

## POLITICAL CRONYISM: A LEADING CAUSE OF STATEWIDE WATER PROBLEMS

Over the past decade, the health of Georgia's waterways has been compromised by political cronyism and a lack of funding for environmental programs, according to the Georgia Water Coalition, which released its annual "**Dirty Dozen 2012: A Call to Action**" in November.



Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) is a founding member of the coalition, which was established in 2002 to protect state waterways and now includes about 300,000 Georgians.

### Budget cuts, fox guarding hen house

Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has seen its funding cut by 44 percent and staff cut by 23 percent (250 positions) since 2008, jeopardizing the agency's ability to enforce state environmental laws.

More problematic is the political cronyism that puts campaign contributors, representing their business interests, on the Department of Natural Resources Board that oversees EPD — the agency that regulates those same businesses.

Of the 16 governor-appointed board members serving when the report was released, 11 had ties to entities that EPD regulates.

### 'Liberal interest group'

Gov. Nathan Deal's administration, a target of much of the report, responded by calling the coalition a "liberal interest group."

It was a curious characterization of a 187-member coalition of environmental, hunting and fishing, business, landowner and faith-based groups. It's also an inaccurate one that substitutes name-calling for effective solutions to water problems.

A careful look at the coalition's Dirty Dozen shows that the message is about dirty politics as much as dirty water.

The coalition highlights \$213 million in government spending that should concern fiscal conservatives ... and conservationists. The dirty facts include \$9 million in state gifts to some of Deal's political supporters, \$82 million in loans to questionable reservoir projects, and \$122 million in pollution control fees collected from taxpayers but raided by state budget writers.

### Contributor payback?

Headlining the 2012 Dirty Dozen is Gov. Deal's \$300 million water supply program, with its intended purpose of directing state loans and grants to "critical, cost-effective" water supply projects.



A great idea ... *if* "critical and cost-effective" remain the guiding principles. Instead, cronyism trumped "cost-effective."

The only projects to receive direct state investment (funds not requiring reimbursement to the state) were a \$4.4 million well-drilling plan for a private resort and water park owned by Deal campaign contributor Virgil Williams and a \$4.6 million experimental groundwater injection proposal from a Deal campaign contributor, Joe Tanner & Associates.

When the first round of loans and grants were announced, \$82 million of the \$100 million awarded was directed only to questionable reservoir projects — no water conservation initiatives.

### Chattahoochee 'offenses'

The proposed Glades reservoir on Flat Creek, a tributary to Lake Lanier in Hall County, is a returning "water offense" from the 2011 Dirty Dozen list; it made this year's list at No. 3.

Aside from provoking downstream states, Glades reservoir would have devastating impacts on the river system. The dam would obliterate more than 17 miles of free-flowing streams. Because Flat Creek alone isn't big enough to fill the proposed impoundment, the county proposes to pump 100 million gallons of water per day directly from the Chattahoochee above Lanier and into the reservoir, reducing flows into the lake and further downstream.

The state's continuing failure to ensure adequate monitoring and maintenance of critical flows in the river at Peachtree Creek in Atlanta was listed at No. 7.

Twice in 2012, communication glitches between agencies led to extreme low-flow conditions in the Chattahoochee below Buford Dam. Bull Sluice Lake, a reservoir on the Chattahoochee formed by Morgan Falls Dam, almost disappeared, stranding boaters on mud flats. River flows dipped to unprecedented lows at Peachtree Creek and elsewhere with unknown water quality consequences, underscoring a chronic problem: the lack of real-time monitoring.

For a copy of the 2012 Dirty Dozen report, see <http://www.garivers.org/gawater/dirtydozen.htm>. To get involved with the Georgia Water Coalition at the State Capitol, see page 6.

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## STAFF

Sally Bethea  
*Executive Director and Riverkeeper*

Tammy Bates  
*Outings Manager*

Juliet Cohen  
*General Counsel*

Laura Hartt  
*Water Policy Director*

Bonnie Jackson  
*Operations Manager*

Becca Klein  
*Development Director*

Mary Manson  
*Receptionist*

Michael Meyer  
*Watershed Protection Specialist*

David Lee Simmons  
*Communications Director*

Jill Sestino  
*Regional Outreach Manager*

Jessica Sterling  
*Program Assistant*

Jason Ulseth  
*Technical Programs Director*

Christina York  
*Database Manager*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sarah Dearman  
Denise Donahue

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David Shaffer

Charles Smith  
Catherine Woodling

J. Rutherford Seydel II, Chair

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

ATLANTA OFFICE  
3 Puritan Mill  
916 Joseph Lowery Blvd.  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
404-352-9828

GAINESVILLE OFFICE  
615 F Oak Street  
Suite 1000  
Gainesville, GA 30501  
770-531-1064

LAGRANGE OFFICE  
35 Lafayette Square  
LaGrange GA 30240

www.chattahoochee.org  
www.getthedirtout.org

# Reflections

My mentor and friend **Jerry McCollum** recently retired from the Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF), and I've been thinking about his legacy — for people and wildlife in the state of Georgia, for Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and for me personally.

For 25 years, Jerry served as president of the oldest (1936) and largest conservation organization in the state. He led GWF from a largely dysfunctional group of mostly hunters and fishermen in the late 1980s to a politically influential organization that has literally changed Georgia's natural landscape for the better.



A wildlife biologist who worked with the Georgia DNR before taking the GWF reins, Jerry has always advocated natural resource management decisions based on science, never expedience. Persistently and eloquently, he has used his common sense approach and determination to give a strong voice to the wildlife, rivers, forests and estuaries that help define our state.

### ***Saving our natural heritage***

From the coast and the Okefenokee Swamp, across the state to the north Georgia mountains, Jerry helped save and restore pieces of our natural heritage for current and future generations of sportsmen and women, birders, hikers, boaters and families.

For all of this and more he deserves our sincere gratitude and appreciation; Jerry did this work with no thought of self-promotion or fanfare.

He's likely to tell you that he was just one player in achievements, including land deals that protected tens of thousands of acres, the successful fight to stop titanium mining from harming the Okefenokee, and the creation of Georgia's Schoolyard Habitat Program, Hunters for the Hungry and the Camo Coalition — programs that spawned offshoots nationally.

But don't let his modesty fool you. Few if any of these successes, and many others, would have been achieved without Jerry's excellent political sense and unflagging work ethic.

### ***Coalition-builder***

Purposefully and methodically, Jerry worked to expand the reach of Georgia's conservation community by helping create, as one example, the Georgia Water Coalition (*see Page 1*). GWF's Alcovy Conservation Center has long served as the permanent home for Water Coalition meetings and celebrations.

Importantly, these coalitions and other team efforts have not just helped protect Georgia's natural environment; they also have fostered enduring friendships and provided opportunities for younger conservationists and activists to learn and thrive.

On a more personal level, I have always known that I could count on Jerry whenever I was in a pinch and needed sound advice — and that it would be exactly what I needed to hear, even when it pushed me in a different, perhaps uncomfortable, direction.



Jerry McCollum

Photo courtesy of Georgia Wildlife Federation

Generous and loyal almost to a fault, Jerry believed in me and our fledgling organization, like he has believed in so many others over the years, and when I hardly believed in myself. That inspiration — to “just get on with the work,” as he would say — is basic for meeting our mission to protect the Chattahoochee, and so much more.

*Sally Bethea*  
Executive Director and Riverkeeper

## Watershed Moment

I love the rushing bend of the Chattahoochee just below the Buford Dam, especially in the summer when a cold mist rises over the fast-moving river and into hardwood thickets along the banks. While the area may be an uneasy joining of nature and mankind, I still like to hike the trails along the ravine and enjoy the many birds who have seemingly forgiven our intrusion. I am not a fisherman, but I find a common ground with those who come here for the trout — we all want to protect this natural bounty.

— **John Eidschun**, Midtown Atlanta

*What's your "Watershed Moment"? Email your hi-res color image of the river, and about 100 words about its inspiration, to dsimmons@chattahoochee.org.*



# On Patrol

For further details on CRK's investigations and enforcement actions, go to [www.chattahoochee.org/on-patrol](http://www.chattahoochee.org/on-patrol).

## RULES FOR COAL ASH DISPOSAL OVERDUE

In 2008, an earthen dam holding a billion gallons of coal ash waste generated at TVA's Kingston Fossil Plant in Tennessee failed, and the toxic sludge poured into the Emory River, a water supply source. With a renewed sense of urgency, the U.S. EPA proposed rules to regulate the disposal of coal ash, but four years later the rules have yet to be promulgated.

Coal ash contains heavy metals and toxic elements, which are concentrated in the ash when they are prevented from escaping through the plants' smokestacks. Most coal ash waste is stored behind unlined, earthen dams where it can leak into surface and groundwater. The toxic contaminants in coal ash are known to severely damage human health and the environment including arsenic, lead, mercury, selenium, cadmium and chromium.

### Expired permits

According to the nonprofit Appalachian Voices, there are 450 coal ash impoundments in the Southeast holding back 118 billion gallons of ash, including multiple ponds at three Georgia Power coal-fired plants on the banks of the Chattahoochee. Plant McDonough in Atlanta was retired in 2012 and Plant Yates near Newnan is planned for retirement in 2015. The third plant, Wansley, is located just upstream of West Point Lake.

All three of these facilities are currently operating under expired permits, a problem afflicting many power plants in the region. Each one has a system of wet lagoons that holds hundreds of millions of gallons of coal ash waste.

CRK participated in the EPA rulemaking process by submitting written comments calling for protective, nationally uniform standards. We continue to advocate for comprehensive regulation of coal ash storage, including monitoring requirements and proper closure for retired lagoons.



Photo courtesy of John Wathen/Hurricane Creekkeeper

Donna Lisenby with Waterkeeper Alliance paddles the Emory River, a few days after the massive coal ash spill in 2008.

### Smelly landfill may be polluting creek

The largely minority community of Newtown in Gainesville has suffered decades of industrial pollution, most recently a disgusting odor emanating from **Gainesville Waste and Recycling (GWAR)**, a facility owned by Ken Cronan and originally permitted to handle inert construction material. The permit was modified last year to allow "composting" of septage sludge and food waste. Nearby Allen Creek is impaired for bacteria, according to the state, and a stormwater pond on the GWAR site "blew-out" last December, possibly sending additional pollution into the creek. Working with **GreenLaw**, Newtown residents demanded answers, and investigations revealed unauthorized activity that may be continuing on the site. CRK is serving as an advisor to GreenLaw on water-related aspects of this issue, which was highlighted in the 2012 Dirty Dozen report released by the Georgia Water Coalition (see Page 1).

### Buford proposes to pipe stream for aquatic center

The city of Buford in Gwinnett County has applied to the **Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD)** for a permit to pipe a tributary to the river to build a new aquatic center. The stream runs across half of the project site, which is nearly 12 acres in size. Only 6 acres are needed to build the aquatic center and parking areas, which could be achieved without impacting the stream. However, the city is proposing to fill in this stream and build on top of it without using the most developable part of the property. CRK submitted comments to EPD urging denial of the request, as currently proposed; we will be closely monitoring this project.

### Atlanta project could block river navigation

A project being conducted by the **Army Corps of Engineers** and the city of Atlanta could block some boat passage in the Chattahoochee at Peachtree Creek. The project will take place at the city's drinking water intake structure located at the downstream end of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area approximately 48 miles downstream from Buford Dam. The city's goal is to add additional large rocks in the river that will help pool water near the intake for easier withdrawal; however, this man-made structure could also impede some boat passage in this part of the river. CRK is working with the city and Corps to ensure that their design meets their project goals, but also allows passage by recreational boaters, emergency responders and CRK's patrol boat.

### Improvements on the way for urban stream

CRK has been regularly monitoring **Atlanta's Proctor Creek** in partnership with the **West Atlanta Watershed Alliance** as part of our Neighborhood Water Watch Program since 2011. Our data has revealed extremely high levels of E. coli bacteria in this tributary to the Chattahoochee. After reporting our findings to Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management, city personnel surveyed the area and found multiple areas where sewage has been flowing into underground pipes that lead to the creek, instead of to the treatment plant. Extensive corrective work will begin soon that could include digging up roadways and yards in order to repair the sewer lines and properly route the sewage to the treatment plant.

# River Stewardship

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATER WATCH PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW

What started out three years ago with a few water samples taken from two streams has turned into one of CRK's most impressive success stories, as the Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) Program now collects about 850 samples per year from nearly 40 sites in local streams and waterways.

NWW marked its third anniversary in January with a host of accomplishments — from new grant funding and staff to CRK's emergence as a state leader in monitoring work. As a result, we've seen improved water quality in several tributaries.

NWW is a partnership with neighborhood groups, schools and citizens to monitor the health of urban streams. Each week, NWW volunteers collect water samples from their respective stations in Atlanta and Gainesville for analysis at CRK's labs. The samples are tested for a variety of parameters, most importantly E. coli.

### More sites, volunteers

The program currently includes 39 active test sites, working with more than 20 community organizations and volunteers. This growth has been



*NWW volunteer Eli Dickerson of the Piedmont Park Conservancy takes a sample from a tributary to Clear Creek.*

aided greatly by funding provided by the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Urban Waters Grant Program, Kendeda Fund, UPS, and the Waterfall Foundation.**

In December, CRK hosted a public forum to review and discuss the data collected by volunteer monitors and interested parties. Also in attendance were representatives from the city of Atlanta, EPA, citizen groups, and residents interested in water quality. The forum covered a range of topics including a review of the data collected, a summary of work and efforts made in response to problems indicated by the data, and a discussion segment in which specific questions and future actions were reviewed.

Results collected as part of the NWW Program are also entered into Georgia's Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) database. AAS is Georgia's volunteer water quality monitoring program, which currently has about 200 active groups across the state. For the third year in a row, CRK was named the most active AAS group in the state based on water samples collected and analyzed in 2012.

*Learn more about our NWW Program by contacting Watershed Protection Specialist Mike Meyer at [mmeyer@chattahoochee.org](mailto:mmeyer@chattahoochee.org).*

## SPELMAN PROFESSOR PROVIDES GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

**D**r. Victor Ibeanusi is a classic example of thinking globally and acting locally. As a small boy growing up in Nigeria, the long-time chair of Spelman College's environmental sciences department had to get up at 3 a.m. every day to walk eight miles round-trip with his sister to fetch water for their family — and still make it to school on time to avoid severe punishment.

"I said, you know what, when I grow up, I will leave to ensure that communities have increased access to safe and clean water," said Ibeanusi, who recently joined CRK's Board of Directors.

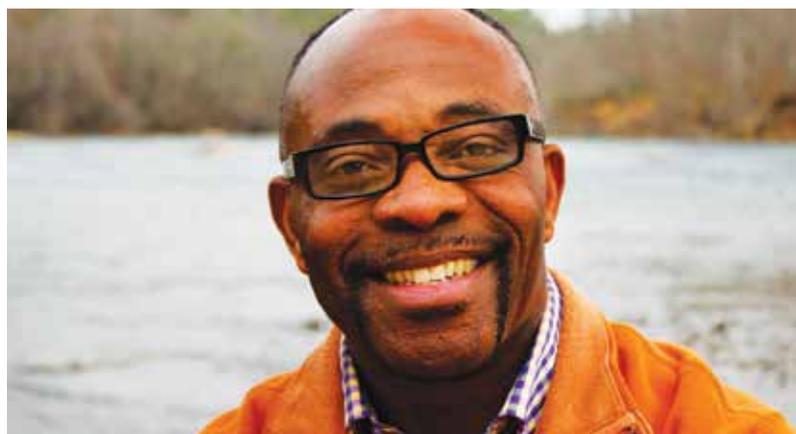
With his expertise in environmental microbiology, Ibeanusi worked with UNICEF in Nigeria testing for fecal coliform bacteria and toxic metals, which he said reaffirmed his commitment to fighting for clean water.

"That work enabled me to realize that through my profession, I can change people's lives ...," he said. "That drove me."

### Clean water for everyone

The one-time Senior Fulbright Fellow has a patent on a bioremediation process that helps remove toxic metals from water. Ibeanusi has taken this global perspective not only into his Spelman College classroom, but also to the city of Atlanta.

In 2003, he chaired the inaugural Safe Water International Conference in Atlanta — which coincided with the United Nations naming 2003 the "International Year of Freshwater." (He has chaired subsequent conferences in Johannesburg, South Africa, and San Diego, Calif.) The idea, Dr. Ibeanusi explains, was to bring together a range of stakeholders of the community — private citizens, industry leaders, governments, nonprof-



*Spelman College professor Dr. Victor Ibeanusi specializes in environmental microbiology and is passionate about clean water.*

its, etc. — to work together to ensure clean water for everyone.

In 2005, Mayor Shirley Franklin and Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management honored him for his work, and he was included in an exhibit titled "African-American Pioneers in Water & Environmental Sciences."

As a CRK board member, Dr. Ibeanusi hopes to engage his students with research opportunities that can complement and supplement our research on water quality, which can in turn be used for publications. This way, he says, "I can give more attention to the efforts already being done by the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper."

*For a list of CRK's Board of Directors and Advisory Board members, visit our website at [www.chattahoochee.org/board.php](http://www.chattahoochee.org/board.php).*

# MIDDLE CHATTAHOOCHEE SCHOOLS ADOPT STREAMS

Nearly 140 students and teachers at **Villa Rica High School** (Douglas County) and **Heard County Middle School** have learned how to monitor water quality in nearby streams, thanks to a grant from the **Alice Richards Foundation**.

Last fall, the students were provided with sampling equipment and training by CRK staffers Jason Ulseth and Mike Meyer, who are both certified **Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS)** instructors.

AAS is the state's successful volunteer water quality monitoring program which engages adults and young people in 200 active groups around the state to learn about the health of waterways in their communities. For the past several years, CRK has been the top AAS group in Georgia, based on number of samples collected and analyzed.

Volunteers take samples that are checked for various parameters including pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, temperature and E. coli. The data collected by volunteers is used to assess stream health and spot pollution, and it can also be an excellent opportunity to bring science into the classroom. The program also is an effective way to encourage partnerships between citizens and their local government.

Heard County Middle School in Franklin has ad-

opted nearby Centralhatchee Creek, a tributary to the Chattahoochee, and Villa Rica High School has adopted the Little Tallapoosa River.

## 'It's research and it's local'

Students at Villa Rica High School and Heard County Middle School are routinely collecting samples from their adopted streams throughout the school year — an excellent hands-on learning experience that teaches them scientific procedures with real world applications.

"I wanted to have my students get involved in real research," said Stephanie Miles, who's in her first year teaching AP environmental science to her

students at Villa Rica High School. "So I thought this would be perfect for them. It's research and it's also local. They really feel like they're part of something. We even decided to add plastic water bottle recycling to our recycling program!"

CRK will be returning to each school at the end of the academic year to discuss the data that the students collected and what the measurements mean for the health of their adopted streams.

For more information about Adopt-A-Stream Programs, see [www.chattahoochee.org/dnr-adopt-a-stream.php](http://www.chattahoochee.org/dnr-adopt-a-stream.php).



CRK Watershed Protection Specialist Mike Meyer shows Heard County Middle School students how to analyze a water sample.

# MORE DIVERSE OUTINGS PROGRAM OFFERED IN 2013!

Have you hiked to the mountain spring that is the source of the mighty Chattahoochee, seen the rare spider lilies at Flat Shoals Creek in Harris County, or taken a ride on CRK's 40-foot catamaran on Lake Lanier?

In 2013, we will offer opportunities for you, your family and friends to do all of these things and more — adventures to learn more about our river and its natural and human history.

Several family-oriented hikes are being planned within the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) and a boat trip on Lake Lanier. See our website at [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) for dates and details and to register.

In addition, five paddle trips are already scheduled as part of our signature River Discovery Program, including three trips within the CRNRA and two paddle-camping outings — one above Lake

Lanier and the second upstream of West Point Lake. The overnight trips fill up quickly, so make sure to sign up as soon as registration is available. Join us on these outings for exercise, river awareness, and great camaraderie!

## 2013 River Discovery Paddle Trips

- **April 27-28** — Paddle/Camp on the Upper Chattahoochee Water Trail, Sautee Creek to Mossy Creek State Park (21 miles)
- **June 29** — Paddle, Buford Dam to McGinnis Ferry Bridge (9 miles)
- **July 13** — Paddle, Jones Bridge to Island Ford (9 miles)
- **August 17** — Paddle, Morgan Falls to Paces Mill (9 miles). This sunset paddle will be followed with a cookout at the Paces Mill Unit of the CRNRA!
- **October 12-13** — Paddle/Camp below Atlanta, McIntosh Reserve to Franklin (21 miles)

Contact Tammy Bates at [tbates@chattahoochee.org](mailto:tbates@chattahoochee.org) to learn more about the paddle trips or visit [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org).

# River Matters

For information on these and other river-related events, visit [www.chattahoochee.org/calendar](http://www.chattahoochee.org/calendar)

## March 16

**Georgia AAS Confluence Conference**  
Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center

## April 6

**7th Annual Urban Forestry Festival**  
Outdoor Activity Center, Atlanta

## April 13

**3rd Annual Sweep the Hooch**  
Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

## April 19

**EarthShare Earth Day Leadership Breakfast**  
Georgia Aquarium

## June 15

**11th Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race & Festival**  
Garrard Landing to Riverside Park (Roswell)

## June 29

**River Discovery Series begins!**  
Paddle Buford Dam to McGinnis Ferry (9 miles)  
Other scheduled trips: July 19, Aug. 17

## Members inspired at 'Celebration'



CRK members came out for our annual Member Celebration in November at the Oakhurst Community Garden to honor our volunteers, learn about our 2012 successes and hear inspiring stories. We acknowledged volunteers **Melinda Langston**, city of Atlanta's Department of Watershed Management; **Charlie Freed**, Atlanta Rowing Club; **Ryan Schultz**, CRK intern; **Michelle Cash**, Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW), Gainesville College; **Jarrett Clinton & Vicki Porter-Fink** and **Amanda Mayberry**, NWW; and **Tom Wilson**, photographer. And we heard from **Stephanie Stuckey Benfield** of GreenLaw, **Todd Edwards** of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, and **William Perry** of Common Cause.

# CRK SEEKS JUDICIAL REVIEW BY GEORGIA SUPREME COURT

In December, CRK petitioned the Georgia Supreme Court for judicial review of the Georgia Court of Appeal's unfavorable decision in our case challenging a new wastewater discharge permit.

If the highest state court agrees to hear our case, it will be the fourth and last opportunity to overturn an illegal state permit. A decision is expected by spring.

## State failed to recognize high-quality waters

In 2010, the **Georgia Environmental Protection Division** (EPD) issued a permit to Forsyth County to discharge 6 million gallons per day of treated sewage from a new wastewater treatment facility into the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA). CRK challenged the permit's effluent limits for fecal coliform bacteria and phosphorous as too weak – 100 times less protective of water quality than comparable limits of other discharges in the river.

In administrative court, we successfully argued that the new discharge would degrade water quality in the river park, that tighter permit limits for fecal coliform bacteria and phosphorous were technically and economically feasible, and that the permit issued to the county was in violation of the federal Clean Water Act; however, Judge Kristin Miller's decision was appealed by the county and EPD.

To date, Forsyth County taxpayers have spent more than \$500,000 on legal counsel to oppose more protective limits in the new discharge permit. Yet, the estimated cost of additional chemical treatment to meet the

tighter permit limits and protect the CRNRA and downstream communities has been estimated at approximately \$180,000 per year. The effects of high bacteria and phosphorous levels can range from serious illness to the recreating public, smelly and unsightly algal blooms that reduce oxygen needed to support the trout fishery, and increased costs for drinking water treatment downstream.

CRK remains steadfast in our work in the courts and other arenas to protect the safety of the millions of people who annually fish, paddle, boat and swim in the national recreation area, recently recognized as the nation's first federally designated "water trail."

For more information, contact CRK General Counsel Juliet Cohen at [jcohen@chattahoochee.org](mailto:jcohen@chattahoochee.org).



# PARTNERING WITH GA WATER COALITION AT THE CAPITOL

The 2013 legislative session that commenced in mid-January marks the 12th year that Chattahoochee Riverkeeper has helped lead the work of the **Georgia Water Coalition** (GWC) at the Georgia General Assembly. CRK is one of a dozen groups that make up a leadership team that annually guides the coalition's work program and develops a legislative agenda to address pressing statewide water issues.

With 187 member organizations, the GWC now represents about 300,000 Georgians. See [www.gawater.org](http://www.gawater.org).

## Emergency response, hazardous waste and Flint flows

In recent years, the **Georgia Environmental Protection Division** (EPD) has inadequately responded to serious environmental emergencies, specifically illegal discharges of toxic substances into waterways that threatened public health and resulted in massive fish kills. At the root of the agency's failure to properly respond is the absence of a statutory obligation (mandate) to respond to spills that threaten public health, safety, drinking water sources, and wildlife – in addition to a lack of funding for personnel and training.

The GWC is working proactively to secure a statutory mandate for specific actions that must be taken by EPD and others in the event of another emergency.

The renewal of the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund (HWWF), which will sunset this coming June, is a second GWC priority. The HWWF provides money to help clean up more than 500 hazardous waste sites in Georgia which threaten ground and surface waters around the state. About \$16 million is collected annually through fees from the transfer of solid waste and the handling of hazardous waste, but only 40 percent of the collected funds go to their intended purposes.

In addition to renewing the fund, the GWC wants to ensure that all funds are appropriated for their intended purpose, and not raided by the legislature.

The Flint River, part of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Basin, is suffering from over-allocation and extremely low flows. The existing Flint River Drought Protection Act (FRDPA) is not effective and is expected to be reconsidered in the current legislative session. The GWC supports restructuring the FRDPA to secure a comprehensive and protective low-flow policy.

As always, we are working to make sure there are no rollbacks in existing environmental laws and regulations during the session. Stream buffer regulation,

a perennial target for weakening proposals, is likely to be an issue again this year. CRK and our GWC partners will work to avoid any weakening of this and other protective measures.

To learn more and get involved, visit our homepage at [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) and sign up for CRK's bi-monthly eblast.



State Rep. Carl Von Epps from LaGrange (left) chats with environmental lobbyist Neill Herring and CRK General Counsel Juliet Cohen at the State Capitol.

# SWEEP THE HOOCH HIGHLIGHTS JAM-PACKED EARTH MONTH

What better way to celebrate Earth Month 2013 than to pull tons of trash out of the Chattahoochee River along with 500-plus other volunteers!

For the past two years, in partnership with the **Upper Chattahoochee Chapter of Trout Unlimited** and the **National Park Service**, CRK has organized Sweep the Hooch (April 13), a huge cleanup at 21 sites along the 48-mile stretch of the river in the Chattahoochee National Recreation Area — from Buford Dam to Atlanta.

Sweep is just one of many ways that CRK staff and board, members and volunteers will celebrate Earth Month.

## A sense of 'river community'

First organized in 2011, Sweep the Hooch has been a massive success, if participation and tonnage are any indication; last year, 445 volunteers pulled out 3.81 tons of trash (1.1 tons of which were recycled).

Cleanups are also a great way to develop a sense of "river community". It's jaw-dropping what volunteers have found along with the usual array of glass, plastic water bottles, aluminum cans and yes, tires. We've even pulled out the kitchen sink, more than once.

"[T]his river cleanup is ... one of the most unselfish things you could do," volunteer Brian McDonald said after the first cleanup. "It helps ensure the health of the river, for current and future generations of people and animals. What a wonderful sense of accomplishment afterwards."

## So much more!

We won't just be out on the water during Earth Month. For the second consecutive year, **Aveda** — a beauty company with a strong environ-



Last year's Sweep the Hooch cleanup netted 3.81 tons of trash.

mental record — has selected CRK as its Georgia Earth Month partner. In 2012, Aveda salons raised more than \$50,000 for CRK programs at local salons where staffers shared our success stories with their clientele. Please check out your local Aveda salon in April!

You'll also find our staff at the **Captain Planet Kids Fest** on April 13 (Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell) and at the **SweetWater 420 Fest** on April 19-21 (Atlanta's Candler Park), where we'll provide information on our work and show off our new merchandise for 2013, so come see us!

To sponsor or volunteer for Sweep, contact Tammy Bates at [tbates@chattahoochee.org](mailto:tbates@chattahoochee.org). For information on the other Earth Month events, contact Becca Klein at [bklein@chattahoochee.org](mailto:bklein@chattahoochee.org).

# FAMILY LEAVES LEGACY OF CLEAN WATER

CRK board member **Dave Kirkpatrick** and his wife, **Mary Jane**, are helping build a legacy for our organization that is already serving as an inspiration for other defenders of the Chattahoochee River. This past year, Dave and Mary Jane became a part of an elite group — The Legacy Society — by naming CRK in their will.

The Legacy Society was created to honor and recognize those who are future benefactors of our organization. Through a will, trust, or other planned gift, members of the Society ensure that CRK will always have sufficient resources to keep watch over our waters.

## Making a commitment

"The Chattahoochee River plays such an integral role in our community," said Dave Kirkpatrick, an 18-year veteran of The Collegiate Licensing Company, a division of IMG College.

"I hope I am wrong but I think that we are headed toward a future where there is going to be less and less public funding for the protection of our natural resources."



The Kirkpatricks: Mary Jane and David with daughters Sarah (left) and Mary Elizabeth

Photo courtesy of Dave Kirkpatrick

Now in his sixth year on our board of directors, Dave is an active outdoorsman who can be found at every CRK event. Mary Jane, who also loves the outdoors, is a native of Louisville, Ken. They reside in Buckhead with their daughters Mary Elizabeth, 7, and Sarah, 4. Together, they hope their legacy underscores the importance of the Chattahoochee and our work as its steward.

"Some folks do not fully understand the critical role that CRK plays in our present and future," said Dave. "As Mary Jane and I sat down to contemplate our planning, we knew that we wanted to make a commitment to Chattahoochee Riverkeeper."

A planned gift may offer many potential advantages, such as federal estate tax savings, the elimination of capital gains taxes, and the opportunity to increase spendable income.

For more information on how to become a member of CRK's Legacy Society, visit <http://chattahoochee.org/planned-giving.php>, or call Becca Klein at (404) 352-9828, ext 19.

# 2012 — BY THE NUMBERS!

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper enjoyed a tremendous year of accomplishments in protecting and restoring the river that supplies drinking water, recreation and more for nearly 4 million Georgians. Here's a look at our 2012 metrics — check out the complete list at [www.chattahoochee.org/accomplishments/php](http://www.chattahoochee.org/accomplishments/php).

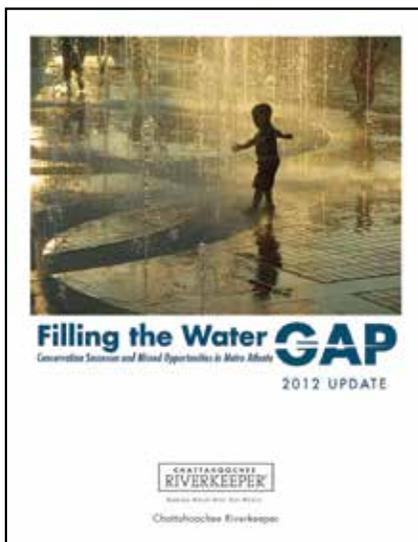


CRK staff investigated 49 sites and secured 10 enforcement actions to stop pollution.

**1** Winning vote to extend the sales tax in the city of Atlanta to fund the ongoing overhaul of its sewer system; 97% of sewer overflows stopped to date.

**2** Boondoogle dam/reservoir projects proposed on Chattahoochee tributaries evaluated, resulting in the river being listed as one of the nation's "most endangered" in 2012.

**3** Businesses/organizations recognized for water conservation programs: TOTO USA, Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, Atlanta's Better Buildings Challenge.



CRK released the 2012 update to our Filling the Water Gap report and recognized local conservation successes.



We brought 4,427 students and educators aboard our floating classroom, 955 who received scholarships.

**20** Neighborhood Water Watch programs monitoring 39 stations.

**207** Citizen Hotline Response Program calls handled.

**900** Citizens, government officials, students and business leaders viewed *Tapped Out: The Drying Up of Atlanta*.

**1,132** Rain barrels provided at conservation workshops reaching more than 4,000 people.

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If you prefer to receive RiverCHAT electronically, contact David Lee Simmons at [dsimmons@chattahoochee.org](mailto:dsimmons@chattahoochee.org).



Cleanups drew 1,136 volunteers picking up trash at stream, lake and river cleanups.

**6,376** CRK members celebrated, including 1,531 new members in 2012.

— Thank You!



Nine paddles trips were organized for canoeists and kayakers, including the River Discovery Series.