilderness preservation to Rome & Floyd County during a week-long stay sponsored by CRBI, Lansource, Coosa Diagnostics Center and other supporters.

Stoltz entertained 125 patrons at a Nov. 14 concert at Berry College and spent four days performing for hundreds of students at local elementary schools. The benefit concert generated more than \$1000 for CRBI programs. CRBI thanks Jimmy and Laurie Douglas for their assistance in bringing Walkin' Jim to the Coosa Basin!

monitoring activities on nearby Silver Creek.

Mark Lamade received the Water Monitor of the Year award. Lamade served as CRBI's first volunteer patrol boat captain and as such performed regular water monitoring on the Coosa, Oostanaula and Etowah rivers for more than a year. Lamade also served as CRBI Board President from 2008 through July 2009.

CRBI also named a special award in memory of Margie T. Harbin, a long-time CRBI member and supporter who died in August 2009. Frank and Bill Harbin accepted the award on behalf of the Harbin family. In the future CRBI will recognize individuals, businesses and organizations with this award for special efforts to support CRBI and river protection efforts.

Doug Woodward, a one-time Deliverance stuntman and considered one of the "founding fathers" of kayaking in Georgia, delivered the keynote address. Woodward regaled the crowd with stories of running the Chattooga River with Jimmy Carter and coaching Burt Reynolds and Ned Beatty in whitewater paddling during the filming of the iconic movie.

Woodward's book, *Wherever Waters Flow*, can be found at www.headwaterspublishing.com.

CANOE & KAYAK RENTALS ADDED TO PADDLE PROGRAM

In 2010 paddling enthusiasts will have even more chances to explore Coosa River Basin streams thanks to CRBI's expanded paddle trip program.

In addition to offering 17 guided paddle trips, CRBI will rent canoe and kayaks and run shuttles for self-guided trips on the Etowah, Oostanaula and Coosa rivers from March to November. Interested parties can also contact CRBI for rentals on other area waterways.

Canoes and kayaks can be rented via our website: www.coosa.org, or by contacting our Recreational Outreach Coordinator, Jamie Taylor, at 706-506-8817 or at jamiemat@hotmail.com. Rentals will be available on days in which CRBI is not running a guided paddle trip. Canoes and tandem kayaks rent for \$35, solo kayaks for \$30.

CRBI will also offer canoe and kayak rides on Rome's three rivers during the city's First Friday Concert Series from May through September. For \$10, you'll be able to rent a boat and tour around the confluence of the Etowah and Oostanaula while taking in First Friday tunes.

Guided trips will be led by CRBI staff and/or volunteers and include trip maps with points of interest, educational talks before and during the trip, shuttle services and lots of good, wet fun.

Register for a guided paddle trip at www.coosa.org or contact Volunteer Adventure Trip Coordinator, Alan Crawford at 706-291-7449 or at fatboyal@bellsouth.net.

The following is the guided paddle trip slate for 2010:

MARCH 20: Cherokee County (GA) 15-mile Fish Weir Paddle on Etowah

MARCH 27: Cherokee County (GA) 10-mile McGraw Ford Paddle on Etowah

APRIL 10: Oostanaula Odyssey 17-miles from Calhoun to Armuchee

APRIL 25: 6-Mile Earth Day Paddle on the Etowah

MAY 8: 5-mile Cedar Creek Paddle with Cedar Creek Park

MAY 15: Terrapin Creek Paddle in Cherokee County, AL

MAY 22: 13-mile Major Ridge's Paddle on the Oostanaula River

JUNE 12: 10-mile Family Paddle on Etowah

JUNE 19: 9-mile Upper Coosawattee Paddle from Carters Dam

JULY 17: 8-mile Conasauga River Paddle

AUG. 7: 17-mile Indian Mound Paddle on Etowah

AUG. 14: 10-mile Peacock Alley Paddle on the Oostanaula

SEPT. 11: 17-mile Fish Weir Paddle on the Etowah

SEPT. 18: 11-mile New Echota Paddle on the Coosawattee & Oostanaula

SEPT. 23: 6-mile night-time Harvest Moon Paddle on the Coosa

OCT. 2: 15-mile New Echota Coosawattee Paddle

OCT. 30: 12-mile Fall Foliage Paddle on Etowah & Coosa



Paddlers celebrate as they reach downtown Rome during January's Polar Bear Paddle. CRBI plans 18 guided paddle trips this year and will also rent canoes and kayaks for residents to take self-guided adventures on local rivers.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH HIGHLIGHTS 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

CRBI's continued growth highlighted 2009—a year in which many non-profit groups struggled to maintain revenue and staff.

CRBI's revenues grew for the fifth consecutive year and the organization set fundraising records for both events and grants. This increased capacity resulted in even stronger programs allowing us to reach a record number of students and adults with education and advocacy programs.

The full 2009 Annual Report can be viewed at www.coosa.org or you can request a hard copy in the mail by calling CRBI at 706-232-2724.

Highlights for the year include...

- Raising awareness of proposed plans to construct a 2,000-acre reservoir in the Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area that would involve a 100 million gallon a day water transfer from the Etowah River
- Successfully lobbying the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to prevent the use of EPA grant funds to pay for environmental studies required of the developers of a controversial shopping center on a city-owned natural area in Rome
- Educating more than 3,000 school children through in-school and other programs
- Removing more than 38,500 pound of trash from our rivers and streams with the help of some 456 volunteers.
- Certifying 32 citizen water monitors through Georgia Adopt-A-Stream and Alabama Water Watch and submitting 185 stream health reports to the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program.
- The organizational budget grew by 20 percent in 2009 and today, CRBI counts more than 2500 citizens as members.



CRBI's Annual Report details our education efforts during 2009, including WATERFEST, our annual environmental education extravaganza.

COALITION PETITIONS TO REMOVE ADEM'S REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Coosa River Basin Initiative has joined the Alabama Rivers Alliance, the ADEM Reform Coalition, and eleven other concerned citizens groups from across Alabama in challenging the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) to be better caretakers of Alabama's natural environment and public health.



Alabama Rivers Alliance
Water Is Life
NEWS

In a petition dated January 14th, 2010 these groups urged the EPA to withdraw the delegated authority of ADEM to administer the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program of the Clean Water Act, stating, in part, that there were inadequate collections of water monitoring data, delayed and inadequate permits and a failure to inspect major discharges. Together, these petitioners hope to effect real change at ADEM in the areas of leadership, funding, enforcement, and public participation.

This petition is just one of many efforts from groups throughout the United States seeking more responsible oversight of state water quality programs.

"Alabama is a state blessed with an abundance of natural resources and extraordinary natural beauty. However, Alabama's natural resources are not limitless, nor are its blue skies, clear waters, fertile soil, or its citizens immune from pollution," said Cindy Lowery, Executive Director of the Alabama Rivers Alliance.

ADOT DECISION ON MENTONE LITTLE RIVER BRIDGE POSTPONED

The efforts of local residents in Mentone has postponed indefinitely an Alabama Department of Transportation plan to construct a new bridge over the Little River in the Northeast Alabama town.

CRBI and others earlier this year submitted comments to ADOT citing concerns about impacts to the river and historic property in the area; ADOT responded by postponing a decision.

ADOT had planned to remove the small two-lane bridge and replace it with a larger one. CRBI and Mentone residents advocated for rehabilitating the existing bridge, which could be widened without the destruction of adjacent historic property and with fewer impacts to Little River.

Alabama has designated the river as an Outstanding National Resource Water, a designation under the federal Clean Water Act that affords the highest level of protection, strictly forbidding degradation of water quality.

BILL SEEKS TO BOOST PROPOSED DAWSON FOREST RESERVOIR

A bill introduced in the Georgia General Assembly by Sen. Chip Pearson (R-Dawsonville) seeks to allow state and local governments to engage in contracts with private companies to build new water supply reservoirs.

The intent of the bill is to allow private companies to use loans from state funds for reservoirs with a requirement for reimbursement, but the hidden intent appears to be to facilitate construction of a proposed 2,000-acre reservoir in Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area.

That reservoir would involve a public-private partnership between Etowah Water & Sewer Authority and Republic Resources, a developer of commercial real estate with no past experience in water supply.

Sen. Pearson's bill was amended in the Senate Natural Resources Committee on Feb. 18 by Committee Chair Sen. Ross Tolleson after testimony by CRBI and Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.

Sen. Tolleson stripped from the bill provisions that would have exempted these private reservoirs from rules that keep pollution out of public water supply reservoirs. Those provisions include restrictions on development



GEORGIA WATER COALITION NEWS

around the reservoir and the prohibition of motorized boats on the reservoir.

In testimony, Sen. Pearson admitted the bill was designed to encourage private companies to develop "amenity" reservoirs within residential developments.

The removal of these exemptions greatly lessens the dangers of the bill. The main incentive for private companies to enter the water supply business would be to sell lakefront property.

However, any plan that encourages private development of reservoirs is problematic. As is the case with the proposed Dawson Forest Reservoir, private initiatives often run contrary to state and local water supply plans and can lead to reservoirs in areas where new water supplies are not needed.

For instance, Etowah Water & Sewer Authority is already in the process of expanding the existing Russell Creek reservoir. This project will meet Dawson County's water supply needs into the foreseeable future.

The Dawson Forest plan involves speculative construction for a presumed water supply need in Metro Atlanta through a large interbasin transfer.

TRANSFERS *continued from page 1*

2000 citizens had signed the petition and momentum was building.

GWC's proposed IBT regulations would mimic the criteria outlined in the Statewide Water Plan adopted in 2008. These criteria require that Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) consider impacts to rivers and communities receiving the transferred water as well as impacts to rivers and communities downstream from the transfer before issuing a water withdrawal permit that involves a water transfer.

Currently, Georgia law does not require EPD to evaluate any additional factors when issuing permits that involve IBTs. The only additional requirement is that EPD issue a press release to news media in effected areas seven days prior to issuing the permit.

Gov. Perdue has repeatedly expressed his support of IBTs and reiterated in recent months his pledge to do whatever it takes to get water supply for Metro Atlanta, including water transfers. In February, the Governor's office told GWC lobbyists that he would oppose any attempt at regulating IBTs.

Legislation seeking to regulate or prohibit IBTs has been in play in each of the recent sessions of the General Assembly. In 2008, the House of Representatives passed a bill that included language regulating IBTs only to have the language stripped from the bill in the closing hours of the session.

Once again this year the IBT battle is expected to be pitched. It appears the real "water wars" in the region will not be between Georgia and neighboring states, but between Metro Atlanta and downstream communities. For updates on CRBI's effort to get IBT legislation passed visit www.coosa.org.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE WATER WAR BATTLEFIELD...

A July 2009 federal court ruling has jump-started negotiations in the two-decades-old water dispute between Georgia, Alabama and Florida. The ruling created a July 2012 deadline for Georgia to reach a water sharing agreement with its neighbors and convince Congress to authorize Lake Lanier as a water supply reservoir. Without an agreement and congressional action, Metro Atlanta could see its water supply catastrophically reduced.

In response, Gov. Sonny Perdue implemented a four-pronged attack to address the looming deadline – negotiate, litigate, authorization and contingency planning.

Negotiate: In December, Governors of the three state met for the first time since the ruling and emerged from the talks optimistic. All three Governors will be out of office after 2010 so an agreement is expected prior to the 2010 elections. Any agreement between the states would have to be ratified by the state legislatures, thus special sessions might be in order later this year.

Litigate: Georgia has filed an appeal of the court's decision though odds of the appeal's success seem low.

Authorization: Georgia must convince Washington lawmakers to authorize Lake Lanier as a water supply reservoir, but Congress has told Georgia to reach an agreement with the neighboring states first.

Contingency: Gov. Perdue's Water Contingency Task Force in December concluded that it would be impossible to meet the water supply shortfall created if the court ruling went into effect in 2012. The Task Force offered water conservation in the short term and reservoir construction in the long-term as the most prudent contingency options.

Litigation between Georgia and Alabama over sharing the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa river system has been stayed in federal court until the outcome of continuing negotiations is clear. The fate of the Coosa is closely linked to negotiations on the Chattahoochee River.

GOVERNOR *continued from page 1*

bill creates a 10-member legislative study committee to "conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state's strategic needs for additional water supply, including...the identification of creative financing options for water reservoirs and other opportunities for water supply enhancement."

It is unclear what is meant by "other opportunities for water supply enhancement" but some have suggested these are code words for interbasin transfers. CRBI questions the need for a study committee given that state agencies are already engaged in developing water needs assessments as part of the Statewide Water Planning Process.

Constructing new reservoirs should always be considered the last water supply alternative. Reservoirs come with astronomical price tags, threaten the Coosa basin's numerous rare and endangered species and can impact water use by downstream communities.

Georgia's EPD estimates that reservoirs can cost \$4000 for every 1000 gallons of water supply created while conservation measures can secure the same 1000 gallons at a cost of 50 cents to \$250.



High efficiency toilets like this one will be required in new construction after July 2012 under Gov. Sonny Perdue's water conservation bill. This one's in Executive Director Joe Cook's house...call for demonstrations!

VOICE YOUR OPINION TO ELECTED OFFICIALS; JOIN GEAN NOW!

The Georgia Environmental Action Network (GEAN) and CRBI needs you! GEAN is a free e-mail action alert service that allows Georgia voters to voice their opinions to elected officials and other decision makers with a simple click of a button.

When a key vote or decision is to be made to protect our natural resources, GEAN will send you an e-mail outlining the issue and providing a sample e-mail that you can send to your elected official. You simply click the button on your mouse and the message is delivered to the appropriate decision makers.

You can register for this service by visiting the GEAN website at www.protectgeorgia.net

GEAN has proven to be one of the most effective tools in engaging citizens and swaying the votes of our legislators. The service has 7,184 subscribers, including more than 125 CRBI members. In 2009, GEAN delivered 144,000 e-mails to decision makers, positively influencing votes on protecting Georgia's well water and stopping unnecessary billboards along our highways.

NERA'S NEW LOGO HERALDS NEW ERA IN ORGANIZATION

With a new office in Calhoun and a new logo, CRBI chapter organization New Echota Rivers Alliance, continues to grow, expanding its water monitoring program and education efforts.

The logo, featuring the confluence of the Conasauga and Coosawattee at New Echota with a nod to the area's rich Native American history, ushers in new leadership at the organization as Calhoun native, Dan McBee, guides the organization as volunteer Executive Director.



The new office, located at 612 Red Bud Road in Calhoun, was donated by Pam and Haley Stephens and will provide NERA Executive Director Dan McBee with a "place to hang his waders" and coordinate the organization's efforts. NERA is seeking donations of office furniture and equipment. To make a contribution contact Dan at mcbec.dan3@gmail.com or at 706-263-4002.

NERA is now collecting stream health data at 16 sites on the

Oostanaula and its tributaries, and recently began testing Salacoa Lake, a popular recreation area in Gordon County. NERA will monitor water entering the lake as well as the outflow from the lake to assess its health for recreational uses. Through these efforts, NERA has worked with local officials to ban outboard motors on the lake, except for electric trolling motors—a move expected to improve the health of the lake.

In only its first year of active water monitoring, NERA was recently recognized by Georgia Adopt-A-Stream for its efforts. During 2009, NERA ranked 5th in the state among water monitoring organizations with 47 stream health reports submitted to Adopt-A-Stream.

The organization is also working to promote non-point source pollution education programs for area elementary schools in Calhoun and Gordon County. Swain Elementary and Calhoun Elementary will participate in CRBI's

Environmental Quiz Bowl competition April 17 at WATERFEST.

On Mar. 12, NERA sponsored a Project WET training for local educators. Project WET is an environmental education curriculum designed to teach students about our water resources. This, and NERA's other efforts to promote environmental education in the area, earned the organization recognition from the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia which presented an award to McBee at its March 19 conference. The Alliance was established in 1990 to serve as a professional education and networking association for environmental educators throughout Georgia.

Memorial Day weekend, NERA plans an 8-mile raft race fundraiser from Resaca to downtown Calhoun to bring residents back to the Oostanaula and raise awareness of the river as a recreational resource. More information about this upcoming event can be found at the NERA website: www.newechotarivers.org



NERA Executive Director Dan McBee conducts water tests along the Conasauga River in Whitfield County. NERA ranked fifth in the state for the number of stream health reports submitted to Georgia Adopt-A-Stream in 2009.

CRBI EXAMINES SEWAGE PLANTS IMPACTING LAKE ALLATOONA

In an effort to reduce pollution of Lake Allatoona, in December and February, CRBI submitted comments to Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) regarding the renewal of wastewater discharge permits for two large facilities in Cherokee County.

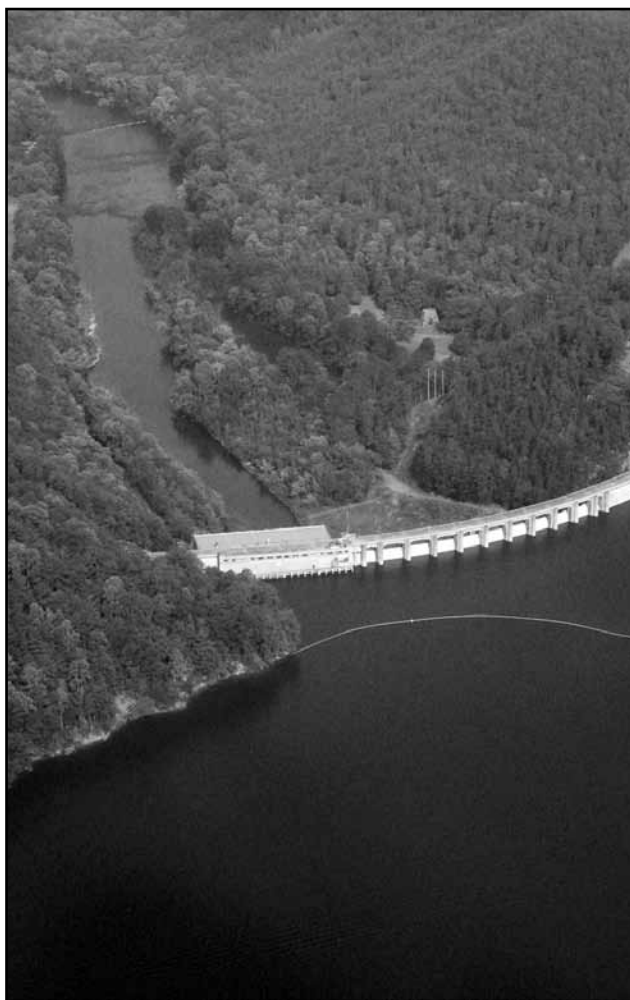
The City of Canton Water Pollution Control Plant and the Cherokee County Water & Sewerage Authority's (CCWSA) Rose Creek Water Pollution Control Plant each discharge treated sewage to the Etowah River upstream from Lake Allatoona.

EPD has identified Lake Allatoona as impaired due to excessive nutrient levels in the reservoir caused by discharges from wastewater treatment plants and non-point source pollution—the pollution that washes off farmland and urban and suburban land whenever it rains.

The state is currently developing clean up plans for this ongoing pollution problem, but these plans do not include stronger restrictions on wastewater treatment facilities.

The primary pollutant of concern is phosphorus, a nutrient that in Lake Allatoona can cause excessive algae growth and ultimately result in fish kills. Phosphorus limits in the permits for these two facilities are as much as six times higher than what they could achieve with more advanced treatment.

The City of Canton's permit would allow the City to nearly double its annual phosphorus discharge to 2,801 pounds per year from 1,770 pounds. At



Lake Allatoona, formed by Allatoona Dam, has been identified by Georgia environmental regulators as a "polluted" water body due to excessive nutrients entering the reservoir. Flight Courtesy of Southwings

the Rose Creek facility, CCWSA's discharge would more than quadruple to 6,394 pounds per year from 1,540 pounds per year.

The federal Clean Water Act makes these permits illegal for the law prohibits the discharge of pollutants to impaired water bodies.

With more advanced treatment methods, the City of Canton could double its capacity while reducing total phosphorus discharges. Likewise, CCWSA could triple its capacity yet still reduce phosphorus discharges.

However, this advanced treatment increases operating costs, and EPD has proposed implementing a "nutrient trading" scheme in the Upper Etowah River watershed that would allow operators of wastewater treatment facilities to pay for programs that would eliminate phosphorus from other sources rather than pay for more costly upgrades at the treatment plants.

EPD is currently studying such programs to determine if phosphorus removal from non-point sources is both achievable and measurable. CRBI is concerned that quantifying reductions in non-point source pollution will not be possible and thus there will be no way to gauge the effectiveness of these trading schemes.

Furthermore, during periods of prolonged drought, most of the phosphorus loading in Lake Allatoona comes from these wastewater treatment facilities—not non-point source pollution.

NEW LOGO, *continued from page 1*

The new logo coincides with the completely redesigned website which features an expanded "who to call" list to report pollution problems, online registration for membership, paddle trips, events and volunteer opportunities and expanded information about CRBI programs.

With contributions made in memory of Margie T. Harbin, CRBI designed and purchased a new educational display to be used at special events. The display highlights CRBI programs and threats to the health of the Coosa.

This spring, CRBI will for the first time rent canoes and kayaks. While CRBI

has led paddle trips for years, this will mark the first time that we have offered canoe and kayak rentals to the general public. The rental season began March 1 and runs through November. To reserve a boat for your own paddle trip or register for one of CRBI's guided trips, visit www.coosa.org.

CRBI's canoe and kayak rental program is made possible through a grant from the Lyndhurst Foundation in Chattanooga. The website redesign was made possible through grants from Netcorps and the C.S. Mott Foundation. Rome-based graphic designer Monica Sheppard produced the logo and educational display.

SUMMERVILLE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION PARTNERS ON RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP, WATER MONITORING

In an effort to promote water conservation and eliminate stormwater pollution of area streams, CRBI, in partnership with the Summerville Park Neighborhood Association, will sponsor a rain barrel workshop at Tolbert Park on May 1.

At the workshop, residents will have the opportunity to construct, at no charge, their own 50-gallon rain barrels for use in harvesting rain for landscape irrigation.

This water harvesting can have the added benefit of eliminating roof downspouts still connected to the city's sanitary sewer lines.

Many older homes in Rome have downspouts connected to drains that deliver water to the city's sewer system. These unnecessary connections can contribute to sewer overflows during rain events and can cause bacteria contamination in local streams and rivers. Such connections are no longer permitted in new construction.

Rainwater harvesting can impact both your home landscape and your wallet. Residential irrigation can account for as much as 40 percent of domestic water consumption, and a quarter-inch rainfall on the average roof can easily fill a 50-gallon barrel. A one-inch rainfall on a 1,000 square foot roof can create 623 gallons of water. Collection of water from



Rain barrels serve dual purposes: they help prevent excessive stormwater runoff that can damage streams and provide free irrigation water for home landscapes.

rooftop runoff can provide an ample supply of "soft water" containing no chlorine, lime or calcium as well as fewer sediments and dissolved salts than municipal water.

The workshop is open to the public, but rain barrels are limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first serve basis. The workshop begins at 9 a.m. and continues until Noon or until all barrels are distributed.

The Summerville Park Neighborhood Association has been working with CRBI for the past year. Members Richard King, Laurie Mercer and others have conducted regular water monitoring on Little Dry Creek which runs through the neighborhood and have assisted with stream clean ups.

The Association encompasses the neighborhood between Martha Berry Blvd and Division Street and Redmond Circle and Colonial Ave. It works to promote community and serve as a "voice for the residents of Summerville Park in matters of family, neighbors and government."

Any resident of Summerville Park who wishes to join the SPNA should contact Eric McDowell at 706-266-6932, or by email at emcdowell@berry.edu.

CANTON MARKETPLACE SETTLEMENT FUNDS LAND, WATER PROTECTION

Some 137 acres of land in the Etowah River Basin has been protected since 2007 thanks to CRBI's \$500,000 settlement with the Sembler Co., developers of the Canton Marketplace retail center at Ga. 20 and I-575 in Canton.

CRBI, with legal assistance from Greenlaw, appealed federal and state permits that would have allowed the destruction of more than 5,000 feet of streams and ultimately settled the appeal with the company. Included in the settlement were concessions to reduce impacts to the streams at the building site and \$500,000 to be used to protect property in the Etowah River Basin.

The Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia (MCTG) has been using the funds to secure conservation easements on biologically and historically significant lands. Thus far, 67 acres in Pickens County have been protected along headwaters of Long Swamp Creek—an Etowah River tributary, and 70 acres have been protected in Bartow County adjacent to the Etowah River.

The Pickens County parcel preserves a 100-foot buffer along streams that represent Priority 1 habitat for the federally protected Cherokee, Etowah and amber darters. These streams also feed Long Swamp Creek that serves as the main drinking water source for the City of Jasper and Pickens County.

The Bartow County parcel preserves 70-acre Valley View Farm in a conservation easement, including 3,000 feet of Etowah River frontage. The easement establishes a 50-foot buffer along the river and permanently protects the farm in its historic state.

MCTG continues to use the remaining funds from the settlement to preserve land in the Etowah basin.



Valley View Farm in Bartow County is one of the properties protected by the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia utilizing funds from CRBI's \$500,000 settlement with developers of Canton Marketplace.

Additionally, \$25,000 of the settlement is reserved for the construction of boat access to the Etowah in Cherokee County and the City of Canton. Efforts to construct these access points are now in the works, and CRBI, Upper Etowah Rivers Alliance, the City of Canton and other partners plan to have at least one boat launch in place before year's end.

THE COOSA VALLEY'S RECENT ICE AGE

Why is it every time you hear about global warming it gets colder than a well it gets cold. As this article is being written Rome is experiencing a high of 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

So what better time to look back at our weather history. The great benefit of the 13 inch snow fall in 1993 was that it finally cleared the way to stop talking about the ice storm of 1960. Weather has always been a great topic for talking and complaining.

The picture at right shows our rivers in 1940. Roger Aycock said in his book that Rome's great freeze of 1940 came suddenly and lasted for nearly ten days. Temperatures reached to near zero and a six day fall of snow reached a depth of 11.5 inches. The Oostanaula and Etowah rivers froze from bank to bank, providing a snow covered playground.

Could it get any worse? An account of one of the voyages of the steamer Magnolia tells of the Coosa being frozen over.



ROME AREA HISTORY MUSEUM

By Dennis Nordeman
Courtesy of the Rome Area History Museum
www.RomeHistoryMuseum.com



A newspaper photo from 1940 shows the Oostanaula River frozen from bank to bank in downtown Rome.

An article in the Weekly Courier on 10 January 1877 describes Captain J.M. Elliott, Sr.'s observation as the Magnolia was ice bound on a trip back from Gadsden.

The article reads, " The Coosa river was frozen over at Dublin, but after two days of hard work, they succeeded in cutting a channel through and came up as far as Cedar Bluff, when they encountered a barrier of far more obstinate magnitude. The river at this point was frozen for a distance of a mile, and an average depth of three inches. On the ice all hands worked all day Sunday, but at night had to stop, lacking some 50 yards of being through. Soon after they stopped, the ice broke loose and the entire field floated down the stream, reaching from bank to bank and carrying everything before it... The ice at the upper end of the floe had drifted up to a depth of six feet, a depth of ice never before heard of on the Coosa."

It might be cold today but at least the rivers aren't frozen over—not yet, at least.

WATERFEST: \$5000 IN PRIZES UP FOR GRABS!

With the addition of a special concert performance and a growing prize vault, the 2010 edition of WATERFEST will be our biggest ever as we celebrate ten years of paddle-powered fun.

More than \$5000 in cash and prizes will be up for grabs through our paddle competitions and Canoe-a-thon, and the weekend will culminate with a concert by nationally-recognized "industrial re-percussionist" Billy Jonas.

WATERFEST X, CRBI's paddlesports and environmental education extravaganza set for April 16-17 at Ridge Ferry Park in Rome, is a free event that includes an Environmental Fair featuring live animal shows, the world's largest portable aquarium stocked with Oostanaula River fish, the Big Cat Quest fishing tournament, exhibits, children's activities, great food, and a regional Environmental Quiz Bowl competition for area schools.

Also part of the weekend's activities are a 13-mile canoe/kayak race on the Oostanaula River, canoe and kayak tug-o-wars in a mammoth portable pool at Ridge Ferry Park and CRBI's Canoe-a-thon fundraising competition.

The Canoe-a-thon competition is open to both paddlers in the race and tug-o-wars as well as non-paddlers. In this competition, CRBI supporters vie to generate the most donations for CRBI advocacy, education, water monitoring and restoration programs.

Those raising the most money win prizes including two Air Tran Airlines tickets to any of the airline's U.S. destinations (\$1000 value); a week-long

mountain getaway at the Villas at Coosawattee (\$1000 value); an Old Town Canoe (\$650 value), a recreational kayak (\$400 value), plus additional vacation packages, outdoor clothing and more.

Canoe-a-thon participants can set up online fundraising pages at www.firstgiving.com/coosa. Donation forms can also be downloaded from the CRBI website at www.coosa.org or requested via mail by calling 706-232-2724.

Participants have until April 17 to raise the money and return it to CRBI. Winners will be announced during WATERFEST.

Registration to participate in the race and tug-o-wars is now open at www.coosa.org or you can request registrations forms by calling 706-232-2724. Registration fees range from \$10 to \$80. Early bird registration ends April 10.

Canoe Tug-O-War teams will compete Saturday, April 17, for \$450 in cash prizes. Teams consist of four people at least one of which must be female. The team registration fee is \$80. The top tug team will take home \$200 and gift certificates to Provino's and Santa Fe Cattle Co.. Second place wins \$150 and third takes home \$100. Kayak Tug-O-Wars take place Friday, April 16.

Lead sponsors of WATERFEST include Johnson Outdoors, Carlisle, Necky Kayaks, Ocean Kayak, Old Town Canoes & Kayaks, Extrasport, South 107, Q102, 93.5 Life FM, and WSB-TV and its Family 2 Family affiliates SCANA Energy, Kroger, Air Tran, Longhorn Steakhouse and Northside Hospital.

BILLY JONAS BRINGS "RECYCLED" MUSIC TO WATERFEST WEEKEND

Billy Jonas, an Asheville, North Carolina-based songwriter and "industrial re-percussionist" will perform a concert for children and adults April 17 at 7 p.m. at Rome City Auditorium as part of CRBI's WATERFEST weekend.

The nationally recognized folk musician who last year was named to USA Today's "Best Family Music List" performs much of his music on found and recycled objects such as tin cans and 50-gallon drums.

Tickets are available now at www.coosa.org and in Rome at Kroger, Lavender Mountain Hardware, Blue Sky Outfitter, The Music Room and CRBI. Adult tickets are \$12, student tickets age 6-18 are \$6 and children under six receive free admission.

Jonas' performances are an explosion of energy in which



Billy Jonas was recognized by USA Today in its "top family music" of 2009 list.

everyone becomes part of the performance. Concerts begin with a simple "tuning" of the audience; from there a whimsical trajectory carries listeners through stories of life, love, and triumph over 'Murphy's Law.'

Jonas' original pieces are played on fanciful "industrial re-percussion" instruments made from found objects. He sings in a clear tenor voice; his guitar work is adventurous, alternately percussive and lyrical. To listen to his music, visit www.billyjonas.com.

CRBI is partnering with local schools and faith communities to fill the 1000-seat City Auditorium. Darlington School, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, First Baptist Church, Rodeph Sholom Congregation and others are supporting the concert.

Don't miss this rare concert. Tickets are going fast!

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COOSA RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE
408 BROAD STREET
ROME, GA 30161

*"When things get so far
gone as to attracts their
notice, the citizen, 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!
This newsletter is printed on recycled
paper and be recycled.



Calendar of Events

For more information on the following events, visit www.coosa.org unless noted otherwise.

- »» March 27 **Get the Dirt Out Workshop in Calhoun**
- »» March 27 **Etowah River Paddle in Cherokee County, GA**
- »» April 10 **Oostanaula Odyssey Paddle**
- »» April 16-17 **WATERFEST & Billy Jonas Concert**
- »» April 25 **Earth Day Paddle on the Etowah**
- »» May 1 **Rain Barrel Workshop in Summerville Park/Rome**
- »» May 7 **First Friday Concert & Downtown Paddles**
- »» May 8 **Cedar Creek Paddle in Cave Spring, GA**
- »» May 15 **Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Workshop in Summerville, GA**
- »» May 15 **Terrapin Creek Paddle in Piedmont, AL**
- »» May 22 **Major Ridge's Paddle on the Oostanaula**
- »» June 4 **First Friday Concert & Downtown Paddles**
- »» June 12 **Family Paddle on the Etowah**
- »» June 19 **Etowah River Paddle in Cherokee County, GA**
- »» June 19-25 **Paddle Georgia**
www.garivers.org