

RIVERCHAT

Summer 2020

A publication of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (CRK)

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER SETTLES CLEAN WATER ACT SUIT WITH TUCKER IRONWORKS COMPANY

A&R Ironwork's garbage dump on Burnt Fork Creek

On a rainy November day in 2018, CRK was investigating a metal working facility in Tucker, Ga. As staff looked into the facility, they noticed materials including sediment piles, scrap metal, and a garbage dump stored outside the facility's walls along the banks of Burnt Fork Creek, a tributary to Peachtree Creek which flows into the Chattahoochee River.

Muddy water was flowing off the site, hinting that sediment and heavy metals like zinc, lead, cadmium, copper, arsenic, and chromium were likely mixing with stormwater.

CRK later learned that the facility had failed to obtain necessary stormwater permits and was in violation of state and federal law. Such compliance failures typically indicate a lack of essential best management practices necessary to prevent stormwater from becoming contaminated with industrial pollutants before flowing into public waterways. After initial attempts to work with the operating company, A&R Ironworks, were dismissed, CRK worked with pro bono counsel Andrew Thompson of Smith, Gambrel & Russell to file a Clean Water Act lawsuit.

"We are very pleased with the successful resolution of the lawsuit against A&R Ironworks and [property owner] Arnworks Properties," said CRK pro bono counsel Andy Thompson. "CRK's industrial stormwater program is essential to protecting the water quality of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries, and when necessary, it is important for CRK to enforce the federal Clean Water Act and Georgia laws through litigation when industrial facilities neglect their responsibilities."

Ultimately, the suit spurred A&R Ironworks to eliminate almost all outdoor storage of industrial materials. Working with Andy and the defendants, CRK was able to negotiate a resolution during spring of 2020, which was formalized in July.

Along with securing compliance under the industrial general permit, CRK was reimbursed most legal fees and expenses, and is also directing \$60,000 to projects managed by the South Fork Conservancy and the DeKalb County Department of Parks and Recreation.

The South Fork Conservancy received \$40,000 for ongoing programs and funding of the Confluence Bridge, a pedestrian bridge at the confluence of the north and south forks of Peachtree Creek.

"The South Fork Conservancy is excited that a source of pollution into these streams has been addressed, and glad to put these funds to use to improve the waterways," says Kimberly Estep, executive director of the South Fork Conservancy. "These funds will be used to create access to our urban streams for generations to come."

The DeKalb County Department of Parks and Recreation will receive \$20,000 for stream bank maintenance and restoration along Burnt Fork Creek at Mason Mill Park. The funds will also be used to support the park's naturalist program, which leads nature programs, coordinates volunteer activities, and oversees park safety and maintenance.

The investigation into A&R Ironworks is just one of hundreds CRK has conducted since 2012 as part of its Protecting Streams and Communities from Industrial Pollution program. CRK remains dedicated to PSCIP and ensuring that industrial facilities comply with clean water rules and no industrial pollutants contaminate our drinking water source. ■



Muddy water flowing into Burnt Fork Creek from A&R Ironworks



Sediment piles, scrap metal, and garbage stored outside the facility's walls along the banks of Burnt Fork Creek

Thank you for supporting our efforts to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River.

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REFLECTIONS: RIVERKEEPING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

On March 9, 2020, I was on the West Point Lake Floating Classroom training a new boat captain for the upcoming season. The whole crew was excited for another year of outdoor education and the calendar for the spring was completely booked. We were aware of COVID-19, but had no idea what was coming.

After wrapping up the training session, which included taking a local high school class out on a wildlife tour, I hit the road to try to beat Atlanta traffic. On my way home, I received a text from my kids' school that said a school employee had tested positive and the school was going to close. By the end of the week, the entire state was on lockdown.

Like everyone across the country, the staff at Chattahoochee Riverkeeper experienced quite a shock. We shut down our boat programs, cancelled cleanup events, grabbed our computers and set up workstations in our homes. Those of us with young children suddenly turned into teachers in addition to river advocates.

It took some time, but I think we all adapted quite well. After a couple of months, most of our programs are up and running again on some level. Neighborhood Water Watch volunteers are collecting their samples and delivering



them to contactless drop-off stations. Cleanup volunteers are wearing masks and social distancing. We are on the river patrolling and working in the field. Most of us are still conducting routine office work from home; we have learned we can do most things at home with the help of modern technology.

No one really knows what the future has in store, but one thing I can guarantee is that Chattahoochee Riverkeeper will continue to be the same powerful guardian of our beautiful river.

Thank you for your continued support! ■

JASON ULSETH, RIVERKEEPER

FACES OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE: PAP DATTA OF LEFT NUT BREWING CO.

Nilanjan "Pap" Datta is the president and founder of Left Nut Brewing Co., a craft microbrewery in Gainesville, Ga. and one of the first breweries featured as part of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's Quality Beer Tour.

"We draw our water from the lake and our source of water has a big impact on our beer," said Pap. 10% of proceeds from Left Nut Brewing Co.'s Pure Source IPA beer will support CRK's work toward a forever clean and sustainable Chattahoochee River.

Other breweries participating in the Quality Beer Tour include Steady Hand Beer Co., Terrapin Beer Co., Reformation Brewery, Cherry Street Brewing, Wild Leap Brew Co., and Pontoon Brewing. ■

Learn more at chattahoochee.org/qualitybeertour.



Pap Datta pictured with his wife, Mirva

ON PATROL WITH CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

Two Cumming businesses fail to purchase required environmental mitigation credits

Clean Water Act Section 404 permits allow the filling of wetlands or streams during construction if permittees agree to mitigate or purchase mitigation credits to offset environmental impacts. Two developers in Cumming, Ga. obtained these permits, but neglected to purchase mitigation credits. As a result, CRK has issued notices of intent to sue to both entities for violations of the CWA. If the entities fail to mitigate their impacts, CRK will pursue compliance via litigation. This is part of a larger campaign to address failures by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enforce these permits, as CRK believes this issue may be widespread in Georgia.

Bellwood Quarry begins filling up

CRK has been monitoring the months-long process of filling the Bellwood Quarry, which began in spring 2020, to ensure that river flows do not dip below safe levels. Six miles of new tunnel connect the City of Atlanta's existing Chattahoochee River surface water intake and drinking water treatment plants with the retired rock quarry. CRK believes that using an existing and deep hole in the ground with a relatively narrow surface area will result in less evaporative loss and environmental impact when compared to a new reservoir. This project will increase the city's emergency drinking water storage from a three-day to 30-day supply.

Sewage spill in North Utoy Creek tributary at Benjamin E. Mays Drive

High E. coli counts indicated by Neighborhood Water Watch sampling revealed a potential issue in North Utoy Creek upstream of Benjamin E. Mays Drive. A series of inspections and testing hinted at an unmarked tributary as the source. On April 30, CRK field trackers donned waders, followed the waterway upstream, and identified sewage leaking from the base of a manhole. The City of Atlanta quickly responded to make repairs. CRK has conducted follow up inspections and testing to confirm the fix was effective. Now, North Utoy Creek has returned to baseline conditions.

New trash trap installed in Anneewakee Creek

CRK has installed a new trash trap in Anneewakee Creek thanks to a grant funded by Google. Manufactured by Osprey Initiative and installed on property owned by the Southeastern Trust for Parks and Land, the "Litter Boom" is the first device of its kind in Douglas County. Every week, CRK staff will visit the site to empty trash, conduct forensic litter analysis, and collect water samples for bacteria monitoring. A CASSI water monitoring device will also be installed near the trap to provide real-time insight into the health of this Chattahoochee tributary.

CASSI detects drinking water leak in Proctor Creek

CRK's first remote water quality monitoring device, dubbed Chattahoochee Aquatic Sensor System Integrated, has been taking samples for conductivity and temperature every 15 minutes since 2018. This data is monitored for changes in water quality. CRK is looking for increases in conductivity, a measure of ions in the water and an indicator of a pollution event. In May, CRK noticed a 50% drop in conductivity levels and reported the anomaly to the City of Atlanta. The problem was traced to a leaking drinking water line into the creek where city crews are now working to fix the problem.



Spill found and resolved on Weracoba Creek

In July 2020 during a routine survey of Weracoba Creek near Columbus, Ga., CRK staff located a sewage leak directly upstream of Lakebottom Park. Columbus Water Works was notified, and a crew responded to the issue within hours. CWW conducted video surveillance and found the leak at a point where there was a crack in the joint where two pipes meet. The area was dug up and the leak fixed. CRK will continue to monitor water quality in this region to protect human and aquatic health.

For more information, visit: chattahoochee.org/our-work/enforcement.

CRK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MID-YEAR BY THE NUMBERS



3 ADDITIONAL IN-STREAM TRASH TRAPS INSTALLED increasing capacity to trap litter around the clock and bringing our total number of trash traps to 8.



3 ADDITIONAL CHATTAHOOCHEE AQUATIC SENSOR SYSTEM INTEGRATED DEVICES were built, programmed, installed, and monitored increasing our capacity to conduct real-time monitoring of water quality at 4 CASSI sites throughout the watershed.

96 INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES INVESTIGATED in Georgia, and 5 in Alabama, to ensure compliance with clean water rules and keep industrial pollutants out of our drinking water.

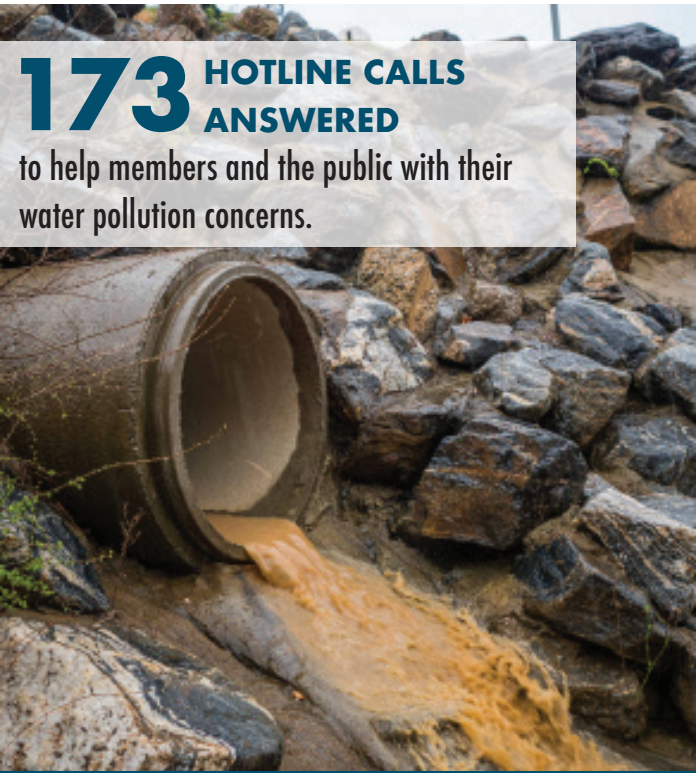


155 RAIN BARRELS DISTRIBUTED to residents, which will lead to a water savings of 116,000 gallons per year.



18 LETTERS AND TESTIMONIES DELIVERED to agencies about important and complex water supply projects and tracked multiple legislative bills affecting clean water in the state.

15 WEBINARS AND TRAININGS HOSTED to share our expertise on water testing, stream flows, gardening, region-specific issues, and much more with members and partners.



173 HOTLINE CALLS ANSWERED to help members and the public with their water pollution concerns.

THANKS TO YOU

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER'S WORK TO PROTECT CLEAN WATER GOES ON.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us in different ways. At Chattahoochee Riverkeeper we have done our best to be a part of the solution to the ongoing public health crises; all the while continuing to protect clean water as we have done every day since 1994.

We are grateful to all the first responders and essential workers who stepped up to serve our neighbors and communities. We are also grateful for your philanthropic support before and during the crises. We count ourselves among the lucky ones and we want to take a moment to say thank you for your continued support during these uncertain times. ■

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND DONORS FOR HELPING US KEEP WATCH OVER OUR WATERS!

January–June 2020

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Paula Villanustre
Steven Viores
VMWare Foundation
F. Argean Vokes
Ron Walker
Walling Family

Hannah Warner
John Watkins
Stephen Weber
Robert Weeks
Frank Wei
Stephanie and Zachary Wells
Justin Wells
Terry Welsher
Donna Werner
Janet Westervelt
Suzanne Wienstroer
Jennifer Wilkinson
Sally and James Williams
Sherry Wittenberg
Nancy Conley and
 Robert Wlodarczyk
Chuck Woddail
Cindy Wolfe
Denise Wolpert
Mark Woodall
Wendy Woskoff
Nancy Wylie
Sarah Yacoub
Leighton Yates
Cathryn Yegan
David Zenner
John Zoller

**MONTHLY
SUSTAINERS/
EMPLOYEE GIVING**

William Bell
Robin Boggs
Dana Bruce
Annelies Carl
Joshua Crane-Whittington
Mary Anne and Brian Ericson
John Fitzgibbon
Mary Lou and Richard Gennings
Griffith Family
Benjamin Hansen
Serina Hardiman
Edgar Hart
Charles Hoskins
Moshe Jacobson
Candice and Craig Kalin
Stephen Klein
Benjamin Lee
Joseph Lyle
Steve McNair
Lyn and Larry Montagne
Diane Morgan
Richard Smith
Christal Threadgill
Kay Todd
Antonia Treverton

**IN HONOR OF/
MEMORIALS**

*In honor of Dale Caldwell
Sandy and Leonard Barmak*

*In honor of Tyler Cooney and
Will Armstrong
Anne Poole*

*In honor of Joseph Knight
Carole Troxler*

*In honor of Nelson J. Malavenda
Anonymous*

*In memory of Hazel Paloma
Popejoy
Colleen McNeil*

*In honor of Rutherford Seydel
Elizabeth West*

*In honor of Nate Thomas
Janet and Robert Riggs*

*In memory of Andrew Valter
Courtney McCormick*

*In honor of the Woodward's
David Thorne*

GIFTS IN-KIND

Ace Hardware-North Hall
Affordable Veterinary Services
Agave Restaurant
American Rivers
Gareth Asher
Atlanta Botanical Garden
Atlanta Botanical Garden-
 Gainesville
Bridgestone Tires
Collins Brown
Bruster's
CeNita Winery
CHaRM
Steve Close
Collective Insights, LLC.
Bill Crawford
Diamond Auto Spa
Elachee Nature Science Center
Martin Emanuel
Etowah Meadery
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Kimberly Clark Corporation
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Orvis Buckhead
Peachtree Waste
Pet Pleasurers Bakery
Porsche Cars
Reduce
Rehab's Rope
REI
Republic Services
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 Lake Oconee
River Through Atlanta
River's Edge On The Soque
Rubicon Global
Savannah Bee Company
Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP
Southern Sweets Bakery
Spa on Green Street
The Inn at Serenbe
Total Wine & More
Vibe Kayaks
White Oak Pastures
Wildwoods Outfitters
Xocolatl
Yonah Mountain Vineyards

***CRK receives 100%
of Board and
Employee Giving**

To become a member, visit chattahoochee.org/become-a-member.

SWEEP THE HOOCH CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

What began in 2010 with just a few sites in the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area has grown in 2020 to include more than 40 sites spread over 12 counties from White to Muscogee. Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s annual watershed-wide trash cleanup Sweep the Hooch has galvanized communities all around the watershed to work toward a trash-free Chattahoochee as volunteers walk, wade, or paddle to gather discarded litter.

Together we have removed 113 tons of trash and tires over the last decade. This year, however, planning for Sweep the Hooch looked a little different. The cleanup was rescheduled from April to August in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Thankfully, Sweep the Hooch is inherently conducive to social distancing, as volunteers can easily maintain at least six feet apart while working on and around the river.



People of all ages and backgrounds came together to Sweep the Hooch

Photo by Dale Asby at Gold Branch Unit of the CRNRA

On August 29, more than 1,000 volunteers celebrated the 10th anniversary of Sweep at 43 local, state, and federal parks, removing more than 36 tons of trash and recyclables.

“Despite all the success we’ve had during the past ten years, trash continues to plague the Chattahoochee River,” said Tammy Bates, CRK Outings Manager. “So much depends on the health of this waterway, so supporting cleanups like Sweep the Hooch along with CRK’s other water quality projects is absolutely vital.”

Sweep the Hooch is part of CRK’s ongoing efforts toward a trash-free Chattahoochee, which includes monthly volunteer cleanups, corporate sponsored cleanups, and our growing instream trash trap programs. ■

Find out about upcoming events and ways to get involved here:
<https://chattahoochee.org/cleanups/>



Photo by Jordan Yu

Proctor Creek Boyd Elementary site

CRK IS PROUD TO RECOGNIZE SPONSORS OF THIS EVENT:

RIVER CHAMPION

The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
The Home Depot
Geiger: A HermanMiller Company

RIVER BENEFACTOR

Reduce

RIVER DEFENDER

Cox Enterprises and Cox Conserves
Green Rock
Kimberly-Clark Corporation
Ruby Collins

RIVER ADVOCATE

Collective Insights
Weed Man Lawn Care
WEG Electric

RIVER CONSERVATOR

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Archer Western Construction, LLC
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Brown Bag Marketing
CHaRM
Chattahoochee National Park Conservancy
The Coca-Cola Company
Georgia Nature Photographers Association
Gwinnett Department of Water Resources
Kinstone River Apartment Homes
Osprey Initiative, LLC
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REI Co-op
Republic Services
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Southwire
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MEDIA SPONSORS

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
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THE SHOALS SPIDER-LILY: JEWEL OF THE RIVER

If you happen to be rafting down the Chattahoochee River whitewater course in Columbus between May and June, you might just spot a few distinctly white blossoms peeking out from the sea of green. These rare blossoms belong to the magnificent shoals spider-lily.

The shoals spider-lily (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) is an aquatic plant species endemic to certain water systems of Alabama, Georgia, North and South

Carolina, and grow only in rocky, fast-moving shoals. They are state-listed as threatened in Georgia and are up for consideration by the Endangered Species Act. Approximately 50 naturally occurring populations remain in the southeast with 12 known populations in Georgia.

Thankfully, a group of volunteers is working to restore the lilies along the River Walk in Columbus, Ga. The project, which involves the planting of lilies grown from seed collected in Flat Shoals Creek, is expected to renew the population of these beautiful plants in the Middle Chattahoochee region.

CRK’s Middle Chattahoochee Watershed Protection Specialist Ashley Desensi is a lily enthusiast and longtime volunteer with the

restoration. “The shoals spider-lily is not only one of the most beautiful native bloomers in Georgia, but also an integral part of a healthy river ecosystem,” said Ashley.

Aquatic flora are essential for a healthy river system, as they provide a food source, serve as shelter, hold down sediment, and create useful sediment by decomposition of vegetative matter; yet aquatic species like the lilies are especially sensitive to the effects of human activities. Changes in water quality, dam construction, and human development of land and rivers can be especially threatening.

The lily restoration project in Columbus is an ongoing effort that includes partners Jim and Debbie Rodgers of Nearly Native Nursery who grow the lilies from seed, Chattahoochee River Conservancy who spearheads the project, Whitewater Express who provides rafts and expert river guides, and many volunteers from all over the Middle Chattahoochee region. ■

SEDIMENT POLLUTION OF OSELIGEE CREEK STOPPED



Aerial view of a large plume of muddy water flowing from Oseligee Creek into the river

In October 2018 during a routine drone flyover of the Chattahoochee River in West Point, Ga., Chattahoochee Riverkeeper staff noticed a large plume of muddy water flowing from Oseligee Creek into the river. The confluence of Oseligee Creek and the Chattahoochee River is just upstream of the drinking water intake for the City of West Point, who had earlier reported problems in its drinking water treatment caused by excessive sediment in the water.

CRK tracked the source of sedimentation upstream to an 1,100-acre construction site in Lafayette, AL. Further investigation revealed the site was being converted from timber land to a large-scale solar installation owned by Clenera/AL Solar A. All grading operations on the solar field site were reported to have been completed in December 2017, at which point AL Solar A's solar panels became fully operational.

In driving around the site, however, CRK observed tremendous amounts of sediment washed into nearby streams, alongside many poorly maintained best management practices that would otherwise have kept the dirt in place.

CRK staff contacted the contractor and owner of the facility soon after, and also filed a complaint with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4. EPA conducted its own site inspection in November 2018, and confirmed the numerous violations observed by CRK.

Soon after being contacted by CRK, both the site contractor, Swinerton, and the site owner, Clenera/AL Solar A, began taking steps to bring the site into compliance with clean water protection rules and to stop the release of sediment to Oseligee Creek and ultimately the Chattahoochee River.

CRK staff were allowed on the property for multiple site visits to assess conditions and efforts to improve the stormwater controls and received regular reports of progress. Both the contractor and owner were notably transparent and committed to improving conditions on their site.

By late summer 2019, the solar field was finally approaching full compliance. Today, CRK continues to monitor the site to ensure no further pollution issues.

In an effort to offset impacts created by the solar site construction, Swinerton and Clenera both made contributions to support the West Point Lake Floating Classroom, an on-the-water environmental education program that has served nearly 17,000 students, teachers and adults since launching in 2015.

Should any additional issues arise in Oseligee Creek, CRK will know in real-time. Support from the Charter Foundation and the City of West Point enabled the installation of a remote monitoring device called a Chattahoochee Aquatic Sensor System Integrated directly into this creek's water. CRK staff are now using data captured by the CASSI to continuously monitor for any significant changes to the health of this important tributary. [You can see our data from the Oseligee Creek CASSI anytime here.](#) ■



Aerial view of the large-scale solar installation owned by Clenera/AL Solar A

CLEAR CREEK IS IN THE CLEAR

For decades, the smell of sewage wafted through Piedmont Park in Midtown Atlanta. Most of Midtown is in a part of the combined sewer system where raw sewage and rainwater are mixed in one pipe. Years ago, during heavy rains when the pipes were full, the sewage-rainwater mix would overflow into Clear Creek and make its way through the park and several nearby neighborhoods before reaching Peachtree Creek and the Chattahoochee River.

As a result, Clear Creek was unhealthy and polluted – even as it coursed through the heart of Atlanta’s most iconic park. In 1997, Clear Creek was placed on Georgia’s list of “impaired streams” meaning that the creek did not have enough dissolved oxygen to support aquatic life.

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper’s successful 1995 lawsuit against the City of Atlanta kicked off a \$2 billion investment in improving Atlanta’s

storm sewer infrastructure, including a treatment plant on Clear Creek to treat the sewage-rainwater mix. In 2010, CRK began detecting that water quality was improving in Clear Creek; bacteria levels went down, and we noticed small fish and herons returning to the creek. It was time to remove the stream from Georgia’s list of impaired streams.

“The water quality improvements that we see in Clear Creek highlight the success of the City’s investment in our sewer infrastructure and our partnership with Chattahoochee Riverkeeper to protect Atlanta’s creeks,” said Mikita Browning, Interim Commissioner for the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management.

In 2017, CRK drafted a sampling plan that was approved by the state and collected dissolved oxygen samples twice per month for one full year. CRK submitted a final report to state officials with our results. The draft list of impaired streams with the removal of Clear Creek was released by the state of Georgia in April 2020 and was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in August 2020. ■



Water sampling on Clear Creek

PROPOSED ROCK QUARRY THREATENS RECENTLY RESTORED STRETCH OF RIVER

Located in the rural southeastern corner of Carroll County, where much of the land is zoned for agricultural use, lies an approximately 508-acre tract slated to become a new rock quarry.

Word of this project spread quickly as it triggered a review by the Three Rivers Regional Commission, which supports local governments with local and regional planning. Swift and widespread public opposition to the project grew, which prompted Carroll County to issue a 60-day moratorium on the issuance of land disturbance permits, and later to revise county regulations dealing with mining operations on agriculturally-zoned properties.

CRK quickly activated to learn more about the project from developer Green Rock and to listen to residents’ concerns. The proposed quarry would be less than 4,000 feet from the Chattahoochee River and two tributaries to the river flow through the site. Impacts to water quality from construction and operation could threaten progress made to restore this stretch of river over the past few decades.

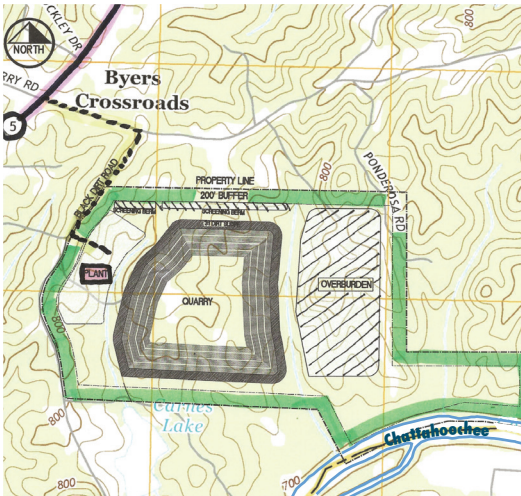
Downstream, a previously unthinkable proposal is under consideration in Coweta County. The County proposed a new drinking water withdrawal from the river, which underscores the significant water quality improvements made in the river downstream from metro Atlanta.

This transformation is also evident by the

investment local governments and partners have made in purchasing and developing parks in the region. Moore’s Bridge Park is located immediately downstream of the proposed quarry site, separated by just one property. Carroll County has invested millions of dollars



Paddlers on the Chattahoochee River near Capps Ferry Bridge, which is a few miles upstream of the proposed quarry site



Carroll County rock quarry planning map into acquiring and developing this park in the last decade.

Future plans within the Chattahoochee RiverLands initiative further highlight the need to protect this stretch of waterway. In April 2020, the partnership — led by the Trust for Public Land, the Atlanta Regional Commission, the City of Atlanta, and Cobb County — finalized a master plan for a recreation corridor that would transit this part of the Chattahoochee. The Carroll County Historical Society, Carroll Tomorrow, and the Carroll Co. Chamber of Commerce support the ambitious plan.

CRK remains engaged in ensuring that this stretch of river is not threatened by the rock quarry, has filed several comment letters to agencies, and will review any permit applications should the project progress. ■

UNUSUAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION YIELDS VICTORIES FOR GEORGIA’S ENVIRONMENT

Each year, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper joins its partners in the Georgia Water Coalition to advocate for our shared waterways before the Georgia General Assembly. CRK spends time at the Capitol advocating for new laws that will protect our environment and fighting against rollbacks that will degrade our water quality.

Despite the impacts of the pandemic and unusual pace of the session, the 2019-2020 legislative session was one of the most successful yet for the CRK team. Below is a brief rundown of our biggest successes in 2020.

COAL ASH LEGISLATION PASSES

Since 2015, CRK has advocated for greater protections for our waterways against the threats posted by toxic coal ash stored in landfills and in unlined pits at Georgia Power’s power plants across the state. There are three power plants along the Chattahoochee River, and the utility plans to leave 31 tons of this toxic waste exposed to groundwater along our river.

Senate Bill 123 closes a loophole that encouraged out-of-state coal ash dumping in Georgia’s solid waste landfills. The bill raises the surcharge that local governments can charge per ton of coal ash from \$1 to \$2.50, in line with the surcharge on regular household garbage.

TRUST FUND HONESTY ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT – VOTE YES!

GWC has worked for more than a decade to pass a constitutional amendment to restore honesty in the state’s administration of fees collected for environmental cleanups. Over the years, the state has raided “trust funds” like the Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste funds that were collected to help state and local governments address tire dumps, repair problems at landfills, and remediate hazardous waste sites.

House Resolution 164 allows Georgia voters to amend our state constitution and require that fees collected for these purposes are applied to the trust funds. The constitutional amendment will empower the General Assembly to direct government collected fees – like Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division’s \$1 scrap tire discarding fee – toward their stated purpose.

In November’s general election, please vote “YES” on this amendment to bring back truth in state fee allocation.



Photo by Julia Regeski



Photo by Erik Voss

FINAL PUSH TO STOP ROLLBACK OF GEORGIA’S “RIGHT TO FARM” LAW

GWC is celebrating the non-passage of House Bill 545, which would have eliminated existing protections for farmers and rural property owners under the existing “Right to Farm” law. This bill was part of a national effort by corporate agricultural operators of large-scale hog and poultry farms to weaken property rights and protections so that concentrated animal feeding operations can operate with little consequence. Throughout the 2020 Georgia General Assembly, GWC helped organize widespread, bipartisan opposition to this attack on Georgians’ property rights.

CRK and its partners in the Georgia Water Coalition will be coordinating throughout the rest of the year and preparing for a fresh legislative session in January 2021. ■



Photo by Erik Voss

THANK YOU SUMMER EVENTS

WITH CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

From volunteer cleanups to film festivals, there are plenty of ways to come together with the CRK community while supporting our work to sustain the Chattahoochee River.

VALLEY RIVER RALLY

NO. 5 CITY OF WEST POINT
A BENEFIT FOR CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER
SEPTEMBER 26 5PM - 9PM



150 PADDLE SPOTS, REGISTER ONLINE ... FREE ADMISSION TO POST-PADDLE PARTY
EVENING PADDLE
LIVE MUSIC + WILD LEAP BEER + LOCAL FOOD

CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER
WEST POINT LAKE FLOATING CLASSROOM
WWW.CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG/VRR

While we were not able to gather together for this year's **Valley River Rally**, the generous support of our friends and partners shined brightly.

We will celebrate on the river as it flows through West Point, Ga. again soon, but in the meantime,

thanks to contributions from the event sponsors, CRK's program work in the Middle Chattahoochee region remains as strong as ever.

PRESENTING SPONSOR

Hutchinson Traylor Insurance

RIVER CONSERVATOR

City of West Point
Wellstar Health System
West Point Development Authority
Interface

RIVER PATRON

Downtown West Point Development Authority

FRIEND OF THE RIVER

La Quinta Inn LaGrange
Center State Bank

In June, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper hosted the **6th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival**. Ticketholders tuned in to watch 17 award-winning family friendly films about community activism, adventure, climate change, wildlife, environmental justice, and more. \$9,000 was raised for The Clean Lanier Equation – a CRK initiative focused on addressing pollution, education, and resilience in the Lake Lanier community. This event is typically held in-person at the Brenau University theatre, but due to the ongoing pandemic, the event took place online.

CRK sold more 339 household tickets and donated \$1 from each ticket to the North Georgia Community Foundation's COVID-19 Relief Fund.



Film-watching at home with Pure Source IPA

THANKS TO OUR FILM FESTIVAL SPONSORS

RIVER CONSERVATOR

David and Gail Chester
Peach State Bank & Trust

RIVER PATRON

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Mincey Marble
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Cool River Tubing

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Janet Chapman
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Georgia ForestWatch
Gene Korzeniewski
Scott and Sonja McLendon
Milton Martin Toyota
Michael Reilly
The Tire Barn Tire Pros

PARTNERS

Brenau University
Left Nut Brewing Co
University of North Georgia
Wildwood Outfitters

CELEBRATING THE Chattahoochee

A VIRTUAL PATRON EXPERIENCE BENEFITING
CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERKEEPER

September 10, 2020 ONLINE
6:30 - 7:30 P.M.

You are the heart of Chattahoochee Riverkeeper!
Celebrate those working toward a trash-free Chattahoochee with guest speakers, a silent auction, and more during this virtual celebration.

Free for all to enjoy.
Registration required.

featuring the annual
State of the River

Honoring

**GEORGIA TRADE-UP and
GROUNDWORK ATLANTA**
River Sustainability Award

STEPHEN TREIMER
River Hero Award

**UPPER CHATTAHOOCHEE
CHAPTER OF TROUT
UNLIMITED**
River Steward Award

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[CHATTAHOOCHEE.ORG/PATRONDINNER/](https://www.chattahoochee.org/patronDinner/)
OR TEXT PD2020 TO 41444

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