GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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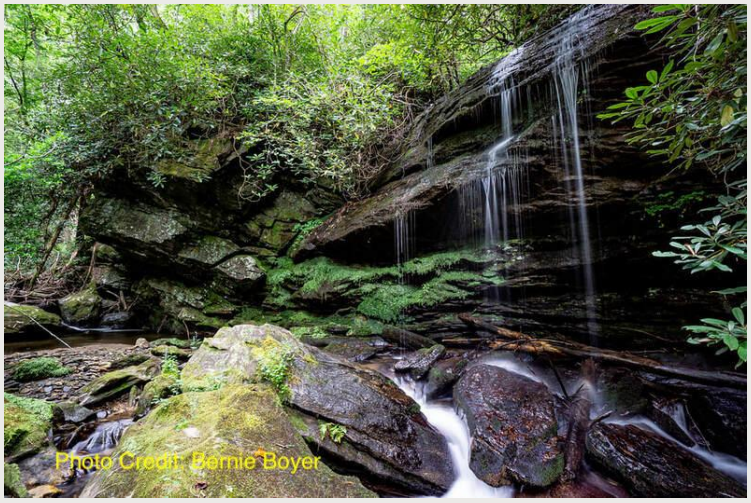

$36M to Improve Roads, Trails, & Water Quality

Earlier this month, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) announced investments of more than $36 million in nearly 100 projects to improve water quality, roads, trails, bridges, and fish habitat on national forests and grasslands nationwide. The funds are delivered through the **Legacy Roads and Trails Program** and funds projects, along with other restoration and infrastructure work, to improve water quality and aquatic habitat while making transportation systems safer, more sustainable, and more durable.

The complete list of 2023 projects includes three in Georgia. Most notably, it is funding the closing of Flatlands Road, which we brought to your attention last week. Funding will also be used in the Chattooga River Ranger District (CRRD) to incorporate two aquatic organism passage projects (installing culverts under roads).

- **Flatlands Road:** Decommission unauthorized and temporary road. Project will improve water quality in public drinking water source area and restore fish and aquatic species habitat.
- **Rock Mt Creek (Finny Creek):** Planning and design of aquatic organism passage. Project will restore fish and aquatic species habitat and improve resilience.
- **Tributary of Tuckaluge Creek:** Planning and design of aquatic organism passage. Project will restore fish and aquatic species habitat and improve resilience.

GAFW thanks both the BRRD and CRRD District Rangers for identifying and pursuing funding for these important projects to improve the health of our national forest ecosystems.

Nationally the USFS is responsible for more than 160,000 miles of trails, 6,700 road bridges, and 7,200 trail bridges, as well as 370,000 miles of roads in a variety of ecological settings and landscapes.

Approximately 80 million people receive drinking water that originates on or flows through national forests and grasslands. This funding will improve ecological connectivity and watershed health while protecting infrastructure and ensuring national forests continue to provide drinking water to communities.

GAFW Certifies in State Sedimentation Controls

Georgia ForestWatch recently met the educational requirements to be certified by the **Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission** in the design, review, permitting, construction, monitoring, and inspection of any land-disturbing activity in Georgia.

GAFW completed the **Level IA Fundamentals** seminar and exam. A course designed to train contractors, builders, developers, site superintendents, grading and utility contractors, and monitoring consultants in properly installing, maintaining, and inspecting best management practices on construction sites. Topics covered in this course are erosion and sediment control fundamentals, the **Georgia Erosion & Sedimentation Act**, field maintenance, stream buffers, **NPDES** Permits, and vegetative and structural best management practices.

GAFW is obviously not engaged in construction but is heavily invested in monitoring and reporting erosion and sedimentation concerns within the boundaries of our national forests and state as part of our mission. With this certification, we can now monitor, observe, and report sedimentation concerns and violations with a full understanding of what the state requires.

If you observe any type of runoff sedimentation flowing into our waterways, please take photos, save the location (**a dropped pin on google maps works great**), and email your observation to **report@gafw.org** with a brief description of the concern. GAFW will validate the observation and, if warranted, report the concern to the

proper authorities. Priority will be given to concerns within the boundaries of, or adjacent to, our national forest lands. With your help, GAFW can reduce the amount of sedimentation polluting our waterways.

2023 Spring Appeal

As of today, we have raised $2,274, or 11%, of our $20,000 spring fundraising goal . For those of you who have already given, we cannot thank you enough. For those of you who have not yet given and are active members, please consider **renewing** or making **an additional generous contribution today**. If you are not a member, or your membership has lapsed, please **become active today** at the highest level possible.

Another way to contribute to GAFW's mission **to preserve and protect our national forests** is by becoming a recurring donor. Monthly recurring donations are a fantastic way to provide support, and it is easy. On the top of the **donation page**, simply choose the "monthly" option instead of "one-time." Note: if you are already a recurring donor – thank you. We will apply your May 2023 donation towards our appeal goal.

Benefits to you as a monthly recurring donor include (but not limited to):

- Your children's children will appreciate it (even if they do not thank you).
- Set it and not have to worry about it. Peace of mind knowing that you are supporting the mission year-round.
- Your membership is always up to date. Recurring monthly donors are always automatically renewed as long as their recurring donation is active.
- Provides consistent income for GAFW. Especially needed during the "off" months when we do not have an active appeal.
- Allows GAFW to budget with fewer ups and downs associated with fundraising.
- Allows GAFW staff to go back to sleep at 2:00 a.m. instead of staring at the ceiling worried about the organization's finances...and the forest.
- You will be granted Eternal Enlightenment.

Donate to GAFW Today

Upcoming GAFW Outings

Thursday, May 25 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting** via Zoom.

Thursday, June 29 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting** via Zoom.

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

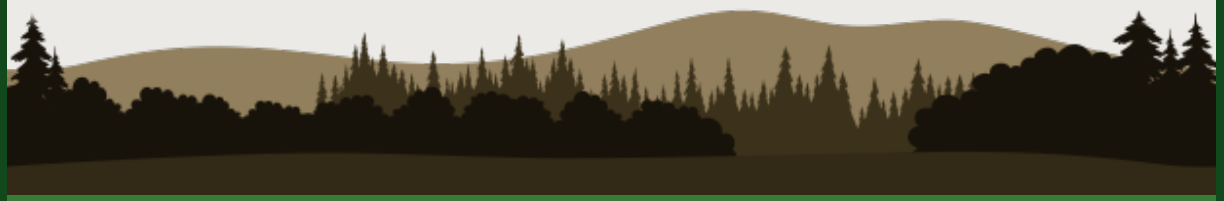
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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 preserve and protect our national forests.



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