GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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FORESTWATCH JOURNAL

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Year-End Appeal Update

Thanks to the generosity of our community GAFW has raised $9,195 (18%) towards our $50,000 year-end fundraising campaign.

For those of you who have already given, we cannot thank you enough for supporting our mission of *enhancing 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.*

If you have not had the opportunity to give yet, please consider a year-end gift to GAFW today. Thank you.

Donate Today

We Need Your Input on the Proposed Chestnut Mountain Prescribe Fire Project

The Chattooga River Ranger District (CRRD) proposes prescribed burning to improve wildlife and plant habitat diversity, enhance forest health, and reduce hazardous fuel accumulations on approximately **801 acres** of National Forest system lands in **Rabun County**, Georgia. Through this project, the CRRD would conduct prescribed fire (Rx) activities in this unit on a 3–5 year prescribed fire rotation, with treatment beginning within the next three years. To achieve desired conditions, prescribed burning would occur in the growing and/or dormant season. The dormant season is defined as November through mid-April, with the primary implementation period being February through March. The growing season is defined as mid-April through October, with the primary implementation period being May through June.

Georgia ForestWatch acknowledges fire has a natural role in the forest's ecology but varies considerably within the wide variety of ecological zones. Understanding the limitations of allowing naturally occurring fire (lightning strikes) to run their course, Rx is the preferred alternative to logging, mechanical thinning, or spraying herbicides. While GAFW is concerned about prioritizing the underfunded USFS budget for Rx burning over the more pressing needs of road and trail maintenance and expanding law enforcement within the forest, we recognize the need for Rx fire.

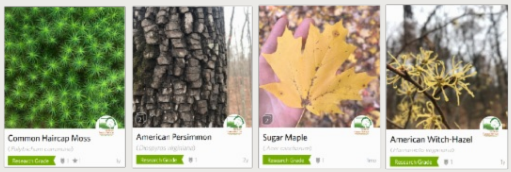
If you live near Chestnut Mountain in Rabun County or have concerns or support for this Rx burn, please let us know your thoughts at outreach@gafw.org. Your input will assist GAFW as we draft comments on this proposed project.

Community Science in Our Forests

Using any technology has pros and cons, but these mobile applications have been vetted by Georgia ForestWatch staff and have robust desktop access to help organize, sort, and track your contributions. An added benefit of these applications is the ability to monitor over time. Each application allows ways to show changes as our forests constantly evolve. Whether it's pictures of the rare flower population over time, more people visiting wilderness areas, or a nonnative

invasive species being eradicated through volunteer workdays, these community science apps have us covered! The more we use them, the more useful they become. Welcome to forest monitoring 2.0!

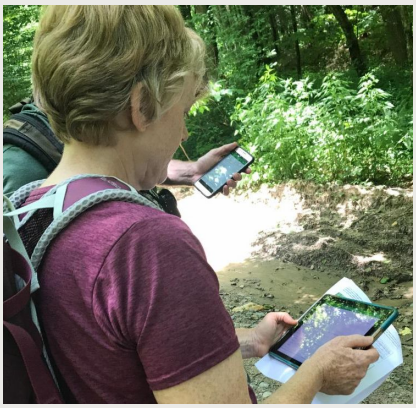
iNaturalist @gaforestwatch
Community Science and species identification!



iNaturalist - Species ID

Using iNaturalist is THE easiest way to enjoy and contribute to our wonderful forest biodiversity. You can learn about a variety of species from salamanders and mushrooms to trillium and yellowwood trees at your own pace and help researchers and public land managers. Simply upload your pictures and see if you have enough information to suggest the species. Each time you contribute, you can aim to improve your photographs to include important differences between lookalikes and receiving help from the community. You can also learn about habitat, range, and protection status. Many apps that help with plant identification, but iNaturalist has settings and methods to help build community science to a whole new level. See how to get started and follow GAFW on iNaturalist.

Survey123



Survey123 was created by Esri, the most well-known mapping developers in the world. The beauty of this platform is customizable surveys and the ability to connect the data to a location (even without cell service). It can be used without having an account, but it is better to join an approved organization to collect specific data that you also care about. The two surveys below are established, and the information is compiled and submitted to the U.S. Forest Service as appropriate.

-Solitude Monitoring: Visitors in Wilderness Areas
Contribute to required F.S. information to ensure our Wilderness area meets its intended characteristics. Contact SAWS for more information.

-Southeast Sedimentation Survey: Sedimentation issues
Is a Forest Service Road causing noticeable sedimentation over/through the trail? Can you see evidence of road material going into the stream? This map helps track those severe sedimentation issues. Of special concern is native trout habitat, but all small mountain streams should be protected from road sedimentation. Contact your local Trout Unlimited chapter for more info.

EddMaps Pro - Nonnative Invasive Species
Not all non-native species are invasive, and not all invasive species are nonnative! Even though it is a mouthful to say, it is important to clarify the EddMaps app can be used to report Nonnative and Invasive Species (NNIS). That includes Emerald Ash Borer (a very pretty but destructive flying beetle), Autumn olive, and zebra mussels. Once a non-native and invasive species ID is confirmed, you can estimate and submit an area of infestation, and professionals then verify those reports. Every paulownia and Callery pear tree documented in our forests can help protect many acres of potential spread. Learn more here.

Fall 2022 Forest News Newsletter

Be sure to check out our latest edition of our quarterly newsletter, Forest News. (Click the image to access the newsletter)

Upcoming GAFW Outings

Wednesday, December 21, 2022 - Winter Solstice hike to the swinging bridge with Melanie. Celebrate the first day of winter hiking 7.2 miles on the Benton MacKaye to the 270-foot suspension bridge over the Toccoa River. We'll picnic by the river before heading back to our cars. Pets allowed. Register on Meetup

Sunday, January 1, 2023 - MEMBERS ONLY EVENT FIRST DAY HIKES AND

POTLUCK. Start the year off right by hiking with forest-loving friends, followed by a potluck lunch (cuz you gotta eat your greens and black-eyed peas) at the Vickers home in Rabun County! Two options to choose from: Rattlesnake Knob 9-3pm with Keith | Coleman River Trail 10-3pm with Eddi

Monday, February 6, 2023 - Len Foote Hike Inn OVERNIGHT Hike ~5 miles to the sustainable and comfortable State Park facility nestled in the Chattahoochee National Forest and enjoy home-cooked meals, hot showers, fresh linens, an evening presentation, and an educational hike out the next day. Discounted rates for Georgia ForestWatch Members!

Interested in leading a hike or other outing for GAFW?We are searching for additional leaders who are willing to share their favorite parts of the forest. Let us know at outreach@gafw.org.

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

Share This Email | Share This Email | Share This Email

Thank You

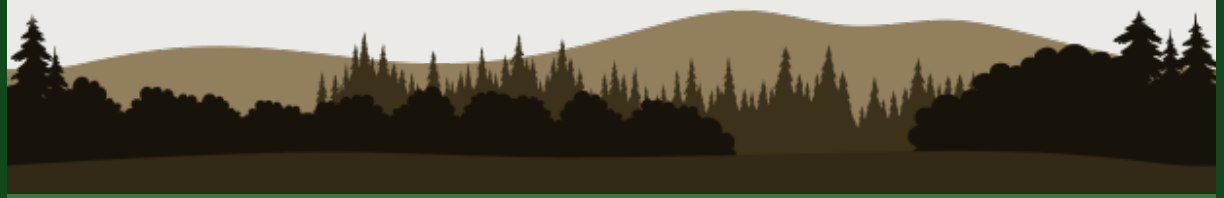
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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.



Connect with us

Georgia Forestwatch | 81 Crown Mtn Place, Building C, Suite 200, Dahlonega, GA 30533

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