GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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Climate Change Has Started. Now What?

If you are like us, you love TED Talk recommendations. Recently a longtime GAFW member and supporter urged us to watch a TEDxBoston presentation entitled **The Drawdown Roadmap** by **Project Drawdown** executive director Jonathan Foley. We found it a practical and optimistic plan to stop the runaway bus of climate change before it rolls off a cliff.

Project Drawdown has used rigorous science to identify and characterize nearly 100 practices and technologies that, if ambitiously implemented together, can achieve drawdown—the point when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere start to decline steadily, thereby stopping catastrophic climate change.

Now, how do we scale them? The Drawdown Roadmap is a science-based framework to strategically and effectively deploy these powerful climate solutions to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The roadmap considers how the opportunity for reduction is distributed across sectors, the relative cost (or financial benefit) of the various solutions, and where and when each might most effectively be implemented.

In **this presentation**, the Drawdown Roadmap is introduced. It outlines how this new plan for prioritizing climate action across sectors, time, and geography can "really drive change on climate change" while there's still time.

Closer to home **Drawdown Georgia** takes its inspiration from Project Drawdown and has identified **Solutions for a Changing Climate** in five cost-competitive and 'market-ready' sectors. By bringing what's possible into focus, Drawdown Georgia puts us on a path to a low-carbon, high-quality of life future for all.

GAFW will continue to advocate for Georgia's natural land sinks, such as the almost 900,000 acres of national forest lands, to increase the capacity to sequester carbon as we reduce emissions elsewhere.

Join the GAFW Book Club

New for 2023!
Learn about our region, explore books by local authors, and connect with other GAFW members.

- Monthly gathering via Zoom
- Speakers & field trips as relevant
- Books of all genres
- Selections will be related to the forest, the SE region, and/or written by regional authors
- List of books available on March 1 – first meeting in April

Interested? Questions? Ideas? Email: bookclub@gafw.org.

Do We Need More Recreation in Our Forests?

It began long before COVID, but during the time we were socially distanced, the amount (number of persons, per day, in unique locations) of those exploring our national forest lands significantly increased, creating a louder, crowded experience that increased the ecological impact on the land. It can be seen, heard, and felt every weekend year-round and every day all summer long. While GAFW fully supports sustainable recreation in our forests that strictly adhere to **Leave No Trace** principles, we also recognize that the USFS needs additional resources in recreation management and law enforcement staff to meet current demand.

In recent years you have seen GAFW take a hard look at commercial recreational special use permits (allowing providers to use our public lands to make commercial income) and advocate with the USFS to begin tracking the increase in recreational use of each district. Without a baseline of use and impact, it is impossible to

document if increased usage leads to increased wear on our roads, trails, and campgrounds. **GAFW's Wilderness Monitoring** partnership with SAWS is an attempt to shed some light on this concern.

Recently a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the USDA's **Rural Development**, the **National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)** , and the **US Forest Service** to partner in developing an annual plan to expand economic opportunities related to recreation in communities surrounding America's national forests. The annual plan will outline how the agencies will partner to conduct program outreach, host informational sessions and workshops, and develop toolkits to help people access the resources they need to thrive in recreation-based economies. The agencies will also:

- Provide technical and planning assistance to help local, state, and Tribal leaders develop regional economic development plans that advance recreation economies.
- Provide funding for Rural Development and National Institute of Food and Agriculture programs to help the US Forest Service gateway communities expand resilient recreation infrastructure and business development projects that create jobs.
- Develop and maintain strategic partnerships, and more.

The **signed agreement** makes no mention of additional resources for USFS districts to address visitor increases and are clearly intended to be an economic boost to communities adjacent to national forest lands. Again, GAFW supports a diversity of recreational users in enjoying our national forests, but an already underfunded USFS cannot be expected to take on growth in use without the necessary resources needed to ensure our forests remain safe for all.

GAFW will continue to advocate with the U.S. Congress to increase USFS recreational and law enforcement budgets and with the USFS directly to create a system of tracking and reporting recreational use on our public lands.

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. 1:00 pm.

Saturday, April 8 - Private Hike & Tour - Lula Lake Land Trust, Lookout Mountain, GA. 11:00 am. **Details posted soon!**

Thursday, April 27 - **Keown Falls & Johns Mountain with Bill & Leslie,** NW Ga, near Resaca, GA. 10:00 am.

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

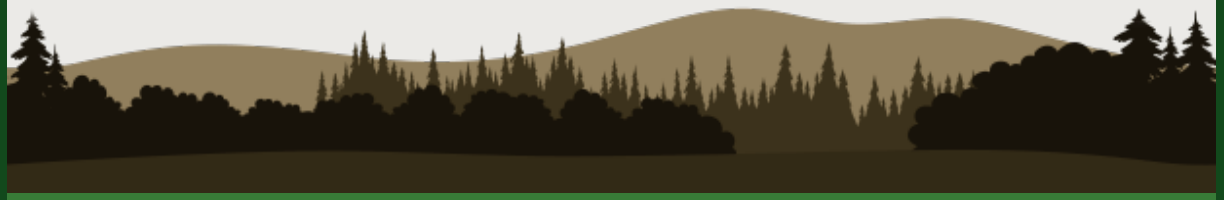
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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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