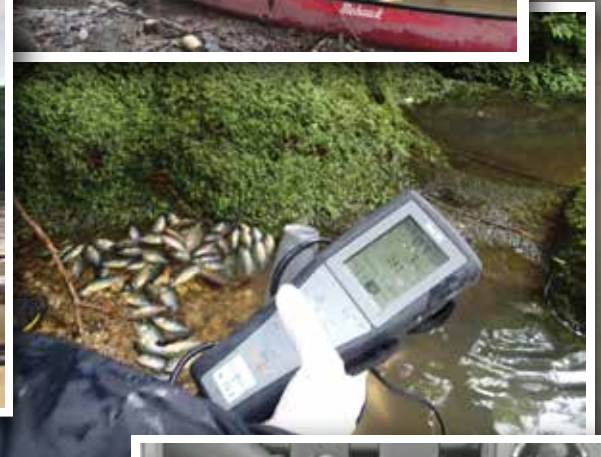


CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR WATERS



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

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Reflections

It seems like only yesterday that we held organizational meetings for Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, christened our first patrol boat, and started pulling trash out of the river.

Now — 20 years and 800 tons of trash later — billions of gallons of raw sewage and polluted stormwater no longer flow into the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries every year.



More than 35,000 students have received hands-on science lessons aboard our floating classroom. And, 7,500 water samples have been collected and analyzed by staff and volunteers; this data has led to positive action to improve water quality.

You — our volunteers, members, foundations, corporations, board members, staff and nonprofit colleagues — have helped us achieve these results and more.

Joining a Global Water Movement

In 1994, I was invited to join a growing movement of people around the country and now around the world, fighting to protect our waterways and winning. That movement, the Waterkeeper Alliance, has grown to more than 200 organizations in 25 countries.

When we started, it was well known that every time it rained Atlanta's streams were filled with bacteria and the river downstream was not safe for any use.

Today, thanks to CRK's lawsuit against the city, 99 percent of the volume of sewage that contaminated the

river two decades ago has been stopped. More than 100 miles of the river and its tributaries are dramatically cleaner and safer.

But, our work hasn't just been about stopping pollution. We've also spent the past 20 years working to make sure that there is enough water for families and businesses throughout the Chattahoochee River Basin and for the ecology. Adequate water supply, fairly allocated, is essential for river health and economic prosperity.

Over the years, we've made sure to have fun, too — offering river trips and outings, service projects and awareness events to more than 100,000 people.

As author Edward Abbey said: "It is not enough to fight for our land and water; it's even more important to enjoy them."

Despite two decades, this work has really just begun. We aren't as far from reaching our goals as we were in 1994, but many daunting tasks remain. Short-term thinking and selfishness still pollute our river and threaten our prosperity.

As Chattahoochee Riverkeeper enters its third decade, I am honored to hand over the leadership reigns to **Juliet Cohen**, currently our general counsel, and **Jason Ulseth**, our technical programs director.

In 2015, Jason will become the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and Juliet, our executive director. As veteran staff, they both know how to get the job done and, importantly, have the necessary fire in their bellies.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity of a lifetime to be your Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.

Sally Betha
Executive Director and Riverkeeper

River Matters

For information on these and other river-related events, visit www.chattahoochee.org/calendar.

December 6

Volunteer Day at Connally Nature Park

January 12

Georgia General Assembly convenes

March 14

GA Adopt-a-Stream Confluence Conference

March 21

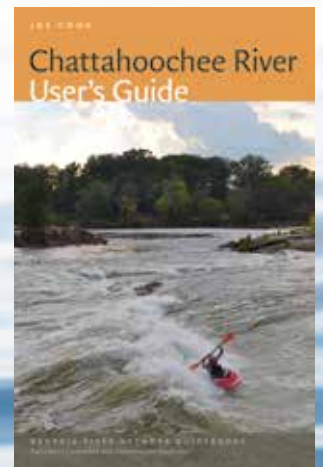
Water Drop Dash 5K & Family Water Festival

April 11

Sweep the Hooch Cleanup

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER USER'S GUIDE ON SALE

Joe Cook, Advocacy & Communication Coordinator for the Coosa River Basin Initiative, has completed the latest edition of the Chattahoochee River User's Guide. Please contact CRK to purchase your copy today! Price: \$20



On Patrol

For further details on CRK's investigations and enforcement actions, go to www.chattahoochee.org/on-patrol.

COMPANY DUMPS OILY ASPHALT MATERIAL INTO STREAM

Thanks to a citizen who contacted CRK's Hotline, we learned that **American Sealcoat Manufacturing**, an asphalt manufacturing and distribution facility in Fulton County, had been discharging stormwater polluted with petroleum products and other chemicals into a stream just 300 yards from the Chattahoochee River.

As an industrial facility with operations and materials stored outside and exposed to rainfall, American Sealcoat is required, but has failed, to apply for an industrial stormwater permit, develop and implement a stormwater pollution prevention plan, and conduct water testing and inspections. The installation of best management practices keep contaminants from flowing off sites and into nearby waterways when it rains.

Company Rejects Assistance

Despite our repeated offers to work with the facility owners to help bring them into compliance with federal and state clean water laws, our efforts were rejected.

During a follow-up site visit, we found the facility discharging oily asphalt sealing material directly into a tributary to the river. We notified the **Georgia Environmental Protection Division** (EPD), which conducted an inspection the next day and has initiated an enforcement action.

In July, CRK filed a complaint and petition for injunctive relief in federal district court against American Sealcoat to stop the company from polluting the tributary and river. Our goal is to bring this facility into compliance with the law. This would include the company installing best management practices to reduce polluted stormwater runoff and removing all asphalt materials deposited downstream of the facility.

To date, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has helped 49 industries comply with clean water regulations through our **Protecting Streams and Communities from Industrial Stormwater** program. For more information, contact Jess Sterling at jsterling@chattahoochee.org.



EPD Takes Action on Industrial Polluters

Located in Gainesville, **Flat Creek** flows into **Lake Lanier** after passing through an industrial area, neighborhoods and near schools. For several years, CRK has collected water samples from the creek when it rains and investigated nearby industries that may be contributing to high levels of bacteria in the water. In May, CRK sent a letter to the EPD, city of Gainesville and Hall County, requesting action to reduce pollution levels. In response, EPD investigated at least six poultry processing facilities and documented numerous problems. Officials took further enforcement action against five of the facilities for failure to prevent polluted runoff from leaving their sites. The facilities are: **Coleman Natural**, **Koch Foods**, **ProView Foods**, **PrimePak Foods** and **Sonstegard Foods Company**.

Monitoring Stops Sewage Overflows

This summer, CRK and our volunteers discovered and stopped two major sewer spills. On July 8, we investigated Sandy Springs' **Marsh Creek**, where bacteria counts were more than 100 times the level recommended by the EPA for recreational safety. Once CRK located the broken sewer line, local officials responded quickly to get repairs done. On August 21, our monitoring data revealed high levels of bacteria in **Burnt Fork Creek**. Working with volunteer **Alexia Kartis** we located the source, an overflowing manhole caused by a grease and debris blockage in the sewer line. DeKalb's Department of Watershed Management was contacted to clear the line, which immediately stopped the flow of sewage into the creek. For information about CRK's **Neighborhood Water Watch** program, contact Mike Meyer at mmeyer@chattahoochee.org.

Floating Classroom to Debut in Middle Chattahoochee Region

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper will soon bring its highly successful floating classroom to West Point Lake. Thanks to the support of the Callaway Foundation, and in partnership with LaGrange College, the **West Point Lake Aquatic Learning Center** will debut in 2015. Over the past 14 years, more than 35,000 students and teachers have climbed aboard our 40-foot catamaran for hands-on learning at Lake Lanier. The West Point Lake program — led by CRK staff — will offer the very same educational activities, such as water quality and lake ecology lessons. Interested schools and colleges, as well as private groups, are welcome. We will be seeking additional financial and in-kind support from local donors to implement this exciting new program. For more information, contact Middle Chattahoochee Outreach Manager Henry Jacobs at [hjacob@chattahoochee.org](mailto:hjacobs@chattahoochee.org), or 706-882-3701.

CRK Urges Alternative Routes to Pipeline

Sabal Trail Transmission, LLC, is proposing to design, construct and operate a nearly 500-mile interstate pipeline to transport natural gas from Alabama to Florida. The applicant's preferred route would traverse the lower Chattahoochee River, critical wetlands, and other sensitive land and water resources. On our behalf, **GreenLaw** filed comments for the draft environmental impact statement, which is part of the review process conducted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Our comments raised suggestions for alternative routes that would not require the pipeline to cross as many sensitive areas, and ways to more closely track already existing interstate transportation routes thereby reducing any impacts to natural resources in the event of a spill or leak. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also has requested that the applicant provide two alternative pipeline routes.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF KEEPING WATCH OVER OUR WATERS

We selected 16 top accomplishments to share with you in celebration of the depth and breadth of the work that we have accomplished together over two decades. Although our vision of a healthy river basin that is safe for people and wildlife is much nearer today than in 1994, daunting challenges remain. We are committed to staying the course until all of our goals are achieved.



1994

Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, now **Chattahoochee Riverkeeper** (CRK) opens its doors with a grant from the Turner Foundation. Co-founders Rutherford and Laura Turner Seydel hire Sally Bethea as the Chattahoochee River's first riverkeeper.

1994

Citizen Response Hotline launches to handle 200-plus calls annually for help with river issues. In 20 years, we have helped more than 4,000 citizens clean up local waterways.

1995

CRK leads a coalition of downstream citizens, businesses and municipalities in filing a **lawsuit against the city of Atlanta** for violating federal clean water laws. Today, more than 100 miles of the river and tributaries are dramatically cleaner.

2002

CRK helps create the **Georgia Water Coalition**, now 200-plus organizations strong. In 12 years, the coalition has defeated legislation that threatened the quality and quantity of water for all Georgians and helped pass legislation to strengthen state water programs.



2003

First **Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival** attracts 100 paddlers on an 8-mile course in the CRNRA. In partnership with the city of Roswell and National Park Service, CRK's event now attracts more than 400 paddlers and thousands of festivalgoers.

2005

CRK launches highly-effective **Get the Dirt Out** program. This statewide effort to monitor and evaluate the success of Georgia's construction stormwater regulations has been replicated throughout the Southeast.



2004

Georgia Supreme Court makes landmark anti-degradation decision regarding a wastewater discharge into Lake Lanier. The order confirms that the law forbids sewage plants from discharging pollutants if technology is available to remove those pollutants from high quality waters.

1997

CRK serves as the catalyst for negotiations led by House Speaker Newt Gingrich on the **tri-state water conflict**, which resulted in provisions to protect water quality and ecology in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin. We continue to fight for these values in current negotiations through the ACF Stakeholders Group.



1999

Our dedicated staff completes the **Soque River Restoration Project** in the headwaters region to prevent further erosion and improve health in a trout stream adjacent to farmland. CRK receives the Environmental Merit Award from the U.S. EPA for "outstanding efforts in preserving the environment of the Southeast."

2000

CRK helps create the ongoing **BacteriALERT** program, working with the U.S. Geological Survey, and National Park Service to monitor bacteria levels and post real-time results for two locations in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA).



2000

In partnership with Elachee Nature Science Center, our **Floating Classroom** begins aboard a pontoon boat, now a 40-foot catamaran, on Lake Lanier. More than 35,000 students and teachers have participated in hands-on learning to date.

2008

CRK initiates **No Time to Waste** program with a new brochure, the "Tapped Out" presentation, Rain Harvesting program, and "Filling the Water Gap" report focused on metro Atlanta water consumption.

2011

We open the **Middle Chattahoochee** office with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the square in LaGrange. A floating classroom will be created on West Point Lake in 2015.

2013

CRK creates the **Protecting Streams and Communities from Industrial Pollution** program to assist hundreds of noncompliant industries meet clean water laws. In the first year and a half, we help four dozen industries stop polluting nearby waterways.



2010

Neighborhood Water Watch begins and we purchase lab equipment to test for *E.coli* in urban streams. Today, we have 72 stream locations where 40 volunteers take samples weekly.



2011

With partners Upper Chattahoochee Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the National Park Service, CRK organizes the inaugural **Sweep the Hooch**. Since 1994, more than 800 tons of trash have been removed by thousands of volunteers at hundreds of cleanups, including Sweep the Hooch!

River Stewardship

CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL PARK LOSES ONE OF ITS BEST

The National Park Service lost one of its very best this past summer when **Patty McMullen Wissinger**, former superintendent of the **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA)**, died of cancer at the age of 55.

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and all of the organizations and individuals involved in the protection and promotion of the CRNRA also lost one of the very best leaders and coalition-builders that our urban park has ever seen in its 36-year history. Patty found great joy and satisfaction in working with the park's partners, and it showed in her many accomplishments.

Beginning as a seasonal campground ranger on the Blue Ridge Parkway in 1980, Patty ended more than three decades with the **National Park Service** as the deputy superintendent of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Passion for Sharing Parks with Youth

Sharing parks with youth was Patty's passion,

but neither did she shrink from controversy or taking a strong stand against very real threats to the CRNRA from adjacent development, water pollution or budget cuts.

When she left the CRNRA in 2013, Patty said: "I will miss what makes the Chattahoochee River so special to the people of this region. This national park, in the heart of the South's largest metropolitan area, lets everyone take time out of the rush of urban living to reconnect with nature on a quiet paddle or walk on a leafy trail... To all the staff and volunteers of the CRNRA, as well as our outfitters, partners, neighbors and especially our visitors, I am honored to have worked with you in protecting this precious resource."

One of Patty's legacies was the creation of the **Chattahoochee Parks Conservancy**, a friends group for the CRNRA. In her memory, community members may donate to the conservancy. *Send contributions to Chattahoochee Parks Conservancy, 4861 Laurel Springs Drive, Roswell, GA, 30075.*



DEDICATED VOLUNTEER WITH A HEART FOR PROCTOR CREEK

Proctor Creek has been a passion for **Clarence Shaheed Dubois** long before the recent influx of outside interest. A Vine City resident for many years, Dubois calls this part of the Chattahoochee River watershed, quite simply — home.

For as long as residents can remember, Proctor Creek has been plagued with problems. Poverty, crime, flooding, degraded water quality and a swath of other issues have been heady thorns for those who live nearby.

"I envision it being clean; I envision the return of water activities," he said, one recent day along the bank of the creek. "There is the possibility of doing recreation that we have not had before.

"It'll be new, we just haven't had it. But, we can dream and see what other communities have. That's what moves me: to know that we can recreate what they have created in their community."

Dreaming the Possible

With new partners — and desperately needed funds — what Dubois



Clarence Shaheed Dubois is an avid steward for the Proctor Creek community.

imagines seems all the more possible. Money is key: But, so too is improving the area with the interests of its residents.

Dubois, who is a member of the **Proctor Stewardship Council**, knows this all too well. He sees it as a responsibility to use his ties to help rally and educate others.

"It takes someone or some people to begin to start mirroring the type of behavior we want," Dubois said. "If I become better educated maybe in that process I can better educate and train someone else."

Dubois also participates in CRK's **Neighborhood Water Watch** pro-

gram. He has been collecting weekly water samples from Proctor Creek since the spring. The data from those water samples is used to resolve pollution problems and alert residents to risks.

Dubois believes the program boosts community involvement in the emerging environmental restoration efforts.

"We engage each other, but we need to understand (that) our mission — our purpose, is to be able to have a better earth, and a better environment," he said. "We are the change that we want."

COURT ISSUES MAJOR DECISION ON BUFFERS; EPD DEFIES RULING

Buffers alongside state waters are among the most important water quality protections afforded in Georgia law. State law mandates that warm waters have a 25-foot undisturbed buffer beside the water and trout streams have a 50-foot buffer; some local governments have ordinances that require additional setbacks.



A buffer is an area of natural vegetation along the banks of a river, stream, creek, lake, reservoir, pond, spring, and other state waters where development is restricted or prohibited. The primary functions of buffers are to physically protect and separate

a waterway from future disturbance and to filter stormwater on its downhill path to the waterway. Buffers provide critical functions such as flood abatement, holding stream channels in place and preventing erosion; provide wildlife habitat and food sources, and cool rivers and streams by providing shade.

Preserving Buffers Protects Property Rights

Although buffers are among the most effective measures to safeguard state waters, opponents of this regulatory protection tool argue that buffer laws are a 'taking' of private property rights. In fact, natural vegetated buffers help protect downstream riparian landowners. For 20 years, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has worked with government agencies, elected officials, developers and citizens to ensure buffer protection requirements are reasonable, scientifically-based and enforced.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has limited the application of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act (E&S Act) — which includes buffer regulations — to selectively required buffers, primarily along waterways with sufficient flow to “wrest” (or dislodge) adjacent vegetation. This interpretation of state law has left miles of waters in freshwater wetlands, rivers in thick forests and coastal marshlands without buffers — and downstream property owners at risk of muddied waters, increased flooding, and damage to fisheries.

EPD Director Strips Buffer Requirements

On Earth Day 2014 with no public input or notice, EPD Director Judson Turner issued a memo that stripped away requirements for a 25-foot

buffer to protect coastal marshes. The director stated that because coastal marshlands do not have vegetation clearly wrested by stream flow or wave action, there is no method by which to measure the bank, and therefore, they should not receive buffer protection.



A few months after EPD's unilateral decision, the Georgia Court of Appeals ruled in a separate case that all state waters, including those without “wrested vegetation,” are protected under the E&S Act with a 25-foot vegetative buffer. In that case, **American Rivers** and **Georgia River Network**, represented by the **Southern Environmental Law Center**, argued that EPD failed to require Grady County to obtain a variance for impacting freshwater wetland buffers in its bid to build a 960-acre fishing lake on Tired Creek near Cairo. CRK filed an amicus brief in this case in support of the conservation groups' position. The result of the decision is a finding that coastal marshlands, freshwater wetlands, and all other state waters that lack “wrested vegetation” require buffers, too.

When EPD Director Jud Turner appealed the court's decision, he issued a memo stating that “EPD will continue to make buffered state water determinations under existing protocols...” The EPD director has indicated that he intends to seek a law change in the next legislative session to address some of these buffer requirements.

With our **Georgia Water Coalition** partners, CRK has chosen this issue as a priority for the upcoming 2015 legislative session where we expect that the Erosion & Sedimentation Act buffers will be a topic of debate and legislation. Please check CRK's website beginning in January for the latest on this issue and other environmental legislation. You may also receive up-to-date news about the 2015 legislative session by signing up for the CRK e-blast, *RiverFLASH* at www.chattahoochee.org.



20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATES FOUNDING RIVERKEEPER

On October 14, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper celebrated two decades of working to protect and restore the Chattahoochee River Basin on behalf of the four million people who use the river for drinking water and the basin's abundant wildlife.

Special thanks to all of our sponsors and donors who helped ensure a highly successful event which was attended by nearly 600 people and raised \$440,000 to support CRK's advocacy and education programs.



(L-R) Laura Turner Seydel, Sally Bethea, Rutherford Seydel, Juliet Cohen and Jason Ulseth.

CRK's founding Executive Director and Riverkeeper, **Sally Bethea**, who will retire at the end of 2014, was honored at the sold-out dinner at the InterContinental Buckhead. Under Sally's extraordinary leadership, CRK created Georgia's only floating classroom program, became the top water quality monitoring group in the state, engaged successfully in critical water policy decisions and executed precedent-setting legal actions to ensure that we all have enough clean water now and in the future.

In addition to a retrospective video, the program included a presentation by the organization's new leadership team — **Juliet Cohen**, Executive Director and **Jason Ulseth**, Riverkeeper — who will assume these new roles in January 2015.



Bill Hoffman, President-Cox Media Group (L) and Taylor Glover, Gala Co-chair and President-Turner Enterprises Inc.

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GIVE THE GIFT OF WATER

Please consider CRK this holiday season! Thanks to our supporters, we continue to make progress in protecting and restoring the river that provides drinking water to millions. Donate today at www.chattahoochee.org!