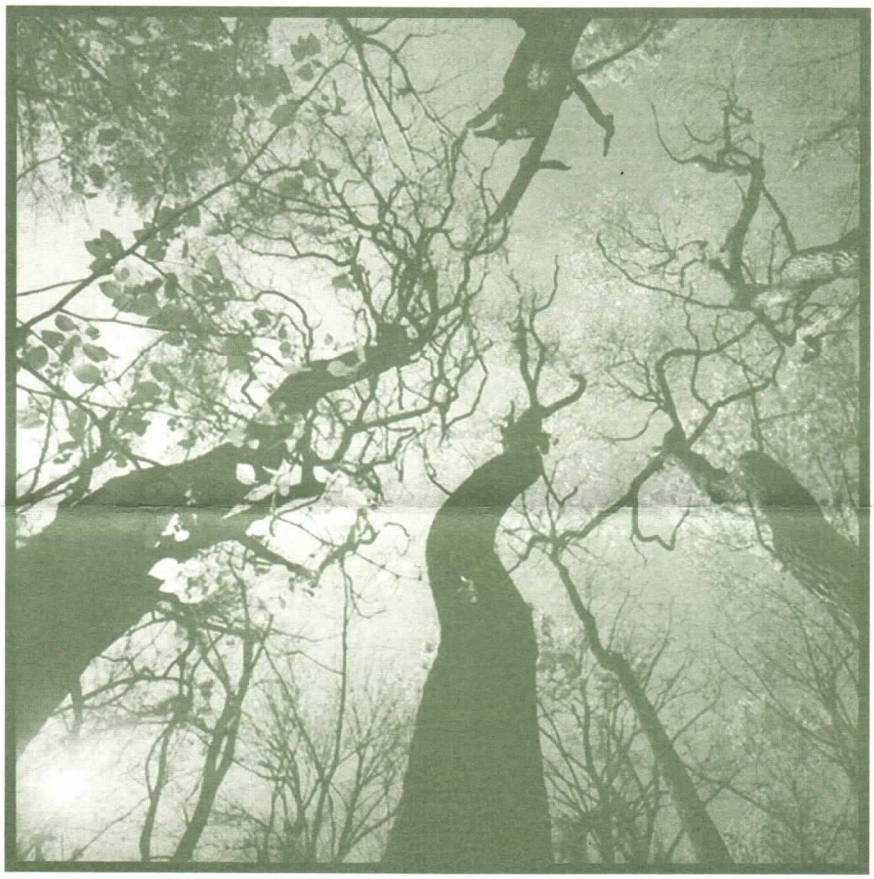
Georgia ForestWatch

Fall Issue
2000

FOREST NEWS

FALL 2000



Old growth Sassafrass, John's Mountain
Armuchee Ranger District
photo by Kathryn Kolb

Inside this issue...

GFW Editorial 2
Watershed Update 3
A Brief History Of Roadless Areas ... 3
News From The Edge 4
Endangered Species 4
GFW Profiles 5
Forests are a Key 5
Land Trust 5
President Signs Harmful Bill 6

Printed on 100% Recycled Paper,
100% Post Consumer

Georgia ForestWatch
4 River Street, Suite C
Ellijay, Georgia 30540
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ellijay, GA
Permit #4749

Georgia ForestWatch on the web: www.gafw.org

To receive updates and action alerts send your e-mail address to: editor@gafw.org

Send letters, articles and comments to: editor@gafw.org

Georgia ForestWatch

4 River Street • Suite C
Ellijay, GA 30540 • 706-635-8733
Georgia ForestWatch is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational corporation.

Staff:

Brent Martin.....Executive Director
Angela Faye Martin.....Watershed Project Coordinator
Valerie Ansted Warden.....Outreach Coordinator
Rita Thrasher.....Fund-raiser/Accounting
Jennifer Rodriguez.....Office Manager

Board Members:

Randall White, President
Lynn Cuminsky, Vice-President and Secretary
Wayne Jenkins, Treasurer
Dan Bowden
Barbara Decker
David James
Bob Kibler
Kathryn Kolb
Mort Meadors
Shirl Parsons
John Pickering
David Studtman
Tom Thrasher

District Contacts:

To volunteer, or for more info call:

Armuchee Dist.:	Angela Faye Martin 706-635-8733
Brasstown Dist.:	Howard Markel 770-781-5418
Chattooga Dist.:	James Sullivan 706-886-8265
Cohutta Dist.:	Dan Bowden 770-993-2539
Oconee Dist.:	J.P. Schmidt 706-542-3489 (w)
Tallulah Dist.:	Mort Meadors 706-746-5799
Toccoa Dist.:	Tom Thrasher 706-635-1414

GFW Newsletter:

Layout/Design: ..... Rising Star Design 706-635-3388

GFW Editorial

by Brent Martin, GFW Executive Director

On the weekend of Sept. 9, I had the privilege to attend the Wilderness 2000 conference in Denver. It was a grand event, with rousing speeches from the likes of Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck, the Wildlands' Project's Dave Foreman, and our very own favorite southern activist, Lamar Marshall, who gave a wonderful fire and brimstone keynote on Saturday morning about the glories of all things wild and southern. Another highlight was ex-Forest Service supervisor, Gloria Flora, who resigned last year over one of the most controversial roads closures in forest service history, and who gave a spiritual call to arms in our battle to protect our last wildlands, never mentioning the horrible situation she had survived in Nevada. Dombeck extolled the virtues of wilderness, and our need for more, as well as the need for further reform of the agency he heads. I was there as part of the planning committee for the event, and to be on a panel titled "Urban Wildlands Interface," the result of my working on a forest with the dubious honor of being the only barrier to one of the fastest growing cities in the history of human civilization. It was a difficult presentation to prepare for, as there was little positive to say, but I found a few good initiatives worth focusing on: the flourishing of land trusts and watershed associations in north Georgia, the Governor's Greenspace Initiative, and the growing local demand for more protection of our forests.

Wilderness 2000 Conference

Of course, the negatives dwarfed most of these initiatives, as the rapid transformation of the private landscape from a rural and largely agricultural setting to one which is becoming urban and industrial seems all but inevitable. I referred to this transformation as "the lamentable loss of clearcuts," for as long as there are clearcuts it means there is a timber industry, and on land where timber is grown there is at least the hope that it might someday be managed sustainably, or be added to the public land base. Timber land converted to strip malls and subdivisions, however, has no hope of supporting biodiversity and only contributes to the overall permanent decline of habitat. While we look forward to the day when the north Georgia mountains are populated with progressive and conservation minded voters, it seems likely that it will also be the day when the rural culture and rural landscape has vanished forever. So while we gain a large population of pro-protection voters, those that will support more wilderness and more protection of our national forests, as well as our private lands, we throw the baby out with the bathwater, as the very voters who are moving here (such as myself) for the beauty of the mountains become part of the biggest threat to the forest.

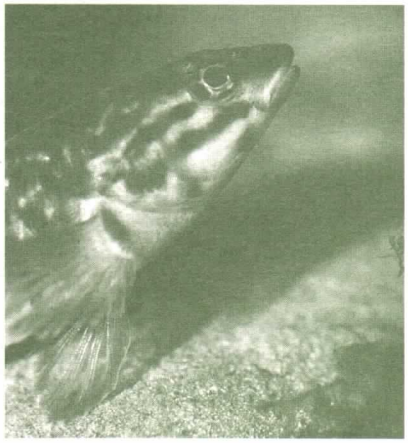
Declining mountain air quality, acidification of our mountain streams, soaring demand for high impact recreational activities, such as ORV use and gold mining ("recreational suction dredging"- I'm not kidding, I heard this at a forest planning meeting last year), roads and more roads, and the soaring value of hardwood sawtimber, are but a few of the threats that rise daily with the urbanization of our national forest. The threats appear insurmountable. But yet we have the rise of the land trusts, like the Mountain Conservation Trust, Chattowah Open Land Trust, and Chattooga Land Trust; watershed associations, like the Soque, Upper Etowah River Alliance, and Concerned Citizens for the Coosawattee; and small citizens' groups such as the Trackrock Gap Alliance, concerned with nothing but protecting archaeological sites on the forest. It's a hopeful sign and one that is safe to predict will continue to grow.

Reflecting about this before the conference, I didn't necessarily feel like we were winning the war, but I did feel like we were going to be winning some great, pitched local battles. And as I left the conference in Denver, I felt more enthused than ever about having more protected public wildlands. I was thinking about an 11 year old girl who had stood before a room full of 500 that weekend and read Rachel Carson to us. She seemed more determined than any one else there. And that gave me great hope, along with renewed courage to move on. There didn't seem to be a choice. ❖

Watershed Update

by Angela Faye Martin

It was a great summer for raising freshwater consciousness at Georgia ForestWatch. Out of all three snorkeling outings, none were rained out and all were highly informative thanks to Jim Herrig of the Cherokee National Forest, whose level of dedication to the fauna of the Conasauga is inspiring. We enjoyed having Dottie McCullar of the Sierra Club who along with her troop of volunteers helped us host a successful day of snorkeling with inner city children (and teens!). It was especially poignant to me when one kid said," I thought rivers are supposed to be brown, not clear!" That was the same thing that I said when I first saw the Conasauga River in the Cohutta Ranger District after being exposed mostly to the Etowah and Chattahoochee Rivers as a child.



Redline Darter
photo courtesy of the Tennessee Aquarium

Our friends from marine life activist and social group, Atlanta Oceans came to enjoy the dazzling array aquatic life at the Conasauga Alliance Field Day in August. Scientists from Conservation Fisheries and TVA in Knoxville and my new, personal favorite, Dr. Carol Johnston (blue shiner expert) from Auburn University were all on hand to educate and inform the one-hundred-plus attendees of the snorkeling tour that weekend. It was a privilege to be a part of such a great effort.

The Conasauga River Alliance (a group of stakeholders with interest in the Conasauga River Watershed), has a new Project Coordinator—Rick Guffey. Rick is an excellent addition to the effort to protect the Conasauga River. He is a fisheries biologist with a strong conservation ethic and has done fieldwork with some of the most polluted streams in Georgia during his tenure with the Dept.

See Watershed, pg. 7

A Brief History of Roadless Areas and Wilderness on the Chattahoochee National Forest

by Bob Kibler

The purpose of this article is to explain the struggles the environmental community (EC) has been engaged in over these issues on the Chattahoochee National Forest (CNF).

This struggle has been primarily with the Forest Service (FS) and the timber industry until recently when opposition has come from the State of Georgia's Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife Management. The reasons for the opposition of the timber industry are obvious but the reasons for opposition from the FS are less clear. Suffice it to say the outward manifestations of this opposition has been obstructionism and inertia. The response of the EC has been one of activism and compromise. The latter deserves emphasis since we are often seen as uncompromising and constantly demanding more and more wilderness. The issue is not how much more wilderness we should seek but rather how much more wilderness can we afford to lose. My conclusion is that we have reached a critical point in our struggle at which we should compromise no further.

The position of the FS after the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964 was that no more than a handful of areas in the East qualified for wilderness due to heavy logging and other human activities. The EC assumed the position that many areas had the potential of regaining their natural state and began to inventory roadless areas for the FS to consider. In response to this pressure Congress passed the Eastern

See History pg.4

Key Contacts

Tom Speaks, Acting Forest Supervisor
USFS, 1755 Cleveland Highway
Gainesville, GA 30501
770-536-0541

Regional Forester (Region 8)
Elizabeth Estill
1720 Peachtree Road, Room 760-S
Atlanta, GA 30367-9102

District Rangers Chattahoochee National Forest

Ranger Brian Beisel
USFS, Armuchee Ranger District
(806 East Villanow Street)
P.O. Box 465, LaFayette, GA 30728
706-638-1085

Ranger Alan Polk
USFS, Brasstown Ranger District
(1881 Highway 515)
P.O. Box 9, Blairsville, GA 30512
706-745-6928

Ranger Michael Gryson
USFS, Chattooga Ranger District
(200 Highway 197 North)
P.O. Box 198, Clarkesville, GA 30523
706-754-6221

Ranger Brian Beisel
USFS, Cohutta Ranger District
401 GI Maddox Parkway,
Chatsworth, GA 30705
706-695-6736

Ranger Barney Gant
USFS, Oconee Ranger District
1199 Madison Road,
Eatonton, GA 31024
706-485-7110

Ranger Dave Jensen
USFS, Tallulah Ranger District
(825 Highway 441 South)
P.O. Box 438, Clayton, GA 30525
706-782-3320

Ranger Alan Polk
USFS, Toccoa Ranger District
6050 Appalachian Highway
Blue Ridge, GA 30513
706-632-3031

Dan Glickman, Sec. of Agriculture
James L. Whitten Bldg.
1400 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20250

Sen. Max Cleland
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3521
Atlanta office: 404-331-4811

Sen. Zell Miller
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510
202-224-7272

Congressman Nathan Deal
P.O. Box 1015, Gainesville, GA 30503
770-535-2592

A Brief History

Continued from pg. 3

Wilderness Act designating 16 wilderness areas including the Cohutta Wilderness and Georgia's portion of the Ellicot Rock Wilderness.

In 1976 Congress passed the National Forest Management Act mandating the FS to create a management plan on a 10-15 year cycle which was to include a study of lands suitable for wilderness. In response to this Act the Carter Administration undertook from 1977 to 1979 a second inventory of roadless areas in both the East and the West (Rare II - "Roadless Area Review and Evaluation"). Rare I had been virtually limited to the West. The criteria for inclusion in the East were relaxed. Roadless candidates could now harbor up to 0.5 miles of road per 1000 acres and up to 20% of the area could be in age class 0- 10 years. There was no limitation on size. The doctrine for determination of solitude, favored by the FS, was rejected. With the help of Georgia's EC the FS listed 26 areas on the CNF for a total of 218,000 acres.

Unfortunately no areas in Georgia were designated wilderness before 1980 when the Reagan era was ushered in. In 1984 the EC was forced to compromise and agreed to have 9 of 26 areas studied in the upcoming forest plan for the CNF. Five became wilderness after completion of the forest plan in 1986. By 1987 all of the other Rare II areas had been "released" and were now subject to logging and other development. Unfortunately many of the released areas experienced an unusual level of road building and logging.

Not willing to wait for the next forest plan in 10-15 years the EC pushed ahead and in 1991 Congressman Ed Jenkins proposed Blood Mountain and Mark Trail for wilderness. This may have been somewhat of a pyrrhic victory as the FS, which began the next forest planning in 1995, toughened the Rare II criteria for roadless areas. They now required that an area possess a "semi-primitive core" of around 2500 acres in order to meet the solitude criteria. A core was determined by drawing a boundary within the roadless area that was at each point 0.5 mile from a road. They also resurrected the principle which required that the area be free of the sights and sounds of human activity, despite the fact the principle had been rejected by Congress in 1978 when it established several small wildernesses at the borders of major cities.

See History pg. 7

News from the Edge

by Tom Thrasher

What is going on in the Toccoa District – I mean, from a forest-watching perspective? Ranger Rick Semingson at the district office reports that THERE ARE STILL NO TIMBER SALES! But that's not the only news. There has been no environmental impact evaluation of a proposed helicopter pad at the Len Foote Hike Inn south of Nimblewill Gap, so it's hangin' fire too, just like the timber sales. The fuse is burning, though, for the Jake and Bull Mountain multi-use (horse and bike) trail systems east of Nimblewill Gap. Ten miles of trail are going to be added to the existing 40 miles – good news for you equestrian and cyclonian types. And that's not the only addition to our Toccoan family (what a mélange of metaphors!) There's a brand-spanking new bathhouse in the making for the Blue Ridge Riviera – otherwise known as Morganton Point. The contract is being bid on as we speak, or breathe, or whatever (use your imagination). And speaking of imagination, imagine there're no roads (get the J.L. ref?). Well, at least imagine there's one less road: our local good guys in the district are decomming Brown Mill Creek Road, off Hwy. 60, near Rock Creek. There'll be a berm, disc and grass seed party for those who care to attend. (Can you believe that great café over there burned down?) NOT in attendance will be the U.S. Army Rangers of nearby Camp Merrill. They will be busy working on the unspecified (classified?) "improvements" approved by the U.S.N.F.S., whose land (our land), they use for training. Imagine if … a camo'd detail of Rangers mixed it up with a bevy of illegal 4-wheeling good ol' boys. If only.

Speaking of illegal ORV activity. Sadly, there can be no news from the edge that doesn't mention it. The good news is that David Govus and his son roved across the Old Rich Mountain Road under the auspices, sanctions and charmed benevolences of O.L.N.F.S.G. (our local National Forest Service Guys), fiercely plunging magical devices into the rich soil, guaranteed to STOP ALL ILLEGAL ORV ACTIVITY – you know, those flexible, brown, hiking-only strips. They're really not magical, nor do they stop much ORV activity, but at least they say "Hey, we do care." More recently, David and I scoped the ORV depredations off of Grapevine Gap Road – and there are many. Once you

See News pg. 8

Endangered Species: A Worldwide Problem

by Jennifer Rodriguez

Issues around biodiversity can evoke different emotions in human beings. While some are awed at its majestic appeal, others are indifferent. However, the extinction of species can be harmful to all human beings. A look at how the problem of risking species to being endangered or extinct is growing around the world can help us make personal decisions about what we can do as individuals to salvage the remnants of diversity in wildlife.

The problem is widespread. It affects continents and islands. In an August 1996 publication it was reported that "in the last 400 years, 85 out of 94 species of birds that have disappeared have been island birds." In different continents around the world the problem is the same. One example is the tiger of Southern China, which has been reduced to a meager population of 30 to 80. In the United States, bats are one of the most endangered land mammals. The Georgia Wildlife Federation states that man is a threat to the black bear due to the destruction of its habitat". It also states that "originally [the black bear] was found throughout North America... was reduced in numbers and eliminated in many areas. Contributing to the animal's decline early this century were heavy timbering and a devastating blight that killed all the Chestnut trees in the eastern US."

The situation does not get better when we turn to the oceans. "The Atlas of Endangered Species labels marine turtles as 'perhaps the most endangered group of sea creatures'.

The number of species that become extinct every year, according to ecologist Stuart Primm is highly debated between experts, however, he does assure that "we have accelerated the rate of extinction far beyond the natural rate." How have "we" done this?

Though species become extinct due to

See Endangered pg. 8

Georgia Forest Watch Profiles

Valerie Ansted Warden
Outreach Coordinator

I am excited about being on board at GFW and look forward to working with the membership, volunteers, staff and board members. I can be contacted via e-mail at valeriew@ellijay.com.

My degree is in Communication with a minor in Environmental Studies and I reside in Jasper, GA with my husband and two of our "Brady Bunch" kids. My background is in marketing, designing newsletters, writing press releases and other P.R. materials. I enjoy coordinating special events, fund-raisers and membership drives both professionally and through volunteer work with civic organizations in Jasper. I am also involved with the Pickens County Chamber of Commerce and Cub Scouts, having just founded a new Pack in Pickens County. I look forward to hearing from you all soon. ❖

Jennifer Rodriguez
Office Manager

Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, I come from a land of lush, tropical forests where the coqui (a small frog, native only to the island of Puerto Rico) serenades the island people every night. In 1990, my family moved to Miami, FL. I started attending Florida International University majoring in English Education and minored in French. The fourth of June of this year I married the love of my life Allan Rodriguez. Together we decided to escape the heat and contamination of Miami life and start over. We contacted some members of our Jehovah's Witness congregation and asked where was there need for bible teachers. They responded that Ellijay, GA had an increasing Hispanic population and only a few volunteers. Once we drove past Atlanta and saw the Mountains we knew this was home. ❖

Forests are a key to climate stabilization

by Randall F. White

The world's stock of carbon is held in the atmosphere, fossil fuel reserves and oceans and forest ecosystems. In order to prevent severe disruption of our climate, human beings must find ways to reduce the input of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere and to augment the uptake of carbon by the earth via its forests. The Kyoto protocol permits countries to count their forests as "carbon sinks," which could be a very good thing if conservation in encouraged — or a very bad thing if plantation forestry wins out. As you might expect, the wood products industry is lobbying for the latter as these rules are being negotiated. The final decisions will be made at The Hague, Netherlands, in November.

Scientific data (and common sense) indicate that old forests contain a lot of carbon, up to 50% of which is below ground and in the soil. When a forest is clear cut, the portion in the soil is lost to the atmosphere within a few years. The remainder, in the bole and limbs of the tree, may be stored for a variable time if the wood is used for a durable product, or may be quickly sent back into the atmosphere (as is the carbon in slash, saw dust, and throw-away paper). If a forest is left standing, it continues to store the carbon, and to take in more carbon. Citing a recent study published in Science, Andrew Revkin of the New York Times wrote, "The research concludes that old, wild forests are far better than plantations of young trees at ridding the air of carbon dioxide, which is released when coal, oil and other fossil fuels are burned." (The New York Times, 22 Sep 2000)

See Forest pg.6

LAND TRUSTS PROTECT PRIVATE LAND

by Barbara Decker

Thus far, GFW has had its hands full concentrating on monitoring and influencing policies that affect Georgia's public lands owned by the State or Federal government. But mountain treasures also occur on land in private ownership, and Atlanta's sprawl and second-home building is turning farms and forests into subdivisions and strip malls at an appalling rate. Pristine forests, and open meadows on private land in North Georgia are important for their scenic beauty and wildlife habitat, and as an integral part of a treasured rural way of life. Although the Chattachoochee National Forest appears as a large, continuous block of green on Georgia state maps, the reality is that the national forest land is patchy and fragmented, broken up by numerous parcels held in private hands.

Fragmented forest is detrimental to plants and animals. Many plant seeds cannot disperse between widely separated forest patches, and inbreeding can occur in animal species reluctant to migrate over open ground or through inhabited areas, Protected forest on private land can provide corridors through which they can move and disperse. Preserved land adjacent to the national forest or WMA also forms a buffer zone and decreases siltation of streams.

Large tracts of land in private ownership still exist in the North Georgia mountains. Although of considerable size, they are too small to qualify for purchase as state parks. Many parcels of land contain rare and endangered species, clear trout streams, and lush coves. The national land trust movement has grown rapidly to provide a means to preserve private land. About 1200 land trusts now operate in all 50 states, usually formed by residents concerned about the loss of open land to development and often focusing on one relatively small local or regional area. Land trusts are non-profit organizations, relying on memberships and grants for financial support for their activities.

See Land pg. 6

Land Trusts

Continued from pg. 5

The primary tool land trusts use to protect private land is a conservation easement. The easement is a document signed by the landowner and the land trust and recorded at the county courthouse. It is essentially a deed restriction on the property which prevents it from ever being divided into subdivision lots. The terms of the easement are very flexible, allowing landowners to tailor it to their wishes and future plans for the property. All or part of the parcel may be included, farming and even timbering can be permitted, and 'envelopes' can be left for barns or additional homes for children. A land trust helps with the process and takes on the responsibility of monitoring the land from then on to be sure the owners' wishes are adhered to. If future owners of the land should try to develop the land in a way not stipulated in the conservation easement document, the land trust is committed to enforcing the terms, even taking the violator to court, if need be. Most land trusts request a minimal fee from the landowner to fund their stewardship work.

The IRS provides tax incentives to landowners who place a conservation easement on their property. When the development rights have been given up and the land can no longer be sold for development, its monetary value decreases. The difference between the amount that would be realized if the land were sold to a developer and the value or the land when it cannot be sold for development is considered a charitable contribution and can be deducted from the owners' income taxes, over a period of years if need be. The lower monetary value of the land also saves estate taxes. Property taxes should also decrease if the land had been assessed by the county as its 'highest and best use' value, i.e., developed. Some landowners place a conservation casement on their land primarily to receive the tax benefits, but many choose to do so just because they love their land and want to be sure that it will never fall to the axe and the bulldozer. "Asphalt is the last crop."

If you would like more information about conservation easements, call the GFW staff and they will put you in touch with a local land trust. ❖

President Signs Interior Appropriations Bill with Provisions Harmful to National Forests

by Randall F. White

The FY 2001 appropriations bill was again loaded up with bad riders, some of which the Clinton administration opposed and got removed, but some of which remain and will be executed by the USFS. Of particular concern are the provisions concerning mechanical treatments for hazardous fuels reduction, timber sale funding levels and a stewardship contracting rider. This latter, a "goods-for-services" authority, allows the Forest Service to trade National Forest trees for contracted services and could encourage large-scale logging in conjunction with restoration projects. The fuels reduction language lacks adequate environmental safeguards to protect roadless areas, old growth forests, endangered species habitat and riparian areas. Funds intended to address hazardous fuels issues in Western forests might be spent on Eastern forests which do not have the same ecological needs. The relatively moist Southern Appalachian forests, for example, naturally limit the spread of fire. Fuel reduction bears little relevance to the decline of native forest types, which is a major threat confronting the Southern Appalachians.

Also, some of the language in the bill gives the USFS the discretion to expedite certain procedures (NEPA) that ordinarily permit citizens to comment on and appeal agency projects, such as timber sales. The Interior Report contains timber target language urging the Forest Service to prepare for sale 3.6 billion board feet of timber. This represents a significant increase in timber sales above the current level of 2.1 billion board feet. The timber targets language is backed up by a significant increase in funding for logging — a $40 million increase in logging subsidies, i.e. taxpayer money for the private sector to cut our forests.

All together, this bill is a possible disaster for our forests. This means that the outcome of the November election is even more critical. Please contact Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250 (fax 202/720-2166) and ask him not to expedite NEPA procedures, and to ensure appropriate safeguards for all "fuel reduction" projects; specifically, to keep them out of the Southern Appalachians, all roadless and riparian areas, and all old-growth forest. ❖

Forests

Continued from pg. 5

The bottomland hardwood forests in the Southeast may be among the richest carbon sinks on earth, but timber companies are clearing, ditching and draining these vital wetlands and turning them into pine plantations. There's a real possibility that this kind of destructive activity could be subsidized under the rules of the treaty. Up to 500 million acres in America could be affected by these rules.

The Clinton administration needs to hear from those of us concerned about the fate of native forests and biodiversity. Please fax or write a brief letter to the following officials with these points:

• The Kyoto protocol must not encourage liquidation of old growth or native forests. Only activities that protect forests should receive credit.

• Climate change policy must not encourage replacing existing native forests with tree farms and the use of herbicides and genetically-modified trees.

The Honorable Roger Ballantine, Deputy to the President for Environmental Initiatives, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC 20520 fax (202) 456 1736

The Honorable Frank E. Loy, Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs, U.S. Dept. Of State, Rm. 7520, C St., NW Washington DC 20500 fax (202) 647- 0753 ❖

Watershed Update

Continued from pg. 3

of Natural Resources. Rick will be an integral force in many new avenues of advocacy for the Conasauga such as the future conservation center, which will be crucial in the effort to build local awareness of the treasure that the Conasauga is.

Freshwater Snail Survey Complete in Mountaintown Roadless Area

Thanks to Pacific Rivers Council, GFW and other generous contributors, a snail survey was recently conducted in the unprotected Mountaintown Roadless Area. Unfortunately, populations exist but are not thriving in the Coosawattee watershed according to Tennessee Aquarium scientists, Paul Johnson and Ryan Evans. Of the creeks surveyed in the Coosawattee watershed, strained populations of snail fauna diminish the lower you go in elevation. Gradient and elevation are key factors while trying to locate snail habitat not to mention that tricky identification of the button-sized beauties should be left to the experts! Other snails recognized as *pulmonates*, which we should have but were unable to find require waters that are relatively *lotic* or pooled within the creeks or in adjoining gullies. They are tiny with a conic shell, which Ryan describes as a rice farmer's hat. Relying on a single-lung respiratory system of sorts for their oxygen they need clear but muddy bottomed holding areas. However, high levels of silt literally choke them to death as the case may be in the areas where we looked for them to no avail.

Mountaintown, East Mountaintown Creeks and Bear Creek alike suffer from trail systems immediately within their riparian areas. During the survey it was noted that Bear Creek, with its multiple-use trail had been impacted by sediment every bit as much as if it had recently been clearcut for timber. Cobble within all of the creek beds were in some places covered unduly by sedimentation originating from innumerable points within the poorly planned trail system. Point bars, which interrupt vegetation and create ruts into the creek banks caused by mountain bike tires, and trail to stream proximity are the chief culprits. If only we had known what aquatic fauna we stood to lose—perhaps the Forest Service would not have designated so many uses for these trails, which stand to harm our streams even further.

If you are interested in ways to help protect Mountaintown Roadless Area, and further protect our streams in the coming forest management plans, or would like to participate in our campaign to protect Chattahoochee-Oconee NF's freshwater habitat, call Angela at Georgia ForestWatch: 706-635-8733.

Georgia Forestwatch represents the Southeast at National Watershed Restoration Workshop

Last July, the Pinchot Institute in Washington, DC invited various individuals from the timber industry, Forest Service and non-government and tribal organizations to come together for a productive and thought-provoking two days in the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho. Topics ranged from road obliteration to the scope of politics surrounding watershed restoration. Lengthy discussion and problem solving sessions addressed grievances and frustrations of non-government affiliates involved in cooperative agreements with local Forest Service meant to provide healthier watersheds.

The most enlightening thing about this great conference was learning how watersheds are being restored in the west and recognizing of how these management styles, in many cases, are ill-applied to our wet Southeastern landscapes. For instance, road obliteration as I witnessed it in the west, would cause episodic contamination potentially leading to long-term destruction of habitat in our fragile southern Appalachian watersheds. Therefore, innovative techniques and applications, which are better suited to our physiographic regions must be employed. A higher level of intervention and guidance from Forest Service Research (a separate and under funded branch of USDA) will greatly improve the quality of restoration efforts here in the southeast. Not to mention better incorporation of independent, scientific peer review and a determination to reflect the social value of a healthy, native freshwater system. Our Forest Service line officers tend to recognize how the western templates for forest management hardly apply to our abbreviated, yet more diverse forests of the east. Unfortunately, budget allocations determined by western Congresspersons do not reflect our eastern landscape needs.

See Watershed pg. 8

A Brief History

Continued from pg. 4

It was, perhaps, not surprising that the next inventory of roadless areas on the CNF consisted of the incredibly low figure of 11,000 acres. This was immediately challenged by the EC. First an attempt was made to clarify the definition of a road which was critical not only for a determination of the semi-primitive core but also for determining the road density (less than 0.5 mile/1000 acres) of potential roadless areas. Roads were inspected on the ground and many were found to be unimproved and/or closed. However, the FS never admitted to the existence of a single such road on the entire CNF.

The instructions from the Regional office of the FS had allowed for some flexibility on the size of the semi-primitive core but on the CNF no areas with cores less than 2500 acres were included in the inventory. Some areas were rejected on a purely subjective basis. Springer Mountain was considered unsuitable because of the traffic on the Appalachian Trail; Three Forks, the essence of solitude, was rejected because of the potential human sounds from the surrounding roads. The semi-primitive core for Windy Gap was considered too narrow.

However, through the persistent and scholarly efforts of many in the EC, particularly Rene Voss working as a consultant for Georgia ForestWatch, the FS eventually produced a roadless area inventory of 65,000 acres.

Thus, of the 218,000 acres of roadless areas on the CNF identified in Rare II (1979) some 79,000 acres have been lost as a result of renewed road building and logging.

During the current planning process the EC has united behind a proposal which provides some degree of protection for most of the wild lands described in "Georgia's Mountain Treasures." This includes the 65,000 acres of roadless areas. Wilderness was not recommended for all 65,000 acres, however. This was the result of compromises within the EC itself. The 9000 acre Springer Mountain roadless area was dropped because of objections by the Appalachian Trail Club. Rocky Mountain (4300 acres) succumbed to the mountain bikers and other interest groups, and Rock Gorge (3000 acres) was dropped because of objections by Trout Unlimited. In its Rolling Alternative, released in the Fall of 1999, the FS did not recommend either Rabun Bald (6900 acres) or Patterson Gap (Joe Gap 5500 acres) for wilderness. They did recommend all of the additions to wilderness and two stand-alone areas,

See History pg. 8

Endangered Species

Continued from pg. 4

multiple factors, habitat destruction and hunting are often involved. Habitat destruction is hard to prevent since it's due to the world's population increase. This destruction also results in a loss of valuable resources to society. For example, nearly a quarter of all medicines known to the Western world have come from tropical rain forest plants. Although rain forests cover only an estimated 7 percent of the planet's land surface, they are home to four fifths of the world's terrestrial vegetation. What will happen once the rain forests are gone? Not only will that cause the animals that call this habitat home to die but also the different flora that can provide humans with medicines not yet discovered will disappear.

All over the world different organizations persuade government officials to take action against these eminent dangers. One example occurred in China where various conservationist groups convinced Chinese officials to adopt stricter rules for the conservation of the Asian black bear. These bears are trapped and killed for their bile and gall bladders which are used in traditional Chinese medicine.

The work of international and local organizations to prevent the extinction of farther animal species is commendable. Conservationists are faced with official corruption, greed, indifference as well as war in some countries. Therefore, they still have many battles to fight and many obstacles to overcome. ❖

News

Continued from pg. 4

get past the almost vertical 20 foot bank at the end of the road that has been skinned by extreme-ORVing, you find yourself on a trail that becomes a network of illegal ORV trails, through heart-breaking beautiful country, connecting the Grapevine with Nimblewill Gap. I toted out all the Budweiser bottles, antifreeze jugs and 2-cycle engine oil containers lying along hemlocked stream banks, while David took video shots of some nasty looking sedimentation caused by some of the trails. We're asking O.L.N.F.S.G. for magic signs and berm parties to slow down the environmental degradation going on there.

One more thing – y'all come out to the Len Foote Hike Inn, between Amicalola and Springer Mountain. Various ones of us are doing occasional educational spiels to the guests, and it is a fine low-impact educational lodge with friendly staff and tasty food. The slide show I did a few weeks back was well-received, and I was as usual amazed by how little folks know about what's going on up here. But I was in their shoes not long ago.

And this: I'd like to have some bi-monthly get-togethers of Toccoan folks for some fun brainstorming and info sharing about the forest front. Contact me at thrasher@ellijay.com. *—Happy Trails*

Watershed

Continued from pg. 7

I left with several new friendships, feeling less alone and more directed in my efforts toward restoring our native watersheds. I know we are trying to act locally, but comparing notes with such friendly and bright individuals from all over the great 48, helped all workshop participants to think of more ways to "play well with others" while we come together to restore and protect our senior commonality—water. ❖

GFW's 2001 Georgia's Last Wild Places Calendars are available NOW!!

History

Continued from pg. 7

Kelly Ridge and Mountaintown. These recommendations amounted to only slightly more the one-half of the original 65,000 roadless acres.

The EC is now being challenged by the Wildlife Management Division of the State Department of Natural Resources to compromise even further by suggesting that Kelly Ridge be part of a 35,000 acre National Recreation Area and that Mountaintown be reduced by 1500 acres in its western portion and would include Mountaintown Creek. The Division of Wildlife Management is concerned over the loss of management options in the contested areas.

One needs to appreciate the long and difficult struggle the EC has been engaged in over the past 36 years, and how much has been lost and how little remains to realize why it is reluctant to further compromise. The forest plan is not yet complete and the EC will not only resist any changes to the Rolling Alternative, but will press for wilderness designation for Patterson Gap, Three Forks and Rabun Bald. ❖

GEORGIA FORESTWATCH MEMBERSHIP AND CALENDAR ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone & e-mail: _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Check one—all are tax deductible

	Individual	Joint
Regular	☐ $20	☐ $30
Student	☐ $10	☐ $15
Generous	☐ $50	☐ $75
Extra Generous	☐ $100	☐ $150
Gilded	☐ $200	☐ $300
Life	☐ $350	☐ $500

GFW membership: _____

1st. calendar $10.00: _____

Additional calendars $5.00: _____

Total: _____

You can also pick up calendars at REI Atlanta 1800 NE Expressway (404) 636-6508, Patagonia Atlanta 34 East Andrews Dr. NW (404) 266-8182, and the GFW office (706) 635-8733.

Please make your check payable to Georgia ForestWatch and mail to (or come by): Georgia ForestWatch, 4 River Street, Suite C, Ellijay, GA 30540.