GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

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Credit: Photo by Chris LeBoutillier

Carbon Waste Dumping in U.S. Forests

Please tell the USFS to scrap its upcoming proposal to allow carbon waste dumping in U.S. forests?

The USFS has **announced** that in August, it will propose changing regulations to allow permanent waste dumping of carbon from carbon capture and storage (CCS) operations in our National Forests. Ironically, the USFS would promulgate a rule while we still have no date for a draft rule to protect mature and old-growth forests.

Carbon waste dumping (with the carbon coming from industrial polluters, like fossil fuel refineries and power plants) would involve pipeline construction and injection wells — activities that would harm forest ecosystems. These industrial facilities would likely require clearcutting and road building for pipelines and related

infrastructure. CCS involves pumping CO2 via Injection control wells below rock layers to avoid contaminating underground drinking water sources (such as where your drinking water comes from). There aren't many Class VI wells because the push for CCS on this scale and type is new. Compressed CO2 is a dangerous asphyxiant, meaning people or wildlife near a leak could suffocate and die.

We want to send a clear message to the USFS never to let this proposal see the light of day.

Please sign this petition from our partners at the Center for Biological Diversity to help show that we oppose carbon waste dumping in our forests and stop this intrusion on our public lands before the damage is started. The private industry reaping the payday from this pollution should be responsible for the full cost of the solution, and it should not involve our public lands. Better yet, the polluters should stop creating this planet-baking pollution altogether.

USFS CONF Streamlines Special Use Application Process

The Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest (CONF) has modified the application process for **special use permits** (SUP) for recreational outfitters and guides, events, and research within the forest. The CONF states, “the new open-season application period to apply for required special-use permits will ensure requests are prioritized to better meet the needs of permittees.”

While GAFW has a policy of **supporting recreational use, including commercially, within the Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest (CONF), IF the activities do not have a negative impact on the ecology or natural balance of the forest or other users or beneficiaries,** we are also concerned about the noticeable increases in commercial recreation and the impact it is having on the ecosystem and the experiences of other users. Our public lands belong to us all, and commercial activity, whether logging or recreation, should not take priority over the forest’s right to exist unimpeded. GAFW asks the USFS CONF to focus on “whether the

proposed use is compatible with the values that make the national forest an irreplaceable resource – including plants, animals, beauty, clean air, and water" instead of ways to "better meet the needs of permittees."

Before any new SUPs are approved, GAFW calls on the USFS to conduct a comprehensive commercial recreation review within the CONF and nationally to develop a commercial recreational use baseline. Without a baseline, we have no empirical evidence to determine if increased recreation does not have a negative impact. Previous recreation research conducted by the USFS appears to focus solely on the **economic impact** and not on the ecological impact. Until such an assessment is conducted, GAFW will default towards not supporting future commercial SUPs.

New Georgia Environmental Protection Division Director

In August, the **Georgia Board of Natural Resources** (DNR) voted unanimously to approve Jeff Cown as Director of the **Environmental Protection Division** (EPD). He will assume the position on August 16 at an annual salary of $190,000, a significant increase over his **current $129,576 salary** as Director of the **Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites Division**.

Jeff Cown has been with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and has been the Director of the State Parks and Historic Sites Division since September 2018. In this role, he oversaw the management of 70 properties catering to the recreational needs of our state. Prior to this role, Cown spent over 28 years with the

Environmental Protection Division, serving as Chief of the Land Protection Branch. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Georgia and graduated from the **Institute of Georgia Environmental Leadership** (IGEL), Georgia's environmental leadership program.

GAFW, as members of both the **Georgia Water Coalition** and the **Okefenokee Protection Alliance**, will continue advocating to stop the proposed mine next to the Okefenokee Swamp from Alabama-based **Twin Pines Minerals'** whose permit must be approved by the new Director before operations can begin. Mr. Cown has promised to conduct a thorough scientific review of both issues and communicate the findings to the public in a way that builds trust in the agency. If you wish to contact Mr. Cown in his new role, he can be reached at **jeff.cown@dnr.ga.gov**.

Donate to GAFW Today

Lead Georgia ForestWatch Into the Future

Climate change, deforestation, forest protection rollbacks, unscientific support for single game species, lack of sufficient law enforcement, old growth protection, commercial logging, increased recreational impact, invasive species, road building, decreased USFS budgets, watershed sedimentation, and welcoming diversity are just some of the concerns GAFW is focused on addressing in our national forests. If you, or someone you know, is interested in supporting our mission to **preserve and protect our national forests** and envisions **a future where people enjoy forests that have reached their majesty and where intact natural processes support healthy ecosystems and thriving biodiversity for all,** then please consider joining our board of directors.

GAFW is seeking board members who support our mission, vision, and **values** and can financially contribute, help fundraise, and grow the membership base, and/or provide input on the organization's strategic direction. Specifically, we seek those with professional experience in human resources, forest ecology, fundraising, **DEI**, or law, but we are happy to consider anyone who believes in our mission. **Diverse candidates from across Georgia are strongly encouraged to reach out.**

Do you want your children's children to have the same healthy and standing national forests we have today? If so, please contact GAFW Board Chair Anne Heikkila at **anne.heikkila@icloud.com** for more information on joining our board.

GAFW Leaves Twitter

We have decided to depart from Twitter. While we have thoroughly enjoyed interacting with our followers and sharing our thoughts and ideas with the community, we have decided to focus our energy on other platforms that better align with our mission and values.

As an organization, we value transparency, inclusivity, and accountability. Unfortunately, we have found that Twitter's policies and practices do not always align with these values. Specifically, we have concerns about the platform's approach to moderating hate speech and disinformation. We believe it is our responsibility to take a stand against these harmful practices, and we cannot continue supporting a platform that does not share our values.

We want to thank our followers for their support and engagement. We are committed to continuing our mission of promoting open dialogue and meaningful engagement, and we look forward to connecting with you on other platforms. Our current platforms are linked at the bottom of this email.

Upcoming GAFW Outings

Friday, August 11 - **Museum of the Cherokee Indian**, Cherokee, NC.

Thursday, August 30 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting**, Zoom (*The Changing Blue Ridge Mountains* by Brent Martin)

Saturday, September 9 - **Guided Tour at the Foxfire Museum**

Thursday, September 28- **GAFW Book Club Meeting**, Zoom (*Deliverance*, by James Dickey)

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

Friday, October 20 - Core Preserve at Lula Lake Land Trust

Saturday, October 21 - **The Second Wurst Festival Ever**, Fannin Brewing Company, Blue Ridge, GA (Tickets on sale soon)

Thursday, October 26 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting**, Zoom (*Haints on Black Mountain* by Ann Hite)

Thursday, November 30 - **GAFW Book Club Meeting**, Zoom (*Literary Field Guide to Southern Appalachia,* Edited by Rose McLarney, Laura-Gray Street, and L. L. Gaddy)

Thursday, December 28 - GAFW Book Club Meeting, Zoom (*The Lost Book of Eleanor Dare* by Kimberly Brock)

GAFW Outings on Meetup

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

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Thank You

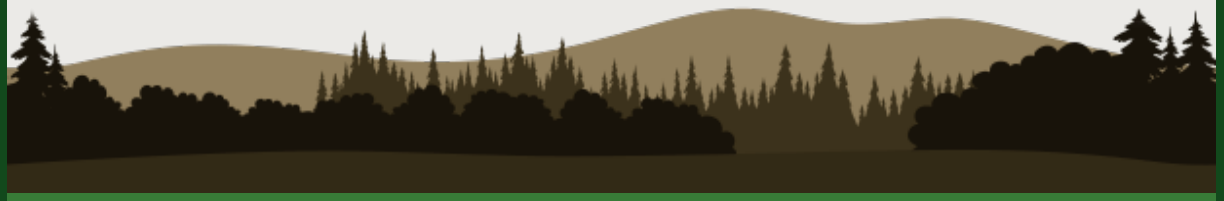
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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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