GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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GAFW at Warwoman Dell

Volunteers recently returned to **Warwoman Dell** to remove 300 pounds of invasive plants and trash before many spring wildflowers emerge.

English ivy had spread through the national forest from the beloved Warwoman Dell recreation area just outside of Clayton, GA. This non-native and invasive vine was historically planted for erosion control, but we have since learned it can outcompete native plant habitats without natural checks and balances.

Warwoman Dell is a convenient access point for some of the best hiking trails in the county and certainly has some wonderful native plants worth protecting.

Georgia ForestWatch Board members came together in late 2019, saying, “enough is enough; we need to do something about this!” In partnership with the Chattooga River Ranger District and **Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy**, ForestWatch volunteers have rolled up their sleeves and manually removed English ivy by hand.

Truckloads of vines have been removed over the years. The area now only requires a revisit every year to minimize chemical applications and protect our forest from a plant known for its adverse effects on acres of our national forest.

“This place is special to me, and being able to come back here to enjoy the wildflowers, knowing we helped stop the English ivy from taking over our public lands, is very satisfying,” says Melanie Vickers, Georgia ForestWatch Board Member, volunteer, and Rabun County resident.

See more in the February 2 issue of ***The Clayton Tribune***.

Join iGive

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Change online shopping for good.

AmazonSmile is closing down on February 20, 2023. To help replace the void they're leaving, iGive is **doubling down on donations - at least 2X more than AmazonSmile.** To their credit, they taught the world that every purchase could help Georgia ForestWatch. We want to be sure you are aware of a few alternative ways to support GAFW.

By using GAFW's **iGive**, you can shop at over 2,000 stores (like **Walmart**, **Chewy**, and **Expedia**), and you can help make a difference.

You can also support GAFW by shopping on Amazon from our **Wish List**. We hope you will consider adding a few items to your cart for us.

Other ways to support GAFW include **Kroger's Community Rewards** and **PayPal's Giving Fund.**

New Rules in the US House of Representatives

Measures in the House of Representatives' new rules package make it easier to transfer federal public lands and support oil and gas development.

The **House of Representatives** recently passed a **new package of rules**, and two of the provisions could affect public lands and oil and gas development throughout all national forests.

The first rule change states that for any bill authorizing the transfer of federal public lands to state, local or tribal governments, Congress would no longer need to account for lost revenues.

Traditionally Congress was required to identify funding to pay for the loss of that land, but under the new rule, public land can be given away for free. The rule, adopted **previously in 2017**, makes it easier for Congress to privatize public land.

The other rule requires the federal government to lease more public land to oil and gas companies if the executive branch disburses any portion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Disposing of public lands and boosting oil and gas drilling is less of a concern within the **Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests** (CONF) than in other public lands.

Thankfully, CONF leadership assures GAFW they have a stated goal of increasing the size of the CONF, and there are currently no oil and gas leases within the CONF. However, as this is a slippery slope once we start on the path to reducing and polluting our public lands, GAFW recommends you reach out to your **Congressional representative** and let them know how you feel about these rules.

Donate to GAFW Today

Upcoming GAFW Outings

Thursday, February 23 - Funk Heritage Center Guided Tour - Reinhardt University, Waleska, GA. 10:00 am.

Saturday, March 18 - St. Patrick's Day Celebration - Fannin Brewing Company, Blue Ridge, GA. 1 pm.

Saturday, October 14 - Save the Date! GAFW Annual Retreat at Red Top Mountain.

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**.

GAFW Outings on Meetup

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.

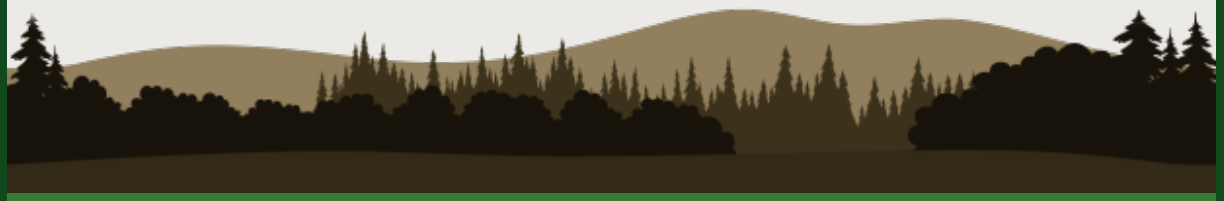
Please support our mission by ensuring your **membership is up to date** and providing **additional support** as you are able.

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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