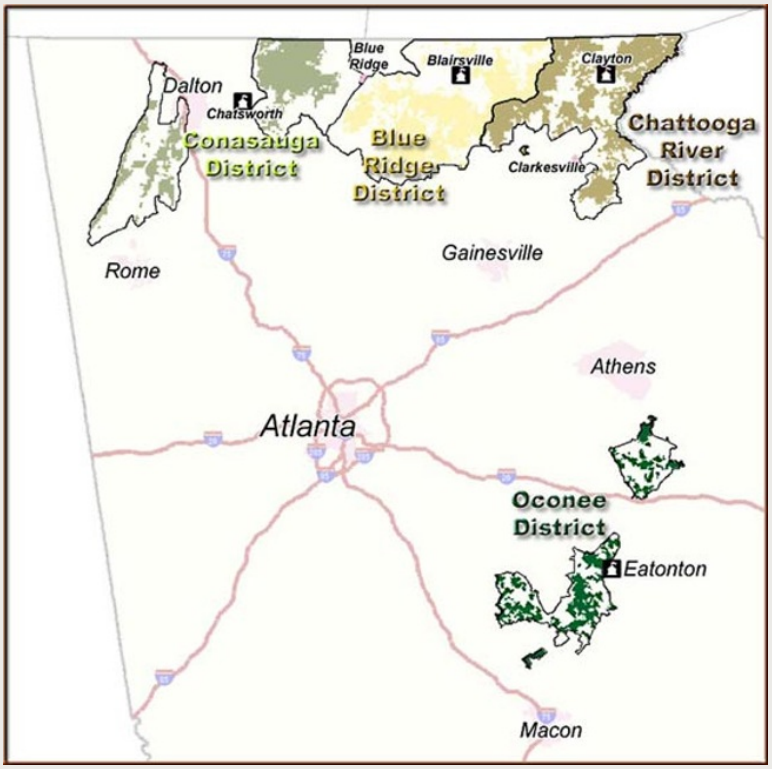
GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

Dec 20, 2022

FORESTWATCH JOURNAL

Volume 1, Issue 27



Your Forest. Your Voice.

Thank you 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.*

GAFW sees a future where people can enjoy **forests that have reached their full majesty, where intact natural processes support healthy ecosystems and thriving biodiversity, and clean streams supply water to millions of Georgians**. We believe this future requires the protection and appreciation of Georgia's national forests and the watersheds, native plants, and wildlife they encompass.

In 2023 GAFW is seeking to:

- Call on Congress to fully fund a much-needed increase in USFS Law Enforcement Officers to ensure our national forest lands and all visitors remain healthy and safe.
- Call on Congress to fully fund and for the USFS to prioritize road and trail maintenance within our national forests to reduce sedimentation into our watersheds.
- Call on the Georgia General Assembly to enact a law allowing

the seizure of ATV and OHV vehicles used illegally to destroy our forests.
- Defend against attacks on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and hold federal agencies accountable to its required provisions.
- Support land acquisitions and the geographic expansion of the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests. And much more.

None of the above is possible without your active involvementin supporting the organization and using your voice to support our national forests. On behalf of Georgia ForestWatch and, most importantly, the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, please make a year-end donation today.

Donate Today

Wilderness Monitoring

A success story for partnerships, monitoring, and volunteers
by Andrew Linker and Lauren King

2022 was a big step in expanding our monitoring efforts. A strong suit of GAFW has always been the ability to respond to national forest proposed actions. This "reactionary" monitoring style can be effective and important when encouraging land managers to test techniques on small areas before risking many acres and suggesting more natural management methods to achieve the project goals. **This year, we took a proactive approach of helping collect useful and required data in our national forests for the Forest Service BEFORE actions are proposed from the top down.**

GAFW has engaged in proactive volunteer monitoring with technical road surveys and collecting GPS tracks for off-road and illegal activity in sensitive areas. This year we had clear goals, an established system, and amazing partners who helped it all come together. A huge thank you to Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) and the Forest Service for allowing us to utilize volunteers, monitor, and collect foot traffic data in designated Wilderness areas.

Casey Helton, a Georgia ForestWatch Intern from the University of North Georgia, was instrumental in a successful first volunteer monitoring season. Casey truly committed to the effort and filled in when necessary, even if it meant changing plans last minute to accomplish our collective survey goals. And, of course, a huge thank

you to the ForestWatch volunteers who got out there in the rain, heat, and cold to achieve 30 monitoring days from June through October 2022: **Casey Helton, Drew Carter, Theresa Ponader, Olney Arnold, Mei Lee Fung, Andrea Timpone, Taylor Stone, and Andy Kunkel.**

You can read the full story here and see the report from Year 1 here.

Meetup

Recently GAFW has began transitioning our Outings program to the event registration platform Meetup. While change is inevitable and no registration system is perfect, GAFW has a goal of expanding upon our Outings program, including:

- Increasing the total number of Outings GAFW offers.
- Expanding upon the diversity and number of Outing participants.
- Exploring new and different types of Outings to fit a wider variety of abilities and interests.
- Intentionally offering Outing opportunities for participants who do not traditionally consider exploring the forest as an option.

At GAFW, we continue our search for a new full-time Outreach Coordinator (interested applicants can find out more here). We are optimistic that the right candidate will reveal themselves soon. When they arrive, you can expect to see many more opportunities to explore our national forests, and we need a way to manage the program's growth. We explored other options but landed on **Meetup as the most appropriate tool to manage reservations and get the word out about GAFW's Outings to those unfamiliar with our work.**

GAFW understands that some of our members and community may want to avoid adding another app to their phones or putting up with the inevitable ads embedded in the notifications, but we encourage you to sign up on Meetup and follow GAFW to ensure you remain up to date on our Outings and can register for those can't-miss Outings we continue to offer. If you have any questions or ongoing concerns with GAFW's use of Meetup, please let us know at outreach@gafw.org.

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

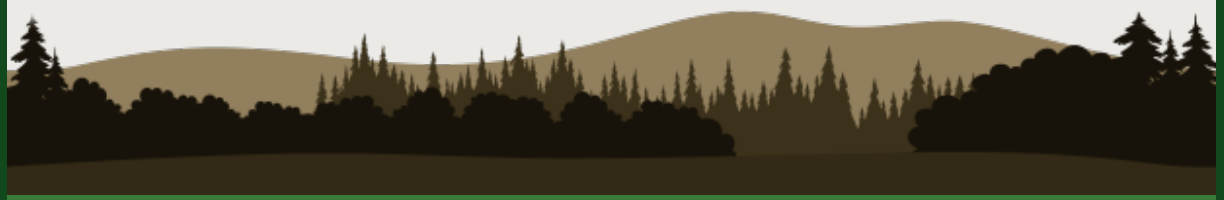
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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

Unsubscribe mklouda@gafw.org

Update Profile |Constant Contact Data Notice

Sent bycommunications@gafw.orgpowered by

Try email marketing for free today!