



# AMERICA'S BEST IDEA TURNS

The invention of the national park system, said author Wallace Stegner, was America's best idea: "absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst."

In his six-part documentary, filmmaker Ken Burns told the story of this big idea, noting that we take for granted this unique

100  
1916-2016

American thing called national parks, just as we take for granted the air we breathe and the water we drink.

"Great sections of our natural landscape set aside not for kings, or the very rich," wrote Burns, "but for everyone, for all time."

For the past century, people have shared experiences with family, friends and strangers in the more than 400 park units

(totaling 84 million acres) that make up the national park system: passing on a love of land and place to the next generation.

On August 25, 2016, the National Park Service — the federal agency charged with managing and protecting park units throughout the United States — turned 100 and kicked off a second century of stewardship of America's national parks.

## Georgia's national treasures

Georgia is blessed with ten national park units: three historic sites, three monuments, one recreation area, one seashore, one battlefield park and one military park.

In 2012, about 5.8 million people visited the three national parks in metro Atlanta: **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area** (CRNRA), **Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park** and **Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site**.

Ranking in the top thirty most-visited national parks in the country, the CRNRA annually offers recreation to 3.2 million people on an iconic waterway that was named the first national water trail in 2012. With 6,500 acres, the CRNRA also provides two-thirds of all the protected green space in metro Atlanta.

At Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's Annual Patron Dinner on September 28, we will honor two national park superheroes: **Ambassador Andrew Young** who in 1974 introduced legislation in Congress to create the CRNRA and **Superintendent Bill Cox** who manages our river park today.

One hundred years ago, the great conservationist Teddy Roosevelt could imagine all of us when he protected millions of acres for future generations. While we enjoy the fruits of his vision, we must do all we can to ensure that these places will continue to provide inspiration and connections for the next century.

CRNRA Environmental Education Coordinator Jerry Hightower inspires students by taking them into the park to learn about the wildlife at close range.



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

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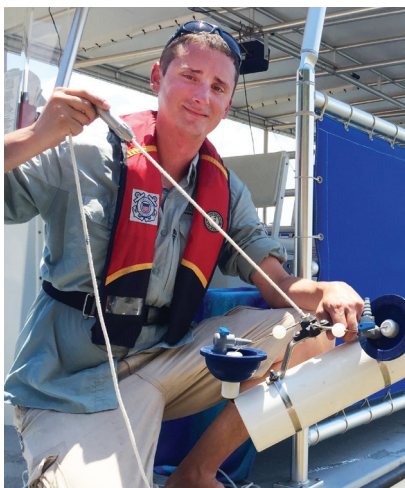
# Reflections

Among the perks of my job is that I get to work on Lake Lanier an entire day every month from April to October.

With the help of student interns, I take water samples at ten locations around the lake and log nearly 60 miles on our patrol boat. In the past six years, we've conducted 55 monitoring trips and have sent more than 700 samples to a UGA lab, all in compliance with federal protocols.

As much as I love being on the water, this monitoring program can be demanding given the long days, heat and pop-up thunderstorms. I remind myself of the enduring importance of building a long-term record to ensure that our lakes stay clean. (CRK has a similar program on West Point Lake.)

High levels of chlorophyll *a* caused by nutrients flowing into the water from agricultural and industrial sites, sewage plants, septic systems and fertilized lawns can cause algae blooms. Eight years ago, our data showed increasing chlorophyll levels on Lake Lanier, which led to a plan to reduce pollutants in the watershed before minor problems can grow into big ones — as they have in Florida this year.



Jason on Lake Lanier with a Van Dorn sampler.

**Guacamole, death stench and toxic:** these graphic terms have been used to describe the devastating algae blooms in Florida's Lake Okeechobee which have flowed into rivers and coastal waters. The green sludge that can be seen by NASA satellites has killed fish, closed beaches and left once popular tourist destinations looking like ghost towns.

While Okeechobee often experiences warm-weather algae blooms, this year's situation is much worse, both because of heavy rains and permissive policies that have allowed mega-agricultural operations to dump into the lake for decades.

With nutrient standards in place for many Georgia lakes, including Lanier and West Point, we have the tools to keep them clean; however, only continuous, systematic monitoring will keep these tools sharp.

This is Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's job. Our team will be on Lanier and West Point every month from spring to fall to test the water for all of us.

*JASON ULSETH*  
Riverkeeper

## Faces of the Chattahoochee



"I live near the mouth of Proctor Creek, about a mile from the Chattahoochee. There is so much potential for Proctor Creek. I was available to do something, so I have been volunteering with the Proctor Creek Stewardship Council, Groundwork Atlanta, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, and Chattahoochee Riverkeeper to improve my community.

My big focus right now is working to see that the Chattahoochee Brick site (near the river) does not become an industrial site endangering the Chattahoochee. Instead it should be a memorial for the people\* who died there and a place where my neighbors can experience nature."

– Donna Stephens

*\*After the Civil War, thousands of African-American men were arrested, many for arbitrary crimes, and forced to work as convict labor in horrific conditions at places such as Chattahoochee Brick Co.*



## Keeping Dirt Out of Lake Lanier

In recent months, CRK investigated 33 construction sites in **Hall, Forsyth and White Counties** that appeared to be out of compliance with erosion control laws; all of these sites ultimately drain into Lake Lanier, either directly or through tributaries. Our efforts resulted in enforcement actions by local governments at 21 of the sites where best management practices were lacking, but needed, to keep eroded soil and sediment from polluting local waterways and downstream property.



## Developer Shut Down After Cutting Trees

Using our online Report a Problem system, a fisherman notified CRK about a possible buffer violation along the river in the **Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area**. Our investigation revealed that a home builder in the city of Sandy Springs had illegally cut down trees next to the Chattahoochee. We immediately reported the violation to city authorities, who placed a mandatory stop work order on the project until a protective vegetative buffer could be reestablished. *To report a problem, visit [chattahoochee.wufoo.com/forms/report-a-problem/](http://chattahoochee.wufoo.com/forms/report-a-problem/)*

## Sewer Leak in Newnan Creek Stopped

CRK's water monitoring staff based in LaGrange found a leaking sewer line when they sampled **Wahoo Creek**, a tributary to the Chattahoochee that flows through the city of Newnan. City crews responded quickly and fixed that problem; however, ongoing sampling by staff and volunteers upstream of this site indicates that there may be other sources contributing to the elevated bacteria levels. See [www.chattahoochee/neighborhood-water-watch.org](http://www.chattahoochee/neighborhood-water-watch.org) and contact Hannah Bradford at [hbradford@chattahoochee.org](mailto:hbradford@chattahoochee.org) to volunteer in the Middle Chattahoochee region.

## Chicken Processor to Treat Stormwater

In 2009, CRK began monitoring high levels of bacteria in Gainesville's Flat Creek, a tributary to Lake Lanier. By 2013, we had narrowed the source to storm drains at two poultry processing plants – **Pilgrim's Pride** and **Mar-Jac** – where bacteria levels were 10,000 times the federally-recommended level, when it rained. We presented our findings to the U.S. EPA which conducted inspections at both facilities. In 2015, the federal agency fined Pilgrim's Pride \$65,000 for failing to comply with clean water laws. Importantly, the company is now investing \$1 million in major changes to its facility to pre-treat and then redirect all polluted stormwater to the city's sewage system. We expect EPA to fine Mar-Jac later this summer.

## Gas Line Installation Leads to Sewage Spill

A resident in Atlanta's **Ansley Park neighborhood** noticed milky, smelly water in the stream that flows through **Winn Park**. A chance conversation with Sally Bethea, CRK's founding riverkeeper, led to stream sampling by CRK that confirmed high bacteria levels. The city responded quickly and found multiple locations where a sewer pipe had been damaged during the installation of a gas line, allowing sewage to flow via a storm drain into the creek. Our weekly monitoring indicates that other pollution sources are likely and we will continue to monitor the situation.

## Nuclear Plant to be Studied



**Georgia Power Company (GPC)** has received approval to spend \$99 million of customer billing revenue by mid-2019 to explore the development of a nuclear power plant on the Chattahoochee approximately 20 miles south of Columbus. GPC will study the economic viability and environmental impacts of building a plant on thousands of acres that it owns in rural **Stewart County**. Nuclear plants consume vast amounts of water and CRK is concerned that such a facility will add significant, additional stress to the river, especially during low flows, drought conditions.

Gulf of Mexico



# A Passion for Shoalies and the Chattahoochee

A small but passionate group of people care deeply about fishing for shoal bass on the middle section of the Chattahoochee River, where it forms the border between Georgia and Alabama.

This feisty member of the sunfish family is a rare and unique species of bass that depends on a swift current and rocky shoals, often hard to find due to the dozen dams on the Chattahoochee. Native to only a handful of rivers and streams in Georgia, eastern Alabama and northern

Florida (primarily the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers), the shoal bass is considered vulnerable throughout its range.

*“My friends always put shoal bass back. We respect the river, respect the fish; we always put them back where they belong.”*

All this makes the fishing that much more special for **Jody Simms**, a local fisherman and photographer who makes his living as a stone mason.

“There’s just something special about this little stretch of river and the fishing” says Jody, a lifelong resident of Lanett, Alabama and passionate advocate for the protection of shoal bass and the Chattahoochee River.

Just about every Saturday and Sunday morning, you can find Jody with a fishing pole in hand and his camera beside him at the ready. Fishing for shoal bass is his reason to be there: “You know when you got [one]; they’ll pull about ten times faster than anything else.”

## Capturing the River’s Spirit

Along with fishing, Jody has garnered a following for the photos he shares of the Chattahoochee River in his “home stretch” between two historic spillways, known locally as Langdale Dam and Crow Hop Dam.

Whether it’s an early morning photograph with mist rising off the water and silhouettes of tangled driftwood, or an in-the-moment shot of a friend reeling in a “shoalie,” Jody captures the river in a way that only someone who has grown up and lived with it their whole life can.

“My friends always put shoal bass back. We respect the river, respect the fish; we always put them back where they belong.”



Jody Simms checks his fishing gear on a summer morning on the Chattahoochee River near Langdale Dam in Valley, AL.

# Volunteer Rock Stars: Sheila Simmons and Family

*Sheila Simmons is not big on heights.*

When we conducted her Neighborhood Water Watch training, she barely wanted to look down from the bridge at the corner of Burbank and MLK Jr. Drives in Atlanta to toss her sampler into Proctor Creek — but she did it anyway.

“People were just littering entirely too much along the creek. There was a need,” she says.

Since then, Sheila has been a non-stop force for Proctor’s reclamation, overcoming countless hurdles and even recruiting her parents, Queen and Floyd, in her work. Sheila exemplifies dedication.

When CRK asked the community for help, Sheila was the first resident to volunteer to collect water samples from the troubled creek. She collected her first water sample in 2012, but her parents say that her commitment to Mozely Park goes back much further: “As a child, she used to go next door and tell the neighbors to clean up their properties.”

Sheila responds that her parents were a major influence, “I first watched them volunteer in the community.” The Simmons family has been active in the community since they helped establish Mozely Park in the 1950s.

Together with her parents, Sheila has collected more than 130 samples at their creek site and helped locate and stop two

sewage spills. Sheila wants people to know, “You can make this a better place by taking care of your environment.”

It’s this kind of dedication that makes CRK so optimistic about the future. Thanks to the work of CRK volunteers, like Sheila and her family, there are similar stories throughout the Chattahoochee watershed. We can clearly see the positive impacts of your work!



Sheila, Queen and Floyd Simmons are committed to Atlanta’s Mozely Park.

To learn about CRK’s Neighborhood Water Watch program, see [www.chattahoochee.org/our-work/water-monitoring/neighborhood-water-watch/](http://www.chattahoochee.org/our-work/water-monitoring/neighborhood-water-watch/). To volunteer in the Atlanta area, contact Mike Meyer at [mmeyer@chattahoochee.org](mailto:mmeyer@chattahoochee.org).



# Thank you to all our members and donors for helping us keep watch over our waters!

January through June 2016

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Please join us!

Together we can protect and restore Georgia's Chattahoochee River, its tributaries & watershed, both now and for future generations.

Please complete and return to: CRK, 3 Puritan Mill, 916 Joseph Lowery Blvd. NW, Atlanta, GA 30318 or log onto to [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) to donate today.

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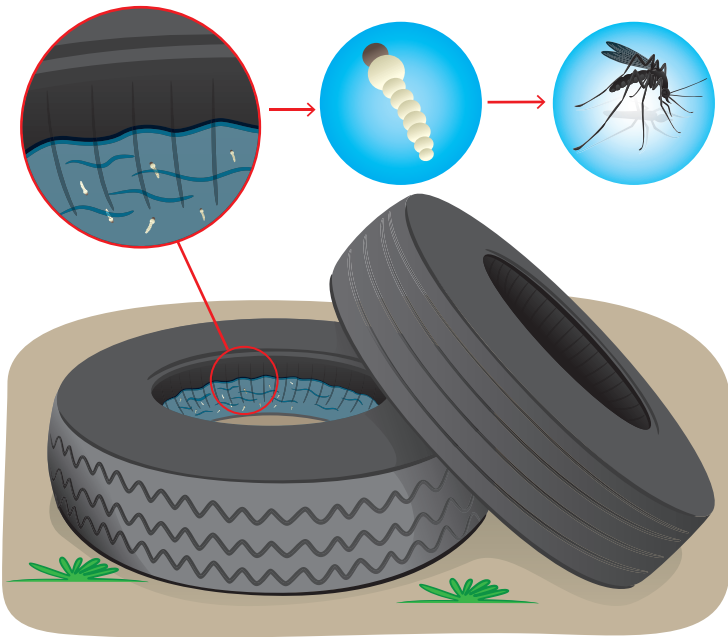


# 'TIRE'-D OF ZIKA?

## STOPPING MOSQUITOES IN THEIR TRACKS

By Mindy Goldstein and Uriel Kitron

Old, discarded tires are not only an eyesore and an environmental hazard, but also a prime breeding ground for mosquitoes that can transmit diseases, including the Zika virus. While state officials have taken some steps to reduce illegal tire dumping across Georgia, the state still hosts more than 100 illegal tire dumps, estimated to hold at least 250,000 tires.



Scrap tires provide ideal breeding sites for several mosquito species — most notably the ones that can transmit Zika, dengue, Chikungunya, and other viruses. Mosquitoes lay eggs in water collected in tires, and the tires provide a safe and protected habitat for the eggs to hatch, grow, and emerge as adults.

It is nearly impossible to get rid of all the water in a tire, so the most effective way to destroy mosquito habitat is to properly dispose and process scrap tires in a prompt and comprehensive fashion. Targeting the scrap tires that mosquitos often favor will go a long way to protect us both from their annoying bites and the harmful diseases they may transmit.

To counter the public health risks caused by mosquitoes, we recommend three actions.

- **Address illegal dumping.** The state legislature should amend Georgia's scrap tire law. Currently, tire retailers must pay to have scrap tires hauled away, and tire haulers must then pay a processor to shred or compress those tires to prepare them

for recycling. Because retailers pay haulers up front, haulers often take the payment and then illegally dump the tires.

Also, Georgia does not allow use of portable tire processing equipment, also known as "mobile processing." Mobile processing allows processors to visit and clean up dump sites. Georgia should allow for the payment of haulers only after the tires are delivered to a certified processor and mobile processing should be permitted and encouraged.

- **Protect funding for the scrap tire program.** The Georgia legislature should pass a Constitutional amendment to protect funding for the state's scrap tire program, so that Georgia voters can approve it. Since the early 1990s, a \$1 fee has been tacked onto the sale of all new tires in the state.

By statute, these fees are supposed to fund a trust used by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to clean up illegal tire dumps. Year after year, the General Assembly has rerouted these fees toward the general fund, using them to fill shortcomings in other areas. Because of this, EPD has lacked the funding necessary to adequately clean up the scrap tire dumps or to prevent illegal dumping through consistent enforcement.

- **Encourage action by local governments and nonprofit organizations.** In April, CRK pulled nearly 200 scrap tires from the Chattahoochee at its annual Sweep the Hooch. That same month, the city of Atlanta hosted its first scrap tire "amnesty day," allowing residents to drop off scrap tires for free at designated drop-off locations. Over 8,000 tires were collected for recycling.

Cities across the state host similar programs regularly; some cities even offer curbside tire pick-up services. We must support these programs by local governments and nonprofit organizations as part of Georgia's attack on scrap tires.

If we fail to take these simple actions now to address scrap tires, we may face the risk of Zika, dengue, Chikungunya, and other viruses spreading across our state, not to mention the nuisance of biting mosquitoes. The public health threat is too big to ignore. We owe it to ourselves and our children to stop mosquitoes in their tracks.

*Mindy Goldstein is a Clinical Professor of Law at Emory Law School and Director of the Turner Environmental Law Clinic. Uriel Kitron is a Goodrich C. White Professor at Emory College and Chair of the Department of Environmental Sciences.*





# The Thrill of Competition for a Cleaner River

The thrill of the catch and competition: these are top reasons why so many people love to fish, according to angler surveys.



CRK’s Becca Klein and tournament winner Ryan Johnson celebrate a successful partnership with Orvis and SweetWater Brewing Company.

The Orvis Company, with two stores in metro Atlanta, knows that their customers love fishing the Chattahoochee and are committed to environmental stewardship — just like the company which dedicates five percent of pre-tax profits each year to conservation.

Therefore, a fishing tournament to support the Chattahoochee River — ranked one of the best trout streams in America — made total sense, says Paul Range, Orvis’ retail district manager.

“We had envisioned a Chattahoochee fishing tournament for some time, believing it would increase awareness about the unique, self-sustaining, brown trout fishery right here in our own backyard. Ryan Johnson’s 30-inch brown showcases why the river is so important to local anglers; we don’t have to fly half way across the world to catch world-class brown trout. They’re just twenty minutes from downtown Atlanta.”

Orvis teamed up with **SweetWater Brewing Co., River Through Atlanta** (an Orvis-endorsed guide service) and CRK to raise funds for the Quality Hooch Campaign, as part of Sweetwater’s annual Save the Hooch Campaign. The campaign will continue through the year with a river cleanup and film festival this fall. T-shirts

and hats are available at Orvis stores (Alpharetta and Buckhead) with all proceeds supporting the campaign.

## Device to Expand River Monitoring

The sixty-six anglers who registered for the first Quality Catch and Sweet Release Fishing Tournament in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area raised \$2,000 to fund a new remote water monitoring technology that will allow CRK to significantly increase its water sampling program.

“What we’ve done is take a \$10,000 monitoring device, reduced the cost to under \$200 and connected it using LTE Category 1 power saving mode,” says Charles Dasher who developed the low-cost sensor for his employer, **Ericsson**, a Swedish tech firm.

Working with AT&T to provide constant remote monitoring, Ericsson’s device will allow CRK to detect pollutants more rapidly and respond more quickly. The Chattahoochee River will be the first watershed to deploy this revolutionary water monitoring technology; a prototype has already been placed in Atlanta’s Proctor Creek watershed.

Ericsson will generously donate twenty of the devices; our goal is to install fifty of the real-time sensors in strategic locations. For more information, visit the Orvis stores or go to [www.orvis.com/hooch](http://www.orvis.com/hooch) or [www.chattahoochee.org](http://www.chattahoochee.org) to learn how you can participate.



Ryan Johnson wins the first annual Quality Catch and Sweet Release Fishing Tournament with a 30-inch wild brown trout caught on a Pat Cohen fly.

# Another Terrific Earth Month with Aveda, Van Michael Salons



AVEDA has once again met their Earth Month goal, raising \$55,000 to support CRK’s river stewardship programs.

Seven years ago, we received a call from Van Michael Salons saying they had raised \$5,000 for the organization; over the years that number has increased to \$100,000. We are thrilled that the company realizes that water from the Chattahoochee runs through their salons every day.

Following an introduction to Aveda by Van Michael, the hair and skin products company invited CRK to be Georgia’s Earth Month partner group for 2012. Five years later, Aveda salons and experience stores have raised more than \$180,000 for our water monitoring programs.

From fashion shows, to cut-a-thons and rain barrel raffles, each Aveda salon owner and employee has gone above and beyond to show their clients that the future of the Chattahoochee River matters to our community.

“It’s phenomenal the way our clientele, the staff, and our community join together as an advocate for our river,” said Jamie “Pepper” Weiss, a Van Michael Aveda Mentor.

“We pride ourselves in being in line with Aveda’s mission in environmental leadership, protecting our natural resources, and constantly bringing awareness to our clean water campaign. Each year we will continue to support Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.”



# Removing Toxic Coal Ash from Riverbanks

Neighbors near an old coal-fired power plant on the Chattahoochee River in Smyrna, recently converted to natural gas, have long been uneasy about the toxic materials stored near the river.

**Roberta Cook**, who lives near the **Georgia Power Company** (GPC) plant, worries about the ponds leaking into the river. “I’m not just concerned about the river. I know there is arsenic and other chemicals in the coal ash, and I am concerned about that getting into the groundwater,” she says.

“It sounds like the company is trying to clean up the site, but we need to know what they are doing. A lot of times, we think we’ve cleaned something up but we end up creating another problem.”

Coal combustion residuals, or coal ash, are the toxic remains of coal after its carbon is burned to produce electricity. The waste contains concentrations of dangerous heavy metals including arsenic and lead that can leach into surface and groundwater, potentially contaminating drinking water supplies.

## Coal Ash Ponds on the Chattahoochee

There are billions of gallons of wet coal ash waste stored in Georgia. Coal ash is often stored near rivers in decades-old ponds; there are three on the Chattahoochee. In the past decade, there have been devastating spills in neighboring states, including Duke Energy’s Dan River spill in Eden, North Carolina and the Tennessee Valley Authority’s spill in Kingston, Tennessee.

GPC operates eleven power plants in Georgia where twenty-nine ponds have been built to store coal ash; twelve of these coal ash ponds are located at the three plants on the Chattahoochee River.

These aging ponds are located near communities and must have adequate maintenance and monitoring to ensure they remain structurally sound. If a dam holding coal ash along the Chattahoochee burst, millions of gallons of toxic sludge could spill into our public water supply.

GPC and the state Environmental Protection Division (EPD) — both responsible for managing toxic sludge at electric power plant sites held in ponds on Georgia lakes and rivers — recently unveiled draft plans for handling the waste.

EPD’s current plan contemplates ash disposal in municipal solid waste landfills — another potential hazard to water sources in some locations.

*Roberta Cook, who lives near Georgia Power Company’s Plant McDonough, is concerned about potential environmental and human impacts from coal ash.*

Last fall, GPC announced its plan to close all of its coal ash impoundments across the state. The company’s initial plan was lacking in some detail and would only have removed the sludge from four of the twenty-nine ponds. The rest would have been “capped in place,” which means liquids are drained to nearby rivers and the remaining sludge is left where it lies. Capping in place can be dangerous because the coal ash can leach into groundwater and still contaminate water supplies.



Photo courtesy of Dan River Basin Association

*A volunteer with the Dan River Basin Association dips a paddle into the river after Duke Energy dumped nearly 39,000 tons of coal ash into the waterway near Eden, NC in February 2014.*

## Positive News

In June, GPC made news when it announced a new, more aggressive plan, which calls for the utility to end activity at all twenty-nine ponds within three years and increase the number of ponds that will be completely emptied of sludge from four to sixteen.

Also of note, EPD recently rolled out new state regulations for managing and closing these ponds. EPD’s proposed new rules likely will require GPC to get permits for the maintenance, operation and closure of the coal ash ponds; however, it is far from clear that EPD’s rulemaking and GPC’s efforts will be sufficient to protect water resources.

This toxic sludge should not be left in these pits along our river. The state should require GPC to empty all of the ponds and remove the coal ash to properly-permitted, lined landfills sited away from pathways into streams and groundwater. Anything less leaves the Chattahoochee and surrounding communities vulnerable.



*“I’m not just concerned about the river. I know there is arsenic and other chemicals in the coal ash, and I am concerned about that getting into the groundwater.”*  
— Roberta Cook



# New Dam Projects No Longer Justifiable

A lifelong resident of Hall County, **Bill Brooksher** has paddled the whitewater of the Chattahoochee River upstream of Lake Lanier for years. It's not unusual to see him stand up in his old Mohawk to scout a rapid and then paddle through — an agile figure in a canoe turned stand up paddleboard.

Bill is also a longtime observer and outspoken critic of one of Georgia's most controversial reservoir projects: "For close to a decade, I've watched the ever-changing plans for a reservoir at the Glade Farm site on Flat Creek become the boondoggle that it is today."

"None of the proposals would make any water available for public use that is not already available; they would actually lose water from evaporation and destroy streams that sustain the Chattahoochee and Lake Lanier. These schemes have



Bill Brooksher, an outspoken critic of Glades reservoir, paddles the upper Chattahoochee near Wildwood Outfitters.

all looked like a big waste of taxpayer money, mostly for the benefit of private developers."

In January, the state admitted that Glades reservoir is "no longer reasonable or even viable." After a decade that saw consultants pocket most of the \$16 million paid by taxpayers, the county put Glades on pause.

Bill hopes that the project is finally dead. So do CRK and the Georgia Water

Coalition, both long opposed to Glades and other proposed reservoirs, given the availability of less expensive and more sustainable water supply solutions.

Less than two years ago, a half-dozen communities were actively seeking money and permits to build these expensive projects. Today, except for a controversial project in Paulding County, there is not a single proposal in metro Atlanta that is actively under consideration; all remaining have been withdrawn.

Consultants and government agencies sought to justify the reservoir projects using wildly unrealistic population projections. Recent census and water use data have confirmed what many long suspected: our water supply needs are not growing at the same rate as our population — and that's a good thing.

Chris Manganiello with Georgia River Network contributed to this story.

## The State's Curious Silence on the Drought

Floods and droughts — the extremes that bracket what we think of as "normal" weather — are often mentioned together in news stories about climate disruption. A large political difference between them is the speed of their arrival.

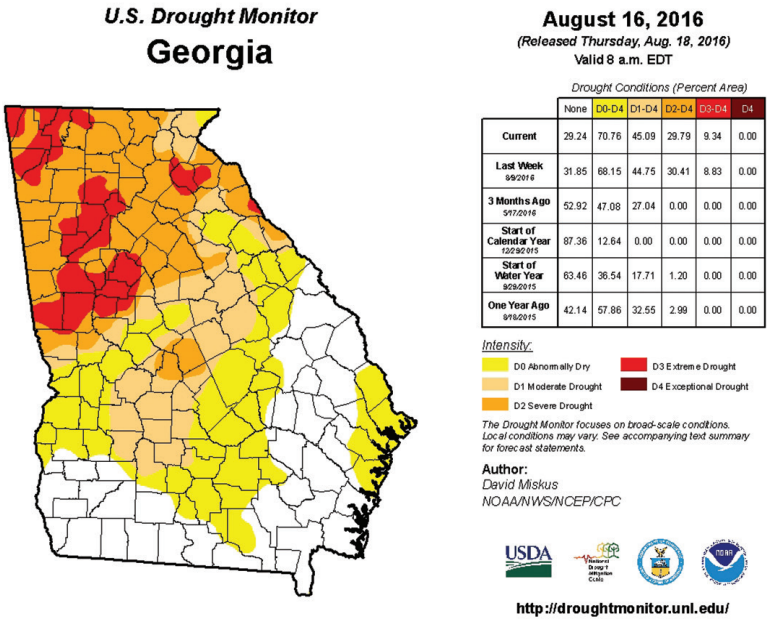
Floods are quickly observed. Droughts, on the other hand, are much more slowly perceived, arriving in people's lives like chronic ailments: they are preceded by periods of uncertainty about (or unwillingness to acknowledge) their existence.

During the "exceptional drought" of 2006-2008 which resulted in a 19-foot plunge in the level of Lake Lanier, state officials failed to declare a drought early enough to trigger conservation measures that could have reduced impacts on waterways and communities. By the time that the state took action, it was too late to make much of a difference; people, businesses and rivers suffered.

Despite the fact that portions of north Georgia met the criteria for "extreme drought" in mid-August (U.S. Drought Monitor), no official declaration of drought has been made. Without this action, state regulations that govern water-reducing measures cannot be triggered.

Given the state's silence regarding the current drought, it appears that our officials did not learn any lessons from the last drought. Or, perhaps, this silence has more to do with the ongoing "water wars" in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Basin and the impending trial.

Over the past century, Georgia has experienced some level of drought 45% of the time, but the frequency of these events appears to be increasing. In the past twenty years, we have faced drought 55% of the time.



Adaptation to changing rainfall patterns is key to the sustainability of river systems and thriving communities.

While the metro Atlanta region has made progress with water conservation, millions of gallons continue to be wasted daily through inefficient outdoor watering, system leaks, old plumbing fixtures and an increasingly hardened landscape that keeps rainwater from soaking into the ground.

Silence on such an important issue is not acceptable. We need leadership, honesty and new resources to help us adapt to our changing climate now.



# Fourteen years of bringing you Back to the 'Hooch!

For the fourteenth consecutive year, CRK and our partners — **National Park Service** and the city of **Roswell** — organized the Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival, held on the second Saturday in June.



Jason Ulseth hands out SweetWater 420 to racers.

The paddle event launched from Roswell's Garrard Landing with 360 boaters racing to Riverside Park where they received awards for speed in more than a dozen categories. People from all around the metro region joined the racers in Roswell to enjoy live music from local bands: Rock U Kids, Jon Harris Band and Tommy Talton & Friends. Funds raised from the race and festival help CRK achieve its mission of keeping watch over our waters.



## THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE — THANK YOU!

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Download the **CRK App for iPhone and Android** mobile devices from the App Store for FREE and have access to CRK's Hotline program to Report a Problem, Events Calendar, Watershed Map, and more on the go.

## Environmental Film Festival Inspires

The 2nd Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival held in May in Gainesville drew nearly 300 people and raised \$7500 to support CRK's Headwater's Neighborhood Water Watch program. Twelve partner organizations participated in the Environmental Expo that preceded the films, creating a networking opportunity among local groups working on green solutions.



Sixteen films selected from **Wild & Scenic on Tour** illustrated the Earth's beauty, the challenges facing our planet and the actions that communities are taking around the world to protect the environment. Brenau's Downtown Center again provided an excellent venue for the festival which included plenty of food, beverages and raffles for donated prizes.

## THANKS TO OUR FILM FESTIVAL SPONSORS!

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