



The Chattooga Quarterly

Summer ♦♦♦ 2004

Discovering Native Culture



250 year old dugout canoe recovered by the Chattooga Conservancy and a crew of volunteers.

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Director's Page

Buzz Williams

Measuring the success of a non profit organization can be done in different ways: acres of critical habitat saved, funding, media coverage, etc. My measuring stick is community involvement. The Chattooga Conservancy is a grassroots conservation organization that depends on participation. One way to measure success is to simply count how many volunteers show up when we call for help. We find an amazing record of community involvement as we look back on our activities since the Conservancy was founded in 1991.

In summer of 1995, we organized a vigil to protest the largest timber sale in the Chattooga River watershed since the turn of the century. The Tuckaluge Timber Sale was an 8 million board foot gift to the timber industry masked by the Forest Service in the guise of "ecosystem management." The Tuckaluge Sale required 9.1 miles of road building into what was known as the old Rabun Bald Roadless Area. The Forest Service had already built as many roads into the area as possible in order to disqualify it for "roadless" designation. The vigil on Rabun Bald overlooked the proposed timber sale, and lasted 34 days and involved over 300 people. Such pressure was brought to bear on the Forest Service by the protest that they finally backed off of the sale.

Again, in 1996, the Chattooga Conservancy mounted a campaign of citizen involvement aimed at Forest Service reform to protect roadless areas and old growth forests. We collected over 20,000 signatures on a petition asking the Forest Service to revise Forest Management Plans based on principles of sound science for protecting resources, such as roadless areas and old growth. In order to use the petition to full advantage we embarked on a high profile, 200-mile trek to deliver the petition to the Forest Service's Regional Office in Atlanta. The journey began on top of Whiteside Mountain at the headwaters of the Chattooga River watershed, and started with a steep descent down the 2,000 foot face of Whiteside to the valley below. Then, the petition was carried on horseback, mountain bike, kayak and canoe down through the Chattooga River watershed, and relayed via logging truck over to the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River at Helen, Georgia. From Helen, the petition was transported by canoe down the Chattahoochee to downtown Atlanta, and delivered to the Forest Service by couriers on road bikes. When the petition was unrolled, it

stretched for a full city block. The journey took ten days and garnered much media and public education. There is no doubt that the momentum to save roadless areas and old growth forest was bolstered by the volunteers who helped make the trek to Atlanta to deliver the petition.

One of our most impressive volunteer efforts happened just this year, which you will read about in this *Chattooga Quarterly* (see pp. 4-7). This project involved hundreds of volunteers in recovering an old dugout canoe found in the Chattooga River below Earl's Ford. Archaeologists have determined this find to be one of the most significant cultural artifacts ever discovered in the Savannah River drainage.

More recently we held a fund raiser on Lake Burton at the home of one of our board members. The "Wild West" party gave supporters of the Conservancy a chance to have a great time and donate to our work. Guests played poker, blackjack and roulette with all proceeds tagged as contributions to the Conservancy. The party required over 40 volunteers as dealers, bartenders, cooks, and hosts. We raised significant funding for our programs, with all credit due to volunteers.

This year, our program of work will call on volunteers and new recruits to establish a greenway on Stekoa Creek (see p. 12). We are also planning a major campaign involving the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency, Rabun County, and the City of

Clayton; our goal: clean up Stekoa Creek! Volunteers are already signing up for stream monitoring, legal services, and active involvement in the project.

Looking back on these successes and to the future, I have a great feeling of pride and accomplishment in being a part of the Chattooga Conservancy. I am well aware of the fact that the reason for our success is based on solid dedication to true conservation, and our volunteers who are willing to contribute to that cause. I am grateful for a dedicated staff, a solid board of directors, our loyal membership, and the hundreds of volunteers who make the Chattooga Conservancy one of the best grassroots organizations in the nation. Thanks to all.



Special thanks to Cecile and Dwayne Thompson for hosting the "Wild West" fundraiser party.

GREEN ALERT!

ROADLESS AREAS THREATENED

On Monday July 12, Secretary of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Ann Veneman announced proposed regulations to replace the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. The "Roadless Rule," adopted by the Clinton Administration, would have protected the 58.5 million acres of roadless areas in America's 192 million acres of national forest land. The rule was developed via a process that included 600 public meetings and drew 2.2 million public comments, over 90% of which were favorable. Under the new rules proposed by the Bush Administration, in order to maintain protection, each state's governor must petition the Forest Service for individual rule-making to protect the roadless areas within that state. Otherwise, the roadless areas will be opened for logging and mining.

We all knew that when President Bush appointed former timber industry lobbyist Mark Rey as Undersecretary of Agriculture, bad policies would follow. In what has been described as the greatest threat to water quality and biological diversity since the turn of the century, the latest announcement by the Forest Service to open roadless areas to industry confirms those fears.

Trout Unlimited's vice president of government affairs said of the announcement, "We're very surprised that the Bush administration has decided yet again to act against the interest of American sportsmen and women... The Bush administration has already established a long pattern of actions that have angered our constituency, but this may be the most concerning bellwether. It poses major risks to the areas we hunt and fish, and you can bet our members will not be happy to find out about it."

Roadless acres at risk in our region: Georgia, 55,198 acres; North Carolina, 142,000 acres; South Carolina, 5,353 acres.

Please let the Forest Service know you oppose Bush's decision to open our roadless areas to logging and mining. Comments are due by September 14, 2004. Please send them to:

Mail: Content Analysis Team
ATTN: Roadless State Petitions
USDA Forest Service
P.O. Box 221090
Salt Lake City, UT 84122
Fax: (801) 517-1014
E-mail:
statepetitionroadless@fs.fed.us

If the Bush Administration's rule is approved by the Forest Service, please ask your governor to petition the Forest Service for rule making to protect your state's roadless areas.

Georgia Governor Perdue, 404-656-1776
North Carolina Governor Easley, 1-800-662-7952 valid in North Carolina only
(919)733-4240, or (919)733-5811
South Carolina Governor Sanford, 803-734-2100



Pristine streams and forests in roadless areas are now at risk under Bush's newly proposed rule.

Rare Chattooga Canoe Recovered

Buzz Williams

Peter Peteet is a soft spoken, thoughtful man with a keen eye for detail. It was his curious eye that first spotted the unusually fine lines of a piece of old wood sticking up out of the sand near the left bank of the Chattooga River about a mile below Earls Ford. That same object had been passed over by the eyes of thousands of recreational paddlers, river guides, and fishermen before Peter waded across the river that dry, hot June day in 2002 to take a closer look that led eventually to the documentation and recovery of one of the most significant cultural artifacts ever found in the Savannah River headwaters.

On the day of the discovery Peter had been camping along the Chattooga River trail with three other friends from Atlanta. The river was running very low after four years of drought; not good for river runners but very good for artifact hunters who have the eye to take advantage of the river's mood to give up its buried treasures.

His companions were well aware of Peter's curious nature and had witnessed his habit of artifact hunting since their high school days. But this time they questioned his findings. All but Peter thought the object was just an old log buried in the sand. The ensuing debate resulted in further investigation. As they pulled the sand away from the wood, the swift current swept it away to reveal a long hollowed out log thirty-one feet five inches in length and one foot nine inches wide. The clincher was the object's well defined gunwales and its taper and rocker characteristics which are indicative of some type of boat. Peter had been right, it was without a doubt an old dugout canoe.

Fortunately, Peter and his friends quickly realized the significance of their find. Together they carefully managed to drag the old boat far enough out of the water onto a sandbar to take digital photographs from several angles. Then with equal care not to damage the artifact, they placed it back in its original resting place in about one foot of water, weighted it down with rocks, and reburied it.

Upon return to their homes in Atlanta, they decided that the proper authorities should be notified. They conducted a preliminary investigation into who the responsible agency might be in terms of ownership and responsibility for recovery. The group concluded that since the canoe was found only a few feet from the South Carolina shore that the practical course of action was to contact authorities in South Carolina. A friend at the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* who had recently written about the recovery of the Confederate submarine *H. L. Hunley* off the coast of South Carolina suggested contacting Chris Amer, Deputy State Archaeologist for Underwater and Associate Director for Marine Research at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina. He turned out to be exactly the right man for the



From left to right, Chris Amer, Buzz Williams, and Peter Peteet discuss strategies for floating the canoe upstream.

Photo courtesy Andy Hinton

job. Amer, however, was completely tied up with his work with the *Hunley* at the time and was essentially unavailable.

Undaunted, Peter pursued other contacts. He had concluded that others agencies such as the Forest Service and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation should be notified and would help with the recovery. These contacts were indeed relevant since the Forest Service has ownership of the lands on both sides of the Chattooga River at the location of the find and since there was a good possibility that the canoe was of Native American origin given its similarity to another dugout found earlier in the Chattahoochee River and now on display in the Cherokee Museum of Natural History.

The archaeologists for the Eastern Band of the Cherokee were excited about the find but also recommended that the Forest Service conduct an investigation to determine more about the origin of the canoe. At this point no one really knew if it was of Native American origin or if it was early European. The close examination of the boat for tool marks and type were critical to pin down its origin. With little info about the canoe's maker somewhat of a dispute arose over just who would be responsible for the extraction and preservation of the artifact. Both South Carolina and the Cherokee urged the Forest Service to send their archaeologist to determine more about the boat.

Peter and crew, not willing to sit idly by while authorities pondered responsibility, continued their investigation on their own. As luck would have it Peter's sister is employed by the Goddard Institute For Space Studies at Columbia University and was able to conduct carbon dating on a sliver of the damaged gunwale. Test results indicated that the canoe dated to about 1760 plus or minus 40 years! This information and the digital photos of the canoe were forwarded to all the principle authorities.

Rare Chattooga Canoe Recovered

The old dugout had been found in June of 2002. By December of 2003 no action had been taken by the Forest Service or the South Carolina authorities. Peter and his friends began to wonder if they would ever see their discovery documented and recovered. To our advantage, however, the drought had broken and the old canoe lay buried and submerged under the rising waters, safe from artifact hunters. But the word was getting out. The fear of discovery and potential damage or even theft was becoming very real.

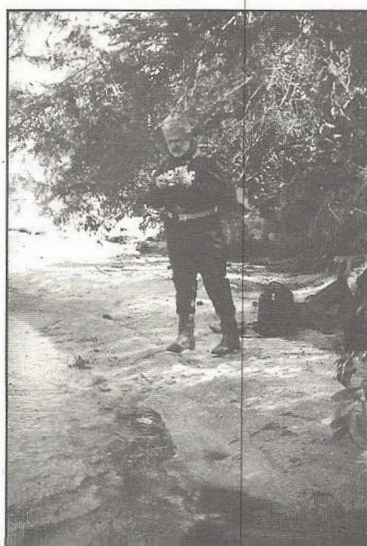
In that same month of December a local forest activist learned of the find in a casual conversation with the Andrew Pickens District Ranger in South Carolina. He requested more information from the ranger and the following memo with Peter's original photos were sent to him on December 18 via e-mail. "Here are some pictures of the canoe that was found over a year ago. Not sure why the state hasn't made this a priority to at least come and look at. My concern is that it is being discovered by others and if something isn't done soon, may be lost in full or in part. The Forest Service doesn't have authority to evaluate and act on this since it is in the river proper." The recipient forwarded this e-mail to several watchdog groups including the Chattooga Conservancy.

When I read the ranger's memo and became aware of how much time had passed since the discovery of the artifact, I was astounded in learning that the Forest Service had done nothing to investigate and protect the find. Most curious was the ranger's statement that they had [no] "... authority to evaluate and act since it is in the river proper." The legal ownership notwithstanding I found it unconscionable that the Forest Service would sit idly by and not as a professional courtesy lend a hand in investigating such an important discovery deeply imbedded in national forest lands. Was this not the same agency given full responsibility to protect not only the biological, geological, recreational, and "cultural" values of the Chattooga River as mandated by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act? Was this not the same agency given full authority to regulate and evaluate the outfitting and guiding industry as well as all recreational traffic on the Chattooga River?

Fortunately, several individual Forest Service employees took a keen interest and went well beyond their official capacity to assist in what soon would become a great community effort to extract the dugout canoe from the river. It was one of these Forest Service employees who gave us the general information that the canoe was about a mile below Earls Ford. On December 20th, my staff and I made several attempts to find the canoe by hiking the river bank to no avail. The next day the weather had turned bitterly cold. At dawn, I paddled down the river in another attempt to find

the canoe. Dave Martin from my staff followed close behind in his kayak. Dave found the canoe first as he hugged close to the South Carolina shore. We now had the opportunity to see for ourselves just what this artifact really looked like. I was amazed at its simple, exquisite beauty, and how long and narrow it was.

The next day I made a telephone call to the district ranger to ask what his plans were to help recover the dugout. In a brief exchange it became clear that he had no intention of taking the lead. Any hope for immediate action would have to be initiated by the state of South Carolina who legally owned the canoe.



Archaeologist Chris Amer photographs the submerged canoe.

A few days later we returned to the canoe by hiking down the river from Earls Ford. We then bushwhacked out an old logging road in a short cut back to the Earls Ford parking lot. This old road would later be invaluable in getting extraction crews in and out of the site. Immediately across from the canoe the Bartram Trail dips close to the site and parallels the river back up to Earls Ford, crossing two narrow bridges on the way. We thought this might be a good way to carry the canoe out to a road for transport. It was becoming more apparent that the Chattooga Conservancy would have to initiate any plan save the canoe.

Two days later I sent an e-mail to the archaeologist for the Sumter National Forest and requested assistance. He responded immediately with confirmation that the find was potentially very important but indicated that he would not be able to visit the site until the first of the year.

Time was growing short as rumors were getting out about the canoe. On December 31st I sent a letter to the South Carolina state archaeologist advising him that I had personally examined the canoe and offered the Conservancy's assistance in its recovery. I informed him of our capabilities to organize volunteers and our knowledge of the area, and I offered to help write a grant request for funds to finance the recovery. In a telephone conversation on January 5th he confirmed receiving my letter and made a commitment to send Dr. Amer to a meeting that the Conservancy would coordinate at the Forest Service office in Mountain Rest. My intention was to also invite other stakeholders including Peter and his friends as well as the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Department of Archives and History/State Historic Preservation Office, and other conservation organizations.

Rare Chattooga Canoe Recovered

While organizing the meeting I also informed our local state senator and asked him to make a phone call to the state archaeologist to lend his support to the recovery. Later I learned from a friend that a local museum would soon be opening in Walhalla, South Carolina and was very interested in acquiring the canoe for a center piece display.

On March 24th the "exploratory meeting" was held at the Andrew Pickens Ranger Station. The district ranger welcomed the participants and then turned the meeting over to Dr. Amer. Amer stated clearly that the canoe could be very unique since he had no knowledge of a similar find this far up the Savannah River watershed. He went on to say that the state of South Carolina claimed ownership of the canoe given its proximity to the South Carolina shore. Dr. Amer also informed the group that the state had very little money for a potentially expensive recovery. He suggested a cooperative recovery with the Forest Service playing a partnership role. We then visited the site and took extensive measurements of the canoe. It was at this point that I got to know Peter and hear the story of his find. His unwavering dedication to recovering the canoe would be indispensable in the days to come.

Upon returning to the conference room, it was suggested that the Chattooga Conservancy coordinate and organize the recovery under the supervision of Dr. Amer of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, with the Forest Service in a support role. This was the chance I had been waiting for. With an official agreement in place and the Chattooga Conservancy in the lead we were free to expedite the operation.

We set a deadline to have the canoe out of the river in one month. Paul Burris of the Forest Service played a key role in soliciting a letter from the local museum that was interested in the canoe as a display, assuring the state that they had the funds and proper facilities to preserve and display the canoe. A special receiving tank was constructed at the museum to temporarily store the canoe submerged in polyethylene glycol, a chemical used to stabilize and preserve wood. Kent Wiggington, who owns a boat dock construction company, generously agreed to construct the "cradle" for the canoe extraction, which we designed using the specifications given to us by Dr. Amer. All labor and

materials were donated. I began organizing the extraction team of river guides with experience in working with swift water rescue. As luck would have it, Mark Fischer, a good friend and counselor with the Cherokee Creek Boys School, agreed to organize a crew of students to carry the extraction cradle to the site via the Bartram Trail.

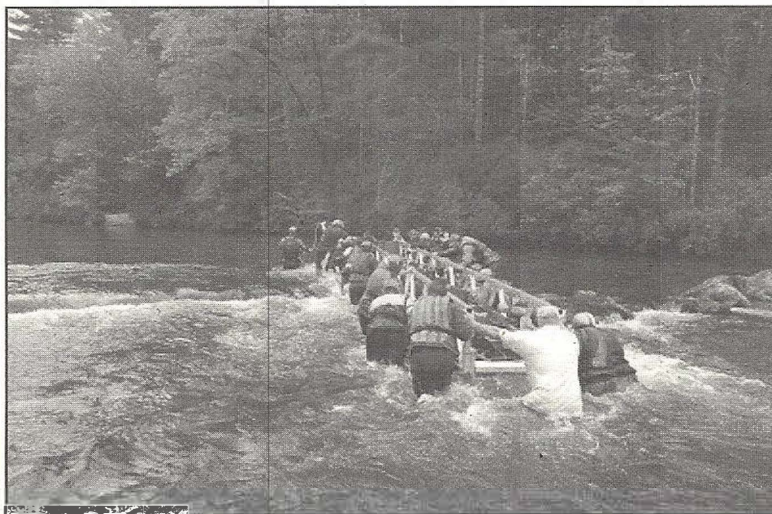
Operations began immediately as we hiked people to the site, took more extensive measurements of the canoe, and contacted the media. But the biggest problem still remained unsolved was how to get the canoe out? At first we tried to get the Forest Service to donate a helicopter for an airlift, but when we learned that it would cost two thousand dollars an hour for the chopper this option was eliminated. The Forest Service offered to bulldoze a road to the site but this option was rejected unanimously by the working group. I

found it unsettling that we had to point out their obligation to minimize the use of mechanized equipment in a National Wild and Scenic River corridor. After much deliberation we decided to attempt to carry the canoe out the Bartram Trail.

This was shaping up to be a huge endeavor. Would it be physically possible to carry the canoe and cradle out the narrow trail across two narrow bridges and tight switch backs? We contacted the Mathematics

Department at Clemson University for help in estimating the weight of the canoe and cradle. A freshmen math class constructed a model of the canoe from measurements. The model was then submerged in water and its volume was calculated by a displacement value and multiplied by the theoretical weight per cubic foot of water saturated "heart pine." The result was staggering. When this weight was added to the weight of the cradle (375 pounds) the total weight turned out to be almost 1700 pounds. This would be almost impossible.

We interviewed Peter and his friends and asked how they had initially managed to drag such a heavy object up on the beach? Peter assured us that the boat would not be that heavy based on their experience with the canoe. We decided to just go for it and hope the math students had overestimated the weight.



Onlookers said the recovery operation looked like a freight train moving up the river. Photo courtesy Butch Clay

Rare Chattooga Canoe Recovered

We put people on 48 hour notice to be ready to make the attempt on May 1st. The Cherokee Boys School kids and other volunteers struggled carrying the cradle down the Bartram Trail the day before the extraction. When we arrived at the site Kent and I sat by the river and puzzled over the dilemma. As we sat looking up the river towards Earls Ford I said to Kent, "I changed my mind, we're going to have to float this thing up river."

Kent, a veteran river man whose judgment I greatly value, responded matter of factly, "I was wondering when you would reach that conclusion."

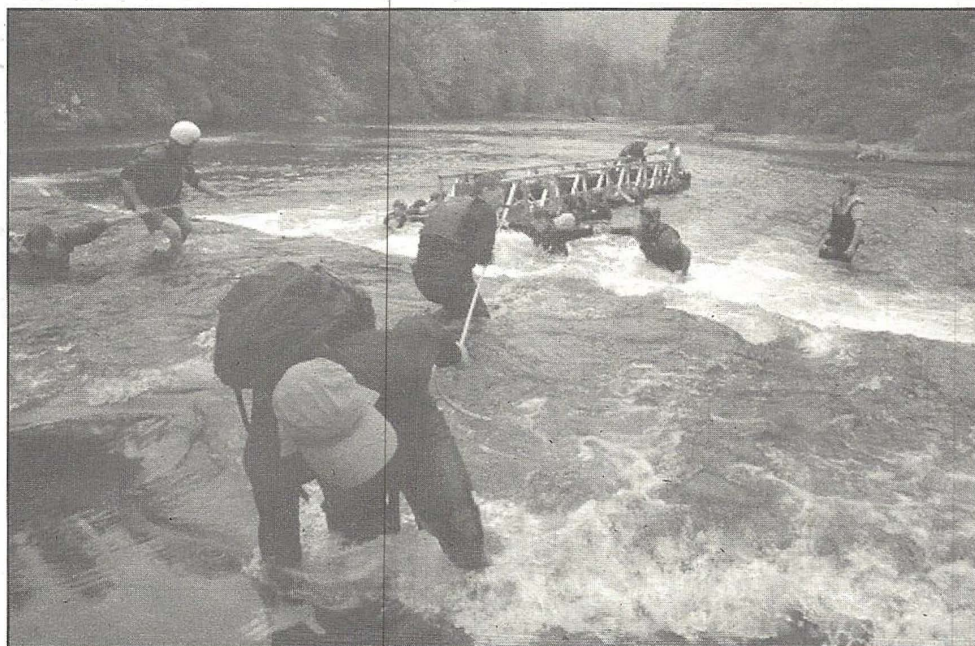
Now the plan was complete. I slept on the beach that night. The weather had changed and it began to rain. Our cut off for the operation was based on water level and things were looking dicey.

Early the next morning old friends from around the community began showing up for the main event. We padded the bottom of the cradle with closed cell foam material that had been donated by Watermark, Inc. and submerged the cradle in the shallow water above the canoe. The Cherokee Creek boys had the honor of excavating the canoe the day before, so it was easy to float the canoe into the cradle. Soon we had enough people to manhandle the cradle and canoe back up onto the sandbar near the shore, where it was padded and cam-strapped. The media was arriving in droves and the work of positioning the flotation under the canoe had to be carefully balanced with talking to TV and newspaper crews. The rain was steadily falling but not heavy enough to threaten the operation. Our hearts sank as we heaved the contraption out in the water and it listed heavily to one side. It would be too dangerous to take the canoe up through rapids with the possibility of capsizing the cradle. Fortunately Kent had some extra flotation back up at the parking lot. Two volunteers made the trek back out along the old logging road and towed the new and bigger flotation down to the river. Once the new flotation was under the cradle we organized the river crew along the sides and out in front with tow lines. Finally the signal was given and the crew charged upriver. What people witnessed that day was one of the most amazing river operations of its kind ever to occur on the Chattooga River. Those who tried to keep up along the shore described it as what looked like a freight train going up river. We were greeted by a host of spectators and media at Earls Ford with a loud cheer. The crew had negotiated about a mile of swift current and rapids by swimming,

pushing, and hauling the canoe and cradle in less than one hour. After a short respite, the canoe, which turned out to be a total of about 1000 pounds, was carried up to the parking lot and loaded onto a lowboy trailer where it was doused with water to keep it from drying out on the way to the Oconee Heritage Museum in Walhalla, South Carolina. Once at the museum it was slowly and ever so carefully lifted and submerged in the holding tank filled with water. That evening the canoe recovery was featured on the evening news in Greenville and Atlanta. The next morning the operation was headline news in local and regional newspapers.

State archaeologists are scheduled to visit the Oconee Heritage Center this summer to go over the old canoe and look for clues to determine if it is Native American or European in origin, and to begin the preservation process by replacing the water with the chemical preservative.

The canoe will be on permanent display in Walhalla in a few months. What had begun as essentially a bureaucratic snarl over an operation that normally cost tens of thousands of dollars was effectively accomplished for a mere few hundred dollars and a community that came together to volunteer their time, money and considerable effort to protect and preserve their own invaluable cultural heritage. The old dugout canoe has been declared by prominent archaeologists as a one of a kind discovery. The Chattooga Conservancy is grateful to have been of service in coordinating the recovery of such a valuable find. The real credit, though, should be given to all the people who cared enough to donate the tremendous time and effort to the recovery. Special recognition is due to Peter Peteet, the man who took a closer look and went the extra mile.



*The recovery crew encounters a "speed bump" while moving the canoe over a rapid.
Photo courtesy Butch Clay.*

Native Americans in the Watershed

Carol Greenberger

Discovery of the approximately 250 year old canoe in the Chattooga River prompted many lively discussions about its possible history. Who made it? How was it used? Which leads to further questions; who lived along the banks of the Chattooga River? And when? A lot has been learned in the past several decades about man's history in North America and in the southeastern United States.

The first people to inhabit the New World came out of Siberia across the Bering Strait land bridge into Alaska during the Ice Age. Although there is some evidence that man was present in North America as early as 40,000 years ago, there is overwhelming archaeological evidence that man was here at least as early as 11,000 years ago. These people were called Paleo-Indians and they lived in the grassy and swampy plains, hunting large animals such as the mammoth and prehistoric horses and bison. At the end of the Pleistocene period, as the ice receded, the large cold-adapted animals became extinct. With that change, the Paleo-Indian hunting tradition gradually declined. In its place, a new tradition, the Archaic, began to take shape in the eastern United States around 8,000 B.C. (Archeologists describe these societies as "traditions" - cultural patterns which endured for some time in a particular place.) Instead of the Paleo-Indian reliance on hunting large animals, the Archaic tradition was based on gathering vegetable foods, fishing, and hunting and trapping small woodland animals. People began settling in distinct territories.

Beginning around 1,000 B.C. and lasting until 700 A.D., a new era began to take shape in the eastern United States. This is known as the Woodland tradition. A change gradually developed both in the ideology of the Indians and in their subsistence pattern. The people of the Woodland tradition were hunters and gatherers, as their ancestors had been. They also learned to harvest local foods, such as nuts, more efficiently and store them. The ability to store food led to a more sedentary life style. This time period shows the first evidence of relatively permanent homes. Agriculture began to supplement hunting and gathering. During this period, Indians began to show a preference for living near the flood plains of rivers, where native seed-bearing plants thrived.

The Mississippian tradition began taking shape between 700 A.D. and 900 A.D. along the middle course of the Mississippi River. This tradition spread along the river systems to almost all parts of the southeast. Mississippian sites were invariably built near the courses or old channels of streams and rivers where the best soil for agriculture was found. They were frequently surrounded by defensive structures and ditches, which were sometimes filled with water. The most characteristic feature of the Mississippian tradition was the building of flat-topped, pyramidal earthen mounds that formed the foundations for temples, mortuaries, chief's houses and important buildings. Etowah mounds in

northern Georgia are an example of this Mississippian tradition.

The Mississippians were the first people to inhabit the southern Appalachians in permanent settlements. The temple mounds and defensive structures indicate that new religious and social elements began in this period, as well as important economic changes. Trading for salt, shells, beads, and obsidian (volcanic glass used for making tools and weapons) between the coast and interior began in this period. While hunting and gathering remained important, agriculture provided a large portion of the Indians' food. The Mississippian tradition reached the height of its development around 1200 A.D., influencing almost all of the cultures in the Southeast.

The Cherokee Indians, a late Mississippian tribe, migrated from the Ohio valley about 5,000 years ago, driven south by wars with neighboring tribes in the northeast. The arrival of European explorers in Appalachia in the sixteenth century hastened the decline of the Mississippian culture. The spread of diseases introduced by the Europeans combined with violent encounters had a devastating effect on the native population. Within a century after Spanish contact, the Mississippians formerly known as "Pisgah" became the "Qualla" - the ancestors of the present day Cherokees. For most of the seventeenth century the Qualla Cherokees continued many of the subsistence traditions of their Mississippian ancestors, such as clay and mud building construction and growing corn. The addition of horses, pigs, and peaches to the Indians' lives can be attributed to the Spanish. Sometime during the early seventeenth century, bands of these Indians migrated across the Blue Ridge mountains into the north Georgia and the North Carolina mountains, and by 1700 about 30,000 Cherokee lived in permanent settlements in the Southeast.

The Cherokee in the Southeast lived in about eighty towns, distributed among four large groups. The Middle settlements centered in western North Carolina on the headwaters of the Tuckaseegee and Little Tennessee Rivers. Kituah, a middle town located near Bryson City, North Carolina, was the "mother town" of the Cherokees; its tribal leaders reigned over all the Cherokee towns and villages. The Valley settlements were also in North Carolina along the Valley, Nottely, and upper Hiawasse River. The Lower settlements were located along the Tugaloo, Keowee, Jocassee, Seneca, Chauga, Chattooga, and Tallulah Rivers in northeastern Georgia and northwestern South Carolina. The Overhill settlements were in Tennessee, primarily on the Tennessee River.

The Cherokee towns varied in size from as small as ten dwellings to as large as two hundred. The average town had about one hundred dwellings. Each town had an open square in the center for ceremonies and dances. Towns on the borders often had stockades whose gates were guarded around the clock.

Native Americans in the Watershed

The council house, located on the west side of the center square, served both as a temple for religious ceremonies and as a public hall for civil and military councils. The traditional council house was seven sided, corresponding to the seven clans of the Cherokee, and could seat as many as five hundred people. Family houses were made of logs, with a small, scooped-out fireplace in the center of the floor, next to a large, flat hearthstone for baking corn bread. Each family also had a small winter house for sleeping during cold weather where a fire was kept burning all day and banked at night.

The woodlands of the southern Appalachians were rich in wildlife that the Cherokee depended on for survival. Deer, elk, rabbit, squirrel, turkey, and beaver provided pelts for clothing and blankets, along with food. The Cherokee were farmers as well as hunters. Corn was their main crop and they cultivated several varieties. They also grew beans, gourds, pumpkins, and sunflowers. Hominy was one of the most important items in the Cherokee's diet. Like their Mississippian ancestors, the Cherokee utilized nature's bounty. Nuts, wild fruits, roots, herbs, mushrooms, fish, frogs, birds' eggs, crayfish, and freshwater mussels ensured survival before crops were ready to be harvested. Cherokees depended heavily on river cane, which was woven by the women into baskets, used to gather and store the annual harvest.

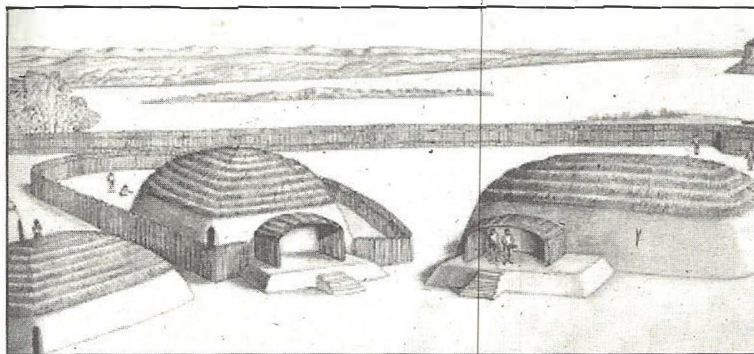
Fire was used by the Indians to clear fields and encourage the growth of river cane, a practice that made visible changes to the mountain landscape. Portions of the woods were also burned in the winter to stimulate the growth of open meadows and plant life, making acorns and chestnuts easier to find, thus increasing the deer and turkey populations.

The Cherokees traveled for three reasons: to hunt, to wage war, and to trade. Before the introduction of the horse by the Europeans, the primary method of travel was on foot. Canoes were used to travel the extensive rivers, creeks, and swamps of the southeast. The frequent rapids on local rivers made travel by canoe difficult, but it was done to some extent. Canoes and rafts made of large cane that grew along the river were also used to ferry people and objects from one bank to the other. After the arrival of the horse, the Cherokee began to ride and use horses as pack animals.

The location of the capital of the Cherokee nation changed according the residence of the paramount chief. In 1715 it

was at Tugaloo in the Lower settlements in northeastern Georgia. The chief was chosen for his wisdom, integrity and ability as a leader. He served as the head of all civil affairs as well as the religious head. Each town and settlement group had its own civil, religious and military organizations that paralleled those of the national institutions. Tribal government was organized around dual chiefs - one to lead in war and one to govern in peace. The White chief, who led in peace, held the highest office in the tribe.

The war chief took an oath to never go to war without just cause and never to shed the blood of women, babies, old men or anyone unable to defend himself. Women played an important role in war, especially one woman often called "War Woman" by the whites. She sat with the council and cast a vote on whether to declare war, and also decided whether captives lived or died. Maternal descent was emphasized in Cherokee society.



Temples at a Mississippian site between A.D. 1000 and 1100.

Ceremonies played an important part in the life of the tribe. The Cherokee celebrated a series of seasonal ceremonies and festivities that corresponded to the food cycle of the tribe. March was the first of thirteen moons and the feast of the deer. April's celebration focused on strawberries, and the next harvests were "little"

corn, watermelon, peaches, mulberries, and then "great" corn. In the eighth moon, our October, the festival featured turkey, followed by ceremonies for bison, bear, ducks, chestnuts, and finally nuts that were used in bread. Most of the seasonal ceremonies declined in importance in the eighteenth century, except the one held in late summer that coincided with the ripening of the late crop of corn. The Green Corn Ceremony lasted several days and had significant cultural and social connotation.

When we think about who lived along the banks of the Chattooga River and in the Appalachian mountains before Europeans came to America we primarily think of the Cherokees. Archeological evidence shows that the history of our area goes back much further in time and is a rich and complex story of mankind and the environment. Much can be learned, not only about living in harmony with nature, but also living and working together as a community, from the people who inhabited this watershed before us.

Bob Benge, Chickamauga Warrior

Eric Orr

In 1775 the Cherokee Indians had been making treaties with the United States for 55 years. They had already signed away a significant portion of their land when a white man by the name of Richard Henderson convinced Cherokee leaders to sell 20 million acres spanning part of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. It turned out to be the largest private real estate deal in the history of the United States. The selling price was 2000 pounds of sterling and 6 wagonloads of trade goods, about a quarter cent per acre. Among the negotiators was Attakullakulla, a prominent Cherokee chief. A young chief named Dragging Canoe vehemently protested the transaction. Bitter that his people had given up almost everything they owned, he feared this would bring about the extinction of the Cherokee. The land that sold was Cherokee hunting grounds, lands that they depended on for survival. Dragging Canoe warned that he would fight and he told the white men they were buying "dark and bloody ground." He deemed the deal illegal as Cherokee law dictated that land cession must meet with unanimous approval among the tribe. Shortly thereafter Dragging Canoe moved his people to Chickamauga Creek, near present day Chattanooga, and formed the Chickamauga band of the Cherokee.

The American Revolution erupted just a month after the Henderson land deal. Most of the Cherokee tried to remain neutral, but Dragging Canoe took the opportunity to strike out at the encroaching white settlements. His forces were small at first but he continued to gain followers over the next 20 years as he and the Chickamaugas fought to preserve their heritage.

Among his cohorts was a young half blood named Bob Benge. Benge is believed to have been born sometime around 1760 in the Cherokee village of Toque. His mother was Cherokee and his father was a white trader of Scottish descent who had lived with Indians for most of his adult life. The older Benge was known to stand by his word. He was so highly respected among the Cherokee that Dragging Canoe once sent his own son to defend Benge in battle. Bob Benge was raised as an Indian along with his brother and sister. He was also related to Sequoyah, who later invented the Cherokee alphabet, and some sources say they were half brothers.

Around 1777, Benge's family moved south to live among the Chickamaugas in a town called Running Water. Here Benge met and befriended a small band of Shawnee that had come to contribute to Dragging Canoe's cause. Several Cherokee, including Benge, joined the Shawnee in raiding white settlements. Benge quickly rose to leadership as he established a reputation of being a courageous and swift warrior.

In 1785 Bob Benge led a war party northeast to the Holston River area of Tennessee and Virginia. The Indians came upon a cabin owned by Archibald and Fannie Dickson Scott. When night fell they broke down the door and rushed in shooting and killing Archibald. The four children living in the cabin were killed with tomahawks and scalped.

After looting the house, they set it ablaze and rode away with Mrs. Scott to present day Kentucky, where the loot was divided equally among the warriors. The chief then divided the group sending nine warriors to steal horses from nearby Clinch River settlements and four men went to hunt with Mrs. Scott in tow. She was left alone with the oldest of the group and escaped to a white settlement. Benge's presence on this raid is only assumed by Scott's testimony of hearing Benge's name spoken several times.

Shortly after the raid a notorious militia leader by the name of John Sevier used the dark of night to surprise the Cherokee settlement Ustalli Town on the Hiawassee River. Sevier's militia managed to capture a young Indian boy and kill five men acting as a rear guard, but they found the town abandoned, fires still burning in some of the houses. Sevier ordered his men to torch the town and then gave chase to the fleeing Cherokee, whom Bob Benge had led away. The militia was met with an ambush from Benge and his warriors giving the Cherokees time to reach

safety, but the young boy captured earlier was brutally murdered during the fray.

In another incident during the summer of 1791, Bob Benge led a war party of six to southwestern Virginia. On their first raid they killed two white adults and kidnapped a woman and a boy of eight. The next raid ended with four dead and a nineteen year old girl captive. They quickly returned home with their prisoners and the scalps of their victims. Such raids made Benge notorious for infiltrating and ravaging well guarded enemy territory leaving only ghosts.

Bob Benge reached legendary status among the white settlers of Virginia and Tennessee. He took on the nicknames of



Dragging Canoe, founder of the Chickamauga Band of the Cherokee.

Bob Benge, Chickamauga Warrior

"Captain Benge," "The Bench," "Chief Benge," and "Chief Bench." Mothers in the region commonly warned their children, "if you don't watch out, Captain Benge will get you."

A well known Indian killer by the name of Moses Cockrell liked to brag about what he would do to Bob Benge given the opportunity for engagement. In the Spring of 1793 Benge and a war band set up an ambush in the Holston River area when they saw three men approaching with a pack train. Benge identified one of the men as Moses Cockrell and, knowing of Cockrell's slanderous talk, decided to kill his companions and take on Moses one on one. So Benge dropped his firearm and leapt from cover, tomahawk in hand. Cockrell immediately turned and ran when he realized it was Benge. The pursuit continued for two miles until Cockrell came upon a settler's cabin and took refuge. As a last ditch effort, Benge hurled his tomahawk and missed, leaving Cockrell to suffer in his own embarrassment.

Though notoriously brutal and cruel to white settlers Benge occasionally showed mercy to his victims. He and a group of warriors once encountered a party of whites traveling to Nashville. The first shot was fired by a Cherokee, and all seven white men hastily fled the ambush, abandoning the four women to meet their grim destinies. Benge captured a horse that escaped from the women and tied it to a tree. He then gently assured each of them that they would be spared, built them a fire for warmth, and left them safe.

Benge joined a raid led by his cousin John Watts near Knoxville. Benge's Uncle Doublehead was also present and was determined destroy and rob as much as possible. The group came upon Cavett's Station, a small outpost. Although the whites were severely outnumbered, they chose to fight anyway. Watts took pity on them and offered them a chance to surrender peacefully. Since Benge spoke fluent English, he was chosen to negotiate with the whites. He told them they would be saved and exchanged for Cherokee prisoners. Doublehead watched and grew furious feeling that no whites should be spared. As soon as the white men opened the gates, Doublehead flew into a rage, attacking and killing the settlers with his axe. Benge tried to protect them unsuccessfully. Another Cherokee warrior, James Vann, picked up a little boy to save him, but Doublehead lunged at the boy, smashing his skull. Benge left Cavett's Station infuriated with Doublehead for killing innocent people after leading them to believe they would be spared. He vowed never to fight with Doublehead again.

Once on a visit to the Cherokee settlement Nickajack, Bob Benge overheard negotiations for a prisoner exchange between the Cherokee and some white settlers. Three white children had been captured from a river boat, and their father was trying to arrange a trade for some Indians whom had been captured by militia leader John Sevier. The

"owner" of the youngest white child lived in another town and was not willing to relinquish ownership to the white father. Upon hearing this, Benge announced, "I will bring the girl, or her owner's head," and galloped away on his horse. He arrived back at Nickajack the following morning with the young white girl. There is no evidence of what transpired when he retrieved the girl.

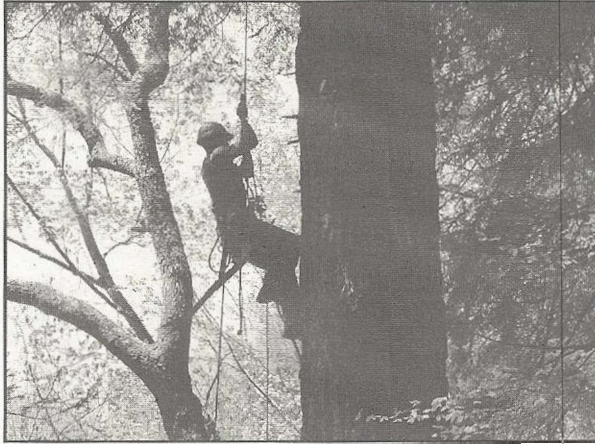
Benge conducted his final raid on April 6, 1794. After a short farewell to his wife and children, he headed out with seven warriors toward Virginia. The war party ended up at the house of Peter and Henry Livingston. The two brothers were outside working when they saw smoke rising from the area where the house was located. As they rushed toward the house they found that their mother and a black child had been tomahawked, killing the child and mortally wounding the woman. Their wives and children had been taken. The brothers rallied help from other settlers before pursuing Benge and his war band. They were afraid an ill prepared chase might jeopardize the safety of their captive family. The local militia called upon all members to aid in the rescue mission. Having dealt with Benge before, they suspected he was responsible, and they knew where he might be headed.

Confident that he wasn't being followed, Benge slowed his pace. He and his warriors took their time breaking camp the following day, and Benge spoke easily with his prisoners. He told Elizabeth Livingston that he was taking her to an Indian town, and he asked her for information on various settlers. He said that within a year he would have stolen every Negro in the area.

As the Chickamauga war band made their way through the mountains they were ambushed by the white militia. Bob Benge was shot dead. His scalp was sent to the governor of Virginia, and the offender was rewarded with a new rifle. To the great relief of white pioneers, the most feared warrior of the Chickamauga band would fight no more. It's difficult to imagine killing innocent people as a means of fighting. Though their tactics were objectionable, Benge and the Chickamaugas were lashing out against a force that rendered them all but powerless. Their freedoms and possessions were gradually taken away so that didn't even notice until it was too late. A violent uprising was all they had left after broken treaties and back room deals had stolen their livelihood.

Benge's death marked the end of the Chickamauga resistance. Dragging Canoe had been dead since 1792 and there was no one left to lead them. The Cherokees continued to yield to white colonization until they had nothing left to give but themselves. They were finally removed west in 1838.

Watershed Update



A tree climber releases *Sasajiscymnus tsugae* beetles in the top of a huge hemlock.

OVER 100,000 BEETLES RELEASED: BATTLE AGAINST HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID CONTINUES

It was a busy spring season for releasing the *Sasajiscymnus tsugae* beetle (name change in 3/04) to consume Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) infestations in the Chattooga River watershed. Known as the HWA Biological Control Project, this effort was initiated by the Chattooga Conservancy and includes partners at Clemson University, the Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, and the Forest Health Division/US Forest Service. Dr. Hugh Conway, director of Clemson University's *Sasajiscymnus tsugae* breeding lab, worked diligently and exceeded expectations by producing over 100,000 beetles, which feed exclusively on adelgid species. During the spring months, the Chattooga Conservancy helped identify adelgid hotspots and release the beneficial beetle in the watershed region, which altogether totaled 49 sites. Meanwhile, a *Sasajiscymnus tsugae* breeding stock of 5,000 strong is being held at the lab over the summer months to begin next year's biological control program.

STEKOA GREENWAY INITIATIVE

In Rabun County, interest in conserving green space is growing as more and more people witness the unsightly, sprawling development along highway 441 and in the adjacent Stekoa Creek riparian area. A group of over 50 citizens met recently to discuss creating a greenway along Stekoa Creek, which is a polluted waterway that winds through Clayton while traveling south through the county, finally draining into the Chattooga River. As envisioned, the Stekoa Creek Greenway would—at least—encompass the 50-foot buffer zone parallel to the creek, enhancing the community environmentally, economically, and aesthetically.

Currently, efforts are focused on the relatively unspoiled lands just north of Clayton as a timely place to begin the

greenway. Negotiations are underway with landowners, and the new Chick-Fil-A business (under construction) has "welcomed the project to our land." The Chattooga Conservancy is working with the Friends of the Greenway, and asks community members to learn about and support the Stekoa Creek Greenway project. Please call our office at 782-6097 for more information.

PERMANENT USER FEE BILL IN THE WORKS

Imagine having to purchase a permit to set foot on the national forest to do anything, for the fee of \$85 or more **plus** add on fees for specific activities! If the House Resources Committee in the U.S. Congress has its way, this will soon be a reality. Representative Ralph Regula, who doesn't have one acre of national forest land in his state of Ohio, claims authorship of H. R. 3283, which would create the "America the Beautiful" pass and implement this ill-conceived legislation to charge us for using our national forests. Mr. Regula is in line to be the chair of the House Appropriations Committee that appropriates money for the Forest Service. He is convinced that this will save tax dollars. Please call the House Resources Committee chair Richard Pombo at 202-225-2761 and tell him that Mr. Regula is wrong! First, the Forest Service has ample funds through existing tax dollars to manage our national forests **if** they will prioritize serving the owners of the forests instead of subsidizing mining, timber, and recreation industries. User fees are essentially double taxation. Secondly, bureaucrats in the Forest Service will actually spend more collecting fees than they collect. Please call right now!

ATV REGULATIONS THREATEN OUR NATIONAL FORESTS

The Forest Service has just published proposed regulations that would restrict all terrain vehicles (ATV) to designated trails. The Chief of the Forest Service has correctly identified damage from ATV use as one of the greatest threats to water quality and biological diversity on public lands. Their conclusion: restrictions will limit damage. Wrong! These new regulations appear to be just another attempt by the Forest Service to "green wash" a cave-in to ATV enthusiasts and the powerful ATV manufacturers who want more designated trails. Steep terrain with highly erodible soils will not stand ATV use without causing severe erosion, along with noise and air pollution. A better solution would be to beef up law enforcement to stop illegal off-road activities. ATV use on national forests should be limited to street legal use on open Forest Service roads. The decision to designate ATV areas lies in the hands of local district rangers. Call Tallulah District Ranger David Jensen at 706-782-3320, Highlands District Ranger Erin Bronk at 828-526-3765, and Andrew Pickens District Ranger Mike Crane at 864-638-9568, and tell them you are opposed to designating more ATV trails in our national forests.

Members' Page

Many thanks to all who recently renewed their membership, joined or donated goods or time to the Chattooga Conservancy. Your generous contributions will help us continue to work on all of the important conservation issues facing the watershed.

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Summer 2004

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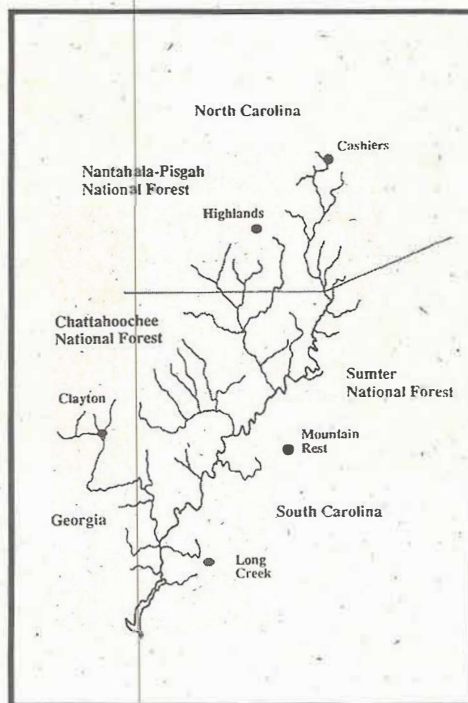
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Monitor the U.S. Forest Service's management of public forest lands in the watershed

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

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