A glass of Atlanta tap water graced page one of U.S. News and World Report’s cover article recently. It made Atlanta the poster child of the water crisis. The water in the magazine resembled murky green tea, rather than the clear liquid we expect to see flowing from our faucets. But, as we endure our fourth year of drought, we could take a “glass half-full” rather than “glass half-empty” view in response to this image of Atlanta’s water supply. The water may be dirty at times, but at least it is there.

Recent analyses indicate that many areas in Georgia are bumping up against their water supply limits—much sooner than expected. As population growth continues and the drought lingers, once plentiful water is becoming “blue gold”. In the midst of this major water challenge, the state is struggling with a political question of the most fundamental nature: who owns Georgia’s surface and ground water?

Georgia Water Coalition Fills Void

The newly-formed Georgia Water Coalition believes that the answer to this question is as clear as our ideal glass of tap water: the surface and ground waters of the state must continue to be a public resource, managed in the public interest and in a sustainable manner by the state to protect natural systems and meet human and economic needs. On behalf of its 50 member organizations, the Coalition is providing its water policy recommendations to the Governor, the General Assembly and the general public for consideration prior to the 2003 General Assembly.

Water Could Become Big Business

The question of water ownership seems, at first glance, to be an academic, instead of practical, problem. But, William Booth reported recently in the Washington Post that schemes abound to move water across great distances for profit. A well-connected British wheeler-dealer has connived to sell water to be stored in an aquifer below the Mojave Desert to southern California. Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens expects to market the blue gold of the Ogallala Aquifer to Dallas, and more ambitious ideas about ocean shipping of water from rivers and glaciers via huge plastic bags underscore the desperation of cities. These plans raise questions about how much water can be withdrawn from rivers and aquifers that cross natural and jurisdictional boundaries without causing negative effects on natural systems, surrounding property values and local economies.

Water marketing, like these examples, also raises questions of equity, ethics, and basic human rights. For example, many counties and cities in Georgia are working hard to implement water-saving measures to protect our fourth year of drought, we made Atlanta the poster child of the water crisis. The water in the magazine resembled murky green tea, rather than the clear liquid we expect to see flowing from our faucets. But, as we endure our fourth year of drought, we could take a “glass half-full” rather than “glass half-empty” view in response to this image of Atlanta’s water supply. The water may be dirty at times, but at least it is there.

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After 25 years as an environmental advocate, I thought that I had seen it all—in terms of bad faith negotiations and political maneuvering. The “work” of the Joint Legislative Water Study Committee (JSC), over the past year, showed me that anything can, and will, be done, when enough money is at stake.

Although other topics were debated, the lightning rod issue during JSC deliberations was reduced to one simple question. Do Georgians’ surface and ground waters belong to all Georgians for reasonable uses? The re-sounding answer from the agribusiness-dominated JSC was “NO”, as the group refused to include a key principle supporting water as a public resource in its final report. The degree to which agribusiness and industry have fought this basic human right has been astounding and telling.

In southwest Georgia, home to 5 of the 23 members including Co-chair Rep. Bob Hanner, transplanted Western economists have found a foothold in the depressed farming region to sell a concept that could make water an economic commodity throughout Georgia. They want to establish private property rights in water and let this “blue gold” flow to the highest bidder, in or out of state. (See cover story) Five other members of the JSC represented agribusiness or industry interests, while only two environmentalists were appointed.

A 50-member Advisory Council was also established pursuant to the resolution that created the JSC and its mission to develop a framework and process for Georgia’s first water management plan. Despite the resolution’s requirement that “citizen groups in each river basin” be represented on this Council, the majority of the appointees from the 14 basins are not connected to grassroots citizen organizations.

At one meeting, Albany farmer George McIntosh claimed erroneously that the public resource statement (a recommendation of the JSC’s water rights subcommittee) was already in the JSC’s draft report. It wasn’t. At another meeting, he declared that seven environmental principles had not been approved at a prior meeting; however, he had, in fact, seconded the motion to approve them at that meeting! This did not deter Rep. Hanner from calling for a vote on McIntosh’s motion to delete the principles from the final JSC report. The vote was reported as being 9-6 in favor of McIntosh, although there remains some uncertainty regarding the vote of Co-chair Sen. Hugh Gillis. At the final meeting, the seven principles were re-inserted for “consideration” only.

The JSC thoroughly tarnished its credibility. It will be up to the Governor and the Legislature to make sure that our waterways are preserved as public resources.

Sally Beth Rotherham
**Superior Court Judge Affirms Bad Decision in Georgia Power Case**

An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) ruled in Riverkeeper’s favor earlier this year in its challenge to the water withdrawal permit issued to Georgia Power Company (GPC) for its coal-fired plant in Heard County. The ALJ found that GPC did not need to withdraw 116 million gallons per day (mgd) of water from the River. GPC and the Director of the Environmental Protection Division quickly filed briefs asking the ALJ to reconsider his ruling. In a surprising change of heart, and with little explanation, the ALJ reversed his earlier decision and upheld the 116 mgd permit term. Riverkeeper appealed the ALJ’s ruling to Fulton Superior Court, but the Superior Court affirmed the ALJ’s bad decision. While disappointed with both judicial rulings, we are pleased that our action established that citizens are water users protected by state law with the right to appeal withdrawal permits. Also, GPC had to significantly augment its original permit application with additional drought and conservation information.

**State Proposes Shoddy “Pollution Budgets” for Streams**

Total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) are pollution budgets designed to reduce pollution levels in degraded, or impaired, waterways. For example, Clear Creek, an urban tributary to the Chattahoochee, suffers from raw sewage, storm runoff, channelization, and low dissolved oxygen, placing it on Georgia’s 2002 list of impaired waters (see photo below). EPD must develop a TMDL for every waterbody on this list. A good TMDL should assess sources of pollution, determine the level of pollution the waterbody can receive and still meet state water quality standards (i.e., the pollution budget), allocate portions of the pollution budget to each identified source of pollution, and leave a portion unallocated as a margin of safety. In July, EPD proposed TMDLs for waters in the Chattahoochee Basin. Overall, the proposed TMDLs are inadequate, failing to identify pollution sources and making only general recommendations on how to clean up the polluted waters. In September, we submitted comments to the state, based on an engineering and water quality analysis.

**General Shale Takes Stormwater Management Seriously**

Riverkeeper’s Stormwater Campaign is making significant strides towards addressing industrial pollution impacts to Proctor Creek in southwest Atlanta. With our partners (Georgia Center for Law and the Public Interest and National Wildlife Federation), we are investigating industrial facilities in the Proctor watershed for potential stormwater violations. We met with the state EPD to discuss the Campaign and asked them to investigate four industrial facilities of serious concern. EPD has inspected two of these four facilities, to date, and required them to improve their stormwater management practices.

**Mystifying Discharge a Result of a Power Outage?**

On July 29, as a thunderstorm moved into north Fulton County, a Riverkeeper member was fishing on the Chattahoochee near Horseshoe Bend and witnessed a brownish-black substance flowing from the outfall pipe at Fulton’s John’s Creek sewage plant. When the fisherman walked through the plant property to get out of the storm, he asked an employee what had happened and was told that a power outage had occurred. The fisherman called our HOTLINE to report the spill and we promptly contacted the state EPD. Three weeks later, the state inspected the John’s Creek plant for the second time and found “more questions, than answers”, including incomplete operating records for the day of the spill. Plant employees claim that there was no spill on July 29, but the state continues to investigate the matter. It is in our understanding that EPD plans to request a full investigation of this mysterious incident. Over the years, fishermen have reported numerous similar occurrences. As a side note, Fulton is planning to double the permitted discharge from the John’s Creek plant in the next three years.

**Embankments on Lake Lanier Need Chlorophyll Standards**

In 2000, the Georgia Board of Natural Resources approved water quality standards for Lake Lanier for a suite of parameters (e.g., dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, chlorophylls, nitrogen and phosphorous) which serve as benchmarks for the Lake’s health. Monitoring stations were designated at only five mid-channel locations throughout the 38,000-acre lake due to limited state resources. As a result, Riverkeeper advocated for additional monitoring to provide a more comprehensive representation of Lake Lanier. During 2001, the state EPD was able to conduct supplemental monitoring at five embayment locations—areas where tributaries enter the Lake and nutrients can concentrate, causing algal blooms.

Riverkeeper also initiated a monitoring program on Lake Lanier to collect additional data, focusing on chlorophyll-a (chl-a), which is a pigment found in plants and algae that is required for photosynthesis. The measurement of chl-a indicates the biomass, or amount, of algae in lake water. Excess algae (an indicator of nutrient pollution) reduces water clarity and dissolved oxygen levels such that algae blooms and fish kills may result. Riverkeeper’s monitoring program on Lanier is intended to measure chl-a levels against state standards and over a greater spacial scale, and collect additional data in embayments.

A review of 2001 data and preliminary 2002 data confirms that standards should be adopted for embayment stations in addition to the five mid-channel locations. All but one bay station showed higher annual average chl-a levels than the benchmarks in both EPD and Riverkeeper data. In addition to setting embayment standards, we continue to advocate that a “one-time” maximum be designated to detect pollution "hot spots". The current standards are based on an annual average over the growing season (April through October) which is not a true reflection of Lake conditions. During months with higher levels of precipitation, additional phosphorous carried in stormwater runoff supports increased algal growth, leading to spikes in chl-a levels. For this reason, additional wet weather monitoring should be conducted to collect data that accurately measures impacts from stormwater runoff and to eliminate "hot spots". Although none of the five benchmark stations exceeded the annual chl-a standards during 2001, some of the averages are approaching the maximum, and it is possible that this standard could be exceeded in the next few seasons, especially as the Lake’s watershed continues to develop. A database is being built with this new monitoring information from Riverkeeper, Gainesville College, the Upper Chattahoochee River Basin Group and the Adopt-A-Lake program. Ultimately, we envision that this database will provide the necessary information to refine and improve Lanier’s water quality standards and enforcement.
Brook Trout Limited Hooks 50+ Members

Ralph Shaw thinks it’s a shame that among 55 protected species of fish in Georgia, from darters to madtoms, the state’s only native trout is afforded no protection at all. Many people don’t know that the brook trout is Georgia’s only native trout and that rainbow and brown trout were introduced to the area. Actually, Ralph says, the brook trout is not a trout at all, but is technically a char. These are just a couple of facts that Ralph hopes to make known, and Brook Trout Limited, a non-profit outdoor educational organization, is off to a swimming start to spread the word.

Ralph, a Georgia native (famous for his lawsuit to stop federal logging in Baker’s Branch, headwaters of the Soque River in Habersham County) has lived in the Chattahoochee’s headwaters for over thirty years and has been an avid outdoorsman his entire life. Concerned over the loss of critical habitat and subsequent population declines of the brook trout, he decided it was time to speak out and work actively to get these special fish the protection he feels they deserve. It turns out Ralph is not alone in these desires. Since early spring of this year, he has rounded up at least 50 other folks that share his love of the outdoors and enthusiasm to protect this native species. Together they formed Brook Trout Limited whose specific mission is to establish the southern range of the southern strain of brook trout by identifying

Soque Watershed Association Hires New Director

A lot has changed in Habersham County, home of the Soque River. What once was a completely natural community is now facing some of the same adversities that larger cities are up against: water shortages, sprawling development, and loss of forested land. In the fall of 1997, a handful of concerned citizens got together to discuss some of these issues, and shortly thereafter the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA) was up and running as a non-profit community-based watershed protection group. Riverkeeper has played an active role in SRWA since its conception, and has witnessed its evolution from a fledgling group to an organization with a firm position in the community. SRWA was awarded a grant from The Turner Foundation with funds specifically designated for the hiring of a full-time Executive Director.

Justin Ellis, who worked for the past five years as Watershed Leadership Director with the Alabama Rivers Alliance, was hired in January of this year. Justin brings experience and enthusiasm for working with local watershed groups to the organization. He brings with him the Alabama Rivers Alliance’s international reputation will be considered for commemorative naming. The Geographic Names Board uses the following guidelines to make its decisions:

- Only persons who have been deceased for at least 5 years will be considered for commemorative naming. (Birth and death dates must be submitted, if known.)
- The person being honored by the naming should have had a direct long-term association (at least 20 years) with the stream or made a significant contribution to the area or State in which it is located. A short biography of the person describing his/her contribution to the area must be submitted.
- Persons with outstanding national or international reputation will be considered, even if the person was not directly associated with the geographic feature.

For more information about naming your stream contact:
Executive Secretary, Domestic Names Committee
U.S. Board on Geographic Names
U.S. Geological Survey
523 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Phone: 703-648-4544

Soque Watershed Association (SRWA) now Executive Director, Justin Ellis

Brook Trout Limited hopes to host more guest lecturers and also begin offering educational wilderness outings.

River Chat
RIVERS OF THE SOUTHEAST CD ROM
A NEW EDUCATION TOOL FOR CLASSROOMS

Thanks to generous funding from Coca-Cola and the Woodruff Foundation, a new interactive CD-ROM for kids will be produced on rivers of the Southeast, with special focus on the Chattahoochee River. Riverkeeper will work with Hamline University’s Global Center for Environmental Education to produce a new educational resource for hundreds of children to learn about their local waterways. Modeled after Hamline’s original CD on the Upper Mississippi River, this educational tool will allow students to learn more about the water cycle, watershed hydrology and ecosystem concepts. The core of the CD will be delivered through a virtual river journey down the length of the Chattahoochee River that will take river users from a historical perspective to modern day time. Water quality impacts will be explored through a visit to the virtual water quality lab which will incorporate a land-use theme. We plan to have this CD available for schools by the fall of 2003. For more information, contact Kristi Rose at 404-352-9828 or krose@ucriverkeeper.org.

RIVERKEEPER YOUTH PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS GEO

RIVER TRIPS FOR KIDS

The Georgia Environmental Organization (GEO) Chattahoochee Watershed Exploration program combines environmental education with outdoor adventure to promote water conservation practices and increase stewardship of local watersheds. Floating down the River in a 6-ft. rubber raft, participants conduct chemical and biological analysis of water samples to develop scientific skills and concrete evidence of pollutant levels. After testing in several locations of the river, the data is compared to levels in a healthy river. Conclusions are then drawn about the water quality present that day in the Chattahoochee River. This program also surveys all of the possible pollution sources that threaten the water quality of the Chattahoochee River. Distinctions made between point source and non-point source pollution reveal the impacts made on a watershed from everyday activity in our local communities. For more information on GEO, contact Trey Gibbs at 404-605-0000 or visit their website at www.gaenv.org.

COMPAÑEROS PARA AGUA LINDA (PARTNERS FOR CLEAN WATER)

Thanks to funding from the North Georgia Community Foundation, Riverkeeper initiated the first phase of Compañeros para Agua Linda, a new headwaters education program. On July 22, Latino kids from the Boys and Girls Club of Hall County visited the Chota Princess to learn about water quality and explore the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River. Each student had the opportunity to conduct tests for pH and turbidity levels, as well as sampling for plankton. By participating in discussions and hands-on activities, Riverkeeper plans to give Latino youth a better understanding of water quality issues and how their choices can protect the Chattahoochee River and Lake Lanier for generations.

Riverkeeper, in partnership with Elachee Nature Center, will continue the Compañeros program as part of a long-term outreach strategy, once additional funding is secured. For more information on this program, please contact Darcie Boden at 770-531-1064, or dboden@ucriverkeeper.org.

WATERSHED PATCH PROJECT

Working with Patty Scott of EPA’s Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C., Riverkeeper developed a generic version of the successful Girl Scouts of the USA’s “Water Drop Patch” program. This watershed protection program is designed for use by Keeper groups and other environmental education organizations across the country. A 50-page booklet contains many community projects and hands-on activities with incentives for awards and certificates to motivate the students to further their knowledge of water resources. This fall, EPA will provide 1,000 copies of the initial printing which Riverkeeper will make available to schools throughout the Chattahoochee watershed. For more information on this program please contact Bill Crawford at 404-352-9828 or bcrawford@ucriverkeeper.org.

CRITTERS IN THE CREEK

As part of the Cornelia-Habersham County Library Summer Reading Program, Riverkeeper staffers Kristin Costley and Darcie Boden led “Critters in the Creek”. Kids got the chance to learn about the macroinvertebrates inhabiting the Soque River in Habersham County and the opportunity to cool off on a hot, summer day.

RIVERKEEPER TO HIGHLIGHT RIVERSMART CAMPAIGN

RiverSmart is a three-year public education campaign promoted by RiverNetwork to raise public awareness of the issues that threaten our rivers and drinking supply. The goal is to help people change some of their simple everyday behavior as a way to help conserve water. Stay tuned for future RiverSmart goods and tips as we advertise them in our website and in our newsletters and classrooms. To learn more about RiverSmart, visit www.riversmart.org.

Kids get hands on experience aboard the Chota Princess.

Cover of new Watershed Patch Project manual provided by Jasmine B., Age 12, 6th, River of Words Contest finalist.
How did it happen, I asked myself as I navigated my canoe along Peachtree Creek through the forgotten backwaters of Atlanta? How could this former source of drinking water, which first attracted Indian civilizations and later settlers to the area, have been relegated to a sewer—a dumping ground?

Early in my quest to find out about Peachtree Creek and its environs, I granted an interview with the late historian Franklin Garrett. I relayed my mission to seek the roots of the waterway and its impact on Atlanta’s history. He thought for a moment, and then said, “Other than the Indian Village of Standing Peachtree, and the Civil War Battle which was fought along it, I don’t know that much happened along Peachtree Creek.” Regardless, we continued to talk, and before our meeting ended, Franklin had identified many significant events and people connected to the waterway and Atlanta’s formative years. These included not only the birthplace of Atlanta, but also its source of water and the roots of its namesake “Peachtree”.

Franklin’s initial response stemmed from the fact that, as with many historians, he studied history in terms of socio-political and economic evolution. He knew a great deal about the history of Peachtree Creek, but had seldom thought of Atlanta’s history in terms of the interaction of a populous and its waterways—its natural history.

Taking a Different Tack

My tack was different. Water is the basis of life. We build civilizations and economies because there are resources in place which allow us to do so. Not knowing much about the nature of historical research, I naively plodded forward, integrating elements of social and natural history, hydrology, and politics.

Twelve years later, my manuscript is complete, but not so my travels through the watershed.

I decided to explore the water first. I entered Peachtree Creek at its headwaters in the suburbs, traveling from Dunwoody to the north to Tucker and Norcross to the east. Climbing over sewer pipes and log jams, I explored it at water level. From arrowheads and pottery shards to mill ruins and grand estates, I began to develop an understanding of its evolution.

I found the ruins of Decatur’s 1906 Waterworks, where the flowing waters of South and Burnt Forks of Peachtree Creek were impounded to provide the city’s drinking water. I canoed through the grounds of the Veteran’s hospital where Walter Candler once raced trotters, and a massive parking lot in the floodplain now causes downstream bank erosion. I spoke with fishermen and homeless persons living under the bridges.

Beneath Atlanta’s Pavement

In the archives and literature, I found the people who left these traces, as a record of Atlanta’s development and the changes to the landscape. Have you ever wondered if there was a Howell’s Mill? A Moore’s Mill? The answer is yes, and the history of these places and the people who built them are as significant to Atlanta’s evolution as Asa Candler’s Drug Store.

The landscape has also seen its share of changes, such as the failure of the Orme Street Trunk Sewer, which collapsed in 1993, causing a giant sinkhole downtown which engulfed autos and killed two people. That sewer was once an upper stretch of Tanyard Creek, a tributary of Peachtree Creek whose headwaters are buried near Centennial Olympic Park. Much of Clear Creek, another Peachtree Creek tributary, also succumbed to the same fate and lies hidden beneath Atlanta’s pavement.

Atlanta’s watershed history is not singularly unique. Creating a sustainable co-existence with nature is typically motivated by catastrophe rather than by vision. It appears that Atlanta has turned the corner and is moving towards a long-term solution to its sewer problems. I just hope that by the book’s second printing I will have a success story to add to the mix.

Dave Kaufman is the author of Peachtree Creek, Atlanta’s Forgotten River (Publication date to be announced). He will speak at our Annual Meeting on November 21.
stream flows and aquifer levels, while preventing pollutants from entering those waters. However, if a private entity obtains the right to sell this same water to the highest bidder, who reimburses the citizens whose efforts have made this resource available for that sale? Enron had water marketing in its sights before it crumpled due to corporate fraud. Clearly, we risk a great deal if we leave it to private water marketers to look out for the public good. It is up to the Governor and the Georgia Legislature to take a clear and uncompromised stand on who owns our water.

Making it Clear

When Georgia makes it plain that its waters continue to be a public resource, the state will not lose its ability to reallocate water for different uses. The state ensures that the citizens of the state come first. The interest of those citizens is in the permanent protection of their waters and the health of the natural systems. The state’s job is to assure the right of everyone to reasonable uses of state waters—for drinking, swimming, and fishing, as well as for agriculture and industry. It must assure that those with political power or money cannot benefit at the expense of everyone.

A statewide water plan for Georgia must be unambiguous on the issue of water as a public resource. Unfortunately, the final recommendations of a Joint Legislative Study Committee charged with guiding the state water plan are more political than profound. It is this Study Committee that has kicked up dust around the water supply issue by ducking the hard question of who owns Georgia’s waters. The Committee pointedly rejected the recommendation of its own Water Rights Working Group that water be considered “a public resource managed by the state in the public interest.”

The Committee member who led the light to remove this phrase, an agribusinessman, claims that a clear statement such as this would set the stage for lawsuits. Perhaps he is confused, thinking of the scores of recent cases in the drought-plagued states of the western U.S. over who is entitled to use how much water from which source, and when. The Joint Study Committee’s failure to declare that Georgia’s water is a public resource is like advertising for lawyers from California and Texas, skilled in litigating water rights, to move to Georgia, so that they can “help” us manage our resources the way they have in litigating water rights, to move to Georgia, so that they

WATER SAVING CHALLENGE

As Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper staff and members, it is important to lead the way in the conservation of Georgia waters. There are water saving techniques we can employ to meet this challenge. Have you ever wondered how much water you use? Some water bills list usage in thousands of gallons while others list it in CCFs (Consumption in Cubic Feet). One CCF is equal to 750 gallons. I looked at my recent water bill and found that my family used 20 CCF of water over a 60 day billing cycle.

The formula for individual usage is:

CCF X 750 gal (or M gallons) = Household gallons for billing period/ Billing period days/ Household members = Per capita daily usage

In my case: 20 X 750 – 15,000/60/3/4 = 83 gallons per day

You can compare this usage to the national and Georgia average (excluding commercial use). The national is 101 per day and Georgia is 107 per day (USGS).

For a “virtual home tour” that shows you how to save water in every room of the house, visit the website of California Urban Water Conservation Council at www. cuwcc.org

Regulating Construction Runoff

After 27 years, erosion laws still don’t stop the dirt

The sediment that flows from construction sites, when it rains, increases the cost of treating drinking water, smothers fish habitat in streams, lowers property values, and muddies the waters we use for recreation. Realizing the impact that this sediment has on state waterways, Georgia lawmakers passed the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (GESAs) in 1975. The very goal of GESA was to stop dirt from leaving construction sites, but a 2001 Performance Audit of Georgia’s erosion control programs conducted by the State Auditor revealed that the program has fallen far short of this goal.

Overlapping Enforcement Programs

In addition to GESA, the state EPD also issued a General Permit for Construction Activities in 2000; a permit required by the federal Clean Water Act for discharges of stormwater runoff from most construction activities. The General Permit overlaps with GESA, in many respects, and has created a dual permitting system in the state, under which a developer must obtain a land disturbance permit from a local government under GESA and also comply with the General Permit from the state. The performance audit found that this system created confusion and diluted the program’s effectiveness.

Reform Efforts Underway

To field questions and address problems with the implementation of the General Permit, EPD formed an Advisory Committee in 2000. The committee is a group of approximately 35 stakeholders from various fields, including developers, utility contractors, road builders, engineers, and environmental groups. Riverkeeper’s soil erosion expert, Alice Champagne, sits on the committee which has met in full and in sub-committees more than a dozen times over the past 2 years. The Advisory Committee’s goal is to recommend changes to the General Permit and the structure of the state’s erosion control program. The Erosion and Sediment Overview Council, created in 2001 by Georgia’s Legislature, was charged with processing the Advisory Committee’s recommendations and proposing legislation for the 2003 General Assembly.

Riverkeeper’s Recommendations

Riverkeeper believes that reform of Georgia’s erosion control program is critical to the future health of our waterways. A few of our key recommendations for improvement, which we are discussing with other stakeholders on the Advisory Committee and the Overview Council, are:

- GESA and the General Permit should be streamlined, so that a developer only receives one permit—the General Permit.
- EPD should remain responsible for enforcement of the General Permit, but work with local governments for erosion control plan review and site inspection.
- EPD should restructure its erosion control program, so that each EPD regional office has a team dedicated to enforcement of the General Permit within their region. In addition to being physically closer to the issue, the regional teams would be better poised to work with local officials.
- There must be tougher criteria for local governments to become qualified issuing authorities, including training for all local personnel involved in the program.
- The General Permit must continue to require monitoring of the level of sediment leaving construction sites. This data should then be submitted to EPD.
- Erosion control training for the development community should be required.
- In order for Georgia’s soil erosion control program to be effective, it must be a top priority for all involved. Otherwise, Georgia red clay will continue to roll off construction sites and into the streams and rivers that supply our drinking water and our recreation.

2002 Annual Fund Campaign meets Matching Grant Challenge!

We have met the Turner and Richards Foundations 2 to 1 matching challenge. In spite of this exciting news, we are slightly behind target for the campaign to date. If you have yet to make your contribution to the 2002 Annual Campaign Fund, send it today in the enclosed envelope. We need your support to do our work to protect the Chattahoochee! Please contact Pam Doxes at 404-352-9828 ext. 15 with questions.

River CHAT
For some, the connection to the Chattahoochee and its tributaries is definitely spiritual. The Native Americans bathed in it daily and, as a first right, plunged their newborn babies in its cool waters. In a region steeped in religious tradition there have been more than a few Christians “cleansed” in the Chattahoochee and its tributaries.

For others the connection is commercial. Your forefathers may have gone to Houston’s Mill or Henderson’s Mill or Howell’s Mill for their ground meal. If they traveled west out of Atlanta, they might have used Johnson’s Ferry or Pace’s Ferry to cross the River.

Many of today’s get our connection through recreation: fishing, rowing, canoeing, swimming, boating—just to mention a few. Anyone who enjoys these activities will tell you that it is more than exercise. It is a connection; a return to our roots as people of the land and water.

With rapid development throughout the Chattahoochee watershed, more and more people make the connection through environmental stewardship such as volunteering as water monitors or participating in a streambank restoration project. Such stewardship meets the River’s challenges of today and ensures that future generations may also make the “river connection”.

“All the rivers come from that one River and go back to it like it was the ocean sea and if you believe, you can lay your pain in that River and get rid of it because that is the River that was made to carry sin. It’s a River full of pain itself, pain itself... to be washed away, slow, you people, slow as this here old red water River round my feet.”

The Reverend Bevel Summers in “The River”, by Flannery O’Connor.

Through a partnership between Riverkeeper, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, Georgia Environmental Protection Division, The Georgia Conservancy and Trust for Public Land, we have been studying water quality issues to determine whether it is safe to play in the Chattahoochee River.

Join us for a Safe Water Seminar on Tuesday, October 22, 2002 at Roswell River Landing, 245 Azalea Drive, Roswell, GA 30075 9AM-1PM to discuss how and when to recreate safely in the Chattahoochee River.

National Recreation Area and the importance of keeping our rivers healthy. Keynote speaker: Bob Zimmerman, Charles River Watershed Association in Boston. Other speakers will include representatives from the National Park Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Geological Survey, state agencies, local governments and nonprofit organizations. Free admission includes a picnic lunch by the River at Noon. For information or if you plan to attend, contact the Riverkeeper office at 404-352-9828 (ext. 24) or bbolton@ucriverkeeper.org. Seminar sponsored in part by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

Don’t forget to check Bacteria levels before recreating on the Chattahoochee River!

Real-time predictions of bacteria counts are available on the new BacteriALERT web page at http://ga2.er.usgs.gov/bacteria/