GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

Dec 6, 2022

FORESTWATCH JOURNAL

Volume 1, Issue 23

Other Ways to Support GAFW

In addition to **becoming a member**, giving an additional **donation** or a **gift membership**, or becoming a recurring donor, there are other ways to for you to give to GAFW you may have yet to consider.

- **Give appreciated stock.** When you give appreciated stock, we'll sell it, and you'll eliminate all the capital gains tax you would have paid had you sold it. Your gift will be deductible at full fair market value (assuming you have held it for more than one year).

- **Make a gift from your IRA.** If you are 70½ or older, you can directly transfer up to $100,000 annually from your IRA. The transfer doesn't generate taxable income or a tax deduction, so you benefit even if you do not itemize your tax deductions.

- **Make a planned giving bequest.** Simply include the following language into your will: "I give (_____ dollars or _____ percent of the residue of my estate) to Georgia ForestWatch Tax ID 58-2188475, a Dahlonega, Georgia charitable corporation for its general purpose use."

- **Host a Facebook Fundraiser.** Go to **https://www.facebook.com/fundraisers/** and follow the prompts to choose GAFW as a recipient. Facebook makes hosting easy, and 100% of donations go directly to GAFW.

Donate Today

Get Out the Vote & Upcoming GA General Assembly

Today is voting day once again in Georgia. Please make time in your schedule to practice democracy and use your voice in the direction of our future.

While our turkey leftovers are finally gone, and we are deciding on our federal Senate seat, the Georgia General Assembly is beginning to gear up, and legislation prefiling began November 15, 2022. On January 9, 2023, the **Georgia General Assembly** will convene to start the first year of a new biennial session for forty non-consecutive legislative days. While elections gain the lion's share of focus from voters, your voice and input are just as important during the legislative session.

Now is the time, if you have not done so already, to reach out to your newly (re) elected member of the Georgia **House of Representatives** and **Senate** and congratulate them on their victory. This relationship is key for every voter that you should develop BEFORE you need them to know how you feel about individual pieces of legislation. Send them an email, write them a note, or call them and let them know you are their constituent.

GAFW's state legislative priority for the 2023-24 General Assembly is reintroducing and passing an updated version of **HB 906 – the civil forfeiture of any off-road vehicle operated while driving recklessly or fleeing police**. This important bill that did not make it through last year's session is intended to address the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) in urban areas within our state. It will also provide a valuable deterrence against the proliferation of illegal OHV use within the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. Within our forest, there are designated OHV use areas but were you aware that outside of those designated OHV areas, all vehicles must be "street legal." That means that four-wheelers, heavily modified jeeps, **side by sides**, unlicensed dirt bikes, most golf carts, etc. are illegal to use on the roads and trails of our forest. (USFS policy for E-bikes is they are currently considered a "motor vehicle" and only allowed on roads and trails designated for motorized vehicle use, not on mountain bike trails.)

This chronic problem has gone unchecked for years due to the lack of meaningful punishment for infractions. It is a leading contributor to waterway sedimentation, muddy roads and trails, and safety for hikers and other recreational users. The

penalty can now fit the concern by allowing the vehicle being used illegally to be seized and permanently forfeited.

In the coming days and weeks, GAFW will be working behind the scenes to have this legislation reintroduced, and while it did receive a committee hearing last year, it was not passed. To strengthen our advocacy efforts in support of this measure, we ask our members and community to share your photos and reports of illegal OHV use within Georgia's national forests. If you have photos or stories of illegal OHV use (including E-bike use on bike trails) within the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, please send them to us at **outreach@gafw.org**. We will compile these, report them to the USFS, and use this vital information to get this bill introduced and passed.

Join Our Team

We are hiring a new Outreach Coordinator. The ideal Outreach Coordinator is openly passionate about Georgia's national forest lands and wants to share their passion for GAFW and the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (CONF) with others. The ideal candidate will be enthusiastic about reaching out to community members and other stakeholders. They will consistently and proactively seek out both formal and informal opportunities to share their love of our national forests, elevate and educate about our forest's ability to sequester carbon, address climate change, and advocate for natural processes in managing our forests.

The ideal candidate is willing to work a full-time but flexible schedule, proactively seeks out tabling and speaking opportunities prefers to have the attention of their audience, and will professionally discuss GAFW and the CONF at every opportunity. This position is a dream job for the right person who enjoys interacting with community members, students of all ages, and all forest stakeholders. **More information and apply here**.

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

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Thank You

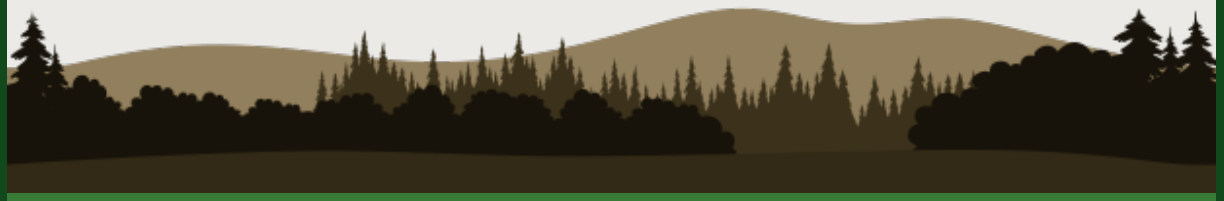
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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.

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.



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