GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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# FORESTWATCH JOURNAL

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## News You Can Use

Elections are upon us. The seemingly unceasing election cycle is rising to a fever pitch, and once again, Georgia is at the forefront of the national discussion. Georgia ForestWatch (GAFW) is strictly a nonpartisan organization and always adheres to and agrees with the laws preventing nonprofit organizations from promoting, supporting, or participating in partisan politics.

However, nonprofits like GAFW can, and should, support activities such as encouraging voting and providing our community with the tools and information they need to fulfill their responsibilities and actively participate in the election process.

Where the line on nonprofit activities is drawn can be a minefield, but there is an excellent resource guiding what is allowable for c3 organizations, like GAFW, versus c4 organizations.

At GAFW, we have worked tirelessly for 38 years *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.* The success of our grassroots work is reliant on raising the voices of our membership and community.

The single most important act you can do to ensure the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy for future generations is voting. Now is the time to prepare to vote in our next election.

Key Dates & Resources
March 7 - First Day to Request Absentee Ballot
April 25 - Deadline to Register to vote in Primary
May 2 - Early Voting Begins
May 7 - Mandatory Saturday voting for all counties

May 13 - Last Day to Submit an Absentee Ballot
May 14 - Mandatory Saturday voting for all counties
May 24 - Primary Election Day

Register to Vote
Check your Voter Registration & your Sample Ballot
Find Qualified Candidates
Check state and local Candidates' Campaign Expenses and Donations– Governor and down
Check federal Candidates' Campaign Expenses and Donations – U.S. Senate and House
Find your County Elections Office
Elections FAQ

In preparing to vote, GAFW recommends:

- (Re)confirm your registration before the registration deadline, even if your information has not changed since the last election.
- Researching your candidates, reaching out to them to let them know you are a voter concerned about the health of our national forests, and supporting candidates who favor increasing long-term protections of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (CONF).
- If you choose to support a candidate financially, request a meeting with the candidate or their staff and hand-deliver the check while expressing your support of CONF.
- Print your sample ballot, do your research before voting, and take your sample ballot with your research notes to the poll to use while you vote. **Voting is an open book test**, and personal materials are allowed.
- Consider becoming a poll worker for your district. You can become a poll worker by contacting your county elections office.

## GAFW Outings

*Enjoy an Outing and Learn About Our Forests*

**Coming Up**
*Registration is required*

Outing! Ramp Cove Wildflowers with Dan 4.8.22

Outing! Beetle Release at Dockery Lake with Stacie 4.9.22

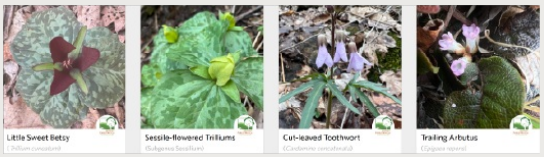
Volunteer! **Wilderness Monitoring Training with SAWS 4.2.22**

Wish you had found out about these Outings sooner? Join us as aGeorgia ForestWatch member and get the first notification of all of our Outings.

**Learn More**

**Photos! Recent Outings**

iNaturalist @gaforestwatch
Community Science and
species identification!




## Shop with iGive and Help GAFW

Help GAFW every time you shop online, it's all free and so easy to be socially-conscious. Join now and start Giving #AllYearRound.

The stores make this possible because they want you to like them and shop at them over and over again.

There's 2117 socially-responsible stores helping to make donations happen.

We hope you'll give it a try. Sign up today at:iGive

Visit How iGive Works to learn more about how shopping through iGive can help GAFW.

iGive.com®
Change online shopping for good.

## Welcome

Maria Klouda joined Georgia ForestWatch as the Communications Coordinator in February 2022. She has experience in publishing, fundraising, marketing, advertising, brand management, and event planning. Her writing has been published in various outlets and has earned a Pushcart prize nomination.

Typically regional in focus, her pieces rely heavily on a sense of place. Environmental issues often drive the topics of her work. A life-long resident of Georgia, Maria enjoys traveling and hiking. Maria earned an MFA in Creative Writing from Reinhardt University, an MBA from Brenau University, and a BBA in Marketing from the University of West Georgia. Welcome!

## Upcoming Events

Saturday, April 9, 2022 – GAFW Executive Director J.D. McCrary will be

speaking on a panel at the Go Tell It in The Mountains Regional Environmental Forum at the Stephens County Center for the Performing Arts.

Wednesday, April 20, 2022 – Stop by and say "Hi" at our table at the University of North Georgia Gainesville Campus 2022 Earth Day celebration.

Saturday, April 23, 2022 – We will be with the North Georgia Conservation Coalition Earth Day program at the Dawsonville Bowen Center for the Arts.

Saturday, April 23, 2022 – Look for us at theEarth Day event at the Sautee Nacoochee Center.

## Legislative Updates

Georgia ForestWatch is a proud member of the Georgia Water Coalition(GWC). Our participation is one of the primary tools we use to promote, oppose, and monitor state public policy. As a member, our organization agrees to support GWC initiatives even if they are not entirely within our mission. While our mission is specific to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, GAFW is also concerned with environmental policies within Georgia and views our state, and our nation, as part of a larger global ecosystem.

We are asking you to engage with your state legislators about the "Bad Neighbor Bill" HB 1150 as it works its way to the Senate floor for a vote.

Please take a moment today to voice your concerns about HB 1150.

Commercial animal feeding operations (CAFOs) make bad neighbors, pollute watersheds, and create air unfit to breathe. HB 1150 replaces existing law in Georgia and paves the way for CAFO operations to move into the state. These operations are often owned and funded by out-of-state and foreign interests.

Georgia-grown and Georgia-owned farms keep food on our tables. And since 1989, Georgia has had some of the strongest protections for existing farmers and property rights in the U.S.

These laws protect our local Georgia farmers from frivolous nuisance lawsuits. These good neighbor laws also protect other Georgians' property rights. But, lobbyists for global food conglomerates and insurance companies are trying to weaken these protective laws with a "Bad Neighbor Bill." **HB 1150 weakens Georgia's long-standing laws. It guts protections for property owners and makes it easier for global meat companies to operate without regard to their neighbors.**

**STOP** the corporate takeover of Georgia's farmland. Send a message to your legislators today. STOP HB 1150.

# Our Updates

If this email was forwarded to you, please register here to receive updates from Georgia ForestWatch.

# 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.

In 2021 donations from individuals, such as yourself, provided for 72% of our budget, and we are asking again in 2022 for your support.

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.

Connect with us

# 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.