Spring 1996

Georgia's NATIVE FORESTS

A Quarterly Publication by
GEORGIA FORESTWATCH

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Planning for Protecting Our Forests

by René Voss

JOIN US! *ForestWatchers in Coopers Creek Old Growth*

Georgia's National Forests are at a major crossroads. Since the inception of the current Forest Plan over 10 years ago, the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests have seen some remarkable changes in use by the people of northern Georgia and our region.

Not only has the public's recreational use nearly doubled over the last 10 years, in 1994 and 1995 the Forest Service's timber program has finally started to decrease due to public pressure and shrinking budgets. Unfortunately, the Forest Service has not kept up with these changes well. The current forest plan, written during the Reagan administration, is severely flawed and does not address the growing changes in environmental values of the American people and the needs of residents in northern Georgia. Forest Service budgets and staff have not kept up with increasing demands for recreation and tourism and strong objections to intensive commercial logging and associated road-building. Unfortunately, the inadequate response to the public's concerns continues to erode the trust in an agency which once hailed a reputation as the world's conservation leader. The forests' managers including our current Forest Supervisor George Martin and our District Rangers continue to cling to an old paradigm which reinforces their own values over those of the public so they can continue a timber program which is increasingly in conflict with new scientific information about the needs of our ecosystems, urban recreational users, and local residents whose spiritual and economic well-being is dependent on the protection of the native beauty of our mountain and piedmont forests.

Each year, almost 12 Million visitors come to the Chattahoochee National Forest. This visitation is more than that of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, our nation's most visited park. To acknowledge this enormous and increasing use, the Forest Service in Washington, DC has designated the Chattahoochee and Oconee an "Urban" national forests. This designation is only shared with 12 other forests and only one other in the east, the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

But there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon in the form of forest planning. When neighboring North Carolina involved the public in the revision of the Nantahala and Pisgah Forest Plan (finished in 1994) the public demanded change and brought the area appropriate for logging down to around 25% of the land-base. The Forest Service decided to specialize their timber program to provide high-value, hardwood saw timber for local markets. Currently, 74% of Georgia's National Forests are open to the commodity-driven commercial logging program, but with tremendous public pressure, this percentage can be significantly reduced or even eliminated altogether. These are the types of major changes possible with forest plan revisions.

Soon, the public will get the opportunity to tell the Forest Service how they want our National Forests managed over the next 10 to 15 years. By law, the Forest Service will gather input from the public over the next 2-3 years and generate a new plan which represents a range of uses for these lands based on the Forest Service's perceptions of the wishes and needs of the American people. Policies will be made by those who show up, or get involved with the process. **This means the Forest Service needs to hear from you!**

This process will formally begin in May of 1996 with a notice of intent in the Federal Register. While the Forest Service is always accepting input from the public, a formal period for comment will last for 4 months until about September of 1996. There will be other opportunities for the public to provide input over the next 2 years but now is the time to get on their mailing list. Next, the Forest Service will generate a draft document based on public input and you will be able to make sure that your concerns have been addressed. Many similar issues or themes can be emphasized by individual comments. The Forest Service can be swayed by your comments as part of an organized effort. Every person will make a difference.

I ask you to get involved. Enclosed are two postcards, one addressed to the Forest Service Planning Staff and one to Georgia ForestWatch. Please mail them today. The Forest Service will keep you informed by mail and tell you about upcoming events and opportunities to provide input. So will we.

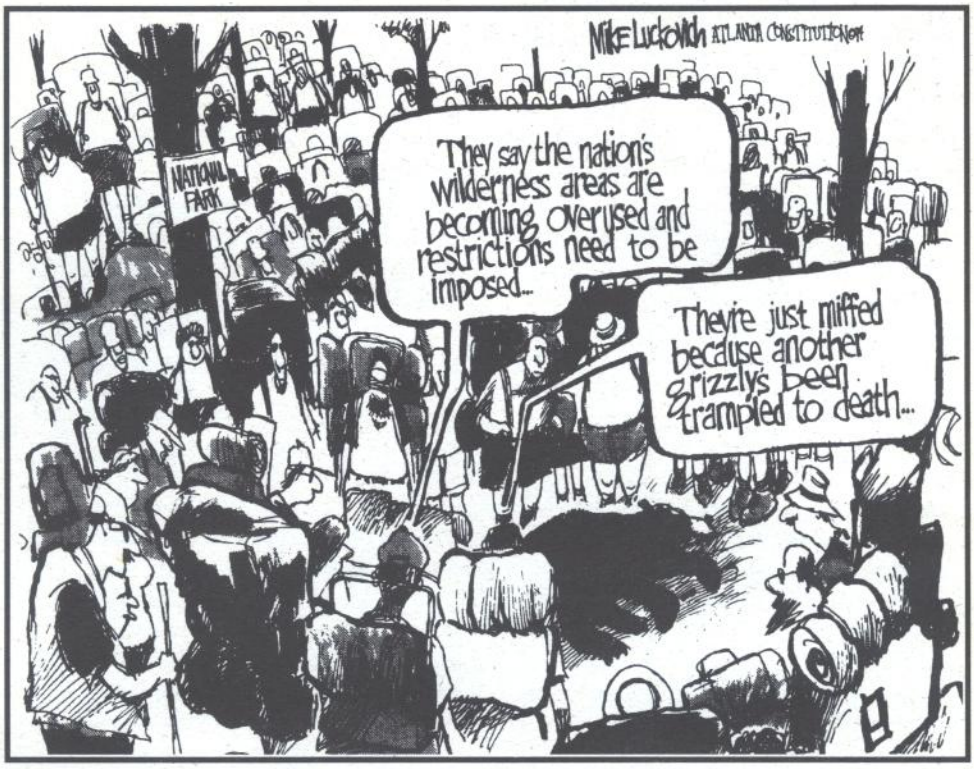
Please send us the card addressed to Georgia ForestWatch with your membership renewal or new membership. You will receive Georgia's Native Forests (our quarterly newsletter), action alerts and advice on specific input to the planning process. We will also try to keep you informed of other issues of concern about people and happenings on our forests. Your membership donation will help support Georgia ForestWatch and is fully tax-deductible.

This newsletter and other related activities are part of a major campaign launched by Georgia ForestWatch to help insure that the public's voice is heard and to provide technical input to the Forest Service so our member's concerns are addressed. We are working together with other environmental groups in Georgia and the region to protect Georgia's Mountain Treasures. We hope to refocus the Forest Service's mission in Georgia towards the protection and full restoration of native plant and animal communities (biological diversity), and the promotion of compatible recreational uses aimed at providing people an escape to the grandeur of Georgia's Native Forests. Please join us.■

René Voss is Campaign Director for Georgia ForestWatch

The Southern Appalachian Assessment

by Peter Kirby



Very soon, the Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (SAMAB) cooperative will be releasing a major report about the environmental conditions in the Southern Appalachians. It will cover wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, including roadless areas, forest "health", social, economic and population profiles, air and water quality, timber supply and demand and other important factors. It is a "snapshot" of the region's resources, public demands and trends. The region in the study includes public and private lands along the Appalachian Mountains from Virginia, through the Carolinas, Tennessee and north Georgia to Alabama.

It is a joint effort by federal and state agencies, with the Forest Service in the lead. The assessment will not by itself contain decisions by the Forest Service or other agencies about land management or other issues.

To get on the mailing list to receive the summary report, call Marianne Holland or Forrest Carpenter @ (404)347-4177. Make your request and give them your mailing address.

The assessment will include various technical reports that may be very useful over the years ahead. In particular, there will be four detailed reports that will contain the key chapters behind the summary report; these will be 1) Terrestrial, 2) Aquatic, 3) Social, Cultural and Economic, and 4) Atmospheric. You can also request any or all of these.

The assessment will also assemble and present many helpful maps and databases about the region's resources. Some new techniques will be used to collect and analyze this material, notably computerized Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Again, you can request this material, if you have a computer and CD-ROM capability.

The information, maps and findings in the study will be used in the upcoming round of plan revisions for all the Southern Appalachian national forests, including the Chattahoochee. It will thus have "real world" consequences for issues of keen concern to conservationists in forest replanning, such as the fate of roadless areas, the type of recreation to be provided, the further fragmentation of wildlife habitat, the priority accorded timber production, old-growth forest restoration, direction on water quality and fisheries, the visual beauty (or ugliness) of the forest landscape and more.

There will be an opportunity to comment on the assessment as it applies to the Chattahoochee National Forest during the 120 day review period this year at the onset of forest replanning. Conservationists have been following the development of the assessment closely and have filed detailed comments on the various draft chapters and summaries. We expect to make a critical review of the final assessment to ensure that it describes the region and analyzes key issues accurately.

The Wilderness Society has critical reports available explaining the economic and ecological benefits of protecting the wildlands of the Southern Appalachians and also explaining the many flaws in current forest plans. Call The Wilderness Society at (404)872-9453 to receive your copies.■

Peter Kirby is the Southeast Regional Director for The Wilderness Society®

"The battle we have fought, and are still fighting, for the forests is a part of the eternal conflict between right and wrong, and we cannot expect to see the end of it... Every good thing, great and small, needs defense. The smallest forest reserve, and the first I ever heard of, was in the Garden of Eden; and though its boundaries were drawn by the Lord, and embraced only one tree, yet even so moderate a reserve as this was attacked... It would not be long before you would find a lumberman and a lawyer at the foot of it, eagerly proving by every law terrestrial and celestial that that tree must come down. So we must count on watching and striving for these trees, and should always be glad to find anything so surely good and noble to strive for."

John Muir, November 23, 1895

LETTERS

Lost Trail on the Oconee

To me, there is a unique and remarkable beauty, stillness, and peace in the Oconee National Forest, particularly when I am able to follow a creek several hours into the woods. There is a certain point, I think, for all woods walkers, when there is a sense that we have reached a sort of boundary where we are now an infrequent visitor, temporary and privileged, and not an intruder. At this point, it is possible to sit quietly and observe what is going on, what is growing, what is moving about, what has passed by recently, what smells and sounds emerge when we wait. More importantly, it is also possible to experience solitude and a remarkable sense of tangible connection with the natural world. Even more interesting to me than this experience itself is the universality of it, that the human experience of peace and serenity in a deep woods is not unique but common. The difficulty for most of us is to locate the deep woods.

I have enjoyed the Oconee during all seasons for eight years. In the summer, we float in inner tubes or paddle canoes downstream from the Glenwood Springs Road bridge (over Murder Creek) to the "falls." In the spring, we trek down the Creek from Rock Eagle Road (#300) or Route 16 or Hillsboro Road with rubber rafts and high boots, keeping quiet at moments that we think there is a chance of seeing an otter around a bend. On these trips, we are almost always accompanied by kingfishers and heron, pausing slightly ahead in high branches, as if they understood our limitations. On Murder Creek we are, at any time of the year, in the world of the river cooter. By the dozens, sometimes by the hundreds, slipping always off their rocks at precisely the same distance from human travelers, just beyond the point where my camera can capture them. And, yes, we are also in the world of the deer tick and the occasional water moccasin.

In the Murder Creek Research Natural Area, there are three huge and mysterious trees. Mysterious to me, because I must always search for them; the Creek takes sharp turns in this area so that I am often pleasantly disoriented, surprised by a tributary branch that I thought came before but, instead, appears after the Creek splits around an island. It is likely that during the last visit, I had been distracted by a sudden arrival of turkeys or ducks and walked without noticing the twists and turns of the Creek. So I am always searching for those huge trees, thinking I know where they are and finding them elsewhere.

The problem with the Oconee Forest is that there are so few places that are really forest. Virtually every square inch seems vulnerable to sudden timber harvesting. During the spring of 1994 I decided I would try to make notes so that I could walk the same path twice, so that I could find the same wild azalea, the same dogwood patch, the grape vines, the blackberries, the trillium, the ferns, the wild ginger, the blood root, the lilies, the giant cedar, marking, along with the daffodils and the iris, the ghost of a homestead. I decided to make a trail guide for myself since the Oconee really has no trails through the heart of its timber-harvested acres. I thought this would mean that I could learn the fastest ways to spots where I might someday bring a friend or child to picnic by a deep pool in a steam, to explore an old bottle pile, to imagine the farm family who nailed the "no parking" sign to a tree alongside a road that has become a gentle, green path below the level of the forest floor, with trees growing tall where the farm family parked its truck.

In the spring of 1995, I got my trail notes and headed to the woods. I found my lilies but not my trail because much had changed. One compartment had been logged, almost down to the edge of what was a lovely bottomland stream. One animal trail that had formed part of the path was so littered with remnants of logged pines that it was faintly visible for only a short way and then disappeared from lack of use. The dogwoods remain but in a sadly depleted setting. I was especially fond of a certain spring but could not find the least trace of it in the muddy, circular tracks of the logging equipment. The spring had been marked long before I discovered it by another human who carefully built a small pyramid of stones where the spring trickled out, cool and persistent during the driest days of summer. I prefer to assume that it will be rediscovered in another generation when we are more curious about what happens when we leave the Forest alone.

The beaver swamp remained but it is no longer comfortably surrounded by an unusually lush, diverse, and vibrant forest, one that was noteworthy for the exciting shift from pine to wetland. The area between the swamp and the county road had been logged so that the beaver swamp

K. Kolb

which had formerly appeared so suddenly, as if by magic, in a deep woods turned out to be only about 100 yards from the road. It is no longer hidden at all.

Such are the ways of a timber-harvest forest, like the Oconee.

I am speechless when I hear that a managed forest is an improvement over an unmanaged one, meaning, in the case of the Oconee, a forest given over almost completely to pine plantations. I know that the Oconee Forest, to a large extent replaces eroded farm fields and that the farm fields had long replaced the original forests. I know that forest fires, pine beetles, and storm damage are all reasons to interfere to some extent with the natural progress of a National Forest. But the utter transformation of a woods into an endless rotation of timber harvests simply cannot be, to anyone who has grown fond of a forest, an improvement.

I think about it this way. If we humans who have respectfully visited a familiar forest and learned where the turtles crawl up on the banks of a creek, where beavers are at work, where certain wildflowers grow, where tall pines and white oak and banks of ferns live amid the infinite sounds of bugs and birds-- if we feel sick at heart when an entire section of a forest is cut down, what is the effect on the surviving nonhuman residents, flora and fauna?■

Sue Jamison (from letter to George Martin, Nov. 20, 1995)

Please send letters to:
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Armuchee News

by Brent Martin

The last year on the Armuchee Ranger District was one of unprecedented activity. Buddy Darden's election loss to Bob Barr was the end of our logging moratorium on the three areas outlined in Georgia Mountain Treasures and a green light to district ranger Joe King to push ahead with scoping notices for Johns Mountain and The Pocket. King has agreed to stay out of the Rocky Face area until the new management plan is issued, but local members of the Armuchee Alliance remain skeptical. Our work this fall to have Rocky Face placed in the roadless inventory was undermined by the Forest Service's designation of a long impassable road as "public." The Forest Service continues to maintain their position despite the county and state's refusal to accept responsibility and ownership for it. Don Davis of the Armuchee Alliance and Brent Martin of Georgia ForestWatch presented a signed statement from the county, as well as photographs of the impassability of the road, to Forest Service at the Roadless Inventory Open House. Furthermore, the landowner, through whose land the road passes, wants the road closed and the issue remains unsolved.

ForestWatch and the Armuchee Alliance did win one round of appeals on the Dunaway Gap Decision Notice issued in mid-1995. The Forest Service had neglected to evaluate the presence of certain endangered aquatic species in East Armuchee Creek, despite the fact that the new roads and logging would be dumping 37.8 tons of sediment into the stream. Their subsequent evaluations revealed no endangered species and the Decision Notice was reissued this past December. It is currently in its second round of appeal with the Armuchee Alliance, Georgia ForestWatch, and the Sierra Club signing on. It is also part of a planned lawsuit by environmental groups, including Georgia ForestWatch and the Armuchee Alliance. Our attorneys with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund charge the Forest Service with violation of the Clean Water Act requiring permits for road-building.

Joe King also plans to salvage 334,000 board feet of timber damaged by hurricane Opal and almost 1,000,000 board feet killed by southern pine beetles. These salvage projects have been issued under the Clearcut Salvage Rider which suspends the appeal process and all our environmental laws to log. We have recently received a new Decision Notice for a timber sale on Taylor's Ridge. Our first concern with this project is its impact on the recently approved Pinhoiti Trail that will be bisecting the district. If anyone would like more information on any of these issues please feel free to call Brent Martin at 404-876-7798.■

Botanical Society Outings

by Will Griffin

The Georgia Botanical Society will be conducting outings in the upcoming months to several areas of importance in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Outings will be led to set up vegetation monitoring plots in representative forest stands, and to popularize botanically rich roadless areas. The Botanical Society feels an initiative to assess plant communities in repeatable study plots on the Forest is important to help provide an idea of change in vegetation over time on the Forest. This is especially important in areas currently scheduled to be timbered, where an inventory of vegetation within a repeatable study plot could provide a useful picture of the vegetation before and after timber harvest, and would benchmark the subsequent changes in the vegetation community. Also, some significantly rich botanical sites remain within the suitable timber base on the Forest and as a result need the popular attention they deserve in order to receive support as areas not suitable for logging as determined in the upcoming rewrite to the Forest Management Plan. More than a few worthy sites exist on the Chattahoochee and the Oconee National Forests, and so far two outings have been officially scheduled.

If you are interested in coming on these trips mark your calendar as follows, but be aware: for the vegetation monitoring trips the Society would like you to plan to attend at least two out of the three trips scheduled so far, and that you plan to come with a work party orientation to the trips. Please sign up in advance for the vegetation monitoring trips by calling Will Griffin at (404) 429-1836.

yellow lady slippers

K. Kolb

For more information on the Roadless Area outings please call for directions and times during early April

These should all be fun and educational outings. We look forward to seeing some of you.■

Vegetation Monitoring:

March 2, May 12, and June 29, at the Wild Hog Creek portion of the proposed Cynthia Knob Timber Sale.

Roadless Area Outings:

April 21 at Dismal Creek, Union County (Kelly Ridge Roadless Area)

April 28 at Till Ridge Cove, Rabun County (Patterson Gap Roadless Area).

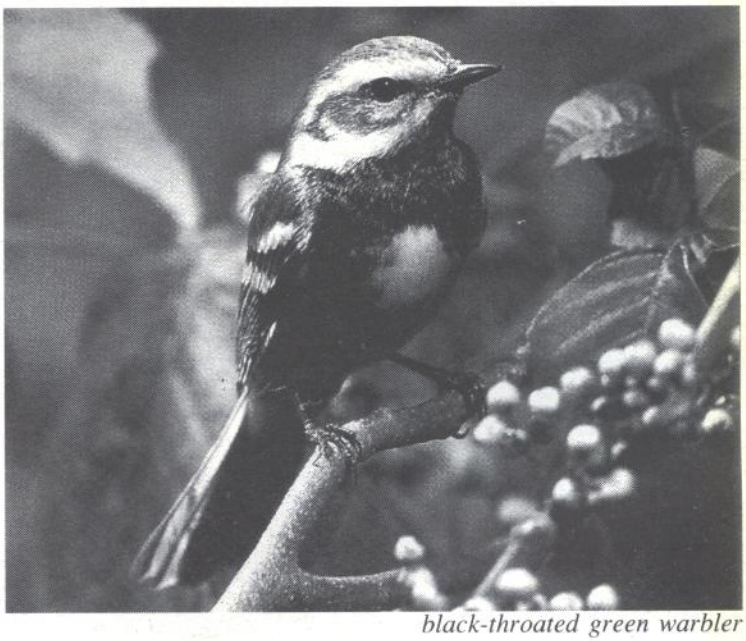
Our Songbirds Return To The Chattahoochee

by Colin Meaney

As you hike along your favorite trail in the Chattahoochee National Forest, you might be lucky enough to see a scarlet tanager, bright as a flaming arrow between the trees, or fortunate enough to catch the mellifluous song of a golden-winged warbler, or perhaps startle an ovenbird from her hut-like nest on the forest floor. What do all these songbirds have in common, other than making their homes in the Chattahoochee? All of them are what biologists call neotropical migrants, birds that spend the spring and summer in the United States but migrate to warmer climes in the fall.

The Chattahoochee National Forest is home to some 97 separate species of birds, 69 of which make an annual migration in search of sunnier perches and renewed food sources. Among these are the various species of warblers, vireos, tanagers, thrushes, and gnatcatchers. Many birds travel thousands of miles to Mexico and Central America, while others prefer the islands of Cuba, Haiti, and Puerto Rico. The distance these birds travel is nothing short of amazing, and fraught with dangers throughout.

From August to October, thousands of neotropical birds leave the Chattahoochee. Relying on internal fat reserves and a guidance system not completely understood by science, they brave the hazards of high winds, inclement weather, predation and starvation in a daunting procession. Especially at risk are those species making long journeys over the Caribbean, where a strong wind may blow them hopelessly off course. Many lives are also claimed in collisions with man-made structures such as bridges and buildings. As if this were not enough, after surmounting all the hazards of the journey south, many birds find their wintering grounds deforested, turned into coffee plantations or clearcuts, leaving them with no sanctuary.



black-throated green warbler

It is estimated that neotropical migrants have a mortality rate of 50%, meaning that it is rare for an individual to live three seasons. Further, small clutch size puts these birds at an increased risk in an already perilous lifestyle. Data collected from the 1960's to the 1980's shows a 50% reduction in the number of birds crossing the Gulf, one of the most popular flyways south. Clearly, these birds deserve all the breaks they can get.

In late March through early May, as the Georgia countryside is waking up in a wealth of flowers, our wearied travelers are returning home. The forest is rich and alive with the songs of male birds claiming territories and courting mates. During May the eggs are laid, and sometime in June the first chick pecks free of its shell. By the end of July the young birds have fledged and are training for their first trans-continental flight.

The Chattahoochee National Forest provides these birds with large areas of unfragmented territory which they need for breeding, foraging, and survival. Some species, like the cerulean warbler need several thousand acres per breeding pair, whereas other species require smaller areas, but may need a more specialized habitat of mature forest. Logging in the Chattahoochee can adversely affect the well-being of neotropical birds, especially during the nesting season when eggs or a clutch of young birds is defenseless. Even winter logging can be harmful in that it may alter the borders and inroads of their habitat, allowing predatory mammals and birds access to the interior of the forest where many birds nest.

If you are interested in learning more about neotropical migrants, or feel you'd like to help in some way, contact E.J. Williams of Partners in Flight at (912) 994-1438. Partners in Flight is working in conjunction with the Audubon Society, the Georgia Ornithological Society, the Forest Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service (non-game department) to produce a book called The Breeding Bird Atlas, which will record the location of all nesting species on a topographical map. Volunteers are needed for this project.■

Colin Meaney is a writer for Georgia ForestWatch and Co-Editor of Georgia's Native Forests

Forest Planning: The State of the Forests

Analysis of the Management Situation

by René Voss

National Forest planning is a long and arduous journey which we all will embark upon shortly. While the plan revision is now slated to begin in May of this year, a final plan will not be forthcoming until the end of 1998, at the earliest. Until then the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forest will be managed under an out-dated and flawed plan.

The first document that the Forest Service will be producing for the public's review as part of the Forest Plan revision is a report titled the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS). The AMS analyzes the current management situation in terms of progress towards meeting the goals and objectives established in the "old" Forest Plan for our forests and the plan's ability to achieve these goals and objectives.

This analysis indicates that some decisions made in the Forest Plan no longer provide for changing public desires, needs, and values while still maintaining a healthy and resilient forest ecosystem.

The major purpose for this document is to show the "need for change" for the resource on the forests for the Forest Plan revision.

According to the Forest Service, the long-term objectives of the current plan did not fully consider some of the ecosystem functions, processes, and biological diversity concerns known today. Continuing biological inventories have identified some species not previously known to be on the forests. New information and techniques are now available that improve the ability to do landscape level analysis in assessing the effects on the environment. The forest plan permits the restoration of ecosystem health but is weak or lacking in identifying where this is needed and the tools to accomplish it.

The combination of the AMS and the Southern Appalachian Assessment demonstrate that an ecological approach is needed to meet the intent of the Forest Service's ecosystem management policy.

Current Land Allocation

Overall, the Chattahoochee and Oconee National Forests contain 845,820 acres. This land is "zoned" for various uses and can be classified in one of three ways. There is land "suitable" for timber production, "not available" for timber production, and "not appropriate" for timber production.

Timber Production	Acres	(%)
Not Available	128,217	(15)
Not Appropriate	66,122	(8)
Suitable Base	651,481	(77)
Totals	845,820	(100)

"Not available" means that the areas are permanently withdrawn by congressional action (Wilderness, National Scenic, etc.) or by the Forest Service (Research Natural Areas, Endangered Species Habitat, etc.). "Not appropriate" means that a decision was made to withdraw these areas from timber production until the next forest planning period can revisit them. "Suitable" means that timber production is being done or planned for these lands.

Planning for the Oconee

by J.P. Schmidt

Currently, only a small area of the 115,000 acres that make up the Oconee National Forest is outside of general forest management and protected from logging and road-building. Areas under non-timber management include the Murder Creek Research Natural Area, the Hichiti Experimental Forest and a small Botanical Area near Monticello.

However, numerous areas worthy of special management exist - particularly riparian areas - along the Oconee, Appalachee, Ocmulgee and Little Rivers, and large areas of deciduous forest. The Scull Shoals area - near Athens - is of particular interest for management as a dispersed recreation area since it forms a large contiguous area of forest with extensive mature deciduous forest, archeological sites, and large beaver ponds. In addition, several compartments containing rare or unusual plant species - such as Oglethorpe oak and ginseng - should be designated as botanical areas.■

ID TEAM MEETINGS OPEN TO PUBLIC

The Long Range Management Plan for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests is being redone, and in order to develop the best possible new plan it is critical to have thorough public involvement. Public input is needed to identify key issues and concerns about how our Forests should be managed over the next 10 to 15 years. Suggestions about what did and did not work in the current Forest Plan are vital in preparing proposed actions and alternatives. The ID Team open house meetings have been initiated precisely with those purposes in mind.

The open house meetings not only give the public an idea about the stage of the revisions, but also give them a say about the issues. The Forest Interdisciplinary Team (IDT), hosting the open houses, consists of individuals knowledgeable in specific fields such as recreation, soil, water, timber management, biodiversity, and engineering. The ID Team analyzes each area of the National Forest for a range of possible management emphasis so that a "site-specific," yet socially and ecologically integrated approach can be achieved.

The monthly open meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at the Supervisor's Office, 508 Oak Street in Gainesville and will start at 10:00 am unless advance notice is given of a change.

For more information contact the Forest Service staff Marcus Beard or Caren Briscoe at (770) 536-0451.■

Wilderness: A Path To Sanity?

By Randall White, M.D.

Kelley Ridge-Moccasin Creek

P. Kirby

An intriguing idea has become popular among some environmentalists, many of whom are looking for the ultimate demonstration that humans, in order to survive, must maintain at least remnants of fully intact ecosystems. The aesthetic and recreational benefits of wilderness, while compelling, fall short when, as in our society, money becomes the arbiter of resource allocation. But what if our mental health, our social well-being actually depended on regular and substantial contact with nature? Perhaps then we could get real-estate and timber barons to stop destroying what we understand is an irreplaceable treasure.

I know many people who believe that their psychological health depends on regular hikes or prolonged camping trips. But I also know people who can't get by without a weekly massage, or a daily workout in the gym, or a quarter-hourly cigarette. Nonetheless, some very interesting research and philosophical writing has addressed the issue of humans' psychological response to nature. Paul Shepard wrote, in Nature and Madness, that hunter-gatherer children have prolonged and intense contact with nature in order to become competent adults. In industrialized societies, competence has much more to do with reading than with toadstool classification. Our development is consequently distorted, and Theodore Roszak suggests in his book, The Voice of the Earth, that we are all consequently neurotic as manifested by our willingness to destroy our own habitat.

As appealing as this conclusion might be, few scientific data exist on this topic. E.O. Wilson has provided a working hypothesis for behavioral scientists to explore. While agreeing with Shepard that our ancestors lived in much closer relation with nature, he posits that, according to Darwinian principles, they must have evolved psychological means to adapt to the wilderness. He calls this biophilia, "an innate attraction to life and lifelike processes." Since most humans abandoned this way of life only 10,000 years ago, each human still comes equipped with biophilic tendencies. But this phenomenon, like all human behavior, has complexities, and the dark side of biophilia is biophobia: an innate fearfulness or revulsion toward aspects of nature. Who isn't at least a little wary of snakes, thunderstorms or turbulent water? Without such wariness how long would one survive in the wilderness?

Research seems to substantiate positive and negative responses to nature which transcend gender and culture. Work by Rachel and Stephen Kaplan, psychologists at the University of Michigan, has shown that time spent in wilderness has quantifiable psychological benefit in normal adolescents and adults. Here in Georgia we have a successful program for troubled children, the Outdoor Therapeutic Program, with campuses at Camp Appalachian Wilderness in White County and at FDR State Park. The Kaplans have also studied the importance of "nearby nature," the parks and gardens which are a sort of surrogate wilderness. Wilderness, however, is a resource which merits special consideration because only there can we reproduce the experience of our ancestors, and no one yet knows the psychological consequences of completely divorcing humans from wilderness. Further study might help us understand in what ways wilderness can be therapeutic for people whose culture encourages both boundless desire and irreverence for other forms of life. That the psychological interpretation of wilderness can alone unravel our problematic relationship with nature remains speculative.■

Dr. White is a practicing psychiatrist and Adjunct Assistant Professor in Human and Natural Ecology at Emory University.

Adopt Mountain Treasures Areas for Special Protection

The Georgia Conservancy has launched a public involvement effort to help protect some of Georgia's special but unprotected mountain areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest. These areas are described in a beautiful book titled Georgia's Mountain Treasures, published by The Wilderness Society in 1995. Mountain Treasures books will be mailed to you at no charge in exchange for adopting one of these 44 areas. The Georgia environmental community wants to permanently protect these special areas from commercial logging and road-building and you can help by visiting and describing your adopted area or by simply writing letters in support for protecting the area. For more information call TGC at 404-876-2900.

ForestWatch Succeeds in Making Improvements in Roadless Inventory

by Shirl Parsons and René Voss

As part of the Southern Appalachian Assessment, the Forest Service has been conducting a roadless area review for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. As required by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), these roadless areas will be studied for possible wilderness recommendations during the upcoming revised forest plan. The previous inventory was RARE II and was done over 15 years ago. It resulted in 6 new wilderness area recommendation subsequently designated by Congress.

Many ForestWatch activists have been working with the Forest Service in an effort to identify our roadless areas and nominated most of the areas presented in Georgia's Mountain Treasures (about 235,000 acres); however, the Forest Service's initial inventory unveiled to the public in February of 1995, identified only 9 small areas in only 10,000 acres. After considerable outrage, 5 months of public pressure and ForestWatch negotiations, the Forest Service agreed to add 11 areas and 52,000 acres to the inventory. The first part of the Table is where the inventory stands at this point in time.

While the list is a major improvement from February 1995, ForestWatch believes the Forest Service is applying the roadless criteria too stringently and is disqualifying many areas worthy of study for possible wilderness. These areas are listed in the second part of the table and should be considered roadless but have not made it on the list.

Since many of these criteria are quite vague, the Forest Service's Regional Office in Atlanta has tried to provide guidelines so, it was hoped, they could be consistently applied. However, the guidelines themselves have often been similarly vague and may not have achieved the intended results, since these guidelines themselves are open to interpretation by Forest Service staff.

After almost a year of wrangling over the criteria and its application, there is still significant disagreement between the Forest Service and Environmental Groups in the Southern Appalachians. Because the Regional Office in Atlanta came up with the interpretation and guidance to the Forests, we have had to ask for help from the Washington Office of the Forest Service.

The Forest Service's criteria for roadless areas is a mixed bag. Some criteria are straightforward and some are not. For example, not more than one-half mile of "improved" road is allowed per 1,000 acres, and an area should be at least 5,000 acres, or can be smaller if it has a manageable boundary. Other criteria are quite vague: an area should provide "outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation." Areas must also be "natural appearing with the imprint of man substantially unnoticeable." And "improved roads" must be passable by "standard passenger-type vehicles" which can mean anything from a Jeep to the family wagon. This is not helpful at all.

However, there is still hope to add several areas to the inventory. Forest Supervisor George Martin has set up a Roadless Area Team to reconsider several areas nominated by various groups including ForestWatch. The team will consider new information presented by individuals or groups to determine if areas meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory or for wilderness study.

Chattahoochee National Forest Roadless Areas

SAA #	Included in Current Inventory	Acres	Totals
3001.	**Rock Gorge (Big Mtn.)** - Georgia Side	2,757	
	Blood Mtn. Extensions		
3002.	**Cedar Mountain**	374	
3003.	**Miller Creek**	705	
3004.	**Duck Branch** - Brasstown Extension	195	
3005.	**Ellicott Rock Extension**	707	
3006.	**Mountaintown (Pink Knob)**	12,121	
	Raven Cliffs Extensions		
3007.	**Boggs Creek**	2,071	
3008.	**Helton Creek**	2,414	
3009.	**Turner Creek**	1,486	
3010.	**Rocky Mountain**	4,283	
	Southern Nantahala Wilderness Extensions		
3011.	**Ben Gap**	1,291	
3012.	**Shoal Branch**	403	
3013.	**Till Ridge (Patterson Gap)**	1,203	
3020.	**Tate Branch**	1,087	
3014.	**Kelly Ridge**	8,359	
3015.	**Tripp Branch** - Tray Mountain Extension	627	
3016.	**Rabun Bald East (Sarah's Creek)**	6,895	
3017.	**Springer Mountain (Lance Creek)**	9,064	
3018.	**Wolf Knob (Joe Gap)**	5,340	
3019.	**Foster Branch** - Cohutta Extension	176	61,557
Others	**Not Included in Current Inventory**	**Acres**	
A.	**Rocky Face** of the Armuchee	5,000	
B.	**Stillhouse Cove** - Southern Nantahala Extension	300	
C.	**Rabun Bald West (Windy Gap)**	7,450	
D.	**Moccasin Creek**	3,990	
E.	**High Shoals**	3,850	
F.	**Grassy Mountain**	7,290	
G.	**Licklog**	7,400	
H.	**Mill Creek**	6,450	
I.	**Horse Gap**	5,400	
J.	**Blackwell Creek**	2,950	
K.	**Three Forks** of the Chattooga	3,650	
L.	**Buzzard Knob**	6,500	
M.	**Owl Creek** - Brasstown Extension	932	
N.	**Mark Trail** - East and West Extensions	2,600	
O.	**Blue Valley** - Overflow WSA Extension	1,600	
P.	**Ken Mountain** - Cohutta Extension	650	
Q.	**Fork Mountain** - Cohutta Extension	1,000	
R.	**Cold Mountain** - Rich Mountain Extension	4,500	
S.	**Indian Grave Gap** - Rich Mountain Extension	1,000	72,512
			137,069

Forest Supervisor George Martin has the discretion, under the NFMA rules, to include areas for wilderness study in the process. With enough public pressure, certain areas could be studied if George Martin hears from you.■

Here's what *You* can do to help:

Pick one or more of the areas in the second part of the Table, send a letter to George Martin and tell him why you think the areas should be in the roadless inventory:

George Martin - Forest Supervisor
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests
508 Oak Street, NW
Gainesville, GA 30501

Tax-Payer Subsidized Logging on Georgia's National Forests

by Ken Woods

The fiscal year 1994 Timber Sales Information Reporting Program (TSPIRS) report on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests is the most recent statement by the Forest Service of revenues and costs.

TSPIRS calculates revenues and costs on a forest-wide basis - or, in the instance of the Chattahoochee-Oconee, by combining the two forests in a single reporting unit, although they differ greatly in terrain, tree species, etc. This means that the revenues and costs for any single project or compartment within a forest unit remain obscured.

This report separates the "timber commodity" or commercial component of the timber sales program from the "stewardship" and "personal use" components. The commercial component was arguably designed to return money to the Treasury. The stewardship component includes timber sales designed to increase forest health, including salvage and to bring the forest closer to a "desired future condition" of that in the forest plan. The personal use component is there to provide firewood and Christmas trees.

Included in the FY 1994 TSPIRS report are 1) a **financial report** (i.e., a cash-flow analysis), 2) an **economic report,** and 3) a report that discusses **employment** and federal **tax** revenues resulting from the timber sales program. The financial report lists the "revenues" and "costs" of the three components nationally, as well as by region and forest unit. The economic report or "bare-land" analysis, compares the present and future "benefits" of the timber sales program - including many items for which there is no established market (includes biodiversity, water and certain forms of recreation) discounted to a present value, with the present and discounted future costs of the program[1].

"Revenues" for a given forest unit generally include timber receipts and typically contain non-cash receipts, such as purchaser road credits. "Costs" generally include road surfaces, culverts, bridges and project sale administration, but do not include payments to counties (generally about one-fourth of "receipts"), costs of constructing road bases (without surface), or office administration costs (for timber administration) of the national or regional offices. The Service steadfastly insists that the payment to counties are not expenses. Regarding the road base, or "prism" costs, the Service maintains that roads are permanent capital "improvements" and will neither add them as costs nor depreciate them. The Service does count the construction of road surfaces, culverts and bridges as cost items, and will accordingly depreciate these expenses. Administrative costs attributable to timber sales on a national and regional level are reported in TSPIRS but are not allocated among the individual forest units.

The Bottom Line

According to the Service, the stewardship and personal use components for the Chattahoochee-Oconee lost money in FY 1994 (i.e., costs exceeded revenues). For the commodity component, the financial report discloses that the forests received $3.273 million and spent $3.230 million, netting $42,000[2]. Nationwide, the commercial program netted $234 million using the Forest Service's cost assumptions in TSPIRS.

As a comparison, when the Wilderness Society took the report and moved around a few items (payments to counties were counted as costs, the road base construction costs were counted as a cost item and depreciated, and national and regional office administration costs were allocated among the various forests in proportion to the volumes of timber harvested) the Chattahoochee-Oconee lost over $1.5 million in FY 1994. Nationwide, the commercial program lost $121 million, with the Southern and Intermountain regions the only regions posting net revenues. Across the country, only 21 of 121 forest units had net gains; the rest either had no commercial program or lost money.

Regardless of whether one believes that the stewardship or personal use components should make money for taxpayers, a more precise review of the commercial component is necessary to determine if the Service is generating revenue.

Other Problems with TSPIRS

There are numerous other flaws with TSPIRS. Critics of the Service allege that TSPIRS fails to include all reforestation costs and land line location expenses (at least for some years) and that the Service fails to count necessary "resource costs". For example, wildlife "mitigation" following timber harvests are not counted as costs attributable to the timber program.

Theoretically, the most serious problem with the **financial** report is that it assumes costs incurred in a given year are attributable to the revenues received that same year. Revenues are typically received in the present year for timber sold in past years, while costs of reforestation are incurred to produce timber in the future, and should be considered against the discounted value of such future harvests (particularly if one wishes to determine whether attempts at reforestation will yield a profit in the future). The Service uses a "pooling" arrangement with costs that could allow for some adjustment for this problem. Critics maintain that "pooling" instead underestimates costs.

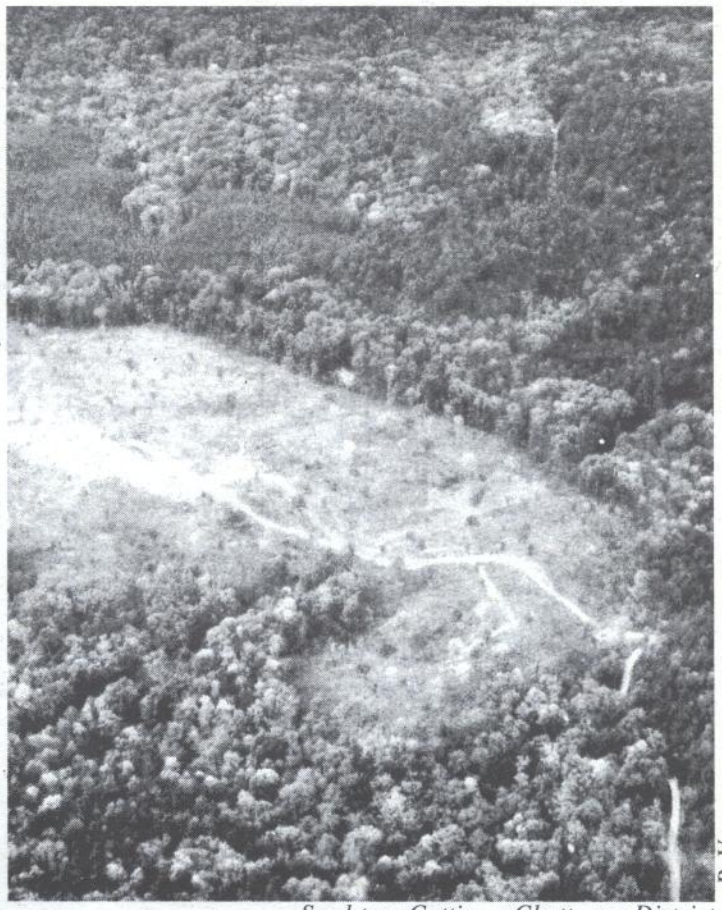
Economic Effects

With the **economic** report, some forest managers argue that their timber programs will provide water, non-game wildlife and other resources which may not have assignable fees or an established market . Other managers, sharing the same general area, watershed and other characteristics, may not include such resources as benefits. Critics disagree with the values assigned to resources that do not have an established market. In any event, the methodology used by the Service in the economic report is confusing or, if understood, subject to criticism. The discount rate, for example, used by the Service - historically, 4% - is probably too low when compared to the rates used by industry (i.e., private companies insist on greater returns for their investments), and results in a relatively high present value of the "benefits" to be realized by the program. The bottom line - private companies would produce very different reports, and the **economic** report, which is a useful document for reviewing the program, is usually ignored by most critics. The FY 1994 report states that the timber program for the Chattahoochee-Oconee realized a present net benefit, for all resources, of $2.5 million.

Jobs and Tax Revenue

Concerning the **employment** and **taxes** produced for the Chattahoochee-Oconee, 527 jobs were directly, indirectly or

Clearcutting - Chattooga District



Seed-tree Cutting - Chattooga District

R. Voss

The Forest Service reports to have reduced clearcutting by over 70% in our Forests by using other methods. Can you tell the difference?

Tax-Payer Funded Logging (cont.)

"induced" by the timber program, and $2.6 million in federal income tax was generated. Employment totals are figured using a formula not explained in TSPIRS for multiplying the effect of a single job; i.e., one logger's employment generates other jobs. The 527 jobs include Forest Service employment. Other reports contest the figures cited by TSPIRS[3].

District Comparisons

The FY 1995 TSPIRS figures are not yet available. There are some interesting data, however, that have been obtained from the Service on the FY 1995 timber cut. The Chattahoochee-Oconee, for example, has released data for the volume of timber cut in FY 1995, and the "value" of such timber, excluding purchaser road credits, for each district of the forest unit. Since "value" is not defined in the released data, the figures may be meaningless; however, once the FY 1995 TSPIRS report is published, there may be some comparison of the report with the data already released, to determine the gain or loss for individual districts of the forest unit, and to compare districts with each other[4]. This could effectively result in a means of determining if below-cost sales have occurred in a district as a whole, rather than in the forest unit as a whole, as is the case presently with TSPIRS.■

Ken Woods is an Attorney with the US Department of Commerce, FDIC and a member of the Georgia Conservancy

[1] The idea of discounting assumes that $1 today will be worth an increased amount in the future, adjusted for inflation, if it is presently invested. The discount rate may be thought of as an interest rate on the amount invested. Thus amounts estimated to be realized as revenues or costs in the future must be "discounted" to a present value. The economic report is designed to indicate the "present net benefits," if any, of the effects of the timber program.

[2] 35 MMBF was harvested for the commercial program.

[3] For example, a 1994 study by Dr. Peter A. Morton for the Wilderness Society, "The Living Landscape, Volume 5, Charting a New Course: National Forests in the Southern Appalachians," found that only 1,773 jobs were directly or indirectly associated with the national forest timber program in an 88 county region of the Southern Appalachians that includes part of all of 8 national forests, including the Chattahoochee National Forest.

[4] The Oconee National Forest constitutes a single district within the forest unit; hence, it may be possible to compare the gain or loss for that "district" with the rest of the unit.

ACTION ALERT

Repeal the Clearcut Salvage Rider:

Call your Congressman and Senators

A bill, H.R. 2745, to repeal the Timber Salvage rider has been introduced and needs your support.

Big timber and their congressional supporters, determined to substantially expand logging in America's national forests, pushed through a piece of legislation known as the Timber Salvage Rider. It was tacked on the 1995 Recissions Act which included disaster relief for victims of the Oklahoma bombing and California's earthquake and became a must-sign bill for President Clinton. Labeled by many as the worst anti-environmental legislation of this century, the rider became law July 27, 1995, suspending virtually all forest protection laws through the end of 1996. Provisions in the bill essentially give the Forest Service and the timber industry free reign on our public forests.

H.R. 2745, the "Restoration of Natural Resources Laws on Public Lands Act" needs your support.

Under the provisions, salvage is defined as 1) dead and dying trees, 2) "associated" trees, and 3) "trees lacking the characteristics of a healthy and viable ecosystem". This extremely broad and vague wording leaves a more precise interpretation up to the Forest Service and reports of many abuses in our forests, like changing green-tree sales into salvage sales, have been documented. The rider has also opened up large tracks of ancient, old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest which are home to endangered species. All of these projects had been previously ruled illegal. The law suspends the appeals process and limits judicial review in the courts. Because the law suspends all environmental laws, citizens and agencies, such as the Fish and Wildlife Service, have not been able to protect endangered salmon runs or habitat for endangered sea birds.

Because the rider cut citizens out of the process in several sales in northwest Georgia, the Armuchee Alliance had to file a lawsuit to delay a large clearcut project in the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee NF.

H.R. 2745 needs your support. It currently has over 126 cosponsors. Calls and letters to your representative are needed. A companion bill by Sen. Bradley has been be introduced in the US Senate. The Capitol Switchboard number is: 1-800-962-3524 or (202)224-3121. Please call and ask for your Representative's or Senators' office.

Outings and Events Calender

April 11 **FOREST PLAN ID TEAM MEETING** - Open to the public. Gainesville office, US Forest Service. Contact: Marcus Beard or Caren Briscoe @ 770-536-0541

April 21 **Kelley Ridge Roadless Area Outing** - Georgia Botanical Society led trip to Dismal Creek area, Union County. Contact: Will Griffin @ 404-429-1836

April 28 **Patterson Gap Roadless Area Outing** - Georgia Botanical Society led trip to Till Ridge Cove area, Rabun County. Contact: Will Griffin @ 404-429-1836

April 29 **DAVE FOREMAN** - The Eco-Warrior himself will be visiting Atlanta and speak at a Patagonia event. Contact: Sean Crosby @ 404-266-8182

May 9 **FOREST PLAN ID TEAM MEETING** - Open to the public. Gainesville office, US Forest Service. Contact: Marcus Beard or Caren Briscoe @ 770-536-0541

May 11 **Slaughter Gap Botanical Field Trip** - Georgia ForestWatch led field trip. Contact: Angela Fincher or GFW @ 404-872-9453

May 12 **Wildhog Creek Vegetation Monitoring** - Georgia Botanical Society trip to learn about monitoring techniques. Contact: Will Griffin @ 404-429-1836

May 24-27 **NATIONAL FOREST REFORM RALLY** - This years annual Forest Reform Rally will be held in the Bankhead National Forest in north central Alabama. Contact: Bankhead Monitor @ 205-974-6166

June 13 **FOREST PLAN ID TEAM MEETING** - Open to the public. Gainesville office, US Forest Service. Contact: Marcus Beard or Caren Briscoe @ 770-536-0541

June 29 **Wildhog Creek Vegetation Monitoring** - Georgia Botanical Society trip to learn about monitoring techniques. Contact: Will Griffin @ 404-429-1836

Georgia ForestWatch Home-Page On The Internet

Look for the Georgia ForestWatch home-page on the World Wide Web at:

http://www.mindspring.com/~gfw/home.html

e-mail us at: gfw@mindspring.com

Georgia ForestWatch Leaders:

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Vice-President:	Howard Markel
Acting Treasurer:	Shirl Parsons
Newsletter:	Colin Meaney, René Voss

District Contacts:

Armuchee District:	**Janice Walraven**
Armuchee Alliance	(706)629-0540
Brasstown District:	**Howard Markel** (770)781-5418
Chattooga District:	**James Sullivan** (706)886-8265
Cohutta District:	**Brent Martin** (404)876-7798
Oconee District:	**John Paul Schmidt** (706)613-8483
Tallulah District:	**Mort Meadors** (706)745-5799
Toccoa District:	**Dennis Stansell** (770)536-9669

ForestWatch Wish List:

(Things we need)

- **Color Scanner** for Computer, Newsletter, and Web Pages
- **Tape Backup** for computer to backup GIS and other data
- **Treasurer** for Georgia ForestWatch (Accountant preferred or knows Quicken)
- Donation of **100% Recycled Paper** for Newsletter or Alerts
- **Newsletter Printing** donation
- **Tree-Ring Borer**
- **Trimble GPS Unit** for field verification and data gathering