



The Chattooga Quarterly

Winter



2000

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Time to Reflect



Reflections of ancient bedrock in a pool on Sarah's Creek in the Chattooga watershed

photograph by Kathryn Kolb

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Buzz Williams

This issue of the *Chattooga Quarterly* takes a look back at the historical events of the last century so that we may gain some insight for a better land ethic in the coming years of the new millennium. We have examined this history from two perspectives; first a look at how the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition (CRWC) has tried to achieve its goals since its founding in 1991, and then an overview of how both local and national events have shaped our watershed in the last 100 years.

We look back at this history with the hope that we can learn from our success and our mistakes. Throughout time people have debated the value of this process. Henry Ford is reported to have said, "History is bunk." His view was that it is only the present that matters. This philosophy is underscored by a quote from Aldous Huxley who said, "That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all lessons of history."

It is my view that there is a ring of truth in Huxley's statement. I choose to focus on the fact that Huxley qualified his statement so that it did not totally discount the importance of history. In other words, I've chosen to see the glass as "half full." There is too much dwelling on the negative in the conservation movement. But on the contrary, we would be fools to ignore the travesties of the past without trying to do something about them. Thus, any insight into the "now" must be considered, for ours is truly a daunting task.

Our best example of this seemingly dichotomous interpretation of the value of historiography is best illustrated by the history of conservation itself. At the heart of this issue at the turn of the 20th century was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was a man who sized up a problem and took it on head first. This great President was passionate about protecting natural resources. To him the

chief threats to the effective conservation of valuable resources were greed and "special interests." Roosevelt said,

"... Our government, national and state, must be freed from the sinister influence or control of special interests. Exactly as the special interests of cotton and slavery threatened our political integrity before the Civil War, so now the great special business interests too often control and corrupt the men and methods of government for their own profit. We must drive the special interests out of

politics. That is one of our tasks today.... The citizens of the United States must effectively control the mighty commercial forces, which they have themselves called into being. There can be no effective control of corporations while their political activity remains. To put an end to it will be neither a short nor an easy task, but it can be done."

Today, 100 years later, we still allow special interests to drive public land management. Is it that we have not learned from the mistakes of allowing this to happen, or are our efforts not effective in countering this threat? It is not that we do not know the enemy, otherwise this would not be so loftily debated. As we poise at the brink of electing a new President, a key issue is campaign finance reform, which is in my opinion, the mightiest weapon of special interests. People know this; we simply have not been effective in controlling the beast.

There is too much dwelling on the negative in the conservation movement. But on the contrary, we would be fools to ignore the travesties of the past without trying to do something about them.... Today, 100 years later, we still allow special interests to drive public land management. Is it that we have not learned from the mistakes of allowing this to happen, or are our efforts not effective in countering this threat?

How, then, will we accomplish this land ethic so desired by great men such as Roosevelt? Read here in the *Chattooga Quarterly* the account of history, and learn what incentives have shaped our movement. Look honestly at what drives land management agencies, and focus on those things which might truly affect change. Let us not spend another 100 years aiming at the wrong targets. Together, let's learn from the past and plan for a better future.

Looking Back *Highlights of CRWC Accomplishments*

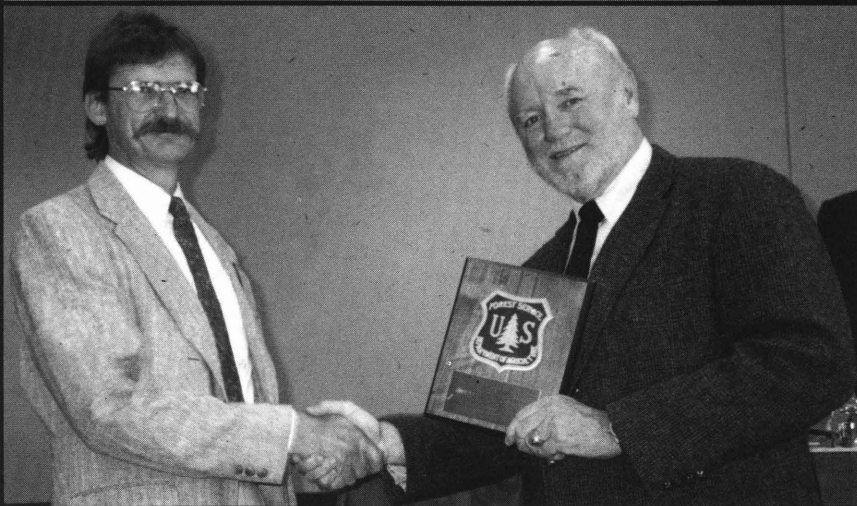
"When things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, the citizens, when well informed, can be relied upon to set them right."—Thomas Jefferson

Citizens came together in 1991 to form the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition (CRWC), inspired by their vision of managing the Chattooga watershed's three, separate national forests as one ecosystem. The group's first project was writing a proposal describing this "ecosystem management" plan for the entire watershed, which was submitted to the Nantahala and Sumter National Forests in North and South Carolina, and the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia. The Forest Service was interested, as the proposal aligned closely with the agency's new land management paradigm called "New Perspectives." Yet at the local level, "New Perspectives" was being totally eclipsed by ongoing intensive timber harvesting and road building projects, especially in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The CRWC spent much of 1992 and 1993 working in opposition to the Forest Service's timber program by filing appeals on many individual timber sales, and in one instance advancing a lawsuit in federal court where the Forest Service was found guilty of breaking the law. All the while the CRWC continued to promote the ecosystem management plan, and in 1994 opened an office and developed other programs designed to fulfil the organization's mission *"To protect, promote and restore the natural ecological integrity of the Chattooga River watershed ecosystem; to ensure the viability of native species in harmony with a healthy human environment; and, to educate and empower communities to practice good stewardship on public and private lands."*

"ecosystem management" proposal for the Chattooga River watershed had gained considerable momentum and public support. This plan was forwarded in keeping with our goal of seeking ways to *work cooperatively with the Forest Service*. The Forest Service used our proposal as a springboard for obtaining \$1.5 million for a three-year research project called the "Chattooga River Basin Ecosystem Management Demonstration Project." Because of this cooperative effort and in recognition of our work, the CRWC received an award from then Chief of the Forest Service, Jack Ward Thomas, for "Outstanding partnership with the USDA Forest Service in managing the natural resources of the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest."



CRWC members held a month-long vigil on top of Rabun Bald to protest the Tuckaluge Timber Sale.



CRWC Director Buzz Williams accepts an award from Chief Jack Ward Thomas for "Outstanding Partnership with the USDA Forest Service."

1994

Ecosystem Management for the Chattooga River Watershed
By 1994, the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition's

1995

Vigil on Rabun Bald

Early in 1995 the Forest Service proposed a massive project known as the "Tuckaluge Timber Sale," that was located partially within the boundaries of the former 14,000 acre Rabun Bald Roadless Area in Georgia. The timber sale called for 8.2 million board feet of timber to be harvested, and the construction of 9.1 miles of roads. This was the largest timber sale in recent history of the Chattooga River watershed. Curiously, the Forest Service held that this huge project adhered to exemplary principles of "ecosystem management," and illustrated the agency's past three years' investment in the

"Chattooga...Ecosystem Management Project." Needless to say the CRWC did not share this point of view, and acted on our goals to *educate the public*, as well as to *protect remaining old growth and roadless areas*.

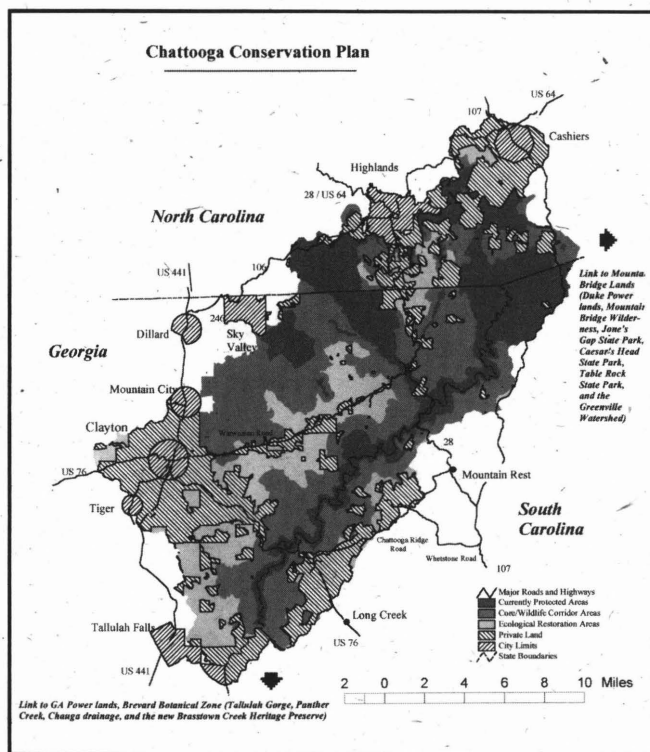
Looking Back

CRWC members held a month long vigil on top of Rabun Bald to protest and draw attention to the misguided Tuckaluge Timber Sale. This vigil drew much public support, attracting more than 300 visitors to the observation tower on top of the summit. After the vigil, the timber sale was stopped from proceeding by a compromise agreement negotiated between the CRWC and the Forest Service. Shortly thereafter and probably as a result of this highly publicized controversy, the Georgia Wildlife Federation recognized the CRWC with their 1995 "Forest Conservationist of the Year" award.

1996

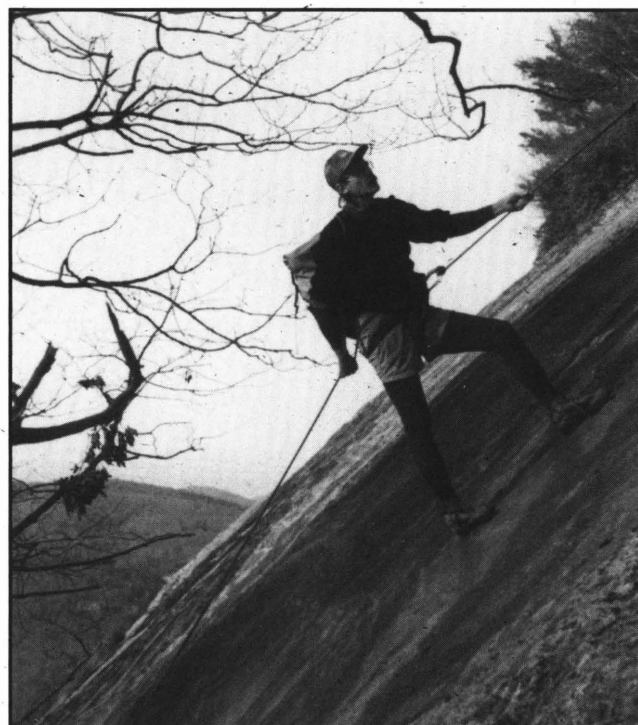
Chattooga Conservation Plan

1996 brought the unveiling of the CRWC's "Chattooga Conservation Plan," a ground-breaking project applying principles of conservation biology, landscape ecology, and Geographic Information Systems technology to devise a specific plan for preserving, restoring and maintaining the native forest ecosystem of the Chattooga River watershed. This Plan is an extension of the original, catalyst concept for founding the CRWC: that the Chattooga River watershed is composed of ecological attributes and social characteristics that are independent of political boundaries, and therefore should be managed as a natural, cohesive landscape. Submitted as an alternative for the watershed's new Forest



The Chattooga Conservation Plan could be implemented through the new Forest Plans.

Plans, the Conservation Plan places significant emphasis on its implementation through the Forest Plan revision process since nearly 70% of the entire watershed is within the jurisdiction of the national forest system. The CRWC's goal to *promote public choice based on credible scientific information* is expressed by the Conservation Plan project. Copies of the Conservation Plan booklet, which explains the Plan and includes an economic analysis of the watershed area and a color poster, are available upon request.



The petition delivery journey started at the head of the watershed with a steep rappel down the face of Whiteside Mountain.

Petition for Better National Forest Management

As further input for the Forest Plan revision process that was just getting started in 1996, CRWC members collected over 20,000 signatures on a petition to the Forest Service requesting that six reasonable forest management strategies be implemented while the new Forest Plans were being devised. These requests included "no harvesting of old growth trees," "no new roads" and "no conversions of native hardwoods into pine plantations." With the petition in hand, Coalition members embarked on a 200 mile overland and down-river journey to deliver the document to the Regional Forester in Atlanta. This journey started at the top of the Chattooga watershed at Whiteside Mountain in North Carolina, with a steep descent down the face the 4,000+ feet high mountain face to the valley below. Then the petition was carried on horseback, and by canoe and kayak down through the Chattooga River watershed, and relayed via

Looking Back

mountain bicycle and logging truck over to the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River at Helen, GA. From there the petition was transported by canoe and kayak on the



The petition was unfurled and presented to the Regional Forester in the courtyard of the Forest Service's Atlanta office.

Chattahoochee River/Lake Lanier complex all the way into downtown Atlanta. The entire journey took ten days and received much media coverage and public support. The lengthy document of about 150 yards long was finally unfurled and presented to the Regional Forester in the courtyard of the Forest Service's Atlanta office.

Horse Logging Workshop

Our entry into the logging business was another big splash in the community and the media in 1996. The CRWC salvaged about 10,000 board feet of hardwood sawlogs from trees that were blown down by the high winds of Hurricane Opal. Two horse loggers were employed for the logging job, and the operation was conducted as a public workshop on the grounds of the Hambidge Center in Rabun County, Georgia. In addition to the week-long workshop, we employed a local sawyer with a portable bandsaw to set up on site and process the raw logs into dimensional wood products. For the last two days the general public was invited to view "low impact" logging demonstration, and about 200 people from the watershed community came to watch. CNN also came to film the activities, and produced an entertaining piece that aired for a week on their "Earth Matters" television show.



The horse logging workshop was featured on the Cable News Network's "Earth Matters" show.



The CRWC employed horse loggers to salvage about 20,000 board feet of hardwood sawlogs.

1997

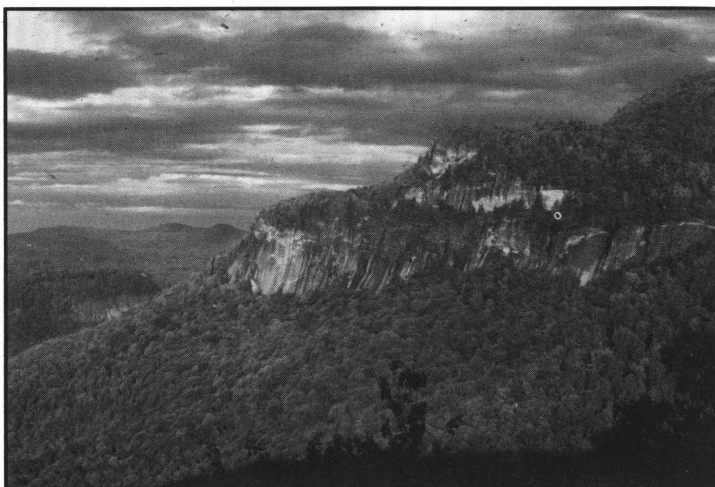
West Fork Controversy

Private land issues were brought to the forefront this year. All over the watershed, inholdings (private land totally within the confines of the national forest) were being put on the market at ever escalating prices to be developed, or in the case of the most strategically located tracts "held for hostage" until the federal government could consider anteing up. For example, over 200 acres known as the Brushy Mountain Tract were slated for a one-house-per-acre residential development right next to the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area. Yet federal land acquisition dollars were scarce, in combination with growing sentiments against expanding public land holdings.

Early in 1997 another key piece of property located partially inside of the Wild and Scenic

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Chattooga River Corridor was purchased by developers. Situated directly on the banks of the Chattooga's West Fork, the land known as the Nicholson Tract was a popular place for the local community to fish, swim and float. This property was also the last privately owned tract inside of the National Wild and Scenic River Corridor. One bright summer day, a CRWC member notified us that the new owners had strung a cable across the river bearing a threatening sign that said, "*Absolutely No Trespassing, Survivors Will Be Prosecuted.*" Further, a group of men including the property owners were stationed on the riverbank, stopping people and intimidating them from paddling down the section of the West Fork where their property began. This caused a widespread uproar, and everyone's reaction was "They can't do that!" Yet neither law enforcement or the Forest Service stepped forward to stop the property owners' actions.



Federal dollars for land acquisition allow for public ownership of tracts such as Devil's Courthouse in the Chattooga's headwaters.

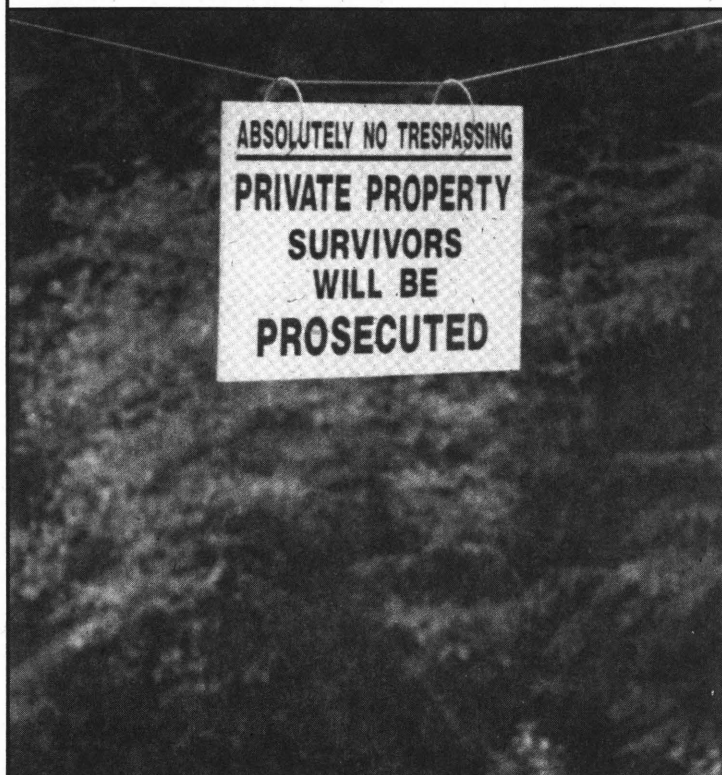
Today, the fate of this critical piece of land is unresolved. The tract remains a top priority for acquisition into the national forest system. A recent letter signed by three senators from North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia called for federal dollars to be earmarked specifically for buying the Nicholson Tract. In federal court, summary judgement affirming the public's right to float this section of the Wild and Scenic River is pending. The CRWC is still working, along with others, to bring the property into the national forest system. In addition, we are organizing a land trust to function as a satellite organization to the CRWC. We expect that the land trust will assist in this work.

1998

Brown Gap Timber Sale

In 1998 the CRWC took on a bold and unique project, one that was also a first for a non-profit conservation organization. We worked collaboratively with Forest Service personnel at the Highlands Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest to negotiate the terms and to purchase a timber sale on the national forest. The final timber sale contract called for single-tree-selection harvesting of a 10 acre boundary of timber, to be done with horses. We also planned to process the logs on site with a portable bandsaw, and sell the wood products in the community.

Doing a single tree selection sale requires more skill and care in order not to damage the residual "leave trees;" therefore, it is a slower process than, for example, clearcutting. There were some big questions in our purchasing this timber sale. Would we be able to show a profit, or at least break even? Could wood products produced in this manner compete in a marketplace geared to maximum fiber production? Could we execute the timber sale without damaging the surrounding



The new owners of the West Fork Tract stopped citizens from floating down this section of the Wild and Scenic River.

This prompted the CRWC to act. We worked to precipitate a ruling from legal experts at the Office of General Counsel on citizens' rights to float the river. We also worked with the Forest Service and land trusts to help negotiate a purchase price for the tract. However, the new asking price was three times what the current owners had just paid, so hopes for public ownership were dimmed. In the interim, an agreement was reached with the property owners to remove the offensive sign and allow the public to float down this section of the river unmolested.

Looking Back



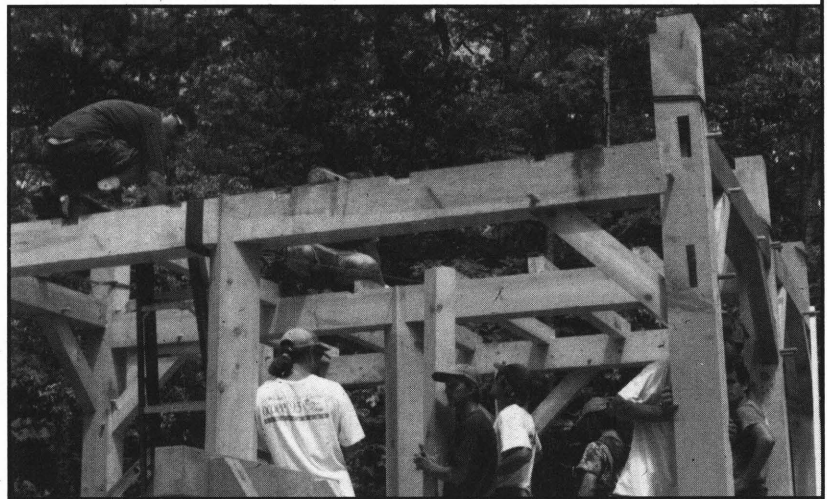
Mike and his team of Belgian draft horses drag a large white pine to the portable bandsaw on the log deck.

doubt that the added dimension of the CRWC maintaining the chain of custody of the raw log commodity and creating a value-added product by processing the wood was the key to the project's financial success.

The timber sale was an environmental success too. The skid trails were small and unobtrusive, and they as well as the log deck were re-seeded with native grasses instead of non-native invasive species. A scientist studied the nearby riparian area by sampling for macroinvertebrate species, and sediment after storm events, and recorded no evidence of any impacts from the logging. Indeed, soil compaction and movement was negligible. The Forest Service's Timber Sales Administrator gave the logging operation an exemplary final evaluation, noting that he had "never seen a timber sale with as little residual damage."

forest, the soil and nearby riparian areas? Would the project be educational for the Forest Service, loggers and the community? At the project's end, the answer to all of these questions was "yes."

Using single-tree-selection, the timber sale produced 75,000 board feet of white pine timber, 15 cords of firewood, 10 tons of pulpwood, and a small quantity of miscellaneous hardwoods. We processed every scrap of wood, producing high quality large beams and wide boards, as well as locust posts, sourwood sled runners and wood carving stock. These products were sold in the community, augmenting the local economy. Altogether, value-added wood products were purchased by over forty individuals. There is no



The wood products from the Brown Gap project were used locally, such as in building the timber frame for this house.



The raw logs were processed on site into large beams and wide boards, which were marketed in the community.

The educational component of the timber sale was a prominent aspect of the project. A steady stream of onlookers visited the site to see the logging and sawing operation in motion, including Forest Service land managers, local entrepreneurs, loggers, forestry students and interested citizens. We also sponsored a workshop that gave hands-on instruction to aspiring horse loggers.

The Brown Gap Timber Sale was a major undertaking, certainly the most demanding project for the CRWC to date, and one that embodied nearly all of our organizational goals. The rewards were great, including increased public awareness and support for low impact logging; enlightened Forest Service land managers; and, successfully taking action in a way that clearly demonstrated a "real world" conservation ethic.

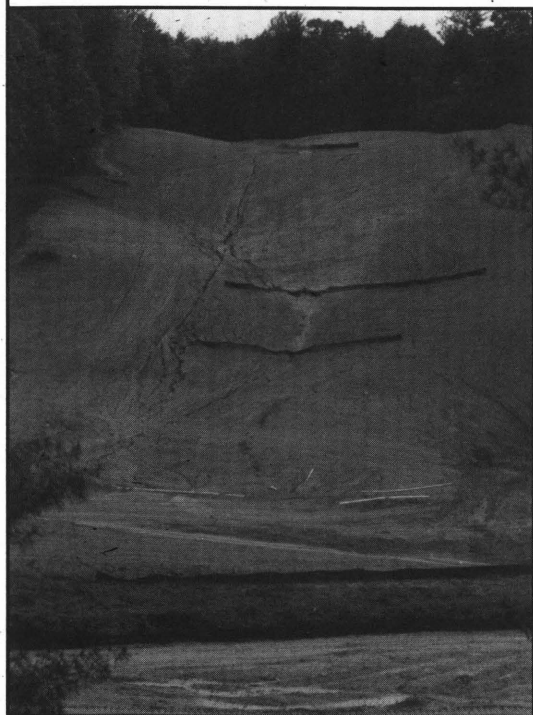
Looking Back

1999

The final year of the 20th century increased the pressure on the Chattooga River watershed from all quarters: Private land deforestation and development caused unprecedented sediment loads in the river; the very tenets of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act were tested during a body recovery operation on the Chattooga's Section IV; and, the Forest Plan revisions for the watershed's Sumter and Chattahoochee National Forests were a battleground for competing special interests.

Erosion Monitoring Project

After numerous calls to the office from concerned citizens about the tremendous amount of dirt flowing into the Chattooga River from the already beleaguered Stekoa Creek,



The Kingwood erosion monitoring project increased attention to the status of Stekoa Creek's 303d listing.

we determined that its source was the new golf course construction at the "Kingwood" development near Clayton, Georgia. The CRWC immediately employed a civil engineer to set up sediment monitoring stations to document the problem and collect data, which was then submitted to

the Georgia agencies charged with enforcing state's Erosion and Sedimentation Control laws. While this work did not result in the prompt enforcement of state erosion control laws, it did bring to the forefront the issue of Stekoa Creek's terrible water quality vis-a-vis the state of Georgia's compliance with the precedent-setting Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) lawsuit. Georgia Legal Watch is representing the CRWC's interests in applying the TMDL provision of the federal Clean Water Act to help clean up Stekoa Creek, which is a major impaired tributary to the Wild and Scenic River.

Recovery at Raven Chute

A young woman's tragic drowning in the Chattooga River set in motion a series of events that would test fundamental tenets of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the landmark federal legislation for protecting and managing the Chattooga River. Her body was trapped underwater for nearly two months, which resulted in the largest and most controversial search and recovery operation in the history of the Chattooga River watershed. In the center of this controversy was the issue of altering the bedrock of the river, in the course of erecting a temporary dam ("Portadam") to divert the water away from the entrapment area.

The CRWC was also at the center of this controversy, in the pivotal role of working with the Forest Service, local rescue squads and the Portadam company.



The CRWC devised alternative methods to secure the dam structure such that bedrock alteration was unnecessary.

The whole ordeal came to a close with the CRWC being incorporated into the Forest Service's permit granting the Portadam company permission to divert the Chattooga: "Buzz Williams, CRWC Executive Director, will work with Portadam representatives to consider alternative methods"—other than drilling holes in the bedrock to secure the dam. Buzz devised a process of using sandbags to stabilize the dam, as well as directed the recovery crew to small underwater potholes that were used to brace the dam's skeleton. Still unresolved, however, are clear sideboards for search and recovery operations in federally protected "wild" areas. We hope the lessons learned during this controversial Chattooga episode will help define these sideboards.

National Forest Plan Revisions

The last months of 1999 were laden with public meetings about the status of the new Forest Plans for the Sumter and Chattahoochee National Forests. While the activities of the CRWC caused the Forest Service to commit that the Chattooga River watershed will be treated as a "single management area...shared by all three national forests as they revise their Forest Plans," what will go on here is still largely undetermined. Special interests are lobbying hard for increased levels of ORV access, commercial recreation development and timber harvesting. We urge citizens to express strong support for the CRWC's **Chattooga Conservation Plan**, and to see this tedious planning process through. The next 15 years of our public land and resource management lie in the balance.

The Chattooga River Watershed: *Shaped by 100 Years of National Events*

Buzz Williams

As the century turned on January 1, 1900 the Chattooga River watershed, like most remote headwater streams in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, remained relatively pristine compared to what the next 100 years would bring in the form of wanton destruction of the native forests. But surely the previous century had brought change.

Determined settlers who wrenched a hardscrabble existence from the rugged mountains had hewn the forest-dependent homesteads scattered across the landscape. They, like the native Cherokee who they displaced, had changed the forest with fire, forest clearing, hunting and cultivation; however, 75% of the Southern Appalachians was still forested, 10% of which was virgin timber. Events that unfolded in the next 100 years on both national and local levels would shape what we know today as the Chattooga River watershed.

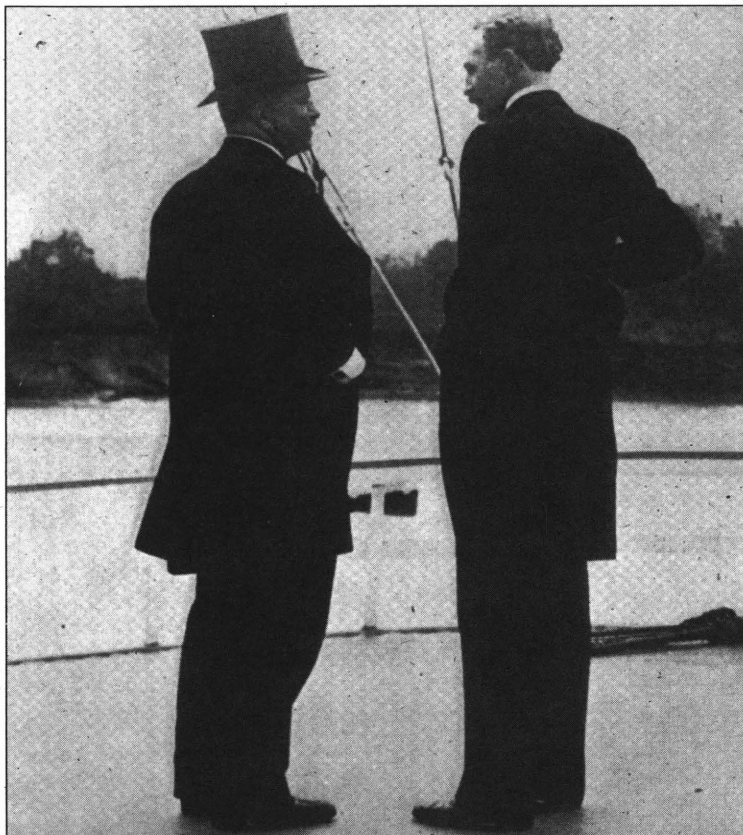
There were harbingers of the pending destruction. Soon would come the first major change in the watershed: the wholesale cutting of the forest by the timber industry. "Timber barons" who had razed the forests of the Northeast and Midwest were beginning to send scouts into the Appalachians, to purchase and brand trees for selective cutting as well as the most valuable trees along more accessible rivers. In this first wave logs were cut, bound together and floated as "rafts" to a sawmill downstream. Most authorities place this first phase of the "timber boom" in the Southern Appalachians at about 1880. The second phase of massive cutting was just a few years away with the development of railroad lines and the invention of the Shay Locomotive, a powerful engine designed for penetrating into steep mountain forests on narrow gauge rail lines. There was no science in this frenzy; in fact, at the turn of the century there were only about a dozen trained foresters in the United States.

The exploitation of the northern forest had, however, stimulated a newborn "conservation movement" that also arrived in the milestone year 1900. The cutting of the great forest of the Southern Appalachians accelerated the conservation ethic in America due to the loss of an exceptional cache of natural resources, which were heretofore thought to be inexhaustible. The forest of the Southern Appalachians had been described as the heaviest and most beautiful forest on the continent, consisting of poplar, oak, spruce, hemlock and chestnut. Some of these magnificent trees were 8 feet in girth and 150 feet tall. Altogether this mountain ecosystem supported an

unparalleled diversity of life, unusual in its richness and variety.

Responding to public concern the strong, newly elected President Theodore Roosevelt addressed the Congress of 1901 with a request that the responsibility of managing the fledgling Forest Reserves, about 56 million acres located in western states, be assigned to the Department of Agriculture (USDA). This calculated move would place these valuable reserves in the hands of his friend Gifford Pinchot, who shared his personal philosophy of "preservation through use." Consequently these managed reserves would be a hedge against the ongoing destruction of private forestlands, to protect watersheds and ensure an ongoing supply of timber. Roosevelt and Pinchot also engineered

the retooling of the Division of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture, providing funding to assist private landowners with forest management plans. Roosevelt also expanded the Forest Reserves to 132 million acres between 1904 and 1908. In 1905 Congress did indeed transfer the Forest Reserves from the Department of Interior to the USDA, and the Division of Forestry became the Forest Service. Under Pinchot this new agency would control "special interest" exploitation by managing for the "greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." Roosevelt, who understood the connection between special interests



Pictured here on a trip down the Mississippi River in 1907, Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot shared the philosophy of "preservation through use."

100 Years of National Events

and politics, attempted to insulate the Forest Service from industry-sponsored influence by placing the agency under the purview of the Civil Service.

In the meantime, other factors emerged that would later have dramatic effects on the Chattooga watershed. In 1868 the gypsy moth was brought into the United States at Medford, Massachusetts by a French entrepreneur who sought to establish a silk industry by crossing the gypsy moth with the silkworm moth. Later, in 1904 a fungus called the Chestnut Blight arrived, again by accident, in a shipment of oriental nursery trees at New York City. By 1950 the country's entire population of American Chestnuts had been devastated by the blight, thus eliminating from the forest the most important wildlife and timber tree in the Southern Appalachians. Today the gypsy moth is just now making its way into the Chattooga watershed, and is predicted to seriously impact many hardwood species if it becomes established. Other introduced species of forest pests such as the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid may follow.

By 1902 the Chattooga River watershed had been discovered by lumbermen. In that year Andrew and Nat Gennett bought several boundaries of timber purchased and marked by Midwestern speculators, but never harvested. The two brothers from Tennessee invested their life savings and set up a sawmill near the railroad line at a town called Madison, located on the Tugaloo River into which the Chattooga flowed. For the next 20 years the brothers employed local people to fell the timber and take the logs to the river, where they were floated down to the mill with the aid of "splash dams" and spring freshets. The splash dams were set up on tributaries and made of log pens with a gate in the center that when opened, would flood the area below to flush the logs downstream. This method of transporting logs to the mill caused great damage to riparian areas as the floodwaters and log piles scoured the stream banks. This

destructive method of log transport also was problematic as many logs were left stranded on and behind large rocks in the river as the water receded. During periods of low water, the Gennett brothers' employees would work prying the logs loose with peavies. The Gennetts also employed locals to log with teams of oxen and draft horses, to supply other subcontractors with portable, steam-driven sawmills to manufacture lumber for their operation. Though a large quality of timber was harvested by the Gennetts, intense competition and fluctuating market conditions almost drove them out of business. But an interesting turn of events saved

them when Henry Ford's Model T manufacturing operation discovered that "wormy" Chestnut made great wheel hubs. By supplying this market the brothers turned a profit at a critical time.

These intensive timber cutting operations were of national significance. In 1909, the Southern Appalachians supplied about 40% of the US timber market. Roosevelt and Pincott both predicted a timber famine. Responding to these concerns, the public demanded a remedy. In 1911 Congress passed the Weeks Act, authorizing the purchase of private cut-over lands for watershed protection east of the Mississippi River. Until this time, all the Forest Reserves were out west. It was also at this time that the Forest Reserves were renamed National Forests. Support for the National Forest concept was bolstered by a congressional

appropriation to local governments for roads and schools. To this day, this is one of the strongest incentives driving the timber program in the national forest system. Later in 1915, Congress again created a strong incentive for forestry-related activities when it passed the Brush Disposal Fund, which allowed forest managers to use timber receipts for clean up operations after harvesting. This fund was promulgated by huge forest fires fueled by the build up of woody debris from large-scale timber harvesting on private lands.



Aldo Leopold helped inspire the new concept of wilderness preservation, and further enhanced the iconic persona of the "noble forest ranger."

100 Years of National Events

It was during this era that the Forest Service became the model conservation agency in American history. The Forest Service acted swiftly with the mandate of the Weeks Act, and in 1916 the first national forest in the East was established near Asheville, North Carolina and was called the Pisgah National Forest. It is no coincidence that these lands were purchased from the widow of George Vanderbilt, Pinchot's former employer. It was here at the Biltmore Estate that Vanderbilt had brought in the bright young forester to manage his lands.

Other national forests were soon to follow. Most of the land bought to create these new national forests was eroded farmland that was abandoned as people moved to the flat lands to work in the textile mills coming into the South. Some of this land was purchased

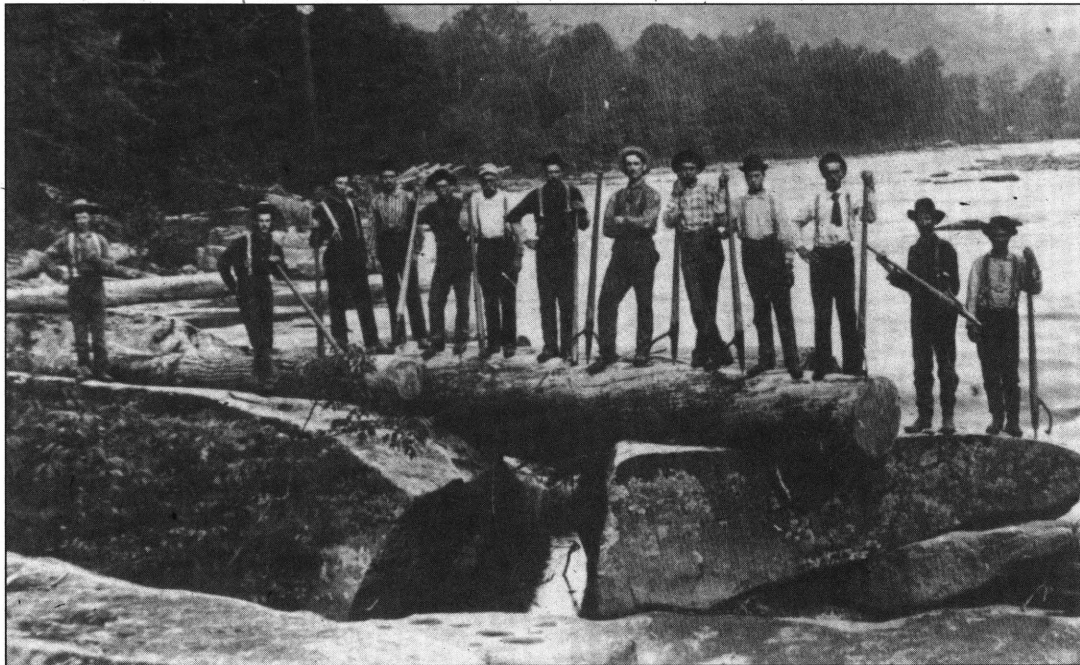
for 5 to 10 dollars per acre. The Gennett Lumber Company operation in the Chattooga watershed helped spearhead these national forest purchases as a way to divest the company of much of its depleted timberland. In 1920, the Pisgah National Forest was expanded. Also established were the Nantahala, Cherokee and Monongahela National Forests. Later in 1936 the Sumter National Forest was added to the system.

Such stalwart and innovative Forest Service employees as Bob Marshal, Arthur Carhart and Aldo Leopold who together inspired the new concept of wilderness preservation further enhanced the iconic persona of the "noble forest ranger." In 1939 it was Marshal who convinced the Chief of the Forest Service to establish the "U" regulations that were the foundation for the Wilderness Preservation System. But the agency was also moving into the role of timber supplier.

In 1929 the national forest harvest was 1.6 billion board feet, or 4.1% of the total national harvest. Nonetheless the Forest Service practiced single tree selection management, as opposed to clearcutting. Then in 1930, Congress added another timber management incentive when it passed the Knutson-Vandenburg Act. This new incentive allowed forest managers to deduct reforestation costs from timber receipts before they were sent to the United States Treasury.

The "dirty 30's" and the Dust Bowl era brought even more change to the local landscape that were caused by further

conservation measures enacted at a national level to stem the effects of bad land management. In 1933 under Franklin Delano Roosevelt's social program agenda, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) set up work camps in the Chattooga River watershed at



Rivers were used for floating logs to sawmills downstream, and fluctuating water levels often caused logs to become stranded on top of and behind rocks. During periods of low water teams of laborers would work to free the logs and place them back in the river.

Georgia's Warwoman Creek area, and in Mountain Rest, South Carolina. The CCC's contributed 730,000 person years of conservation-related work on public lands including reforestation, timber stand improvement, road construction and building recreational facilities of unusually high quality. Unfortunately, albeit well intentioned they also brought in kudzu to accomplish soil stabilization. In the same year the Soil Conservation Service, now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service (that continues to this day), was instrumental in helping private landowners implement good land stewardship practices.

By the mid 1930's almost all of the virgin timber in the East was gone. Taking the place of large tree timber harvesting was the pulp and paper industry, which utilizes second growth forests. During this period the national forests' annual cut jumped to 4 billion board feet. Recreational use

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of the national forest system also increased, totaling 16.2 million "visitor days." By the 1950's the Baby Boom generation caused the demand for timber to increase steadily. In 1953 the allowable cut on national forest land increased to 6.4 billion board feet, 13% of the nation's supply. About half of the country's pulp and one-third of its paper was produced in the Southeast during the 1950's.

The 1960's brought an increased demand for multiple uses of the national forests. Off-road vehicle sales skyrocketed. A

local automobile dealer in Pickens, South Carolina claimed the largest jeep sales in the United States.

Recreational "user days" in the national forests reached 100 million in 1962.

At the same time timber harvests from the national forests reached 10.7 billion board feet, 22% of the US supply.

Industrial strength logging equipment including crawler-type skidders, chemical brush killers and

eighteen wheel logging trucks advanced the opportunity for large-scale clearcutting and wide spread even-aged forest management. Consequently, the intense competition for logging versus "other uses" of the forest intensified. The controversy inspired the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960. This landmark law defined the purpose of the national forests as based on the "most judicious use of the land."

The 1960's also stimulated the conservation movement. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* brought national attention to the detrimental effects of insecticide and herbicide use. In 1964 the National Wilderness Preservation Act was passed by Congress. Other laws aimed at environmental protection soon followed including the National Trails System Act and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, in which the Chattooga was named as a "study river." President Nixon ended the decade by creating a cabinet level Citizens Advisory Committee on Environmental Quality.



During the 1930's the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) set up camps in the Chattooga River watershed at the Warwoman Creek area in Georgia, and in Mountain Rest, South Carolina. CCC workers built this shelter at the Yellow Branch picnic area in South Carolina.

The 1970's began with the first Earth Day and the signing of the National Environmental Policy Act. In 1971 the Forest Service conducted the first Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE I), but it was abandoned when courts ruled the Forest Service had excluded 44 million acres. The Forest Service felt strong political pressure from Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz, who helped fight off attempts to restrict clearcutting. But in a milestone case, a judge ruled in favor of the Izaak Walton League of West Virginia to halt

clearcutting on the Monongahela National Forest. The case was won on arguments that the Organic Act of 1887 allowed the Forest Service to cut only dead, mature and marked trees.

The 1970's were landmark years for the Chattooga River. The movie *Deliverance* was released in 1972. This movie was filmed on the Chattooga and brought large groups of thrill

seekers to the river. The next few years saw a dramatic increase in drownings. This "Deliverance syndrome" prompted the Forest Service to implement safety requirements and helped to bring accidents under control. Commercial outfitting became established during these early 70's. On May 10, 1974 the Chattooga River was named as a National Wild and Scenic River.

This decade also produced a steady stream of important laws. In 1972 the Clean Water Act passed Congress, and in 1974 the Threatened and Endangered Species Act directed great responsibility to federal land management agencies to protect recognized species. The same year Congress passed the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act. This powerful law directed the Forest Service to establish resource extraction "targets" based on evaluations that included both private and public lands. The following year an appeals court upheld the Izaak Walton League's suit over

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the Monongahela decision, thus raising forest planning and clearcutting to the forefront of the conservation agenda. 1975 also marked the passing of the Eastern Wilderness Act that allowed smaller wild areas within the East's national forest system to be designated as wilderness areas. In 1976 one of the most significant national laws governing the management of our national forests passed Congress as the National Forest Management Act.

This law established a mechanism for crafting 10 to 15-year forest management plans and included full public participation. However, the discretion given to the Forest Service in determining lands suitable for timber harvesting and the methods of harvest renewed and intensified the battle over forest management. President Jimmy Carter added fuel to the controversy by directing the Forest Service to conduct a second roadless area inventory called RARE II, while on the other hand urging the Forest Service to update Forest Plans to increase harvesting of old growth timber.

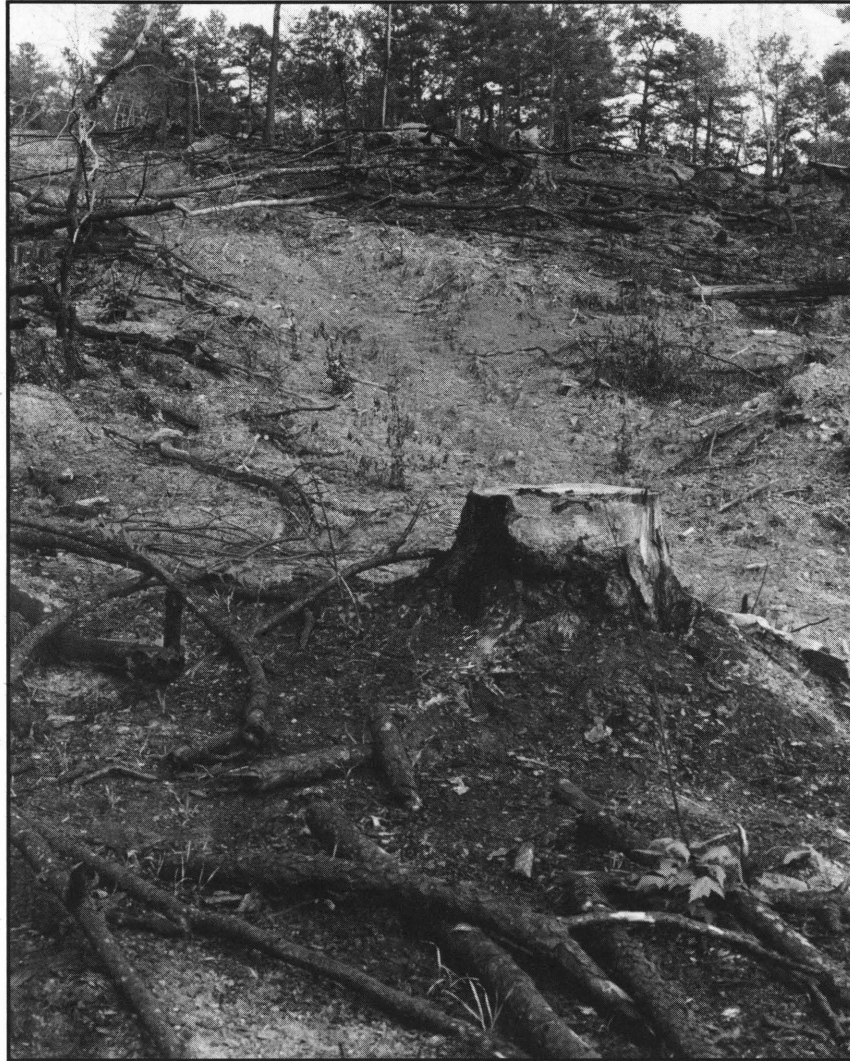
The election of President Ronald Reagan in 1980 brought sweeping changes to the management direction of the Forest Service. In the first three months of office Reagan's Vice President George Bush ordered review of management regulations, resulting in revisions more favorable to the timber industry. In 1982 the Reagan Administration named John Crowell, former general counsel of Louisiana Pacific Company (timber company) as USDA Undersecretary over the Forest Service. Crowell proposed to increase the cut on national forests from 11.9 billion board feet to 20-24 billion board feet to stimulate lagging home

building market. The Forest Plans for the three national forests in the Chattooga watershed, which came online in the mid-1980's to comply with the National Forest Management Act of 1976, used a linear computer model that allowed massive timber harvesting based on a predicted sustainable management regime. Yet private monitoring of the Forest Service's accounting records revealed a \$740

million deficit in the national forest timber sales program. By 1986 the national forests reached harvest levels of 11.8 billion board feet, and 226.5 million visitor days for recreation. The 80's also witnessed the growth of the Forest Service's road system to 344,000 miles on 191 million acres of national forests, about one mile of road per square mile of national forest. On the back of this massive road system, the annual cut grew to 12.7 billion board feet in 1987.

The growing alliance of the Forest Service with the timber industry was strengthened through Forest Plans and congressional incentives, which spurred a radical backlash by environmentalists. Alarm intensified over scientific evidence of the decline in forest-

dependent species such as migratory songbirds, and the rapid elimination of all but the last 4% of the old growth forest of the Pacific Northwest. In 1987, a protestor calling himself "Forest Green" made the front page of the *Atlanta Constitution* when he blocked a timber sale in the Chattooga watershed's Sumter National Forest by "tree sitting" in huge white pine tree directly in the path of bulldozers building a road into the timber sale area. A subsequent lawsuit found the Forest Service guilty of a blatant violation of the



The 1980's brought even higher levels of intensive timber harvesting to our national forests, illustrated by this clearcut right next to the Chattooga's Wild and Scenic River corridor in the Chattahoochee National Forest.

photograph by Kathryn Kolb

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National Environmental Policy Act. In their rush to cut trees, the agency simply failed to do the required environmental evaluations of the sale area.

The Forest Service began re-thinking many of its management policies at the close of the 1980's. In 1989 the agency initiated a program called "New Perspectives," aimed at forest management centered on ecosystem management. In 1991 citizens organized the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition (CRWC) to request that the Forest Service fund a pilot program to experiment with this new idea. Consequently, the Forest Service authorized the \$1.5 million "Chattooga River Ecosystem Management Demonstration Project." This important initiative produced many scientific papers including identification of old growth sites, classification of different ecosystems within the watershed, sources of sedimentation, as well as various other plant and animal research studies.

The CRWC evolved with this important ground-breaking initiative, expanding its program to include monitoring the implementation of Forest Service "ecosystem management" projects, old growth and roadless area protection, public land acquisition, scientific research and public education. The Coalition is now quite involved in the ongoing revision of the Sumter and Chattahoochee National Forest Management Plans, which started a few years ago in the mid 1990's.

Other important shifts in national forest management have been initiated in the 90's. In 1991, a scientist named Jack Ward Thomas was appointed Chief of the Forest Service. Thomas was appointed by way of an important change made by the Clinton Administration, which allowed the Forest Service's Chief to be a political appointee—the first since Gifford Pinchot. Our present Chief, Michael Dombeck, was appointed with a mandate for more environmentally sensitive forest management, watershed restoration and increased emphasis on developing recreation facilities. One important part of this new management directive includes an increase in recreation "user fees." Other public land management initiatives include proposals to overhaul the National Forest Transportation System management policy, and an Environmental Impact Statement that will determine how to protect remaining roadless areas from development. Also pending are proposed changes to the National Forest Management Act's regulations. Prompting these initiatives is growing scientific evidence that the functionality of natural processes would be improved by better protection of roadless areas, as well as decreased fragmentation of forests by excessive roadbuilding. Studies show that the 440,000 miles of system roads in the national forests are contributing heavily to the demise of aquatic ecosystems due to their inappropriate location and the \$10 billion backlog of road maintenance needs. Nonetheless, questions remain about the sincerity of an agency still driven by 100 years of incentives bias toward

extraction. Is the Forest Service simply replacing a depleted timber resource with a new "cash cow" called recreation?

On a political level campaign finance reform is a prominent issue in the presidential candidates' debates. The issue is driven in part by the obvious domination of timber industry contributions to candidates who in turn vote for the continuation of national forest management policies based on resource extraction. This influence is no better exemplified than by the Salvage Rider of 1994, which gave the Forest Service unprecedented authority to bypass environmental laws and harvest green trees in the name of salvage for "forest health." This infamous Appropriations Bill rider was introduced in the House of Representatives by Charles Taylor of North Carolina, a tree farmer and crony of the timber industry. One would only need to look at the numerous attempts to add anti-environmental riders to the year 2000 Appropriations Bill to see the influence of big money and politics. Here too, questions loom on the cusp of the new millenium. Will a new political appointee after the 2000 elections produce another "industry chief"?

As the last turn of the century saw bold and important new changes to the nation's land stewardship policies on both the local and national fronts, so will the passing of this century into a new millenium bring change. Many of today's incentives for land management date back to the early 1900's. These incentives include payment to counties from timber receipts, the Brush Disposal Fund, the Knutsen-Vandenburg Act, timber salvage incentives, and congressional guidance through Resource Planning Act to meet timber targets; all of which drive the Forest Service to cut more timber and build more roads. Until these basic incentives are changed the agency is destined to be ruled by timber targets, and to remain an agency driven by natural resource extraction goals. Even though the traditional method of resource extraction, that was based on building roads deeper and deeper into roadless areas, is no longer accepted, some policy changes will facilitate timber cutting in the name of "restoration" or "forest health". Other policies seem to point toward less citizen review and opportunity for appealing decisions. Agencies are also leaning toward "user fees" to maintain inflated bureaucracies, thus fueling the dangers of over development.

Nevertheless, change is in motion. Due to scientific research and a public response to habitat destruction, new initiatives for better land management have begun, as at the turn of the last century. There will be special interests working to block needed change at every turn. The CRWC looks forward to this challenge, and in alliance with an informed citizenry change for the common good of conservation of our natural resources will indeed come about successfully.

Who's on First? *National Transportation Policy, Roadless Initiative, Planning Regulations*

Tom Cromartie

Currently within the Forest Service, there a number of initiatives of local and national scale that will greatly effect the condition of the national forests in the first decades of the 21st century. National forest management policy is being developed and revised at every agency level. Locally, five of the six national forests in the Southern Appalachians are revising their resource management plans. At the same time, the Forest Service's Washington Office is changing its Roads Policy. President Clinton has also directed the Forest Service to develop a comprehensive plan to protect the remaining Roadless Areas on the national forests. And the Washington Office is changing the regulatory measures that are intended to provide specific direction for implementation of all Forest Plans. Many of the relationships between these initiatives are complimentary and could provide strong direction for the Forest Service in the coming decades. On the other hand, there are many instances in which these initiatives are clearly oriented in different directions.

FOREST PLAN REVISIONS: SUMTER AND CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FORESTS

Perhaps the most publicly visible Forest Service initiative besides the President's Roadless Initiative is the Forest Plan revision process currently underway on the Sumter and Chattahoochee National Forests. This costly and time-consuming effort was begun in 1996 with a Notice of Intent, which was required by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). The current Forest Plans were completed and implemented in 1985, and were the first under the NFMA.

In the current Plan revisions, agency direction and public comment were used to generate several significant region wide issues that were the basis of the range of alternatives that would eventually become what's known now as the "rolling" alternative. This "rolling" alternative was presented by staff members of the various national forests, at public meetings that were held in North Georgia and northwestern South Carolina. In general, the discussion following the presentation was punctuated by stalemates resulting from the polarized views expressed by those in attendance. Forest Service planners are now faced with the daunting task of coordinating divided public opinion with requirements for implementing sound science to ensure species viability. The end result of this activity will be the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Forest Plan) that will be available sometime late next summer.

The region wide issues that were chosen as focal points for the Plan revision process emphasize the language of "restoring and maintaining forest ecosystems through the application of management prescriptions" to biodiversity, water, recreation and "use issue clusters." These clusters are

further divided into specific issues that are arranged to meet the Forest Service's multiple use requirements. Because of that, the issues are arranged out of numerical sequence within the clusters.

The Biodiversity Cluster is the first grouping of issues that is presented in the "rolling" alternative. The issues discussed in this section are 1, 2, 3, 9, 10 & 14. Issue 1, *Terrestrial Plants and Animals and Their Habitats* seeks to provide a diversity of plant community types and structures. A variety of early successional habitats (0-15 years) would be sought through this alternative, providing forage for certain game species. Habitats as well would be maintained or enhanced for species needing large, contiguous forested landscapes. Issue 2, *Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive/Locally Rare Species* has the ultimate goal of conserving and recovering Threatened, Endangered, sensitive, and locally rare species and their habitat. These protections were provided by a far-sighted Congress in the form of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Issue 3, *Old Growth* would provide natural old growth forest areas and areas where management would maintain old growth conditions over time. It is important to note that out of the 28,500 acres within the range of this issue, only 600 are to be maintained as core areas where management actions would not be allowed. The remaining acreage would be subject to timber harvest, prescribed burning and vegetation control. Through the implementation of these prescriptions the Forest Service's definition of old growth would be far removed from the archetype of primeval forest. This process of redefinition can be seen as an integral part of the "rolling" alternative.

Issue 9, *Health of Forest Vegetation* is associated with management prescription "9H" that emphasizes the "Management, Maintenance and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential." Among the goals of this issue and its related prescription is to provide the desired composition, structure, function, and productivity over time that can be attained through sustained yield timber management. Issue 10, *Special Areas and Rare Communities* is a recognition of the special geological, paleontological, botanical, zoological, cultural, or heritage characteristics present on national forest lands. These areas will be managed to protect o to restore these characteristics.

Water Issues 4, 11 & 13 range in complexity from recreation to the restoration of watersheds. Issue 4, *Riparian Area Management, Water Quality, and Aquatic Habitats* would include management to provide resilient and stable conditions, to ensure the quality and quantity of water to protect ecological functions and support intended beneficial water uses and resources. 68,400 acres of riparian areas would be classified as unsuitable for scheduled timber

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harvests. This restriction would apply to all management prescriptions. Issue 11, *Wild and Scenic Rivers* recognizes rivers and streams with "outstanding, remarkable values." All rivers eligible Wild and Scenic status are either recommended to Congress for the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System designation, or managed as if they had been designated. The streams recommended are the Conasauga and Jacks Rivers; portions of the Upper Chattahoochee River; the Tallulah and Coleman Rivers; Overflow Creek; Murder Creek; and, the Ocmulgee River. Panther and Davidson Creeks were initially recommended for Wild & Scenic status, but were removed from consideration because this designation would exclude management options such as the construction of in-stream structures.

The last of the Water Issues, Issue 13, is *The Chattooga Watershed* and is a consequence of the efforts of Chattooga River Watershed Coalition staff to encourage the Forest Service to manage the Chattooga as a single ecological unit across administrative boundaries. In 1994 \$1.4 million was appropriated for the Forest Service's Ecosystem Management Demonstration Project, which coordinated a variety of biological and cultural studies that were intended to provide management direction for the Sumter, Nantahala and Chattahoochee National Forests. In fact, this study resulted in a fair amount of good scientific inquiry, although actual management practices have been inconsistent with the recommendations made in that study. Nonetheless, the opportunity exists again in the form of the Chattooga River Watershed Restoration Project (CRWRP), to implement sound measures to protect the watershed. Funding for the project is around \$2.1 million for the first year, with the possibility of additional funds to follow in subsequent years. The primary objectives of this project will be "to improve water quality and aquatic habitats through the relocation and improvement of recreational facilities, roads and trails, conservation education with state, private, and federal recreation users and landowners." Issue 13, the *Chattooga Watershed* as presented in the "rolling" alternative lists 26,792 acres under management prescription 9A3, Watershed Restoration Areas, which does seem consistent with the goals of the CRWRP. However, within Issue 13, 23,792 acres are listed under prescription 9H: Management Maintenance and Restoration of Plant Associations to Their Ecological Potential. This prescription allows far too much discretion on the project decision-

making level, essentially leaving the whole area open to a new brand of forestry that has been created to "remedy" the ill effects of past management.

Recreation Issues 6, 7, 8 & 15 cover the vast spectrum of recreational opportunities/experiences from vehicle travel corridors to Wilderness management. Issue 6, *Aesthetics/Scenery Management* essentially deals with the maintenance of scenic areas along scenic drives that pass through the national forest. Issue 7, *Recreation Opportunities/Experiences* would include prescriptions for a wide variety of uses ranging from motorized to remote non-motorized backcountry. Issue 8, *Roadless Areas/Wilderness Management* would result in the recommendation of Roadless Areas contiguous to Wilderness areas being submitted to Congress for that same protection. However, some Roadless Areas would be compromised by "restoration maintenance" (prescription #9H). In all, 33,861 acres would be recommended for addition to Wilderness Areas.

It is important to note that out of the 28,500 acres within the range of the "Old Growth" issue, only 600 are to be maintained as core areas where management actions would not be allowed. The remaining acreage would be subject to timber harvest, prescribed burning and vegetation control.

Issue 15, *Minerals-Recreational Gold Collecting* was a relatively uncontested issue at the public meetings. All agreed that gold collecting methods that compromised water quality should not be allowed. The "rolling" alternative says specifically, "Water quality is a condition that takes priority over other resource uses such as recreational activities, road construction, and gold collecting, and so on."

"Use" Issues are the final category that you will have to endure, if you have made it this far. Use Issues are 5, 12 and 16. Issue 5, *Wood Products* suggests that "supplying wood products would not be an emphasis but would occur as a result of" other management activities. By a very conservative estimate, 50% of the prescriptions would allow timber harvests. The fact that timber outputs would decrease has more to do with past management and availability of wood than with the "restrictive" nature of present Forest Service policy. The Resource Planning Act (RPA) of 1974 requires the Washington office of the Forest Service to establish outputs of timber, recreation and other outputs based on certain budget levels. Therefore, the appropriate level of timber harvest is arbitrary when considered with market demand and forest capacity.

Issue 12, *Access/Road Management* deals with the massive road system on the national forests. The intention is to

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decommission unneeded roads and to improve more heavily used roads that are causing environmental damage. What will actually occur will have a great deal to do with the Transportation Policy Guidelines that are discussed briefly in this article. Issue 16, *Special Uses* deals with areas that are unsuitable for utility corridors or electronic sites. Military use is mentioned as well.

WASHINGTON OFFICE: TRANSPORTATION POLICY

On January 28, 1998 the Forest Service gave notice of its intent to revise its regulations for maintaining roads within the National Forest Transportation System. On that same day a proposed interim rule was published that would suspend road construction and reconstruction in certain roadless areas until "new and improved scientific and analytical tools are developed to better evaluate the need for and effects of roads in sensitive areas." The final interim rule was published on February 12, 1999 and has been effective since March 1, 1999. According to an update on the proposed Road Management Policy, a draft environmental assessment has been completed and will be released at the same time that the proposed road policy is published. According to Forest Service correspondence, this information should be available on May 15th. The interim rule will expire upon the adoption of a revised Road Management Policy or 18 months from the effective date, again March 1, 1999.

On February 28, 1998 the agency extended the public comment period on the proposed interim rule for an additional 60 days due to requests from individuals, organizations and elected officials. Ninety-six percent of the comments were from private individuals; 3% were from recreation user groups, wood products companies, and county, state, and federal agencies; while 1% were from "conservation oriented groups." According to the analysis prepared by the Forest Service, public comment was divided on most of the issues involved with the interim rule. Comments in opposition often referred to the interim rule as a "massive land grab" that violates the Forest Service's multiple-use-mandate. On the other hand,

comments in support generally cited scientific evidence that Roadless Areas were the cornerstone of ecological diversity, while a few claimed that the multiple use mandate was no longer feasible because society's needs are far greater than the national forests can support.

As mentioned earlier, the final rule should be available by this summer. According to Forest Service correspondence

the final plan will change road policy emphasis from road development to "sustaining access within the capability of the land." This would be accomplished by upgrading and maintaining roads that are important to national forest access; eliminating unneeded roads; requiring a scientifically-based analysis to build new roads; and, allowing local-level decisions with appropriate public involvement. Tougher standards would be set for building roads in Roadless Areas as well.



The Forest Service has a \$10 billion backlog of road maintenance needs; the agency's proposed transportation policy would eliminate some unneeded and ill-placed roads.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE: ROADLESS INITIATIVE

On October 13, 1999 a memorandum was sent from the President's office to the Secretary of Agriculture directing the Forest Service to develop, and propose for public comment, regulations to provide appropriate long-term protection for most or all currently inventoried Roadless Areas, and to determine whether such protection is warranted for smaller Roadless Areas not yet inventoried. The Notice Of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was published in the *Federal Register* on October 19, 1999. The rule making process is being carried out under existing laws and regulations governing the Forest Service and has involved the public in an open, participatory process by way of many public meetings across the nation.

The NOI is divided into two parts. The first part restricts certain activities such as road construction and reconstruction in the unroaded portions of inventoried roadless areas. The second part of the NOI seeks to establish procedures and criteria to be used by each individual forest to determine activities that are consistent with the values associated with Roadless Areas of ALL

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sizes. The Forest Plan Amendment and National Environmental Policy Act processes require active public participation, and it is the intention of this NOI that ultimately the agency's final rule will be structured in a manner consistent with that input.

A large percentage of the over 380,000 miles of roads on National Forests and Grasslands are not maintained to federal safety and environmental standards. The Forest Service receives only 20 percent of the annual funding necessary to maintain roads that already have an \$8.4 billion maintenance backlog. The cost of building roads into the few remaining Roadless Areas in the Southern Appalachians would only compound this problem. The difficulty and exorbitant cost of building roads into these areas would seem to suggest that it would be imprudent for the Forest Service to do so. The timber receipts from liquidating all the timber in these remaining areas would not begin to provide sufficient funding for this maintenance deficit.

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT: PROPOSED NATIONAL FOREST PLANNING REGULATIONS

Despite all the activity within the Forest Service at present, the most important initiative currently is the proposed revision of the planning regulations. As a result of the National Forest Management Act, regulations must govern the planning process such as the ones currently underway in the Chattahoochee and Sumter National Forests. These Forest Plans will replace the 1985 Plans structured under planning regulations that were developed in the late 1970's and modified by the Reagan Administration in 1982.

The current proposed planning regulations would change many important aspects of this process including, but not limited to: the administrative appeals process; specifics relating to species viability; the suitability of lands in the national forests for salvage logging; and, the decentralization of the planning process. The existing administrative appeals process would be replaced with a "pre-decisional objection period," which would require objections to be filed within 30 days of the release of the final EIS. Inadequate time would be given for concerned individuals to prepare an objection, and there are no deadlines for the agency to respond. As well, citizens would not be able to request stays of activities pending an appeal decision, which the Forest Service Chief would no

longer review.

The proposed "streamlining" of planning regulations was in part made possible by the fact that Forest Service planners said that they would place many of the specifics regarding the national forest planning process into Forest Service Manual (FSM) and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) direction. However, the Forest Service has decided against issuing draft FSM and FSH direction, and maintains that comments on the draft of proposed regulations will be used to inform the decisions on the draft Manual direction. The difficulty with this is that the Forest Service has never included the necessary instructions regarding the scope of comments requested. Essentially, the process is streamlined by excluding participation in a very important portion of the planning process.

The current proposed national forest planning regulations would change many important aspects of this process including, but not limited to: the administrative appeals process; specifics relating to species viability; the suitability of lands in the national forests for salvage logging; and, the decentralization of the planning process.

In general, the proposed planning regulations limit the clear direction given to administrators at all levels in the planning process. These proposed regulations go so far as to say that "a topic...may require one or more Regional Forester or the Chief of the Forest Service to undertake planning and decisions which may amend one or more Land and Resource Management Plans" (Forest Plans). Essentially, many decisions would be made discretionary. This goal is further accomplished by making the Forest Supervisor, not the Regional Forester, the deciding official. A

proposed regulation gives the Forest Supervisor the discretion to determine whether a topic is worthy of further consideration, resulting in this official's opinion superseding all other information available on the topic. A Forest Plan revision is then redefined as being "completed when one or more of the decisions of a Land and Resource Management Plan are revised or determined to continue without change." The Forest Supervisor, with the new discretionary powers mentioned above, could decide that no changes are necessary in the Plan. Therefore the Plan is revised by definition.

The coming year promises to be a landmark time to help shape these new and very important initiatives aimed at managing natural resources on our public lands. The key will be active and informed input by citizens with a clear understanding of these issues. Please express your opinion to the Forest Service and Members of Congress. Make your voice heard!

Watershed Update

CHATTOOGA WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

The US Forest Service recently decided to implement a large scale watershed restoration project in the Chattooga River watershed. The first year's funding for the project will be a whopping \$2.1 million, with a projected project duration of up to five years. The Forest Service's list of "potential collaborators" includes three state governments, four county governments, three national forests, two Forest Service Research Stations, numerous special interest groups, and just one conservation-advocacy organization: the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition.

The project's stated intent is to "build upon the body of research and the relationships developed through the Forest Service's Chattooga River Watershed Ecosystem Management Demonstration Project conducted in 1993-1995," with a focus on "sediment reduction and alleviating excess fecal coliform concentrations."

Our analysis of the Restoration Project's fledgling Business Plan clearly indicates that strong third party participation and oversight is needed. It seems that considerable funds are earmarked for projects that are quite removed from "watershed restoration;" for example, activities aimed exclusively at timber management, and creating artificial habitats for game species. *Instead, we advocate direct funding to projects for remedying urgent water quality problems, such as cleaning up Stekoa Creek.* The CRWC will participate in and closely follow the implementation of the Restoration Project, which begins initial organization and coordination this January.

COUNTY SCHOOLS FUNDING REVITALIZATION ACT OF 1999

Representative Nathan Deal of Georgia has introduced some startling legislation (HR 2389) called the County Schools Funding Revitalization Act of 1999. The proposed Act addresses the federal funding given to counties from timber sales where public lands are located, which is known as the 25% Fund. This fund has dwindled, because the volume of timber sales has been reduced or stopped altogether in many areas due to past over-harvesting, and litigation. Now, this bill would undermine the ability of Forest Service Chief Michael Dombeck to redirect his agency toward responsible land management. Dombeck has strongly endorsed decoupling county payments and timber receipts, because he knows that the current system produces the incentives for logging at the expense of other important values such as clean water, recreation, fish and wildlife. Furthermore, the Deal bill is premised on the idea that our national forests need more logging. The bill increases federal subsidies for logging by at least \$90 million annually and \$630 million over the next seven years. Yet the Forest Service's timber program loses millions of dollars of taxpayer's money, and results in enormous environmental costs as well. The bill also

contains provisions to transfer a measure of control of our national forest to a few select, local authorities who would have the means to fashion projects to keep the cash flowing. Certainly, this could further the likelihood of increased resource extraction at the expense of the other values found on our public lands. *Currently, the bill has passed the House and is headed to the Senate. Please contact your Senators and express your opinion about this bill. Members of Congress should understand that excessive logging is the problem, not the solution.*

GEORGIA DNR BUREAUCRATS OVERSTEP THEIR AUTHORITY

On December 16, without public input, knowledge or consulting the DNR Board, DNR Commissioner Lonice Barrett and Division of Wildlife Chief David Waller signed an official policy statement opposing the creation of additional wilderness areas in the Chattahoochee National Forest. This position runs counter to the wishes of thousands of Georgians, who see wilderness designation as a way to protect their drinking water supplies and other natural resources. It also fails to recognize that wilderness areas are open to traditional uses such as hunting and fishing, and this special designation is supported by organizations such as the Georgia Wildlife Federation. We urge citizens to express their views to Governor Barnes. After all, only 15% of the 750,000 acre Chattahoochee National Forest is currently protected as wilderness, and the Forest Service's draft proposal would add to that figure only 34,000 acres, leaving more 600,000 acres open to logging and possible wildlife management.

BIODIVERSITY AND FUNDING: THE 106TH CONGRESS

The outcome of the first session of the 106th Congress for *biodiversity* could be summarized as a few steps forward and no major steps back. Regular funding for the major conservation agencies showed some increases for Fiscal Year 2000 over FY '99, as shown below:

- ⇒ National Park Service: \$1.8 billion, up from \$1.7 billion
- ⇒ Fish and Wildlife Service: \$878 million, up from \$802 million
- ⇒ Bureau of Land Management: \$1.2 billion, up from \$1.1 billion
- ⇒ Funding for the Forest Service dropped by \$29 million overall, in areas both harmful and helpful to biodiversity. While certain fisheries programs got increases and money to reconstruct degraded roads was increased, so was money to construct new logging roads, as well as increase in logging in Alaska and clearcutting in Colorado. Also, over all funding for the timber program will remain the same as last year.
- ⇒ Funding for lands for habitat protection increased: The President's Land Legacy Initiative was funded at \$651 million, including \$444 million for federal land acquisition and \$206 million for state and local governments.
- ⇒ The Land & Water Conservation Fund allocations were increased this year to \$450 million, and progress has been made toward a permanent funding mechanism via a compromise bill that combines the bill introduced by the late Rep. George Miller's pro-conservation HR798 and Rep. Don Young's anti-conservation HR701. The new compromise bill could pass this year.

Back Issues of the *Chattooga Quarterly*

The *CHATTOOGA QUARTERLY* contains articles about the watershed's cultural and natural history, as well as timely conservation news and commentary. Back issues are available for nearly all publications. Contact our office and we will fill your request; cost is \$1.25 apiece, for postage. Each issue's feature articles are listed below; a selection of issues are pictured on the facing page.

Fall 1994

BATTLE LINE DRAWN ON RABUN BALD

Looking At the Big Picture; Monitoring the Chattooga; Archaeologist Digs up Cherokee Town on the Chattooga; Former President Jimmy Carter Gets Involved; William Bartram and the Fraser Magnolia; Tree Keeps Growing and Growing.

Winter 1995

LOGGING THE WATERSHED *Past, Present, & Future*

Forest Stewardship on Private Lands; Interview with Mr. Joel Thrift of Thrift Brothers Lumber Company; The Mountain Bridge Proposal; Geology of the Chattooga Basin; Op Ed by Dr. Eugene Odum of UGA Institute of Ecology.

Spring 1995

RECREATION: *Who Wins, Who Loses, Who Pays?*

Recreation in the Chattooga Watershed; USFS Ecosystem Management; A Letter from Senator Hollings; Economy of the Chattooga Area; Interview with Dr. Claude Terry of Southeastern Expeditions; Spring Flowers; Scientists Call for Veto.

Summer 1995

POWDERHORN MAPS THE CHATTOOGA IN 1761

Tuckaluge Project; Marie Mellinger on Rabun Bald; Powderhorn Map; History of Watershed Research; Monitoring Water Quality; History of the Watershed Activism; Tropical Plants and Local Waterfalls.

Fall 1995

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ESA on the Chopping Block; Tuckaluge Update; Vigil Thank You's; Dr. Zahner Gets Conservation Award; Public Treasure for Sale; Spiders and the Web of Life; *The Dying of the Trees*; Nature's Pharmacy; Cherokee Ghosts; "The Walk."

Winter 1996

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: *Protection and Restoration*

Old Growth Forest in the Chattooga; Chattooga Conservation Plan; Animals of the Forest Interior; Plants of the Forest Interior; Making the Law of the Forest; Public Opinion Numbers Game; Horse Logger with a Mission; In Season.

Spring 1996

RABUN BALD ROADLESS AREA:

Spared by Negotiation

Rabun Bald Roadless Area; Mountain Bogs in Spring; Interview with Bill Guthrie of T&S Hardwoods; Biorealism: Reading Nature's Blue Prints; Spring Warblers: Jewels of the Treetops; Biological Monitoring Strategies; Review of *Southbound*.

Summer 1996

PICKING UP THE PIECES: *Restoring Our Native Forest*

Picking up the Pieces; The American Chestnut Story; Butterflies of Xanadu; Land & Water Conservation Fund; In the Name of Salvage; The Blue Ridge Railroad; Chattooga, The Dangerous River; *Mountain Lion* Book Review.

Fall 1996

"GOOD SCIENCE": *Yours, or Mine?*

Forest Health in the Chattooga River Watershed; The Great Forest; Salamanders of the Chattooga; The Monarch Butterfly; Interview with Forest Service Chief Jack Ward Thomas; Endangered Species: Managing For Extinction? Aldo Leopold's Name in Vain; National Forest Plan Revision Response; *The Ecology of Commerce* Book Review.

Winter 1997

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Focusing on the Private Sector

Land Use and Zoning; Stekoa Creek; Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment; Endangered Species & Private Lands; PILT and the 25% Fund; Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle; Chip Mills; Petition Delivery; Decline of the Butternut.

Spring 1997

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: *The Foundation of Life*

The Value of Biological Diversity; Carolina Hemlock & Table Mountain Pine; Interview with Dr. Eugene Odum; Brook Trout in the Chattooga Watershed; Small Mammals of the Chattooga; When Continents Collide; Forest Fragmentation & Migratory Birds; Trends in Biodiversity.

Summer 1997

FROM CULTURAL HERITAGE, A NEW LAND ETHIC

The Whiskey Rebellion; Memoirs of Andrew Gennett, Lumberman; The Chattooga's Cultural Heritage; Damming Diversity; Wild Medicinals of the Chattooga.

Fall 1997

PUBLIC LAND ACQUISITION: *The Stakes Get Higher*

Joyce Kilmer's Birds; Land Acquisition; Knutsen-Vandenberg Act; Letter To South Carolina DNR.

Winter 1998

GROWING ALTERNATIVES & CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Hunting in the 3rd Millennium; Citizen's Forestry Tools; Forestry for a New Value System; Blue Valley Timber Sale, Update on the Jocassee Gorges; *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun* Book Review.

Spring 1998

WATERSHED RESTORATION REVIVAL

Forest Service Budget; Interview with Dr. Arthur Cooper; A Message from the President; Forest Service Chief Speaks Out; The Swamp Honeysuckle; Loggers of the Blue Ridge.

Summer 1998

THE HEAT IS ON: *Fighting Fire with Fire*

Flashes in the Night; Cicadas are Buzzing; Catesby's Natural History of America; Oconee Nuclear Station; The Threat of Climate Change; Solar Energy Emerging; Legislative Riders of the Night; USFS Line Officer Gives Her Directive.

Fall/Winter 1998/1999

HARMONIOUS HARVEST, *Phase I*

Owls; Brown Gap Timber Sale, *Pinus Strobus*; Chip Mills Proliferate; Update: Oconee Nuclear Station; Letter to the Editor; *The Appalachian Forest* Book Review.

Spring 1999

RIVER OF CLOUDS

Bobcats: Ghosts of the Forest; Climate of the Chattooga Basin; Hemlock Woolly Adelgid; General Wade Hampton III; Nuclear Plants: Watching License Bids.

Summer/Fall 1999

TURBULENT TIMES

Plant Kingdoms' New Family Tree; Interview with Representative Cynthia McKinney; Recovery at Raven Chute; Kingwood.

Chattooga Quarterly



The Chattooga Quarterly

Winter *** 1995

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Logging the Watershed Past, Present, and Future



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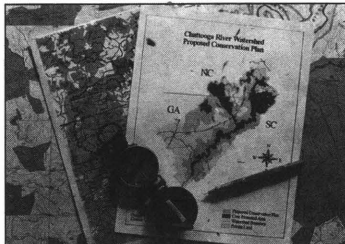


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Picking Up the Pieces Restoring Our Native Forest



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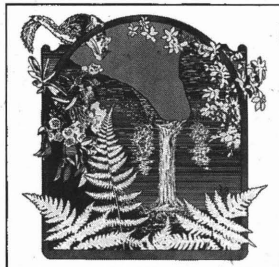


The Chattooga Quarterly

SPRING *** 1997

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Biological Diversity: The Foundation of Life



God said, Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the Earth across the vault of the heavens... Let the Earth bring forth living creatures, according to their various kinds... And He saw it was good.

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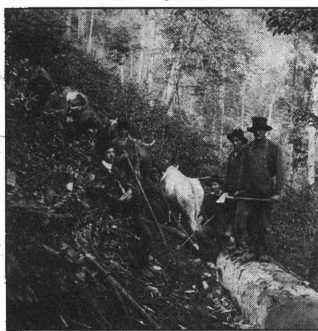


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Summer *** 1997

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From Cultural Heritage, a New Land Ethic



"Roll of the Woods": Andrew Givens and Phil Lewis logging the Chattooga River watershed

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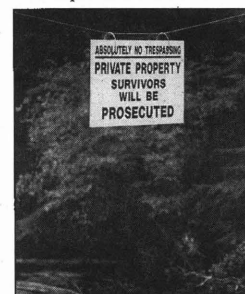


The Chattooga Quarterly

Fall *** 1997

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Public Land Acquisition: The Stakes Get Higher



This sign reminds us citizens from floating down the Historical W&A & Sevier West Park of the Chattooga River

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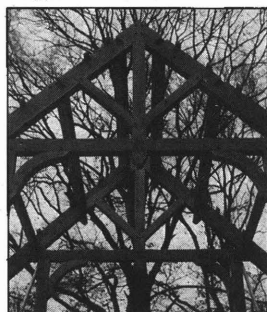


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Growing Alternatives & Creative Solutions



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River of Clouds



Devil's Courthouse in North Carolina overlooks the headwaters of the Chattooga River

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Member's Page

MANY THANKS to all who recently renewed their membership, or joined the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition. Your generous contributions will help us continue to work on all of the important conservation issues facing the watershed.

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Join the CRWC and help protect the Chattooga River Watershed

Your contribution is greatly appreciated. Donations will be used to support the Coalition's work, and guarantee you delivery of the *Chattooga Quarterly*. We're a non-profit organization, and all contributions are tax-deductible.

THANK YOU!

Send to:

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Purpose: "To protect, promote and restore the natural ecological integrity of the Chattooga River watershed ecosystem; to ensure the viability of native species in harmony with the need for a healthy human environment; and to educate and empower communities to practice good stewardship on public and private lands."

Made Possible By:

CRWC Members and Volunteers

Frances Allison Close

Turner Foundation

Bonnie Raitt

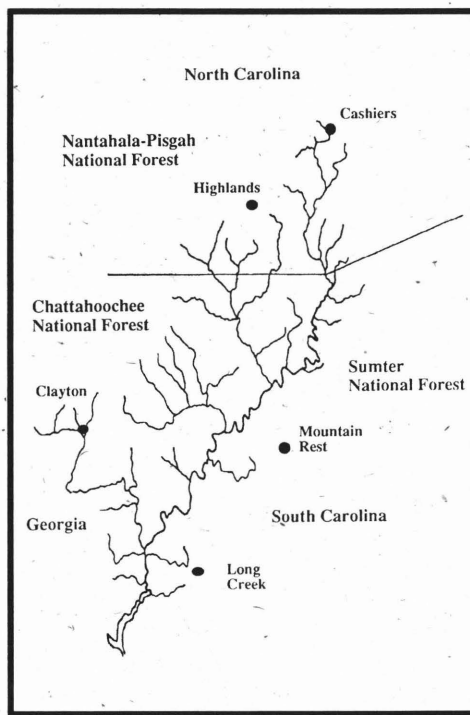
Guacamole Fund

Norcross Wildlife Foundation

Smithsonian Institution CTSP

Katherine John Murphy Foundation

Environmental Systems Research Institute



Goals:

Monitor the U.S. Forest Service's management of public forest lands in the watershed

Educate the public

Promote public choice based on credible scientific information

Promote public land acquisition by the Forest Service within the watershed

Protect remaining old growth and roadless areas

Work cooperatively with the Forest Service to develop a sound ecosystem initiative for the watershed

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