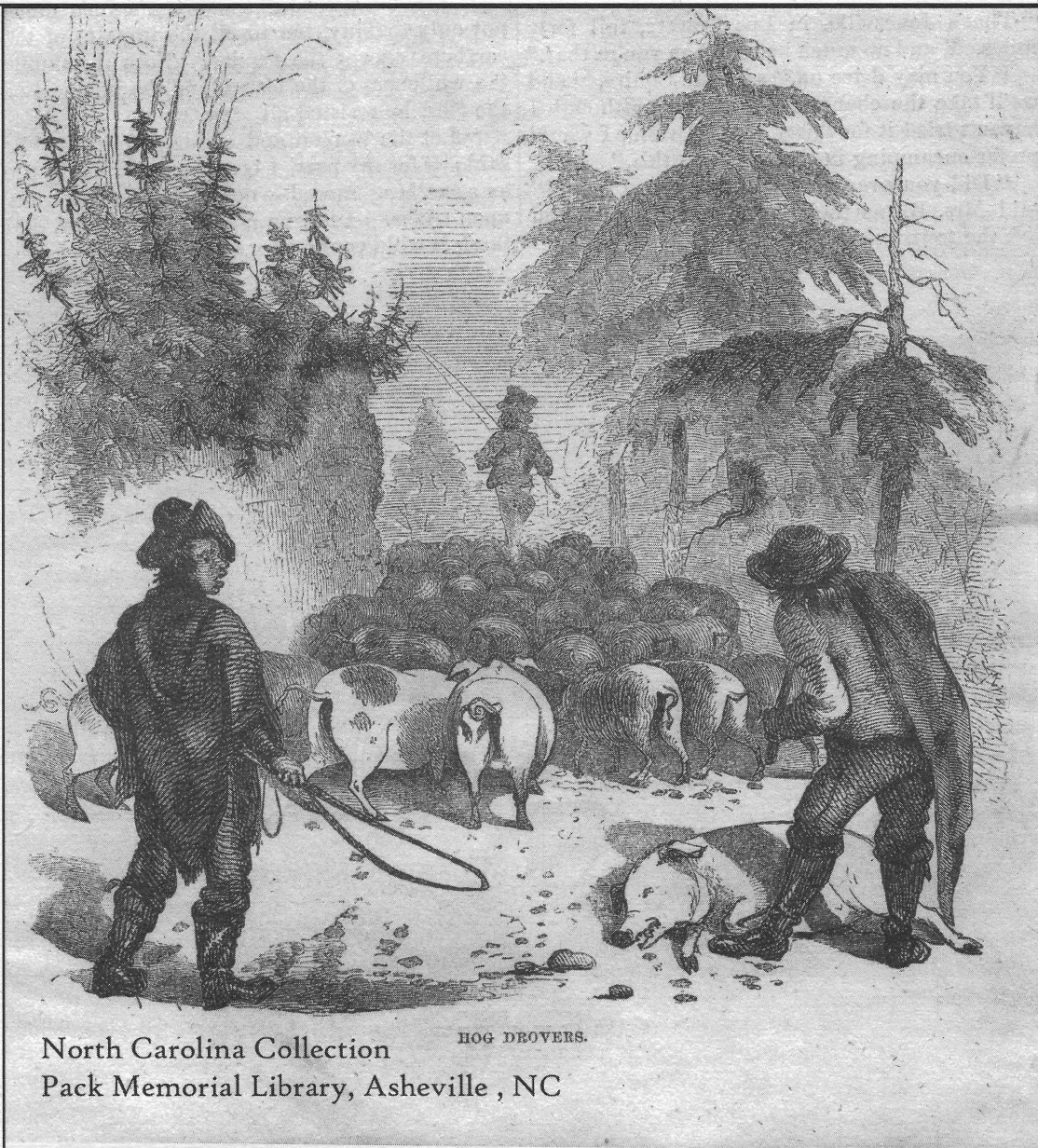




Chattooga Quarterly

Fall / Winter ♦♦♦ 2006 /2007



North Carolina Collection
Pack Memorial Library, Asheville , NC

HOG DROVERS.

"During the months of October, November and December there was an almost continuous string of hogs from the Tennessee line to Asheville." - John Parris

I n s i d e

Director's Page.....	2	Watershed Update.....	7
Wild Hogs in the Watershed.....	3	Members' Pages.....	9
Drovers Road.....	5		

Director's Page

Buzz Williams

This is the season for giving. More often than not, one fulfills this need to be generous in terms of giving material objects. Thoughtful deeds and actions can be an even more meaningful gift. In that sense, promoting or engaging in conservation is a great gift. More importantly, it is a way to give something to everybody at once. This gift to all people is accomplished by doing something to contribute to the welfare of the Earth that in turn, benefits everyone's wellbeing. What better gift than clean air and water, or a healthy supply of plants and animals, which in turn supply food and medicine, or in a more aesthetic sense the beauty and experience of unspoiled wild lands. We at the Chattooga Conservancy would like to thank our members for your gift of supporting the conservation of the Chattooga River watershed, that is so important to so many.

The holiday season and conservation are also connected in another way. Giving always involves some degree of sacrifice. This idea of the importance of sacrifice is a common theme in the writings of all great conservationists. When Wendell Berry was asked how seriously we can take the interest in the environment, he replied, "I don't think we can take it seriously until people begin to talk seriously about lowering the standard of living. When people begin to see affluence, economic growth and unrestricted economic behavior as the enemies of the environment, then we can take it seriously. But people say, 'Give us everything we want and a clean environment,' and this isn't a possibility." The point Berry makes is especially true today with a booming population whose vastly over-consumptive habits are all competing for rapidly dwindling natural resources.

Fortunately, people are beginning to realize the need for conservation as the consequences of our impacts on the environment begin to have direct effects on the average citizen. Hopefully, this awakening will result in the emergence of new leaders that will take conservation seriously. The days are almost gone when a United States Senator can get away with dismissing global warming as a myth in order to please donors who make money at the expense of the environment. Soon, history will remember Dick Cheney's remarks in reference to "conservation as a meaningless parochial exercise" as one of the most shortsighted statements ever uttered.

On the other hand, I wouldn't crack open the champagne yet. There is still plenty of unrepentant greed out there to deal with while we are waiting on the environmental rapture. The "give

us everything we want" crowd of special interests was more aggressive than ever this past year, while showing no signs of letting up in 2007. In fact, herein lays the great danger in letting down our guard just because people are more environmentally aware. People have the sense that somebody is going to do something about the problem, now that we know there is a problem. Not so; what you can expect now is spin! All over America speeches are being given like the one I recently read where Mark Rey, U.S. Undersecretary of Agriculture, rattled off so many rosy statistics about improving water and air quality, etc., that all sounded so convincing I almost dashed off a thank you note to President Bush. Sadly, there may be a lot of people who will believe the spin.

This gift to all people is accomplished by doing something to contribute to the welfare of the Earth that in turn, benefits everyone's wellbeing. What better gift than clean air and water, or a healthy supply of plants and animals, which in turn supply food and medicine, or in a more aesthetic sense the beauty and experience of unspoiled wild lands.

Which brings me to the point. This year has enlightened me to the extraordinary value of our membership, who has supported the Chattooga Conservancy through a very tough year. Funding has been scarce for our conservation programs, due partly to lack of foundation giving to grassroots organizations. Yet at the same time, I have never seen so many varied special interest groups wanting to exploit the Chattooga watershed for their own exclusive purposes. For instance, special interests are pressuring for unrestricted boating use of the river's North Carolina headwaters; South Carolina bear hunters want drastic increases in seasons for chasing bears with dogs and in hunting days; there are unresolved development and growth issues throughout

the watershed; and, in Georgia, the City of Clayton's sewer system spills have Stekoa Creek still reeking from raw sewage. In every case, when the Conservancy was catching major heat from the well-funded special interests and when it would have been pretty easy to just "fold the tent," we would receive a phone call, a letter, or a personal communication from a member letting us know that they were behind us 100 percent.

On this *Quarterly's* update page you will see a paragraph about our "membership appreciation party." We really mean it—we appreciate our membership. This past year many of you have reached deep to give the Chattooga Conservancy your hard earned money to keep us going, others have volunteered time and energy for water sampling in Stekoa Creek, others have helped keep an eye out for polluters, or stood up for us when the Conservancy had to take a tough stand to protect the watershed, and most of all, there were those who took time to simply say, "We're still with you." It is because of this that the Conservancy will still be here 'til the rapture. For you who have made sacrifices to give the best gift of all this season, and who see the value of the true gift of conservation, we wish you the best for this New Year.

Wild Hogs in the Chattooga Watershed

Eric Orr

The cultural heritage of the Chattooga River watershed is rich with the legacy of wild hogs. Since the 1500's imported hogs have been leaving their mark on the forests and folkways of our region. Indians and European settlers alike used hogs for meat and trade. Their impact can be seen in names like Hogback Mountain, Hog Holler, and the Walhalla High School Razorbacks.

Hogs were introduced to the United States by Hernando De Soto in 1539 when his expedition landed on the Florida coast. To the Indians of De Soto's day, pigs were repulsive creatures. The earliest Cherokee name for the hog was *sikqua*, the same name given to the opossum. The name later evolved into *sikqua utse tsti*, or "grinning opossum." Both animals were considered filthy and unfit to eat. The Cherokee believed that if a person ate the meat of a slow moving animal that person would become slow and sluggish. The fact that hogs were brought here by Europeans also contributed to the Native Americans' distaste for the animals. They had similar feelings toward cattle, which they called the "white man's deer." That attitude was held even after the Cherokee had adopted the pig as livestock, which probably occurred sometime in the 1700's. And though Indian women were relegated to taking care of the "filthy animals," the entire tribe depended on pork to supplement the bear and deer meat derived from hunting.

When pigs were brought to the U.S. they were kept like cattle and were often allowed to free range through the forests. In the Southern Appalachians, where land was too steep to cultivate domestic hogs would roam the hills foraging for food, thriving on chestnuts and acorns. When the animals were ready to sell at big city markets they would be rounded up into pens and herded by the hundreds or thousands down drover's roads like the Old Buncombe Trail. A spur of this old drover's trail crossed the Chattooga River at Earl's Ford. The practice free ranging and herding hogs ensured that enough animals escaped to establish a healthy feral population in our forests.

But hog populations began to dwindle in 1920's along with deer, turkey and bear. One of the hog's primary food sources, the American chestnut, was in decline, forests had been over-logged and new laws were being passed that limited and eventually eliminated free ranging livestock. More and more people moved away from the mountains to

Growing Up in Whiteside Cove

Reprinted from *My Life and Times*, by Thomas Eugene Picklesimer

With all the long hours of work I did from the time I could walk, at home and as a teenager on jobs, I would coon-hunt most every night in the winter. All the men and boys had hunting dogs, and we would each try to catch more coons than anyone else.; I never won the contests, but I know I spent more hours in the woods than any other person.

My Father had as many as 100 hogs in the woods during some seasons. These hogs were a gentle breed and were never wild in the woods. The trouble was that wild boars would come to the gentle hogs and most of their offsprings would be wild. The greatest sport of all was catching these hogs and changing them to barrows. I had dogs that would catch any wild boar and hold him by the ears until he was tied down. If these boars lived to be old, their tusks would be four inches long. Two of my best friends were cut on the leg by these boars, and they could not walk for months.

I remember the dog catching one of these boars on top of Whiteside Mountain. When we had made a barrow out of him, we were so afraid of him, we never noticed his head was turned to the face of the mountain. When we turned him loose, he jumped down the 2,000 foot cliff. As we watched him fall, the man who helped me said: "I don't blame him. I would have jumped off the mountain too!"

In the fall of the year, there would be bears moving into the Cove to eat the chestnuts. If they happened to find a field of corn when the ears were soft, they would tear all the corn down while eating the ears. We would get our dogs and run the bears out of the country or kill them. I would pray for the bears to come. It was much fun to hear the dogs barking and the men hollering.

Hunting wild cats was a sport we liked very much. These cats would get in a "rock den" if possible. When the dogs got too close, the cat would go up a tree. I could climb any tree I ever saw, and I would shake the cat out of the tree and beat him with a stick. He would cut a dog to pieces. I had a dog with an ear eaten off by a cat.

One of the best hunters in the mountains was Uncle "Doc" Nicholson. Once, we had a cat bayed in a rock cliff and we could see it. As a dog would try to catch it, he would cut it to pieces. All the dogs were wounded except Uncle "Doc's." They were afraid. He would catch a dog and throw it on the cat. All the dogs were so badly cut we had to shoot the cat.

The squirrels would come in the fall to eat the chestnuts. Once, when I was in the woods by myself and came to a place that was covered with squirrels on the ground and the trees were full of squirrels, I counted ten and twelve in each tree.

The old men would never believe this tale as they had never seen anything like I did. The squirrels were the best wild meat of all to me.

Wild Hogs in the Chattooga Watershed

work factory jobs leaving their subsistence farms behind, and domesticated hogs became less common.

Like the other major game animals, wild hogs have made a comeback, but perspectives are somewhat mixed. While the animals are an ecological nightmare, they are highly prized by many big game hunters. Do a Google search for "hunting boar" and you'll get a listing of countless websites dedicated to the pursuit of feral hogs. Lots of folks spend lots of money to pursue wild pigs. In 1893, the first true Russian boars were introduced to the U.S. in a New Hampshire hunting preserve.

Then in 1910 and 1912, more Russian wild boars were released into a hunting preserve in Graham County, North Carolina near the Tennessee border. By the 1920's most of them had escaped and established a foothold. The Great Smoky Mountain National Park was later created 30 miles north of the hunting preserve, and by the 1940's the wild pig population had spilled over into park boundaries, where they remain a serious problem today.

Russian boars were again released in two hunting preserves in California in the 1920's, some of which got loose and intermingled with feral hogs that had already escaped domestication.

Like most invasive species, wild hogs adapted well to the forests where they were introduced. And with few predators it didn't take them long to populate most of the Southern Appalachian region. Wild sows generally produce 2 litters of 4-8 piglets per year, but they have the potential to give birth to up to 12 piglets 4 times a year. The baby pigs are born after a 115 day gestation period and stay with their mother for about a year. They are sexually mature at a year and a half and fully grown at 5-6 years. The life span of wild hogs is 15 to 25 years. These traits give wild hogs the potential to multiply exponentially.

Although feral pigs can mate any time of year they generally breed during 2 major seasons; one in the summer and one in the winter. When a sow goes into heat boars will fight to breed with her. They attack each other by slicing and jabbing their tusks at the opponent's shoulders. The tusks are extremely sharp and usually measure between 3 and 5 inches. Although they can inflict serious wounds to humans, wild hogs normally develop "shields" on their shoulders that consist of cartilage and scar tissue. These shields are usually about 1 inch thick but they get harder and thicker as the hog grows older.

Wild hogs are considered one of the smartest animals in the forest making them hard to hunt and trap. It's also why they make for a challenging game animal. They rely heavily on their keen sense of smell to locate food. The diet of the wild hog is about as varied as a human's. Along with acorns and nuts, they've been known to eat roots and tubers, most any kind of

agricultural crops, fruit, frogs, snakes, salamanders, insects, mice, eggs, and even baby rabbits, fawns and calves. They will also eat dead and decaying animals.

Wild pigs have a home range of about 10 square miles but they'll move outside that range in search of food or in response to hunting pressure. They like low lying areas near water because the ground is softer. It makes digging for food easier and provides mud for them to roll around in for protection from insects. Hogs also need the water to cool themselves in hot weather and they usually won't go farther than a mile from water.

The feeding and breeding habits of the wild hog have turned them into an ecological disaster. Having the propensity to reproduce like rabbits, it doesn't take them long to overpopulate and overuse the resources available and once they inhabit an area they are there for good. Hogs are the kudzu of the animal kingdom. They "hog" everything for themselves at the expense of the native flora and fauna. Wild pigs will sometimes "root" up dirt 3 feet deep looking for food or making wallows to roll in. And when a bunch of them get together they can tear up a whole field of crops overnight. In addition to the crop loss the huge wallows also threaten wetlands with bank erosion and sedimentation, which can lead to a host of environmental and agricultural problems. It renders water undrinkable for humans and livestock, causes algae bloom which kills fish and other aquatic life and spreads some of the diseases that hogs carry, such as *E. coli*. Wild hogs are responsible for millions of dollars of crop loss and environmental damage every year.

Feral pigs have been implicated in the recent *E. coli* outbreak in conventionally grown California spinach which killed 3 people and made over 200 people sick. That incident alone caused millions of dollars in losses and left spinach with a nasty stigma. Other diseases that are associated with wild hogs are pseudorabies, brucellosis and tuberculosis, all of which are a potential threat to domestic livestock.

Twenty-three states now have wild hogs. Texas and Florida have the highest populations, but Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina all have them. Hogs are a big problem in the Chattooga River watershed, where dog hunting is allowed and hogs are illegally released for hunting. Although it would be virtually impossible to eradicate feral hogs, their destructive effects could be limited by an intensive trapping program coupled with stiffer restrictions on dog hunting. Please encourage your state's Department of Natural Resources to take action against feral pigs. Ask them to outlaw hunting hogs with dogs. The best way to get a handle on wild pigs is to remove their status as a game animal.

The Drover's Road

John Parris

Reprinted with permission of the *Asheville Citizen-Times*

Zachariah Candler stood in the door of his wayside inn and watched the dust boil up far down the turnpike. He knew the signs only too well. The Buncombe Turnpike, he mused, was beginning to resemble a parade out of Noah's Ark.

As the snail-crawling dust edged nearer, he caught the familiar cry "suboy! suboy! suboy!"

Then a barefoot boy came into sight, scattering shelled corn.

Behind came the first of a plodding, grunting drove of hogs bound for the South Carolina and Georgia markets by way of Asheville.

The year 1826 was proving to be a good year for the stock stand operators along the pike and Zachariah Candler figured close to 200,000 hogs had come this way out of Kentucky and Tennessee.

Why, only last month, he recalled, Hezekiah Barnard at Barnard's on the French Broad had fed 90,000 hogs, while David Vance at Lapland had boasted feeding 110,000 during the same period.

Here at Sandy Bottoms, Candler had sold some 2,000 bushels of corn, mostly to hog drovers, which, based on the required diet of 24 bushels daily for each 1,000 hogs, meant that he had fed around 80,000.

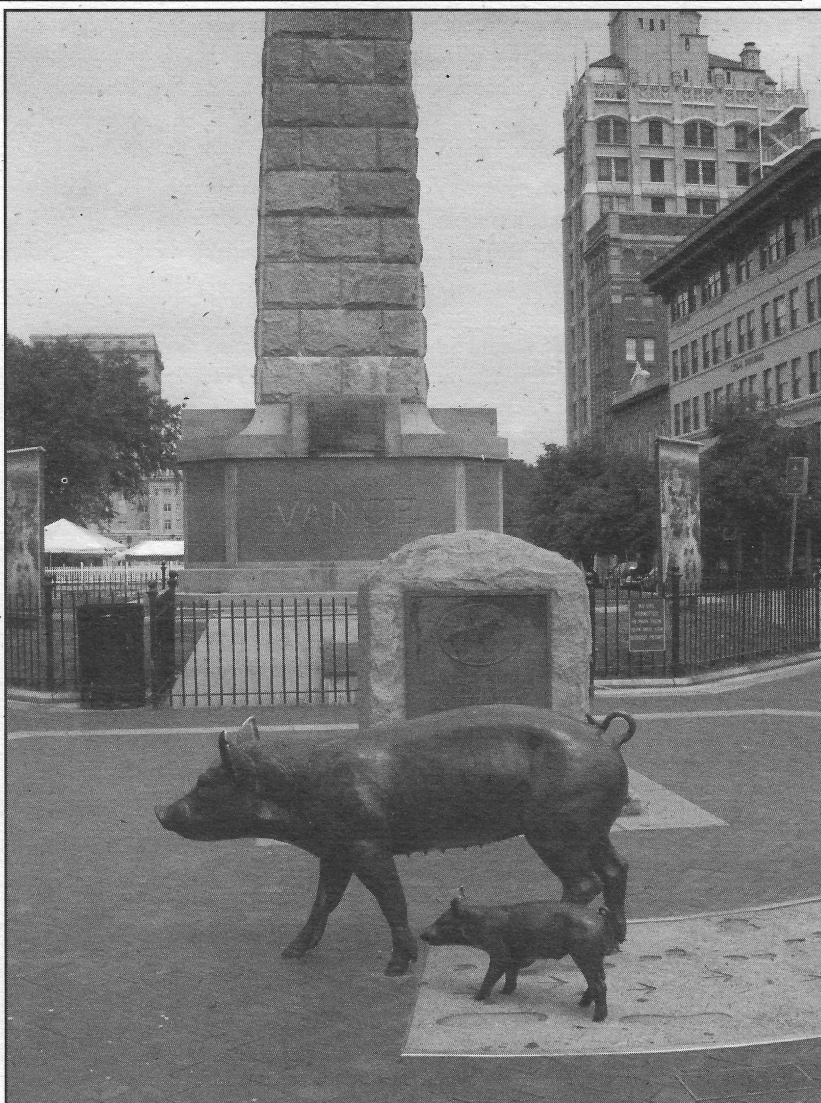
Between Hot Springs and Asheville there were some eight or ten stock stands, or wayside inns with stock yards, at two- to four-mile intervals.

They gave bed and board to the weary drovers and feed to his cattle, sheep, hogs, horses, mules and turkeys that made the Buncombe Turnpike a heavily traveled thoroughfare until long after the Civil War.

James Garrett had a stand about a mile below Hot Springs. John E. Patton ran the White House above Hot Springs. At the mouth of Laurel Creek was a stand kept by David Farnsworth. Samuel Chunn catered to the drovers opposite the mouth of Pine Creek.

At the lower end of what is now Marshall, but then was called Lapland, a stand was operated by Joseph Rice. At the upper end of the narrow village David Vance kept a tavern that was 150 feet long and huddled between the stage road and the mountains.

Samuel Smith accommodated all travelers and their belongings



This bronze sculpture, entitled "Crossroads," resides at the Vance Monument in Asheville, NC to honor the hog drovers that once used the Buncombe Turnpike.

at the mouth of Ivy while Mitchell Alexander was the Boniface at Alexander's.

During the months of October, November and December there was an almost continuous string of hogs from the Tennessee line to Asheville.

It was not uncommon for ten to twelve droves, numbering from three hundred to one and two thousand to stop overnight and feed at one of these stands.

Each drove was "lotted" to itself and "corned" by the wagonload.

The wagon was driven through each lot with ten or twelve men scattering the corn, left and right and to the rear, literally covering the ground.

The Drover's Road

The drovers were furnished large rooms which had immense log-heap fireplaces. They provided their own blankets. They would form a semi-circle on the bare floor, their feet to the fire, and thus pass the night.

Many of these innkeepers, such as Zachariah Candler, whose great-great-grandson, Dr. Charles Z. Candler, Jr., now lives at Asheville, kept little stores and bartered or sold everything on credit.

In the fall of the year they would advertise that on certain days they would receive corn in payment of store accounts.

The farmers would begin delivering frequently by daylight and continue until midnight, and their wagons would be strung out for a mile and as thick as they could be wedged.

The price allowed the farmers for corn on their store accounts was fifty cents per bushel.

The innkeepers would furnish it to the drovers at twenty to twenty-five cents "per diet," meaning per meal for their drivers, asking the whole in lame hogs at so much per pound, or a due bill from the manager of the drive to be paid as he returned home after selling his stock.

Cash was rarely ever paid.

The lame hogs were kept until a suitable time for killing when they were slaughtered and converted into bacon and lard.

The pig pelters were a colorful lot.

Sometimes they frequented taverns where they pulled long and hard from bottles and then whooped it up with a fiddle for hours.

Many drovers camped wherever night found them.

They usually made only about eight miles a day with their droves.

At the stops the drovers would spend their time talking politics and spinning yarns.

And they would listen to the cry of the fiddles telling of young love:

*'Twas in the merry month of May
When the green leaves they were buddin',
Seet William Gray on his death-bed lay
For the love of Barbry Allen.*

The first drovers began moving their herds of hogs, cattle and horses out of Tennessee and Kentucky into the southern seaboard regions about the turn of the 19th century.

There were no stock stands at that time and they camped wherever night found them.

They kindled a fire, spread blankets on the ground and turned in soon after sundown.

The pigs roamed the woods, and morning found the pelters up early. An hour or more was spent daily hunting porkers that had strayed during the night.

Frequently a couple dozen or more strays were left behind, but the percentage of lost pigs was extremely low.

Thunder storms and swollen creeks were the greatest hazards to the drovers.

Like cattle, the hogs stampeded when there was thunder and lightning. They lost their reason and ran wildly.

Farmers who drove their own herds had less difficulty with the hogs than professional drovers.

Trained to come when called or when a conch shell was blown, thoroughly domesticated hogs behaved fairly well on the road.

Autumn and early spring were the best times for droving, since the cool weather not only made traveling easier but also reduced loss of weight.

The Buncombe Turnpike funneled great numbers of animals to Charleston and Augusta, and folks in Asheville got used to seeing the almost daily parade of hogs, cattle, horses and sheep passing through the center of town.

It may have been at David Vance's tavern here in Marshall that a drover, while quaffing a bumper of ale, started the legend that the first pegged shoes were made in the Madison County town, which lies in a narrow gorge of the French Broad River.

The story goes that because the town is so confined, cobblers found it impossible to stretch their thread to arm's length, thus ruling out sewn soles and forcing them to use wooden pegs which they could hammer in by striking up and down.

Such were the legends that grew along the Buncombe Turnpike when it was the drover's road.

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Watershed Update

Conservancy Reports Major Sewer Spill into Stekoa Watershed

At the request of the Chattooga Conservancy, the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources investigated a sewage line spill into Ginger Creek, which is a tributary to the Stekoa Creek drainage that flows into the Chattooga Wild & Scenic River. GA EPD enforcement officers declared it a "major spill," and from the looks of the site, raw sewage had been overflowing from the sewer manhole for quite some time. The Conservancy discovered and reported the problem on November 27th. On November 29th, the City of Clayton repaired the clogged sewer pipe, only to discover it obstructed and overflowing again on December 1st. Then Clayton's public works crew lowered a camera into the pipe, which revealed a large mass of tree roots growing into the sewer line and causing the blockage. City workers waded into the mess and corrected the problem—for now.

Most folks know that the US Environmental Protection Agency and the Georgia DNR have labeled Stekoa Creek as "impaired" from the effects of wildly excessive fecal coliform and sedimentation loads. After all, Stekoa is infamous as a blight on the water quality of the Chattooga River, and has been for over 30 years. Study after study documents Stekoa's poor water quality, but still there has been no resulting improvement in its water quality. Now, a recent paper (September 2006) by US Forest Service hydrologist William Hansen clearly points to health hazards in the Chattooga River from Stekoa's pollution, stating "Stekoa Creek has been the scourge of the lower Chattooga for many years due to fecal and sediment loading. The severity of this fecal contamination problem is not obvious to the casual user or visitor to the river. Some have said 'the solution for pollution is dilution.' However, the concentrations of fecal coliform from Stekoa Creek, even though diluted by the Chattooga River, periodically far exceed the water quality standards that have been set for swimming and associated water contact sports."

For the last year, the Chattooga Conservancy, with the support of our members as well as sponsors of our "adopt-a-sample" site program, has prioritized work on the huge task of cleaning up Stekoa Creek. As a result, GA EPD policing of water quality violations is improving, and state and federal politicians are hearing from their constituents that Stekoa's water quality must improve.

The Ginger Creek incident is the fourth major spill into the Stekoa Creek watershed reported by the Chattooga Conservancy in 2006. The City of Clayton's history of reoccurring sewer line spills further supports the Conservancy's position that the "band aid" approach to the city's ongoing sewage collection failures is insufficient. We are urging the City of Clayton to thoroughly investigate the extent of the problems with their aging sewer

system, and to implement a plan to overhaul the entire system. At the same time, we continue to collect water samples from Stekoa Creek to monitor its fecal coliform levels and identify pollution hotspots. Please support the Conservancy's effort to clean up Stekoa Creek. You can also contact your state and federal representatives and ask them to earmark money to help the City of Clayton repair its aging sewer system.

Christopher Dickey Speaks About *The Summer of Deliverance*

On September 16th, distinguished author and journalist Christopher Dickey, son of James Dickey, delivered a keynote address as part of a fundraising event for the Chattooga Conservancy. A receptive crowd of nearly 100 people packed the Sunrise Lodge at Splendor Mountain in Rabun County to hear the presentation by Mr. Dickey, who currently serves as *Newsweek* magazine's Paris bureau chief and Middle East regional editor. The event was a great success.

Chris began with a presentation of the photographs he took during the filming of the movie *Deliverance*, which had never been shown before at a public gathering (see below). His quick wit and insightful commentary revealed a behind-the-scenes perspective of this epic film that has had such a resounding impact on the Chattooga River area and its people. Chris also offered his insights about conservation versus development in the southern landscape, and spoke about his book, *Summer of Deliverance*, which tells the story of his tumultuous family history and intense relationship with his father (author of the book *Deliverance*). The night ended with a lively question-and-answer session that revealed Dickey's views on the war in Iraq from his perspective as the father of a service man currently stationed in Iraq, and as an award-winning journalist and expert in terrorism in the Middle East.

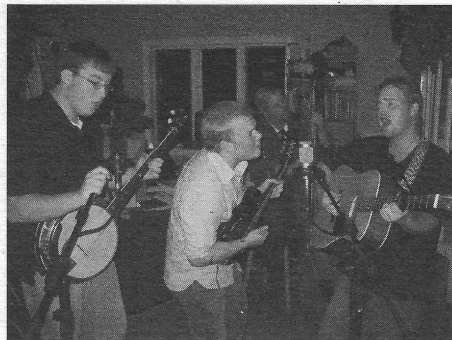
The Chattooga Conservancy wishes to thank Chevin Woodruff, owner and operator of Splendor Mountain, the J. W. & Ethel I.



Pierced by an arrow and swilling a PBR, Herbert "cowboy" Coward rests in between takes during the filming of *Deliverance*. Photo by Chris Dickey; no reproduction without express permission.

Watershed Update

Woodruff Foundation, Inger and Chris Smith of Inger's Fine Foods, John and Martha Ezzard and Bill and Lecky Stack of Tiger Mountain Vineyards, Sue Willis of the Grapes and Beans, Bart Patton, and volunteers Jill Gottesman, Andy Hinton, Beverly Logan, Abi Miner Speed, Cindy Martin and Peter McIntosh. Many have asked if we are planning other such events for spring. Yes, but this one will be hard to top. Stay Tuned.



Another crowd pleasing performance by Blue Streak at our membership appreciation party.

New Tax Law Favors Conservation Easements

On August 17, 2006 President Bush signed into law a tremendous expansion of the federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations. This new law significantly raises the deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement—from 30% of their income in any year to 50%; extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years; and, allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income. It is important to note that this only applies to easements donated in 2006 and 2007.

A conservation easement is a method landowners can employ to protect their property without selling land or giving up the ability to use and enjoy it. Landowners across the country are establishing easements to protect riverfront property, wildlife habitats, scenic vistas, forests and farmland, historic sites, urban gardens, and many other types of land and natural resources. Landowners who place conservation easements on their property are eligible for significant tax deductions for the "gift" of a conservation easement.

These voluntary legal agreements are made between landowners and another party, either a private land trust or a public agency, to restrict the development of a piece of property. The agreement must be permanent in order for the landowner to qualify for income and estate tax benefits. This means that the easement remains with the property even if it is sold or passed on to heirs. The agreement is legally binding and is recorded in the county in which the land is located. A conservation easement is usually donated to a land trust or public agency.

In addition to our environmental advocacy programs, the Chattooga Conservancy is a land trust, and is eligible to hold conservation easements. We expect to hold two conservation easements by the end of 2006, and have several more in the works for 2007. If you are considering placing a conservation easement on your land, please call the Conservancy at 706-782-6097 for more information.

Membership Appreciation Party

The Chattooga Conservancy hosted our first-ever membership gathering in early December, with outstanding attendance. Over 100 folks showed up for a Friday evening "membership appreciation" party, which included barbecued wild hog and live music. The band was a great bluegrass ensemble from Toccoa, GA, called "Blue Streak," and this was their third appearance at a Conservancy event. Other entertainments included a kid's craft table, a blazing fire, and plenty of egg nog. Because of the great turnout we are already planning for another membership gathering in 2007, so if you weren't able to attend this one you will have another opportunity soon. Thanks again to all our members; we couldn't do it without you.

Federal Judge Rules Against American Whitewater

American Whitewater's lawsuit calling for opening the headwaters of the Chattooga River to unrestricted whitewater boating use has been thrown out of court by a federal judge in Gainesville, Georgia. American Whitewater had filed a lawsuit, even though their earlier appeal of the Forest Service's plan for managing floating use on the Chattooga River resulted in the agency performing a "user analysis" to study the possibilities of permitting boating in the river's headwaters.

"It would be foolish to lift the ban pending the study, only to have the ban imposed again upon completion of the study," said Judge O'Kelly. "Therefore, even hearing such a case would be a waste of time and effort."

American Whitewater immediately vowed to appeal the court's decision. Meanwhile, the Forest Service continues to pour taxpayers' money into the user analysis study, filling the coffers of consultants and conflict-resolution gurus to try to find a solution to the conflict. Conservative estimates on the combined cost of the Forest Service's analysis and American Whitewater's legal filings have this figure running into the millions of dollars.

The Chattooga Conservancy has maintained a position that boating should be allowed with sufficient restrictions to protect both the sensitive ecological values and the wilderness character of the headwaters. Our proposal, which is based on extensive study of the issue, can be found on our website at www.chattoogariver.org. Write to the Forest Service at Jerome Thomas, Supervisor, Sumter National Forest, USDA Forest Service, 4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212-3530, and ask that they include the Conservancy's "common sense alternative" in resolving the headwaters conflict, and to stop wasting tax payer's money on pandering to D.C. lobbyists!

Members' Pages

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.

In Memory of Cathy Sanders Chattooga Conservancy Dwayne & Cecile Thompson

Thank you to these members who contributed at or above the sponsor membership level:

Doug & Eedee Adams
John Akridge
Herb Arnold
India Benton
Charlie & Kathy Breithaupt
Chuck & Brigitta Bradley
Richard & Elizabeth Bruce
Morton Campbell & Rocky Grove
George Chase & Three Forks Property Owners
Peter & Licia Cleaveland
Lynn Cochran
Linda Copeland
Kathryn & George Dorn
Bob Edmondson WALH Radio
Bob Fink
Henry Finkbeiner
Betsy Fowler
James & Jeanette Greiner
Charles & Jacqueline Groover
Marian Hansen
Robert & Margaret Hatcher
Sally & Hank Herrmann
Frank & Anne Holleman
Jane Holley
Mike Huggins

John Izard, Jr.
John & Betty Jenkins
Ervin & Elizabeth Jackson
Louis & Joan King
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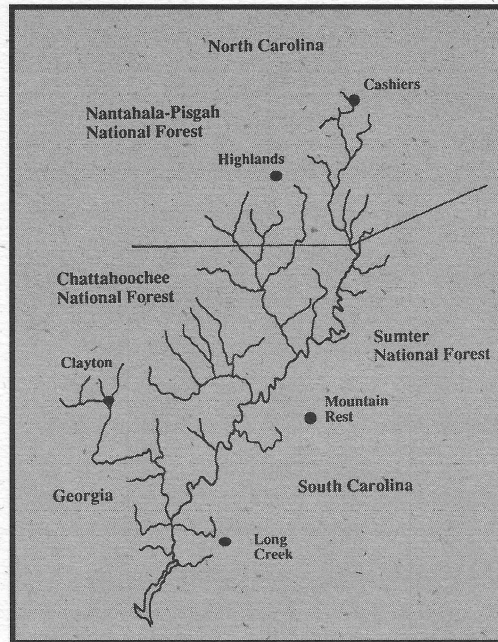
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