GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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Recreational Special Use Permit

Your input is requested

All fees and commercial activity within a national forest require a **Special-use Permit (SUP) Application** that must go through a public comment process. Many proposed SUP requests are focused on recreational activities and are often, but not always, supported by GAFW.

Our policy is to fully support recreational use, including commercially, within the CONF if the activities do not have a negative impact on the ecology or natural balance of the forest or other users or beneficiaries.

We need your help. GAFW is preparing our response to the **current SUP applications** for recreational activities in the **Chattooga River Ranger District**.

If you are aware of the following applicant's reputation, incidents, or history of use in the forest, positive or negative, or if you have specific knowledge of the impact on the listed locations for these activities, please let GAFW know at **outreach@gafw.org** by August 31, 2022. We will use your input to craft our submission.

1. The Southeast Collegiate Cycling Conference and Piedmont University have applied for a

temporary event permit (10/1/22) for a cross-country mountain bike and a downhill race. The following Forest Service system roads and trails (located in Habersham and Stephens Counties) will be utilized for the event: Nancytown Lake Rd (FS-59I), Rhododendron Trail (TR-185), Red Root Rd (FS-92B), Sourwood Trail (TR-155), and Ladyslipper Trail (TR-153). The main staging area for this event will be located in the Nancytown Day Use Recreation Area parking lot.

2. Georgia Ultrarunning & Trailrunning Society, Inc. is applying for a five-year SUP for the Helenback Trail Race. The event is slated for April with 250 participants and 50 spectators and will use Tray Mountain Road (F.S. 79), Hickory Ridge Road, Smith Creek Trail (TR-25), Anna Ruby Falls Trail (TR-15), and Smith Creek Road (F.S. 242).
3. Toccoa-Stephens Chamber of Commerce is applying for a five-year SUP for the Currahee Challenge slated for October with a maximum of 250 participants and 50 spectators utilizing Forest Service system road 62 (Currahee Mountain Road), which is also referred to as Colonel Sink Trail.
4. Chain Buster Racing, LLC is applying for a five-year SUP for the Assault on Currahee Mountain Gravel Race slated for December with a maximum of 250 participants and 30 spectators using Guard Camp Rd (FS-87), Red Root Rd (FS-92), Georgia Mtn Orchard Rd (FS-191), Browns Bottom Rd (FS-92B), Stone Gray Ridge Rd (FS-87A), Currahee Mtn Rd (FS-62), Pear Orchard Rd (FS-62B), Pear Orchard Trail (TR-234C), Latham Rd (FS-87C), FS-92F, Ladyslipper Trail (TR-153), Nancytown Lake Loop Trail (TR-152), FS-59I, and Unnamed Gated Rd (connector to Check Station).
5. Camp Toccoa Project at Currahee, LLC is applying for a five-year SUP for the D-Day Run slated for June with a maximum of 150 participants and 50 spectators utilizing Forest Service system road 62 (Currahee Mountain Road), which is also referred to as Colonel Sink Trail.
6. Grand Fondo National Series is applying for a five-year SUP for the Tour of Georgia Gran Fondo slated for April with a maximum of 500 participants and 100 spectators. The component of the event, which will take place on National Forest Service lands, will be the electronic tracking stations placed at mile point 9.7 at Unicoi Gap on Hwy. 17, mile point 30.9 at Hogpen Gap on Hwy. 348, and mile point 70.2 along Oakey Mountain Road. Water and aid stations will be placed at mile point 17.6 at the intersection of Georgia Hwy 180 and Brasstown Bald Road

(Georgia Hwy 180 Spur).

7. Collectively Outside, LLC is applying for a five-year SUP for the Women's Trailfest slated for October with a maximum of 80 participants and 15 spectators utilizing the Bartram Trail (TR-163), Becky Branch Trail (TR-65), and Pinnacle Trail (TR-58).
8. Daniel's Discovery Tours, LLC is requesting an amendment to their existing special use permit for fishing and waterfall hikes on the following streams: Sarah's Creek, Moccasin Creek, Coleman River, Tuckaluge Creek, Walnut Fork Creek, Holcomb Creek, Soquee River, Middle Fork of the Broad River, Finney Creek, Martin Creek, Nancytown Creek, Dick's Creek (within Rabun Co.), Big Creek, Popcorn Creek, and Mill Creek. Sections of streams or trails located within designated Wilderness and/or Wild & Scenic River Areas would not be authorized under this permit.
9. Virginia Webb is requesting to locate two apiaries within the National Forest in Habersham County for five years. Each apiary contains approximately 30 hives with a maximum of 50 hives at each location and is approximately 250 square feet in area.

Ancient Fish Making a Comeback?

The confluence of the Etowah and the Oostanaula (formed by the Conasauga and the Coosawattee) Rivers come together in Rome, GA, to form the Coosa River, which then flows into Weiss Lake in Alabama.

All source points of this vital watershed originate within Georgia's national forest and provide drinking water for a large portion of NW Georgia, including Cobb County.

American Rivers named The Coosa the 4th Most Endangered River in the U.S. due to the massive amounts of chicken waste and effluent from Georgia's number one industry. It is home to 87 fish species, with 13 of the fish species listed for protection by federal or state agencies as endangered, threatened, or rare.

One of those is the **Lake sturgeon** (Acipenser fulvescens), a threatened

species once prevalent in the Coosa River system until the 1960s, which the **Georgia Department of Natural Resources is reintroducing**.

Recently researchers from UGA caught the largest lake sturgeon ever reported since GA DNR began stocking the native species in 2001. The 52-inch, 24-pound lake sturgeon was caught in the Coosa River near Rome.

Often taking 8-12 years for males and 14-33 years for females, sturgeon have been overfished in the U.S. for sport and caviar. Sturgeon spawn on clean, gravel shoals and stream rapids, usually from April to June, and only 10-20% of adult lake sturgeon are sexually active during their mating season.

The sturgeon caught this month is positive news that GA DNR's reintroduction is tentatively working. Lake sturgeon are protected in Georgia, and if you catch one, GA DNR asks you to contact them at 706-295-6102. Note the date and location, photograph the fish if possible, and provide your contact information.

Legislative Update

Legislation to Protect & Preserve Chattahoochee River Passes U.S. Senate

S.3610 – The Chattahoochee River Act, sponsored by Georgia Senator Jon Ossoff, authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to work with local officials to preserve and protect the Chattahoochee River passed the Senate with bipartisan support.

Sen. Ossoff's bill will help improve water quality, protect essential public works, and restore ecosystems along the river — which are all vital to Georgia's drinking water supply. Did you know that 70% of metro Atlanta's drinking water is supplied by the Chattahoochee River, whose **source** is a spring within the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests.

The Senate passed Sen. Ossoff's Chattahoochee River Act with bipartisan support as part of this year's Water Resources and Development Act Reauthorization.

GAFW, along with partners from The Wilderness Society, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, and Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards, recently led a visit to Horse Trough Falls near the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River for staff from a mix of Georgia delegation congressional offices. See insert below with photo from Representative Williams' office.

The bill now heads to the U.S. House, where it already has support from Congresswoman Carolyn Bourdeaux (GA-07), Reps. Hank Johnson (GA-04),

Nikema Williams (GA-05), Lucy McBath (GA-06), and David Scott (GA-13).

Out in the field at the Chattahoochee Headwaters

The source of about 70% of Atlanta's drinking water comes from a little creek that is the headwater of the Chattahoochee River.

My press secretary Ed visited the headwaters where he learned about efforts to protect our water, conserve the Chattahoochee National Forest, and increase accessibility to our public lands.

Lights Out Georgia

From our partners at Georgia Audubon, it is time for Lights Out Georgia

Nighttime light pollution poses a significant threat to migrating birds, causing confusion and disorientation and often leading to collisions with buildings, confusing their internal clocks, or interfering with their ability to undertake long-distance migrations. You can help by reducing or eliminating unnecessary outdoor lighting during peak migration.

Fall migration officially begins on August 15, and we encourage you to reduce or eliminate outdoor lighting through November 15 to help our migrating birds.

Georgia Audubon sends Light Out Alerts on evenings of peak migration to those who have signed the Lights Out Georgia pledge.

Click here for more information on steps to reduce bird-building collisions and to sign Audubon's lights out pledge.

Last chance

There is still time for **you personally** or your **business or organization** to sponsor our 19th annual retreat at Lake Winfield Scott on Saturday, October 15, 2022. Remember you must **be a member** to attend.

Tickets to the event will go on sale on Thursday, September 1, and we fully anticipate the event will sell out as soon as ticket sales start. The best way to

ensure you get a ticket is to sponsor the event now.

GAFW Outings

Upcoming Outings!

Invite your friends to sign up for Outing notices, but keep in mind, ForestWatch **members** get first notification!

Looking for pics of the latest Outings? Find them all here:

Photos! Recent Outings

iNaturalist @gaforestwatch
Community Science and species identification!

Upcoming Events

Saturday, September 10–**Elachee Wildlife Festival**, Elachee Nature Science Center, Gainesville, GA

Saturday, September 24 & Sunday, September 25–Annual **Trail Skills Workshop** at Lake Winfield Scott - **Preregister**

Saturday, October 15–**GAFW** Annual Retreat, Lake Winfield Scott. Reservations open soon!

Saturday, October 22–Wurst Festival GAFW fundraiser at **Fannin Brewing Company**

Friday-Sunday, November 4-6–**Hemlock Fest** at Cherokee Farms, Lafayette, GA

Ways to Help GAFW

Give cash.

Cash is the most expedient way to support our current needs. Please go to our website at **www.gafw.org** or to make an online donation, or mail your check to GAFW, 81 Crown Mountain Pl #C200, Dahlonega, GA 30533. Even better, schedule a monthly recurring donation online.

Save the Date

Reservations will open soon for our annual retreat on Saturday,

October 15, 2022, at Lake Winfield Scott.
Remember you must be a member to attend.
Join or renew your membership today.

Planning to join us at Lake Winfield Scott for the annual retreat? Send us an email at **info@gafw.org** if you would like to reserve a camping spot at Vogel State Park.

Thank You

Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

Please support our mission by ensuring your **membership is up to date** and providing **additional support** as you are able.

On behalf of our entire national forests in our beautiful state, we thank you for your support.

If this email was forwarded to you, **please register here** to receive GAFW updates.

Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the health of over 867,000 acres of Georgia's national forest by protecting our forests and streams, advocating for natural processes, and identifying opportunities to improve forest management. Visit **Georgia ForestWatch** (GAFW) to learn more.

Connect with us