

Recognize the Recreators!

— INCREASE RIVER PROTECTION BELOW ATLANTA —

It should be no secret

the Chattahoochee downstream of Atlanta is dramatically cleaner than it was when CRK first stood up to protect the river more than two decades ago. Once severely polluted, the stretch of river from Atlanta's wastewater discharge at Peachtree Creek down to West Point Lake has rebounded significantly and riverside communities have taken note.

Each year, hundreds of people fish, paddle, swim, canoe and wade in this part of the river. New initiatives promoting river access are emerging everywhere from west Atlanta down to Franklin and West Point Lake. And yet despite this resurgence in river recreation, the state of Georgia holds most of this 76 mile section of the Chattahoochee to its lowest standard for water quality. CRK has been working to change that.

The good news is that improving the water quality standard for this part of the river is fairly straightforward. It all comes down to Georgia's Environmental Protection Division (EPD) updating the "Designated Use" category they assign to this part of the river. EPD uses Designated Use categories to set limits on the wastewater released into

"This unspoiled section of the Chattahoochee River has a wild and natural beauty. Floating down the river, you will see trees, wildflowers, blue heron, hawks, turtles, bass, and perhaps even an eagle."

- Diana Wilson,
Chattahoochee Hills Parks Commission

"We have a lot of eagles nesting, osprey flying up from West Point Lake. People love it. We see a couple thousand people paddling this stretch each year."

- Chris Chastine, Whitewater Learning Center of Georgia



different sections of our rivers. A river section whose Designated Use is Drinking Water or Recreation is better protected than a section whose Designated Use is Fishing. Most of the Chattahoochee River between Atlanta and West Point Lake has been categorized under EPD's least protective category, Fishing, since the time when this part of river was dramatically impacted by pollution. EPD claims that not enough people spend time on this part of the river to merit updating that designation, but our research shows otherwise.

At the beginning of 2018, we appealed to EPD to update the Designated Use of this section of the Chattahoochee to include Recreation. We documented over 1,800 paddlers on this river section from 89 trips organized by CRK and other organizations.

Residents along this section voiced strong support for our request, and we provided EPD with over 500 signatures and comments from residents who described their experiences swimming, paddling and fishing on this part of the river.

Fortunately, EPD took notice. With a step in the right direction, the agency recently redesignated 13 river miles near Chattahoochee Bend State Park to include Recreation. That leaves 63 miles to go. The remaining river miles flow past Cobb, Fulton, Douglas, Carroll, Coweta and Heard counties, and CRK believes that residents of these counties deserve access to a Chattahoochee with the same protections that the river has further north. You can help make that happen.

If you live near the Chattahoochee between Peachtree Creek in Atlanta and West Point Lake, ask your city and county representatives to encourage Georgia EPD to update the Designated Use of this entire section of river to include Recreation, and sign our request to the agency at chattahoochee.org/epdpetition.

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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 TURNING LEMONS INTO LEMONADE



In my 15-year professional career, I have seen many terrible violations of our environmental laws. From blatant destruction of streams paving way for unpermitted development to open dumping of oil products; it never ceases to shock me what some people are willing to do to skirt the rules. In the cases where the bad actor is caught, fines can be levied and cleanup ordered, but in most cases the damage to our environment is never fully remedied. Fines collected go to a general fund and are not allocated for any environmental benefit while the pollution remains in our waterways.

But organizations like ours have a way to help offset the damage to our environment with an unconventional method. In cases of egregious acts, CRK will file a citizen lawsuit under the Clean Water Act. In many cases, we resolve the dispute through settlement negotiations. To counter the environmental damage inflicted on the river, we propose a Supplemental

Environmental Project (SEP). A SEP involves the defendant making a payment to a third party non-profit organization to do related restoration work.

Recently, CRK filed a lawsuit against a construction development firm that allowed untold quantities of mud and sediment to pour into the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. While all of that mud could not be recovered, in our settlement negotiations the developer agreed to pay \$265,000 to five local, environmentally-focused organizations. This money will allow thousands of underserved kids to participate in outdoor education programs, fund more than three years of water quality research in the river park, train the next generation of environmental lawyers, and support clean water protection work.

While I was frustrated and saddened by the environmental degradation the poorly executed construction development caused, I am very pleased to have turned a negative situation into something positive. So the saying goes, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”


Jason Ulseth, RIVERKEEPER

FACES OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

“People need access to our waters, to interact with the creek, put their feet in it, put their hands in it, and understand that it is a pure place worth protecting.”

JUANITA WALLACE
Resident,
Proctor Creek Atlanta



Juanita Wallace vividly remembers growing up on Proctor Creek, “The water was so clear, I would sit there for hours with my feet in it, captivated by the freshness of the air, hearing the sound of the creek, the birds, the bees. When you see life around the water, it gives you a sense of its purity.” As a highly-engaged community leader, weekly Neighborhood Water Watch volunteer and concerned Proctor Creek steward, Juanita feels personal connection is imperative to conservation. “People need access to our waters, to interact with the creek, put their feet in it, put their hands in it, and understand that it is a pure place worth protecting.”

ON PATROL WITH CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

BROKEN EQUIPMENT AT OIL COMPANY THREATENS FLAT CREEK

In April, CRK's Headwaters office received a HOTLINE report about a malfunctioning piece of equipment located at an oil company in midtown Gainesville at the headwaters of Flat Creek, which flows into Lake Lanier. We investigated the site and found an oily sheen in the parking lot near the creek. We reported the violation to the City of Gainesville and are continuing to monitor the area weekly.

ROLLBACKS IN PERMIT FOR CUMMING CHICKEN PROCESSOR

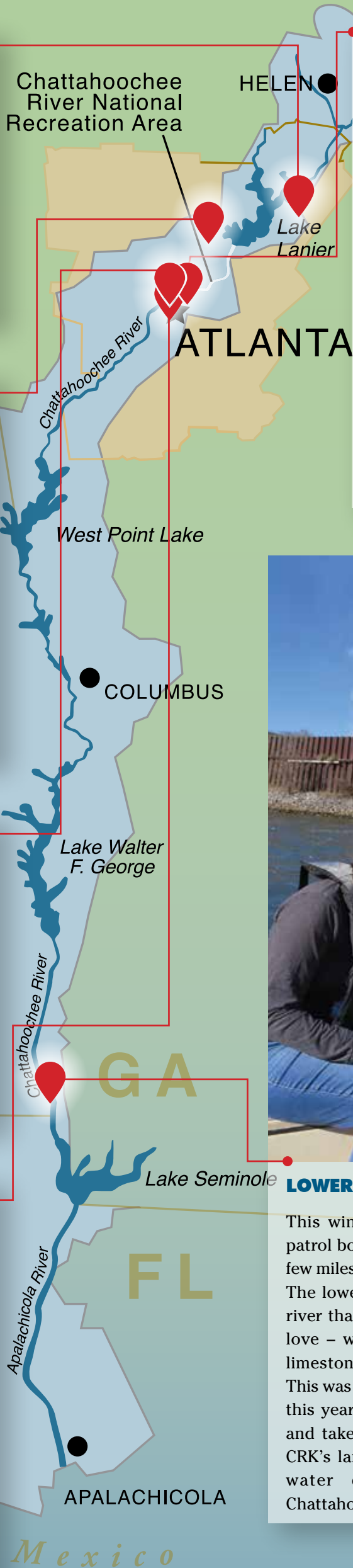
Tyson Foods in Cumming operates a wastewater plant to treat water used in processing and packaging live chickens. The wastewater, which can contain high levels of bacteria and ammonia, is released into Orr Creek, a tributary of Big Creek. Tyson's wastewater discharge permit expires this year and is up for renewal. In April, CRK submitted comments to the GA EPD on a draft permit and pointed out several problems with the permit, including rollbacks to the limits of bacteria and ammonia the facility can discharge into Orr Creek.

MASSIVE TIRE DUMP DISCOVERED AND REMOVED

During a sewer spill inspection, we discovered some 10,000+ tires at an abandoned apartment complex in west Atlanta's Valley of the Hawks. CRK alerted the GA EPD and City of Atlanta who worked together to clear out the tires. Abandoned tire piles are a public health threat as tires can hold water and create habitat for disease harboring mosquitoes. The area has now been enclosed by a chain-link fence and barriers to discourage illegal dumping.

MALFUNCTIONING SEWER LIFT STATION CAUSES BIG STINK

A railroad employee called CRK for help after smelling foul sewer odors. CRK staff responded quickly by tracking the foul stench down to a broken sewer lift station operated by an apartment complex adjacent to Utoy Creek in southwest Atlanta. If not for the call, the lift apparatus would have continued releasing sewage into the valley below. We notified GA EPD who informed us of the lift station's history of problems. The lift station is now operating correctly, and we have established a downstream water monitoring station to detect and address any future spills quickly.



PROCTOR CREEK IN REAL-TIME

In February, CRK deployed a water quality sensor in Proctor Creek that measures temperature, pH, conductivity, and dissolved oxygen every 15 minutes and relays the data in real-time over a cellular network. The sensor is part of a larger project spearheaded by EPA, and our sensor is one of a dozen in Georgia. We participated in a two-day workshop hosted by EPA staff, where we learned to build, program and deploy the open source water quality sensor. We plan to build a network of these devices across the watershed to help us identify pollution problems in critical areas.



LOWER CHATT RIVER MONITORING

This winter, we made the trek with CRK's patrol boat down to the lower 'Hooch. Just a few miles north of the Florida state boundary. The lower Chattahoochee is like a different river than the upper stretches we know and love – we experienced flat water and saw limestone banks, ferns, and cypress trees. This was the first of two trips we will be taking this year to check out a few industrial sites and take water quality samples, as part of CRK's larger and growing effort to address water quality issues in the entire Chattahoochee basin.

For more information, visit: chattahoochee.org/our-work/enforcing-environmental-laws

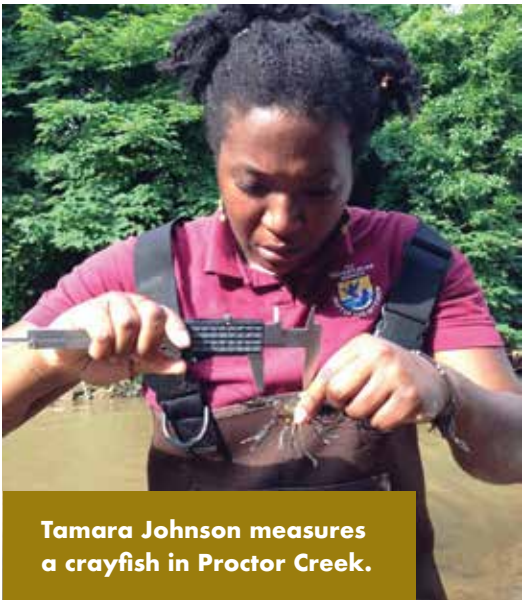
CRAYFISH, CRAWFISH, CRAWDAD, MUDBUG, YABBIE

Crayfish have been given many names, but whatever you call this feisty freshwater lobster they are more than just ‘good eating.’ Crayfish are considered moderate bio-indicator species when determining the health of a stream habitat.

It is easy to find these animals in rural streams or hidden deep in the forest, but one U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist searches for these creatures in what many would believe to be an unlikely place.

Proctor Creek, one of Atlanta’s most urban creeks, has been the focus of biologist Tamara Johnson’s work for many years now. She works to identify species found in the creek and crayfish are her specialty. Tamara’s interest is in finding the Chattahoochee Crayfish, a species of crayfish that is protected in Rottenwood Creek just a few miles away.

The Chattahoochee Crayfish is a gaudy member of the crayfish family with green, blue, orange and even lavender coloration. Though not much is known about its behavior, Tamara hopes that in locating this animal and other animals within streams like Proctor (that have a lot of urban influence), we can better understand the similarities and differences between rural and urban streams.



Tamara Johnson measures a crayfish in Proctor Creek.

On many summer days you will find Tamara and her interns tracking through the cool waters of Proctor Creek. This creek system is fully encapsulated within the limits of Atlanta, and has long been the poster child for pollution. CRK regularly monitors Proctor Creek and has seen a major shift in the stewardship by the local community as well as lower E.coli bacteria levels. This is a

“Many locals have clued me in to the history of the area and how they have always had hope for Proctor Creek.”

- Tamara Johnson, Biologist, US Fish & Wildlife Service

great sign, not only for Proctor Creek and the surrounding community, but for Tamara’s ongoing search for crayfish.

Tamara has seen changes herself, “I have noticed many areas with ‘black tape’ (AKA no biodiversity here) being removed from the stream and life is being discovered... Many locals have clued me in to the history of the area and how they have always had hope for Proctor Creek.”

Many times, we drive over bridges where creeks lie hidden underneath and we give no thought to the creatures that call it home. Let us be encouraged that even in the places that may seem desolate, life can still be found.

CAMP ¡LIBERTAD! WELCOMED ABOARD THE MISS SALLY

It’s a June morning on West Point Lake and the *Miss Sally* floating classroom is busy hosting Casa Alterna's Camp ¡Libertad! Like many other groups this summer, the children and chaperones are here to have a good time and learn about the lake, wildlife and water stewardship.

On land there’s excitement among the two dozen children as staff demonstrate how to use a fishing pole and explain the types of fish they might catch from the shoreline—a special summer treat. But the sound of approaching engines leaves no doubt that a ride on the floating classroom is the reason they are here.

Camp ¡Libertad! is centered around a small community in the heart of LaGrange and based on the tradition of Freedom Schools during the Civil Rights movement. Organized by Anton Flores, the goal of the camp as he put it “is to develop confident, literate, and empowered Latinx children who will be change makers in every sphere of their watershed.”

As the *Miss Sally* cruises along the forested shoreline of the lake, binoculars are handed out and the children are instructed on the types of wildlife they might spot. Impressive



Two campers participating in the West Point Lake Floating Classroom program.

“In a day when children can name scores of corporate logos, but can't name probably three fish in our lake or two trees in our neighborhood, this is much needed.”

- Anton Flores, Organizer, Camp ¡Libertad!

birds like great blue herons and cliff swallows quickly come into view. Osprey and their fledgling young win the most attention, though. Anton turned to me and said, “In a day when children can name scores of corporate logos, but can't name probably three fish in our lake or two trees in our neighborhood, this is much needed.”

Returning to the dock, instructors reviewed lessons learned from the day including one fact that took the kids by surprise. The question was posed again: “What’s the source for our drinking water?” This time they answered in unison, “Chattahoochee River!”

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND DONORS

FOR HELPING US KEEP WATCH OVER OUR WATERS!

January 2018 through June 2018

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Stephen Huber
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Anthony & Katherine Smith
Debra Smith
Lori & Jeff Smith
Gary Smith
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Paul Smith
Susan Smithson
Smoke Rise Garden Club
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Lindsay Snyder
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Kathryn Young
Chuck Young
Cory Zahner
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Sherry Zhou

MONTHLY SUSTAINERS/
EMPLOYEE GIVING

William Bell
Joshua Crane-Whittington
Benjamin Hansen
Jonathan Jordan
Joseph Lyle
Tynke & Frederik ten Lohuis

IN HONOR OF/MEMORIALS

In memory of Guy Adams
Helen K. Hale

In honor of Dale Caldwell
Fleur De Lis Garden Club

In honor of Kelly Callahan
& M. Harness
Katie Terry

In honor of Ivey & Charles Crutchfield
Marti Breen

In memory of Elizabeth DesPortes
Patricia Hallum

In memory of Kevin Dyer
Joi & Robbie Cook

In honor of Steve Gold
Cheryl & Harris Gottlieb

In honor of Alexander Holmann
Myrricia Holmann

In memory of Taylor Ibarrondo
Diane Bridges
First Data Corporation
Cody Luedtke
Ruth Shults

In honor of Henry Jacobs
Judy & Edward Garland

In honor of Anne Jenne
Margaret Lirones

In honor of G.B. Pratt & Rachel Pratt
Carol Pratt

In honor of Northside neighborhoods
& communities
Angela Erwin

In memory of Jacqueline & Julius Rutzky
Ivy Rutzky

In honor of Ted Turner
and Shearon & Taylor Glover
Mandy & Knox Culpepper

CRK GIFTS IN-KIND

2 Dog Restaurant
97.1 The River
Affairs To Remember
The Alliance Theatre
American Rivers
Appalachian Outfitter
Atlanta Botanical Garden
Atlanta Department of Watershed
Management
Atlanta Hawks
Atlanta Journal Constitution
The Atlanta Opera Center
Atlanta Seafood Market
Atlas Pizza
Batdorf & Bronson Coffee Roasters
Ken Beck
BiBa’s Italian Restaurant
Big Daddy DJ Services
Brenau Downtown Center
Bridgestone
Busch Gardens
Canoe Restaurant
Caroline’s Lucky Dog Salon
Cartecay Vineyards
Cartoon Network
Center for Puppetry Arts
CHaRM
Chattahoochee Nature Center
Classic Tents & Events
The Coca-Cola Company
The Collegiate Grill
Crossroads Deli
Decatur Glass Blowing

Diamond AutoSpa & Lube
Don Carter State Park
Downtown Drafts
Dress Up Gainesville
Elevation Fitness
Fifth Group Restaurants
Fly Shop Company
Forest Hills Resort
Friends of Georgia State Parks
Front Porch Collective
Georgia Crown
Georgia Harvest Tables
Georgia Nature
Photographers Association
Glenda’s
GLL Marine
High Country Outfitters
High Museum of Art
Home Depo
Honey Baked Ham
Lake Lanier Canopy Tours
Mary Anne & James Lanier
Longstreet Café
Michael Lowe
Amanda & Paul Mayberry
The Metropolitan Club
Miller Union
Nantahala Outdoor Center
Natural Juice Café
Outside World Outfitters
Paradise Boat Rentals
Pelican Pete’s
Pet Pleasers Bakery
Publix Supermarkets Charities
Bonny Putney
Rain Barrel Company, LLC
REI
Republic Services
River Through Atlanta
Royal Lakes Golf & Country Club
Ruby Falls Tour
S&S Fire Pits
Serenbe Development Corporation
Shane’s Rib Shack
Smart Glass Jewelry
Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP
Smith's Old Bar
Soaring Sapphire Designs
Southern Smoq BBQ
Spa on Green Street
Studio 5 Salon
SweetWater Brewing Company
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Tree Top Quest
Truelove Celebrations Bakery
Uncle Maddio’s Pizza
Village Health Wellness Spa
Vine & Cheese
Wander North Georgia
Wild Wings Cafe
Wildewood Outfitters
Tom Wilson
WSB-TV
Yonah Mountain Vineyards

*CRK receives 100% of Board
and Employee Giving



With your help, we will
continue to stand strong to
ensure our drinking water is
clean and safe and that our
Chattahoochee River system
is protected for us now and
for future generations. Please
become a member today.

Visit [chattahoochee.org/
become-a-member-or-renew](http://chattahoochee.org/become-a-member-or-renew).

STAND UP FOR CLEAN WATER: 24TH ANNUAL PATRON DINNER

"Each year, CRK honors community leaders, institutions and businesses who embrace our mission to protect and restore the Chattahoochee River, its tributaries, lakes and watershed. These honors are awarded at our annual Patron Dinner where we also celebrate the organization's achievements of the year and raise funds to support our programs."

- Juliet Cohen, Executive Director, CRK



This year's Patron Dinner theme is "Stand Up for Clean Water" and will be held on the evening of September 26 at the Georgia Aquarium. Van Michael Salon is our honored recipient of our River Guardian Award for having supported Chattahoochee Riverkeeper since 2007. In 2012, Van Michael Salon's commitment to clean and plentiful water in the Chattahoochee River inspired AVEDA

Corporation to select CRK as its Earth Month Partner. Now in its eighth year, Van Michael Salon and AVEDA have led an annual campaign in April to raise awareness and support for our mission.

Agnes Scott College will receive our River Sustainability Award for demonstrating exceptional commitment to protecting the Chattahoochee River. Agnes Scott College has adopted and implemented a Water Plan to reduce its footprint on the river focusing on efficiency and conservation. In addition, the College has implemented a suite of renewable energy strategies including solar and geothermal power sourcing. These and other sustainability programs are already having a positive impact on the river and its communities.

Bonnie Jackson is the honored recipient of our River Steward Award. For three decades, Bonnie devoted herself to protecting Georgia's natural resources by serving the organizations that are dedicated to defending and preserving these special places including the Chattahoochee River while Operations Manager at CRK.

Join us on September 26 as we celebrate those individuals and institutions that have gone above and beyond for our waterways!

MANY WAYS TO GIVE BACK

There are many ways to give back to CRK above and beyond your time and annual membership donation. Whether it's while you shop, through your company, or even using social media, opportunities to help promote CRK's mission to protect the Chattahoochee River are abundant. Here are a few ways you can give your favorite river advocacy group the extra support needed to continue our important work.

Matching Gifts

Many companies offer to match an employee's donation to a charity. Check with your human resources department to verify if your company offers a matching gift program and what protocols you should follow.

CRK Merch

T-shirts, hats, tumblers and more, make great gifts and are a wonderful way to show your support. Plus, you'll be a walking billboard for CRK! Check out chattahoochee.org/crk-store for more details.

Amazon Smile

Amazon Smile offers the same products, prices and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on smile.amazon.com, and choose Chattahoochee Riverkeeper as your charity of choice, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to CRK.

Kroger Rewards

Did you know you can support Chattahoochee Riverkeeper each time you shop at Kroger? Sign up for a Kroger Plus Card, and select Chattahoochee Riverkeeper as your organization of choice. Once enrolled, you'll earn rewards for CRK every time you shop and use your Plus Card.



Social Media

The more people who know about CRK, the more people can get involved in our important work! Head over to CRK's social media platforms – give us a like, follow us and repost the events and issues that are important to you. You can also raise money from your Facebook page. Put a CRK donation button on your wall and ask friends to contribute to protect your river!

A NEW HOME FOR THE LAKE LANIER AQUATIC LEARNING CENTER

For the last 17 years, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK) and Elachee Nature Science Center have partnered to operate the Lake Lanier Aquatic Learning Center (LLALC).

The LLALC, a 40-foot custom-built catamaran has successfully engaged more than 60,000 students and teachers from north Georgia in outstanding outdoor learning opportunities.

In 2018, the LLALC welcomed its third partner, Hall County Parks and Leisure, and moved the program to River Forks Park in Hall County. The park had existing amenities to operate the program including pavilions, fishing pier, bus parking and restrooms. To house the boat, CRK commissioned the construction of a double slip boat house with a gangway and skylights at the cost of nearly \$200,000. Many thanks go to The James M. Cox Foundation for their support of the capital project. A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for August 21.

On board the LLALC, students conduct a variety of hands-on activities that emphasize STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) concepts – from water quality testing to the identification of freshwater



The *Chota Princess II* docking at CRK’s new boat house on Lake Lanier.

plankton and wildlife – that are tied to age-appropriate Georgia Standards for Excellence. Students learn how the lake water is connected to the drinking water that flows from their home and school faucets, in addition to ways they can protect these precious water resources. Enhancing the on board program are supplemental land-based watershed activities and lake history lessons.

Program scholarship awards make it possible each year for thousands of students to participate from Title I schools and after-school and summer programs that serve the financially disadvantaged. The LLALC is primarily available for public and private schools, colleges, nature centers and summer camps; however, guided lake tours can be arranged for civic groups, businesses, and others.

PADDLE PEACHTREE CREEK ANYONE?

“Does anyone want to try paddling Peachtree Creek next week?” asked Outings Manager, Tammy Bates, in our May staff meeting. After all, the creek has been a Sweep the Hooch destination for years. Now Tammy wanted to expand our engagement from a river bank cleanup to a paddle cleanup. Peachtree Creek is choked with trash – plastic bottles, bags and aluminum cans litter the banks and creek bed. Illegal dumping adds its own collection of ‘treasures’ including tires, car parts, couches and mattresses.

In the 1990’s, author Dave Kaufman investigated how Atlanta’s history has shaped Peachtree Creek and explored the creek in a canoe. In his book, *Peachtree Creek, a Natural and Unnatural History of Atlanta’s Watershed*, Kaufman talks about Peachtree Creek as an open sewer. Water quality in the creek was terrible in the

“You can paddle Peachtree Creek and find plenty of trash, but the best part is seeing a place you think you know from a new perspective right in Atlanta’s backyard.”

- Tammy Bates, Outings Manager, CRK

1990’s, flooding with stormwater and untreated sewage every time it rained from the City of Atlanta’s combined sewer system. Thanks to our 1995 lawsuit against Atlanta for failing to control the discharge of raw sewage and other pollutants from combined sewer overflows and the improvements that followed, water quality is much better today.

We wanted to experience the creek as Dave did—on the water. So in the spirit of urban adventure we carried our kayaks into the creek at Memorial Park on a warm May morning. Along the way, we were struck by

the contrasts—houses so close to the creek that they must flood; a red shouldered hawk that eyed us as we paddled past; golf balls resting on the bank while turtles swam underneath us. We were in the middle of the city, surrounded by evidence of humans, but felt completely alone.

Taking out at Standing Peachtree Park, Tammy reflected on the journey, “You can paddle Peachtree Creek and find plenty of trash, but the best part is seeing a place you think you know from a new perspective right in Atlanta’s backyard.”

CRK will hold a paddle cleanup on Peachtree Creek on September 8. Check out opportunities to join CRK’s other outings at chattahoochee.org/cleanups.



GOLF COURSE IMPACTS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED

The old Bobby Jones Golf Course in Atlanta's Memorial Park is undergoing a major renovation. At the cost of \$23 million, the Bobby Jones Golf Course Foundation is transforming its 18 tees, greens, and fairways into a nine-hole reversible course with other amenities. Part of the renovation plans call for impacts to the state designated 25-foot stream buffer along Tanyard and Peachtree Creeks. To encroach on the 25-foot buffer, a variance from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division is required and this created an opportunity for CRK to weigh in on the plans.

Riverkeeper Jason Ulseth was already familiar with the project having conducted several site visits to address significant erosion and sedimentation on site due to general land disturbing activities following winter rains. CRK closely reviewed the application for a stream buffer variance in the spring. Original plans involved removing all vegetation on both sides along parts of Tanyard Creek and grading the streambanks to the water's edge. Missing from the application was any mitigation to offset the impacts of tree removal and bank regrading.

Negotiations Lead to Project Improvements

Over several weeks, CRK worked closely with the Foundation to reduce impacts while still achieving golf course design goals. A series of negotiations resulted in a drastically improved variance application, which also included a robust mitigation plan.

In the initial application, the Foundation proposed to cut down 46 large diameter trees in the buffers; we were able to reduce that to 18. Initial plans to build cart trails and tee boxes on the banks of Peachtree

Creek have been abandoned. The Foundation also dropped plans to re-grade the banks of Tanyard Creek, which will help prevent future bank collapses.

The revised application includes stream buffer mitigation and native replanting along the banks of Tanyard and Peachtree Creeks in areas that have long suffered from erosion. This mitigation will provide for an overall net positive impact to the banks of these creeks that flow into the Chattahoochee River just four miles downstream.



Tanyard Creek's lushly vegetated stream buffer.

SUPREME COURT SENDS WATER WARS CASE BACK

On June 27, the very last day of the U.S. Supreme Court's 2017-2018 term, the Court issued its opinion in the *Florida v. Georgia* water wars case. The Supreme Court Justices were deciding whether or not to accept an appointed special master's recommendation to essentially dismiss Florida's case seeking limits on Georgia's water use primarily in Metro Atlanta along the Chattahoochee River and on agricultural lands along the Flint River.

Writing for the Court, Justice Stephen Breyer held that Florida's case should not be dismissed and sent it back to the special master. Now, the special master must consider all of Florida's claims and determine if there is a solution that will balance relief to Florida's oyster fishery against any potential impacts to Georgia's economic interests in Atlanta and its South Georgia farms.

CRK believes that now is the time for the three states (Alabama included) to negotiate an interstate compact to equitably apportion the waters. Furthermore, the three states should

again consider the ACF Stakeholder's *Sustainable Water Management Plan*, a plan that identifies specific and technical tools for sharing this critical resource. We must cease endless rounds of litigation, and instead focus our resources on sharing our water resources equitably because communities will continue to grow and our clean water resources are limited.

This opinion recognized that there will always be a downstream community, farmer or industry that will need clean

water for economic sustainability. The legal battles are not really about which state wins or loses. The debate is about critical water resources, community health, and economic growth in communities spanning three states.

Regardless of the outcome, Georgians have a responsibility to conserve water. If a robust culture of conservation does not take hold in Atlanta, the Flint River basin and across all economic sectors, Georgia will be back in court again another day.



CRK's General Counsel, Kevin Jeselnik, and Water Policy Director, Chris Manganiello, in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. in January.



GEORGIA EPD GETS COLUMBUS, GA PERMIT RIGHT AGAIN

In recent years, the Chattahoochee River through Columbus has undergone a revival. In 2013, Columbus leaders made a \$25 million investment to create the Columbus Whitewater Course, which extends for 2.5 miles through downtown Columbus.

Tens of thousands of kayakers, rafters, fisherman, and swimmers take to the river in Columbus each year. What many visitors may not know is that when it rains, untreated and partially treated sewage is released into the river from the City’s combined sewer system (CSS) that runs alongside the whitewater course under the Riverwalk.

In a CSS, stormwater and sanitary sewage (a.k.a. what is flushed from a toilet) flow together in a single pipe. During dry weather, Columbus’s system can send the sanitary sewage to a wastewater treatment plant. When more than 0.6 inches of rain falls in one hour, the excess stormwater overwhelms the combined system and a mix of untreated or partially treated wastewater and stormwater is released into the river. CRK is concerned that during heavy rains, high levels of bacteria and chlorine from the CSS put public health at risk and potentially harms fish and wildlife.

Then...

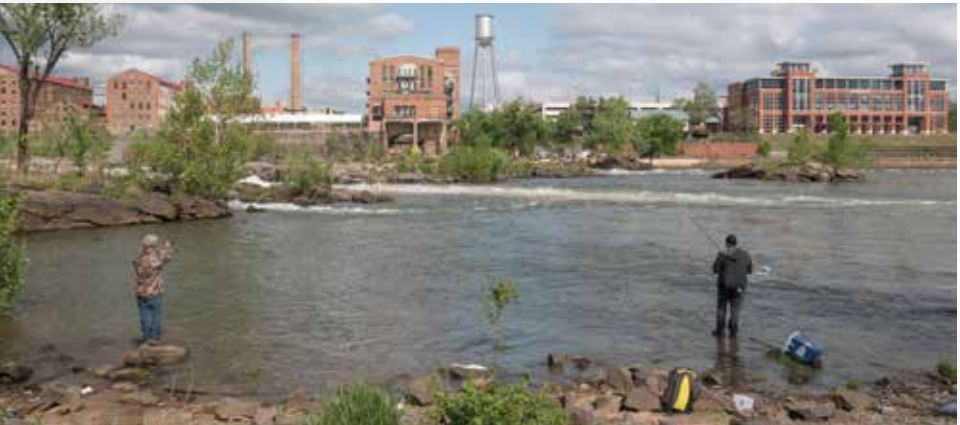
Columbus Water Works received its first permit to operate its CSS in 1992, and constructed its current facilities between 1993 and 1995, decades before the development of the whitewater course. During the past twenty years, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) attempted to impose upgrades of the CSS. Each time, Water Works rebuffed the state’s efforts to impose more protective requirements for monitoring and limits for bacteria in the discharges.

Now...

In late 2017, EPD proposed a “draft permit” limiting the amount of fecal coliform bacteria and chlorine that can be discharged from the CSS. Fecal coliform is an indicator of the amount of dangerous bacteria present in the combined sewage, while chlorine is a commonly used disinfectant to remove the bacteria. Chlorine in rivers can be harmful for aquatic life and form toxic byproducts in downstream drinking water sources. The CSS must be managed in a way that removes the bacteria from the wastewater, but does not result in heavily chlorinated water in the Chattahoochee.

“Because of the potential public health threat, the Water Works should accept the new permit required by the EPD that limits effluent emission into the river, the same as is required for all other cities along the river,” says Virginia Causey, a local historian and organizer with Friends of South Commons.

CRK has sampled combined sewer discharges since October 2017 to better understand the water quality and public health impacts of the current system and to provide science-based support for a more protective permit. Columbus Water Works’ current CSS permit, issued in 2010, does not meet federal Environmental Protection Agency guidelines. CRK supports EPD’s 2017 draft permit, because it is time to provide full and accurate water quality information and protection to Columbus’ thousands of river users.



Fishermen along the banks of the Chattahoochee River in Columbus.

CRK, Mid Chatt Watershed Protection Specialist, Hannah Bradford, taking a water sample at a Columbus CSS outfall.



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8TH ANNUAL SWEEP THE HOOCH

We broke the record with 820 volunteers who pulled 24 tons of trash from the Chattahoochee River! We are grateful to our sponsors. River Benefactor: The Home Depot. River Advocate: Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, Brown Bag Marketing, Collective Insights, Kimberly-Clark, The Kroger Company Foundation, Ruby Collins, Inc., Southwire Company. River Conservator: David B. and Gail Chester. Media Sponsors: The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Family2Family

CATWALK FOR WATER

The 6th Annual Catwalk for Water was a success, raising thousands of dollars CRK's many clean water initiatives! It was hosted at The Metropolitan Club in Alpharetta in partnership with AVEDA. A special thank you to sponsors Colonial Pipeline and Arthur Blank Family Foundation for their support.



CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER VALLEY RALLY

Big thanks to the 130 paddlers who joined us for the 3rd Annual Chattahoochee Valley River Rally as well to the sponsors of the event: Interface, West Point Development Authority, LaGrange-Troup Chamber of Commerce, Charter Bank, Southern Harbor Marina, Renasant Bank, Hutchinson Traylor, Johnny's Pizza, Point University, GLL Marine and SweetWater Brewing Company.

4TH ANNUAL WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

The Wild and Scenic Film Festival was a huge success, raising thousands of dollars for the Neighborhood Water Watch program in the Headwaters region. Thanks to our sponsors - River Conservator: Brenau University, Gainesville Urology, Mincey Marble, SweetWater Brewing Company, United Distributors, WSBTV, Family 2 Family. River Steward: David and Gail Chester, Gainesville Flooring, Mike and Lynn Briggs, Nantahala Outdoor Center, North Georgia Label, Outside World Outfitters. River Patron: University of North Georgia Institute for Environmental and Spatial Analysis. Friend of the River: John O'Sullivan, Susan and Bill Brooksher, Jake Martin & Sons, Contractors, INC, Core Benefit Solutions, Joanne Steele, Karen and John McHugh.

A Sweep the Hooch volunteer pitches in with a smile to help remove trash along the river.

