GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
PRESERVE PROTECT RESTORE GAFW.ORG

September 12, 2023

FORESTWATCH JOURNAL

Volume 2, Issue 32

Use Your Voice to Fund USFS Recreation & Deferred Maintenance Needs

In last week's **ForestWatch Journal**, you may recall that **GAFW submitted comments** in response to the proposed Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest (CONF) **recreation fee increases**. Our organization understands the need for increased funding to financially support and maintain not only the most popular recreational areas but all of our public lands. GAFW is fully supportive of increasing the non-off highway vehicle (OHV) recreation and site maintenance budget of our national forest public lands; however, it also feels strongly that the funding should come directly from federal tax revenues distributed by the U.S. Congress, allowing all users, despite their available household resources, to enjoy our public lands.

GAFW now asks you to **Use Your Voice** to ask our U.S. Congress to fully fund the non-OHV recreation and deferred maintenance needs of our U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed national forests. Please click **here** to advocate on behalf of our national forests today.

Additionally, we are seeking a small group of GAFW-supportive constituents from **Georgia's 9th Congressional District** to participate in a to-be-scheduled weekday visit with **Congressman Andrew Clyde** (or a staffer) at his Gainesville, GA office to advocate for increased USFS non-OHV recreational and deferred maintenance

funding. GAFW will schedule the visit, prepare the handouts, and provide a brief pre-visit training for those interested in participating. Please let us know if you are interested by emailing us at **communications@gafw.org**.

GAFW Signs on to Endangered Species Comments

GAFW has signed onto the **Southern Environmental Law Center** (SELC) prepared comments on the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's** (USFWS) and **National Marine Fisheries Services** (NMFS) proposed revisions to the **Endangered Species Act's** (ESA) implementing regulations, which respond to the Services' 2019 rollbacks to the ESA under the Trump administration. While we support several key changes, such as reinstating default protections for threatened species, there are multiple regulations pertaining to the consultation process in which we have offered critiques of the Biden administration's decision to retain 2019 changes and have provided suggestions for how USFWS and NMFS can improve these regulations instead. You can read the **full comments here**.

Donate to GAFW Today

Chattooga Rafting Trip

"You don't beat it. You don't beat this river."

Because they're buildin' a dam across the Cahulawassee River; they're gonna flood a whole valley, Bobby, that's why. Dammit, they're drownin' a river; they're drownin' a river, man. Lewis Medlock, as played by Burt Reynolds

GAFW's next book club selection is *Deliverance* by James Dickey (**register here**). The (in)famous novel (and one of the first movies to be filmed in Georgia) tells the story of four men and their pursuit of an adventure in the wilderness gone wrong. The book and movie are set on the fictional Cahulawassee River in Georgia, but many do not realize Dickey wrote the story based on an experience he had on Georgia's real-life Coosawattee River and what is now Carters Lake, one of the deepest lakes (450+ft) and the tallest earthen dam in the U.S. east of the Mississippi.

Many of us do know that the 1972 movie was filmed on our state's only wild and scenic river - the Chattooga. The headwaters of the Chattooga River are located southwest of Cashiers, NC, and stretches 57 miles to its confluence with the Tallulah River within the impounded Lake Tugalo (**Free the Tugalo**) before continuing downstream as the Savannah River.

Rafting **Section IV** of the Chattooga River, the final section before the lake, is a must-do, and now you can join GAFW in crossing this wild trip off your bucket list. Join GAFW staff, along with the **Nantahala Outdoor Center** (NOC), on an all-guided, all-day Section IV rafting trip down the most challenging section of whitewater in the Southeast. GAFW provides all the logistical support, and NOC provides all the gear and professional raft guides needed to have a safe but adventurous day on our region's most iconic river rafting trip. All you need to do is register and meet us at the **outpost just outside Clayton, GA** .

Please join GAFW on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Registration Deadline: Friday, September 22, 2023
Trip Date: Friday, September 29, 2023
Age: 12 and older
Dogs: Not this time
Ability: Able to walk up to half a mile and to paddle. Let us know if you have any questions, and we will do our best to talk you into it. In addition to the professional raft guides, GAFW staff will also be there to assist. You should go for it.
Lunch: Included
Time: From outpost to outpost, morning through late afternoon. Final times will be provided prior to the trip. Plan on being at the **outpost** that morning, and you will be tired but also back at your car in time to get home that evening.
Shoes: Closed-toed shoes or river sandals are mandatory. No flip-flops. Our recommendation is to wear wool socks and your old tennis shoes. Your feet will be in the water all day.
Clothing: You will get wet and stay wet all day. Wear long layers to keep you warm and protected from the sun and cold. Outer splash gear or wetsuits are available by NOC if needed.
Gear: Bring a hat and a water bottle. All the rest will be provided.
Weather: Rain or shine; however, since the Chattooga is a natural free-flowing river, changes to the put-in/take-out or the trip may be canceled depending on the flow. **See the river level here**.
Cost: $140 payable to GAFW, but GAFW is also asking for additional support of $20 for GAFW staff to participate. Gratuities for the NOC guide (Not GAFW) are expected. $10-$20 per participant cash for the rafting guide is recommended for a fun and safe full-day trip. Many who experience a once-in-a-lifetime adventure give more, but the amount is up to you.
Waivers: You will need to fill out both the GAFW waiver and the NOC waiver. You may complete this GAFW **waiver** before you arrive and bring it or complete it onsite. Each person (adult and minor) needs their own waiver.
Questions: outreach@gafw.org
Register: Use this form. Please do not register directly with NOC.

Upcoming GAFW Outings & Outreach

Saturday, September 16 - Come see us at **Dahlonega Trail Fest**

Saturday, September 23 - Come see us at **Patagonia Beltline**, 10 am - 2 pm

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

Saturday, September 30 - **Outing! Project Chimps Private Group Tour**

Friday, October 5th - **Members Only** - **Outing! Coopers Creek - Old Growth "Valley of the Giants" with Cliff**

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

Saturday, October 21 - **The Second Wurst Festival Ever**, Fannin Brewing Company, Blue Ridge, GA **Tickets are on sale now!**

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

by Ann Hite)

Friday, October 27 - Outing! **Core Preserve at Lula Lake Land Trust**

Wednesday, November 15th - Outing! Geology Hike to Ravens Cliffs Falls with Bill

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 14th - Outing! Geology Hike along Johns Mountain to Keown Falls

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.

Share This Email | Share This Email | Share This Email

Thank You

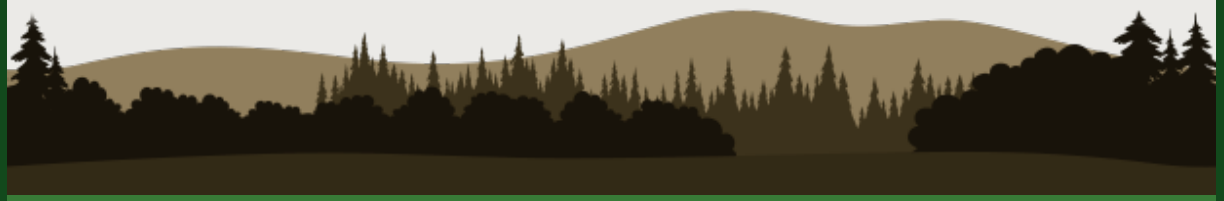
Georgia ForestWatch is the only nonprofit organization with a mission solely dedicated to ensuring the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests remain healthy and available for future generations, and we can only pursue our mission with the support of the community.

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 preserve and protect our national forests.



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

Constant Contact

Try email marketing for free today!