Georgia ForestWatch

Winter Issue
2000

FOREST NEWS

WINTER 2000

©Kerry Stroud Green

Hoar Frost on Cold Mountain, Taccoa Ranger District.

Photo by Kathryn Kolb

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Georgia ForestWatch Editorial

by Brent Martin, GFW Executive Director

You've got the money, but we've got the time. You cut the hardwoods, and we'll burn the pine.

- Poster found in a southern National Forest, 1930

If the anti-Forest Service sentiment expressed in the limerick above has relevance today, it could most certainly be used to interpret recent events here in the north Georgia mountains. A chain of arsonist fires in wilderness and roadless areas, and a wild variety of misinformation campaigns which targeted the Forest Service, characterized this fall's last major comment period on the new forest plan. One possible re-write of this limerick might be, "You've got the power, and you've got the ground; you make it wilderness, and we'll burn it down." At least that seemed to be the message. What began as a relatively tame set of public workshops on the "rolling alternative" in Gainesville, Dalton, and Eatonton back in October, degenerated quickly as anti-wilderness, pro-access, pro-timber forces aligned for the map based "public input" meetings which occurred in the first two weeks of December. The first two public workshops were pretty straightforward: the Forest Service presented the public with a map of the alternative, and a handout describing what all the numbers on the map meant, and the public was allowed to comment on the four issues that the FS had determined summarized everything, namely, biodiversity, water, recreation, and resource uses. There was almost unanimous agreement at these first two meetings that the new forest plan was heading in the right direction, with little opposition to the Forest Service's meager proposal for 33,000 acres of new wilderness, 32,000 acres of remaining roadless area protection, etc.. However, by the time the Gainesville meeting arrived, the sentiment had changed drastically, as the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Trout Unlimited, Off-Road vehicle associations, and the timber industry aligned to try and gut these meager wilderness and scenic recommendations.

Trout Unlimited, which had originally been a signatory organization on our conservation proposal for the protection of Georgia's Mountain Treasures, was a vocal opponent to wilderness at the Gainesville meeting, as they argued that it would eliminate their ability to artificially manipulate mountain streams for non-native game trout species, i.e., Browns and Rainbows. Their case in point was Mountaintown creek, a lovely stream that bi-sects the 12,000 acre Mountaintown roadless area. TU was concerned that if the Forest Service recommended this area for wilderness, which they currently are, they would lose their option to continue getting into Mountaintown creek with a backhoe, felling large trees in riparian areas, and installing wire holding structures in the streambank. Although the Forest Service had carefully drawn the wilderness recommendation to exclude the section of Mountaintown creek that they currently "manage", TU felt that they might want to do this with the rest of the stream at some future point. They suddenly found themselves allied with off-road vehicle users, mountain bikers that currently have a mountain bike trail running the entire length of the riparian area, and the DNR, which would like to provide more wildlife openings and early successional habitat in this area. Strange bedfellows.

The DNR also emerged as a vocal opponent to wilderness here in the 11th hour. Forest Service meetings suddenly became peppered with DNR uniforms and DNR trucks and intense efforts to represent

See Editorial, page 5

Angela Faye Martin, Tanner Martin & Taylor Barnhill view old growth Buckeye in the Kelly Ridge roadless area. *Photo by Brent Martin.*

Land and Water Conservation Fund: Hostage to Oil and Commercial Recreation Interests

by Randall F. White

Well, it seemed too good to be true, and was. Having anti-conservation legislators writing a bill to reinvigorate the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has resulted in the insertion of language that will potentially do considerable harm to coastal areas in oil-drilling states. The LWCF should be providing $900 million per year for acquisition of land, but Congress has under funded it for the past decade and a half. Legislation to permanently fund it is under debate, and major players include Rep. Young and Sen. Murkowski, two Republicans from Alaska, with powerful committee chairs. Their goal is to increase oil production in Alaska and LWCF is their tool. By loading legislation with promises of money for lots of constituencies, they can create considerable support for bad policy.

The bill that recently passed the House Resources Committee, the Conservation and Recreation Act of 1999 (H.R. 701), would provide $900 million for LWCF, $150 million for conservation easements and species recovery, $600 million for urban parks, $350 million for state wildlife conservation and a whopping one billion dollars for coastal impact assistance. Sounds great, no? Well, the language includes major incentives for off-shore oil drilling, especially in Alaska, and the coastal impact money has few restrictions so that it could be used by local governments for environmentally damaging projects such as onshore road and port construction. The state wildlife money would probably go for meddlesome programs, and the bill doesn't even fully address the problem of annual appropriations for LWCF. This is not what conservationists hoped for. Furthermore, there's rumor of a very bad bill, S. 1969, being inserted into this package. It is an "outfitter bill of rights" that Scott Silver of Wild Wilderness in Oregon says "rewrites the Wilderness Act with respect to permitted commercial uses within designated Wilderness. It is that bad." The bills we should support are still in Congress, although they haven't passed committee. S. 446 and H.R. 798 have no incentives for oil drilling and no money for questionable programs. Ask your representative and senators to support these, not H.R. 701 (a.k.a. CARA), at least not in its present form. ❖

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Forest Service Seeks Help Finding Arsonist

Chatsworth, Georgia-U.S. Forest Service investigators are asking the public for assistance in their search for the person or persons who set 25 fires along the Beech Bottom Trail within the Cohutta Wilderness over the New Year's weekend. Sometime during the night of January 1st or the early morning of January 2nd, someone set a number of fires along this popular trail.

"We're asking anyone who was camping or hiking in that portion if the Cohutta Wilderness, either on Beech Bottom Trail or at Jacks River Falls, the weekend of January 1st or 2nd, to please call us," said Jim Crowe, Law Enforcement Officer for the Forest Service in Chatsworth. "It may be that you saw something that really doesn't mean much unless it's paired with information from other people in the area,". He continued, "we want to be able to get as much information as possible in order to catch this arsonist."

The fires burned about 300 acres of forest within the Cohutta Wilderness. "In addition to damaging valuable forest resources, wildfires are costly to fight, threaten private homes and property, and oftentimes put firefighters and the public at personal risk," said Crowe. Anyone who visited the Cohutta Wilderness near Beech Bottom Trail or Jacks River Fall on January 1st or 2nd are asked to call Jim Crowe at (706) 695-6737. ❖

Status of Watershed/Riparian Emphasis in the Plan Revision Process

by Tam Davenport, Cherokee Forest Voices

The Southern Appalachian Planners have a variety of tools to assist them in planning management activities in certain watershed and riparian areas. Among those tools are four land allocation prescriptions-Source Water Protection Watersheds, Reference Watersheds, Watershed Restoration Areas, and Aquatic Habitat Areas. Also included in the tools are Standards and Guidelines for defining the width and extent of riparian buffers, along with permitted and prohibited activities. A third tool is Management Area Direction-a listing of goals and objectives for a landscape scale area that may contain unique conditions. This direction may provide additional guidance for management where watershed values take precedence over other values of the area.

The Planners are struggling with the use of these tools. They have relied on recommendations from a team appointed by the region. The initial recommendation of this team related to methods of defining and mapping riparian ecosystems. When it was revealed that this recommendation would allocate 35-40% of the forests to a riparian prescription, the planners rejected the recommendation.

The regional team then proposed to perform a rapid assessment of the conditions and vulnerability of watersheds on the forest. Analyzing the data for 20 factors, the team divided the watersheds of the forest into 4 quadrants: better condition/lower vulnerability; better condition/higher vulnerability; lower condition/lower vulnerability; and lower condition/higher vulnerability. The idea was to assign prescriptions to watersheds and/or provide management area direction depending on watershed condition or vulnerability. This notion was rejected by the Steering Committee of the Planning Team-in this case, the allocation of land to watershed emphasis would be approximately 50% of the

See Status of Watershed, page 8

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!

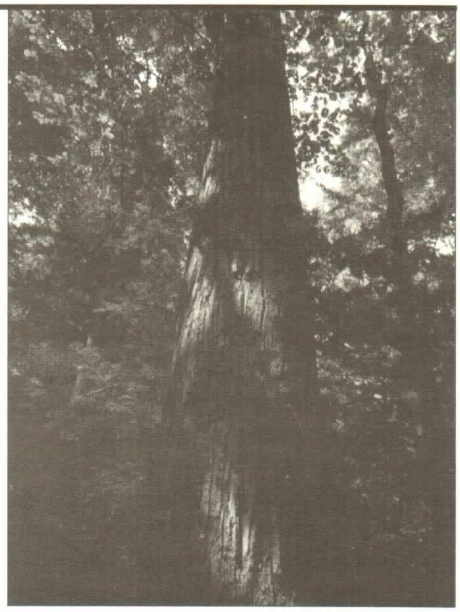
Georgia ForestWatch would like to thank all the members who responded to our November 12th fundraising letter/accomplishments update. Our organization is founded and operated with the belief that the future of our environment depends upon the actions of individuals like you. (Thanks & apologies to those whose contributions were received after press time.) If the response continues at the current rate, we hope to reach $10,000 within the next month - which would cover either all travel expenses for the year, or all newsletter expenses and office supplies for the year!

Doug Adams, John Allerdice, Peggy Anderson, Elizabeth Andrew, Jack Araj, Daisy Arrington, Brian Baker, Albert Balows, Doug Barlow, Ellen and Ted Bayley, Stacy Beasley, Brandy Belville, Goebel Berry, Bill Blakeslee, Stephen Bloomingdale, Betty Ann Boggs, Julie Robertson Bone, Jerry Bowden, Len Boymer, Carol Brady, Kay Breyer, Susan Bridges, Don & Mary Brockway, Hart Brooks, David Brown, Elaine Brown, Sherry Bryant, Lucinda Bunnen, Liz Burlingame, Martin Burrell, David Busch, Bill Buzbee, Jim Callison, Jean Caputa, Tom & Linda Carroll, Philip Cheek, Billy Chism, Mike Clark, Cherry Clements, Chalmus Cochran, C. Cochran, Stephanie Coffin, Dorothy Dabbs, Edwin Dale, Kevin Darrow, Seabury Davies, Max Davis, William & Mary Davis, Michael A. Dean, Barbara Decker, John DeLoach, Malon DeLong, Frank DePinto, Tobias Dirks, David Dodge, Robert Doeseckle, Ogden Doremus, Judi Dorsey, Jim Eady, Martin & Anne Emanuel, John Ethridge, Frances Evans, Laura Faller, Steve Fisher, Tom Fowler, Elizabeth Fox, Frank & Karen Fuerst, Christine Gardiner, John Garst, Jud Germon, Norman Giles, John Giles, Tom Gorman, Joseph Gouge, Tom Govus, Mildred Greear, Beth Green, Dolores & Gene Hall, Herbert Halwes, Margaret Harnbin, William Harbin, MD, Ronn Harding, Cherie Haun, Rick & Gail Hayden, Charles, Hertwig, Jr., Jacqueline Heyda, Dietrich & Petra Hoecht, Carolyn Hoffmann, James Holliman, Marjorie Hornsby, Patricia Howell, Rod Ingraham, M.D., John Izard, Sue Jamieson, Janet Johnson, Mike Jones, Rene Kane, Thomas Keene, Bob Kibler, R.Kilpatrick, Leon Kramer, Adele Kushner, Thomas Lanier, Jr., Steve Laub, Dr. Alan Lease, Susan & David Lennox, Lillian Lin, Gary Ludi, Frances Mallory, Frances Maney, Tom Manning, H.L. MarLead, Annel Martin, David Martin, Linda Martinson, Bill McCalley, Ken and Tami

See Thank You, page 8

Georgia ForestWatch Joins Orion Society's Grassroots Network

Georgia ForestWatch is proud to announce our participation in the Orion Society's Grassroots Initiative. We invite our members to take advantage of this offer. For $30 you will receive one year (four issues of each magazine) of Orion and Orion Afield. Ten dollars of your subscription fee supports the work of Georgia ForestWatch, while the remainder supports the Orion community of writers, poets, scientists, educators and artists. Known widely as the literary, artistic and philosophic voice of the environmental movement, Orion brings you today's most thoughtful and soul-stirring writing on the relationship between people and nature; Orion Afield celebrates the hands-on experiences of people working to protect, preserve and restore the natural areas in the places where they live. Find out why 80% of Orion/Orion Afield subscribers renew their subscription every year; why 90% of readers keep every issue for their personal library; and why Utne Reader has nominated Orion five times for Best Publication in its Alternative Press Awards. ❖



Tulip Poplar at Cooper Creek
Photo by Kathryn Kolb

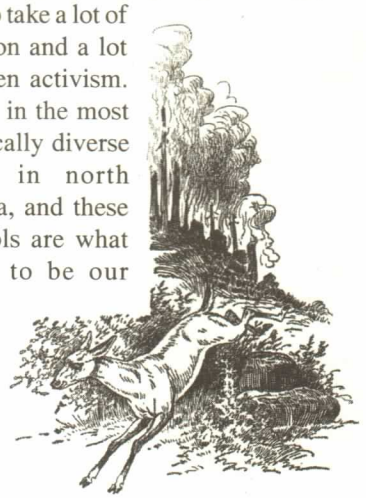
Editorial

Continued from page 2

"their public." (Last year, I purchased a hunting license and a fishing license, as well as an $18.00 WMA stamp, and I don't ever recall giving them permission to represent me as "their public") But there they were, shaking hands with everyone who looked like they might own a gun, and talking about how the new forest plan was a bad deal for hunters and fishers. Ironically, Georgia Outdoor News published an article to this effect around the same time. At the first "public input" meeting in Blairsville, over 300 people showed up because they had heard that the Forest Service's new forest plan was going to eliminate hunting on the National Forest. They had also heard that the Forest Service was going to condemn land to make new wilderness areas. Needless to say, there was not much meaningful input at that meeting, nor at the ones that followed, as the rumors continued to fly and existing wilderness areas continued to burn under the arsonist's blaze. Furthermore, as the arsonists continued burning roadless and wilderness areas, the meetings became bizarre forums for private property rights advocates arguing that wilderness areas would eventually result in the destruction of private property.

One of the most disturbing aspects of this "dialogue" between interests is the fear that exists on both sides. Conservationists fear that the Forest Service is doing nothing more than representing the timber industry with their "restoration" prescriptions, which still allow a great deal of vegetative management, and in which commercial timber sales would be a "by-product". This fear seems justified, as over 400,000 acres (half the forest) would be in some prescription that would possibly generate wood products. (We have jokingly referred to this alternative as the Georgia Forestwatch job security alternative) Conservationists also fear that the DNR is concerned about nothing but game species like deer and turkey, and that they would turn the whole forest into one big wildlife opening if they could guarantee every hunter a deer. This fear is also somewhat justified, as the DNR does have an enormous interest in future access and management options for National Forest lands, particularly roadless areas, where they have opportunities to expand their programs.

Anti-wilderness, anti-roadless advocates fear that they will be locked out of the forest, losing traditional access (not to mention future access), as well as hunting and fishing privileges. These fears are also justified, as new wilderness areas and existing roadless areas would be closed to motorized access, though not to hunting and fishing. They also fear that this is all just another example of kooky environmentalists taking over the forest, without any sensitivity to local issues. The reality is that our few remaining roadless areas on the forest are already being impacted by illegal ORV use, as well as most of our designated wilderness areas. To open these areas up to legal ORV use and budget driven game managers (i.e. more food plots and roads) would destroy some of the last intact watersheds and opportunities for solitude we have left in the state. I hope that this brief article illustrates the current dynamic of wildlands protection here in north Georgia. If it is going to change, it's going to take a lot of education and a lot of citizen activism. We live in the most biologically diverse region in north America, and these two tools are what appear to be our only hope of retaining that status. Neither are that expensive. As Georgia Forestwatch enters the third millennium, we will continue our commitment to both. We hope that you, as a member, will as well. Happy New Year, and see you at the next planners' meeting! ❖



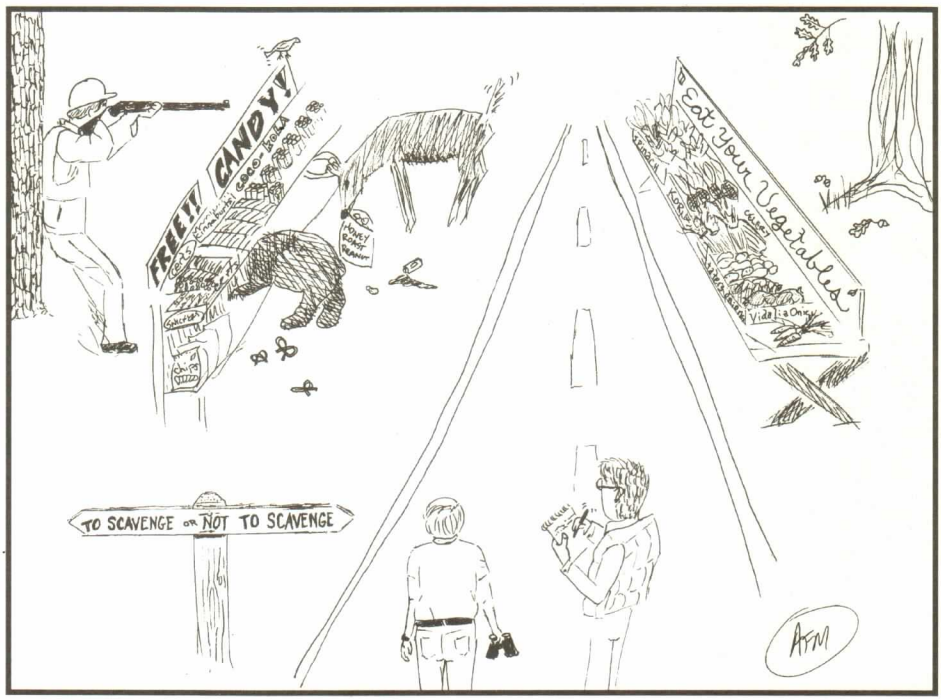
Historic Opportunity to Permanently Protect National Forest Wild Lands

by Randall White

President Clinton on Oct. 13 directed the Forest Service to develop a policy to protect existing roadless areas in National Forests. The Forest Service has admitted that its current approach to road building and maintenance has failed to protect the public's resources. Chief Dombeck wrote in a memo, "...roads can contribute to erosion, landslides, and slope failure... [and] may allow entry of exotic and noxious species, increased person-caused fires, disrupted habitat connectivity...." We couldn't have said it better. Unfortunately, not everyone agrees.

Two hearings on the proposal were recently held in Georgia: a regional one in Atlanta on 30 November, and a local one in Gainesville on 13 December. At the Atlanta hearing, 52 people commented and only two spoke in opposition of protection. At the meeting in Gainesville, anti-wilderness forces showed up in force. Of 77 people commenting, 60% spoke against protection, and most confused roadless areas with designated wilderness. The phrase "a neglected forest" was heard repeatedly. One person said that wilderness eventually becomes "a wasteland with dead trees, no animals and uncontrolled fires." Others insisted that animals need "food plots," that disabled people would be denied access and that children of mountain communities would end up on welfare. Misinformation and emotion abounded, but, clearly, some organizing had gone on.

This initiative is the most important conservation legacy the President will leave. Nationwide, 40 million acres of forest could be protected, and if Alaska is included, as it ought to be, 60 million acres meet the criteria mentioned by the President of being inventoried roadless areas of 5000 acres or more. In Georgia, total inventoried roadless acreage is 63,287. The official comment period is over, but if you haven't yet you should write to your member of Congress and to our senators in support of the President's proposal, and request protection of all roadless areas in all national forests (Sen. Cleland is already is support, so give him your thanks). A Congressional attempt to block the initiative is expected. ❖



FOOD PLOTS vs. NATURE

"Bob, I think the evidence is clear. 4 out of 5 whitetail deer prefer peanut butter cups to spinach."

Appalachian Foothills Heritage Association

The Chattahoochee Forest's long compromised Armuchee Ranger District has gained the steadfast allegiance of one of the region's most respected and competent forest activists, Kenneth A. Wills of Birmingham, Alabama. Georgia ForestWatch, Alabama Environmental Council and WildAlabama with Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition welcome Ken in a joint project named Appalachian Foothills Heritage Association (A.F.H.A.). He will be continuing current campaigns to garner support and carry out new initiatives that will benefit the bio-region held in common by Alabama and Georgia. We are most excited for someone to be focusing on Forest Service land acquisition, on the most fragmented district in the Chattahoochee National Forest. It currently looks like scattered pigeon droppings on a city sidewalk, at least on the map, quipped Angela Faye Martin, GFW's Armuchee District Leader, ...but Ken's going to be working to fix that. Not to mention, Scott Layfield, of the Forest Service's LaFayette office is one of the most innovative rangers on the forest and his expertise will compliment our efforts on the district.

Another one of A.F.H.A.'s chief initiatives will be to foster a land ethic with local leaders such as Chambers of Commerce, Representatives, their staffs and other local decision makers. Land and Water Conservation advocacy for key areas will be part of Ken's work. With his adept knowledge of eco-regional biodiversity, he will continue to instill within our public officials a natural "sense of wonder" for these unique areas. Ken is an authority of Native American history and one of his deep passions is cultivating an appreciation of this history in all of our hearts and keeping a heritage intact for which future Southerners can be guardians. ❖

December 17, 1999

Open letter to the public regarding protection of roadless areas:

We, the undersigned, wish to reiterate our endorsement of the Forest Service move to protect existing roadless areas in our national forests. We were included in a long list of scientists who made that point in an earlier letter to President Clinton. In light of recent press coverage claiming that logging is good for wildlife, we now feel compelled to take our concerns to the public.

An Associated Press story this past week argued that "too little logging hurts some dwindling species" and that the protection of a small fraction of natural forest from further environmental insults will lead to declines in species associated with young forest. One source stated that logging is the only way to provide habitat for these species. Such statements are readily seized by the logging industry as justification for blocking the protection of the few remaining acres of intact forest left in the eastern United States. But these assertions are untrue.

The scientific data are very clear: forest fragmentation is one of the leading causes of population declines in a long list of forest creatures, from black bears to scarlet tanagers to trillium. Some of these have been demonstrated to flourish only when their habitats are available in large, continuous tracts of unfragmented forest. The development of habitats for these mature forest species requires decades, even hundreds of years, and the places still harboring these species in viable numbers have diminished to a tiny fraction of their original extent. Roadless areas offer the best opportunities to promote the survival and reproduction of species, such as black bear, that are known to be negatively affected by roads.

We do not agree that protecting the remaining small roadless areas, totaling 750,000 acres in the national forests of the Southern Appalachians, will jeopardize the status of a few "early successional" forest species, such as Golden-winged Warblers, which are experiencing declines. Indeed, it is likely that a number of these species are declining in response to the recovery of the native forests following the period of intensive forest clearing that occurred earlier this century a time when they experienced unnatural population explosions.

Early successional habitats are found widely throughout the region, and many species that use them are common in our suburban backyards. They are also present in old growth forests, where natural disturbances of all kinds (fire, wind and ice storms, etc.) create forest openings. That some of these species are in decline is a reason for concern, but in the meantime, let us stand on solid ground: there are no studies demonstrating that roadless or wilderness protection is responsible for their decline.

Let the public be assured: Roadless areas on our national forests represent one of the least human-disturbed landscapes in the global context of which virtually all landscapes show some evidence of human disturbance. They act as refuges for numerous sensitive plant and animal species, reservoirs of genetic material, and benchmarks for research. Streams flowing from roadless areas typically provide supplies of the purest water, untainted by chemical pollutants and sediment, and thus provide the highest quality habitat for freshwater organisms as well as drinking water for people. They deserve our protection.

Sincerely,

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Are you interested in keeping up with developments in the Forest Service's roads and roadless policies? Visit these websites: www.fs.fed.us/news/roads and www.roadless.fs.fed.us

GFW 2000 Calendars

Because they were so well received last year, Georgia Forestwatch's award-winning photographer, Kathryn Kolb, with help from a grant from REI has produced another 4-color forest desk calendar, meticulously printed on high-quality kaolin-coated tree free paper. (It's made from bamboo.) And once again each photograph is also a citizen comment card, pre-addressed to one of our public officials. So you can uplift your spirits by looking at some of Georgia's most beautiful places, and then at the end of each month let your concern for these wild places be known by mailing the postcard. They are reasonably priced at $10.00 or $5.00 for members or FREE with new membership/renewal. And your support for Georgia Forestwatch will be very much appreciated.

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Georgia ForestWatch T-shirts

We still have a few beautiful, new, 100% organic cotton T-shirts for only $15, which includes mailing costs. Our full-color logo is on the back, and on the left front in black lettering is "Georgia ForestWatch-Protecting and Restoring Our Native Forests". You may order as many as you wish. Sizes available are S, M, L and XL.

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Georgia ForestWatch is online at:
www.gafw.org

Status of Watershed

Continued from page 4

forest.

On the Cherokee National Forest, we have tried a third approach. This approach was built around the role of the state in implementing the Clean Water Act. The state has identified nine reference watersheds in the area of the forest. The forest has a prescription allocation for reference watersheds. Each of the watersheds should be allocated to the reference watershed prescription. The state has identified several 303(d) segments in the vicinity of the forest. To complement the work of the state, the forest should allocate lands in the watershed of these segments to the watershed restoration prescription. The state has designated a reach of the Hiwassee River as a mussel sanctuary. The forest should complement the work of the state by allocating the watershed of this segment to the aquatic habitat area prescription. The same would apply to the Conasauga River and Citico Creek. This strategy has been rejected by the leadership team of the forest, even though several groups reached consensus on this strategy during the public meetings.

Some token land allocations have been made to support watershed values. There is general agreement that riparian zones will be unsuitable for timber production (although we have no definition of what constitutes the riparian zone). Beyond this, the planning team is floundering. Worse, they are waiting to be told what to do. And, perhaps, even worse, the Steering Committee is waiting for a proposal that will give them a preconceived acceptable answer before they will provide direction. ❖

Thank You

Continued from page 4

McClung, Phyllis Miller, Anne & Hugh Mitchell, Denise Moore, Frank & Winifred Morris, Jo Myers, Gladys Myratt, Ed Nicholson, Hugh & Carol Nourse, John & Judy O'Donnell, Shane Olson, John Orr, Karen Osborne, R.E. Palmer, Kathy Patrick, Gunda Perry, Carole Perry, Chuck Peters, Brenda Podratz, Chris & Jim Powers, Robert Prezulman, Nicola Printer, Walter Rehm, Doug Riddle, Susan Rogers, Susan Rowe, Catherine Sale, Holt Sanders, Joseph Sardonia, Bob Scholz, Roberta Sedam, Dan Sewell, Maureen Shields, Sid Shortt, Courtney Siceloff, William Simmons, Marianne Skeen, Jean Smilie, Ed Speir, Ted Spetnagel, Martha Ann Stegar, Jean P. Steinhaus, Robert Stephens, Gene Surles, Bill & Lynda Talmadge, Jason Tamblyn, George Taylor, Doug Triestram, Charles Turner, Julie Tuttle, Carl Tyler, Jr., James Unger, Sandra VanValkenburg, John Vaughn, Carl & Nancy Verber, Steve & Jackie Walburn, Jerome Walker, John & Ann Watson, Milt Webb, Ed & Jane Powers Weldon, Herb and Myrna West, Charles Wharton, Randall White, John & Linda Williams, Woodie Williams, Larry Winslett, Bob Woodall, Greg & Dimmis Ziegler & all the GFW staff. ❖

GEORGIA FORESTWATCH MEMBERSHIP

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone : _____

E-mail: _____

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Check one—all are tax deductible

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Regular	☐ $15	☐ $25
Student	☐ $8	☐ $12
Generous	☐ $40	☐ $65
Extra Generous	☐ $100	☐ $150
Gilded	☐ $200	☐ $300
Life	☐ $350	☐ $500

GFW membership: _____

___# of calendars @$10.: _____

___# of calendars @ $5.
(members' price): _____

___# of T-shirts @$15. _____
S__ M__ L__ XL__

Total: _____

Please make your check payable to Georgia ForestWatch and mail to (or come by): Georgia ForestWatch, 4 River Street, Suite C, Ellijay, GA 30540. You can pick up a calendar at REI Atlanta 1800 NE Expressway (404) 636-6508 or Patagonia Atlanta 34 East Andrews Dr. NW (404) 266-8182.

Calendar of Events

Feb. 28: Freshwater Species Science Day, hosted by Conasauga River Alliance.

Feb. 29: Mussel Day, both at the beautiful Cohutta Springs Lodge near Chatsworth. For more info call C.R.A. at: 706-695-3950

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Mar. 18: "A Winter Tree I.D." at Coopers Creek, hosted by Georgia Botanical Society's Prez, Richard Ware. If you want to learn trees by their "bark" this is the trip you've been waiting for!

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Apr. 8: Birding Excursion at Kelly Ridge. Hosted by bird aficionado and GFW prez, Randall White. This... you don't want to miss.

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May 19: Photography Workshop GFW's favorite photographer, Kathryn Kolb, assists the budding naturalist/ photographer in you, on a once in a lifetime outdoor workshop. (B.Y.O.C.) Bring your own camera! Ramp Cove.

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Apr. 29: Insect Hike, everything you've ever wanted to learn about your insect friends. Join Dr. John Pickering, University of Georgia entomologist, in the North Georgia mountains.

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July 22: The World of Butterflies & Moths, a nighttime event of winged creatures with Bill Kelly (a real treat for kids of all ages).

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Jul. 29: Snorkeling on the Conasauga with USFS's Jim Herrig.

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Aug. 5: "Just kidz" (and their folks) view fishes of the Conasuaga River! "Kids are the best naturalists in the world." - Angela Faye Martin, Watershed Project Coordinator.

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Sept. 23-24: Retreat, GFW Annual Activist's Retreat

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Each outing is limited. So, call the GFW office at 706-635-8733 for details and reservations. ❖

A special thanks to Dr. Jerome Walker for his donation of an Old Town canoe to Georgia ForestWatch. We can't wait to put it to work this Spring.