



Chattooga Quarterly

Fall / Winter ♦♦♦ 2008 / 2009



BULL SLUICE RAPID FROSTED WITH A FRESH, TRACKLESS SNOW

photo by Peter McIntosh www.mcintoshmountains.com

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Director's Page

Buzz Williams

THE BOTTOM LINE: *When the 'study of the household' (ecology) and the 'management of the household' (economics) can be merged, and when ethics can be extended to include environmental as well as human values, then we can be optimistic about the future of humankind.*

-Dr. Eugene Odum

Every American is wondering what President Obama is going to do to stimulate the economy. Here's my wish list of ways the federal government can help the economy in the Chattooga River watershed. These examples are measured against the three "E's" as described by Dr. Eugene Odum in his book Ecology and Our Endangered Life-Support Systems.

A healthy economy is an efficient, sustainable management of income and expenditures, in order to meet human needs in our pursuit of health and happiness. Some of these needs are absolutely essential for survival, such as clean water and air, food, shelter, and clothing. We also need recreation, social security, education, health care, art, music, and entertainment. All of our needs, whether it be a house, a new coat, air to breathe, a guitar to play music on, or a canvas to paint a picture on, depend on a sustainable supply of natural resources. It would follow then that a healthy economy is dependent on a healthy environment capable of renewing itself through natural processes.

The health of the environment is dependent on how well we treat it. People must, to the best of their ability, restrain tendencies toward exploiting natural resources for short term gain with disregard for damages that might be caused to natural life support systems as a result of their activities. Consequently, if we harm the health of the environment, we harm ourselves and our economy.

WISH LIST:

1) **Create the CCC**, the "Chattooga Conservation Corps." This revival of an old idea for public works projects on federal lands would create new jobs and provide valuable training to develop skills in a whole new generation of workers and entrepreneurs. It would be great for the environment because CCC projects could include ecological restoration and road decommissioning. Trails, campgrounds and access areas could be rebuilt, cleaned up, and maintained. There is a great need for this, because the Forest Service no longer has the personnel or money to do these things effectively. The CCC worked before, and it should work again.

2) **Don't build Interstate 3**. The economy of our ecoregion is based on our rich natural resources on hundreds of

thousands of acres of public land. If a new interstate highway were cut through our watershed, it would sever vital wildlife corridors, cause much erosion, mar scenic beauty, and bring in more sprawl up and down the Highway 441 corridor. The net result would be a dead goose, and no more golden eggs.

3) **Give family farmers a tax credit for all produce sold within one hundred miles of where it was produced.**

We are losing family farms and green space at a phenomenal rate. This tax credit would subsidize the right kind of jobs that protect the environment and produce necessities. Purchasing local produce also eliminates the burning of all the fossil fuels necessary to bring produce in from far away places, thus helping reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

4) **Fix the City of Clayton's sewage collection system.** The Chattooga River is a national treasure. Clayton's sewer system is one of the largest contributors of fecal coliform polluting the Chattooga River. Cleaning up a National Wild and Scenic River should have high federal priority.

5) **Bring back the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).** LWCF money comes from a tax on off-shore drilling. Public land managers in Chattooga watershed used to receive 2 million dollars each year from this fund to buy land on the free market, from willing sellers, that had been prioritized as important green space or critical habitat. Bringing this fund back would purchase important wildlands that otherwise may be destroyed by development.

6) **Make tax breaks for conservation easements permanent.** Tax incentives now on the books expire at the end of 2009. We need to make this a permanent tool in land protection.

7) **Increase federal oversight over flood plain filling.** Until the Chattooga Conservancy convinced local officials to enforce flood plain regulations, Rabun County and the City of Clayton were illegally allowing flood plain filling that caused much damage to the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River.

8) **Subsidize sustainable industries** like installing solar water heaters and electrical systems, and cottage industries such as teaching organic farming techniques.

The list is endless, and these are just a few areas where the incoming administration could help. But it will be up to citizens to make the case. It feels exciting to be on a new path, yet there is, of course, some trepidation of the unknown. Having a vision based on conservation principles will help us along the way. If our new economy is based on helping people without harming the Earth, if we inspire innovation and provide skills training programs for using new sources of energy that are better for the environment, and if we can regulate greed, we will see a better economy.

Civilian Conservation Corps 2009

Buzz Williams

The failing economy is now our first national priority. The Obama Administration is poised to spend a trillion dollars to stimulate the economy. State and local governments across the nation are scrambling to request anticipated money from the president's "stimulus" fund. It will be critical that these projects create jobs that will contribute to a sustainable economy. We know now that a sustainable economy must be in balance with natural resource protection.

The Chattooga River watershed is blessed with abundant natural resources that have national significance, including thousands of acres of national forests and the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River. There are several projects in the Chattooga River watershed that could benefit greatly from federal funds to create needed jobs and help restore and protect our watershed. One of the projects that we recommend for receiving federal stimulus money is to reinstitute a program similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s.

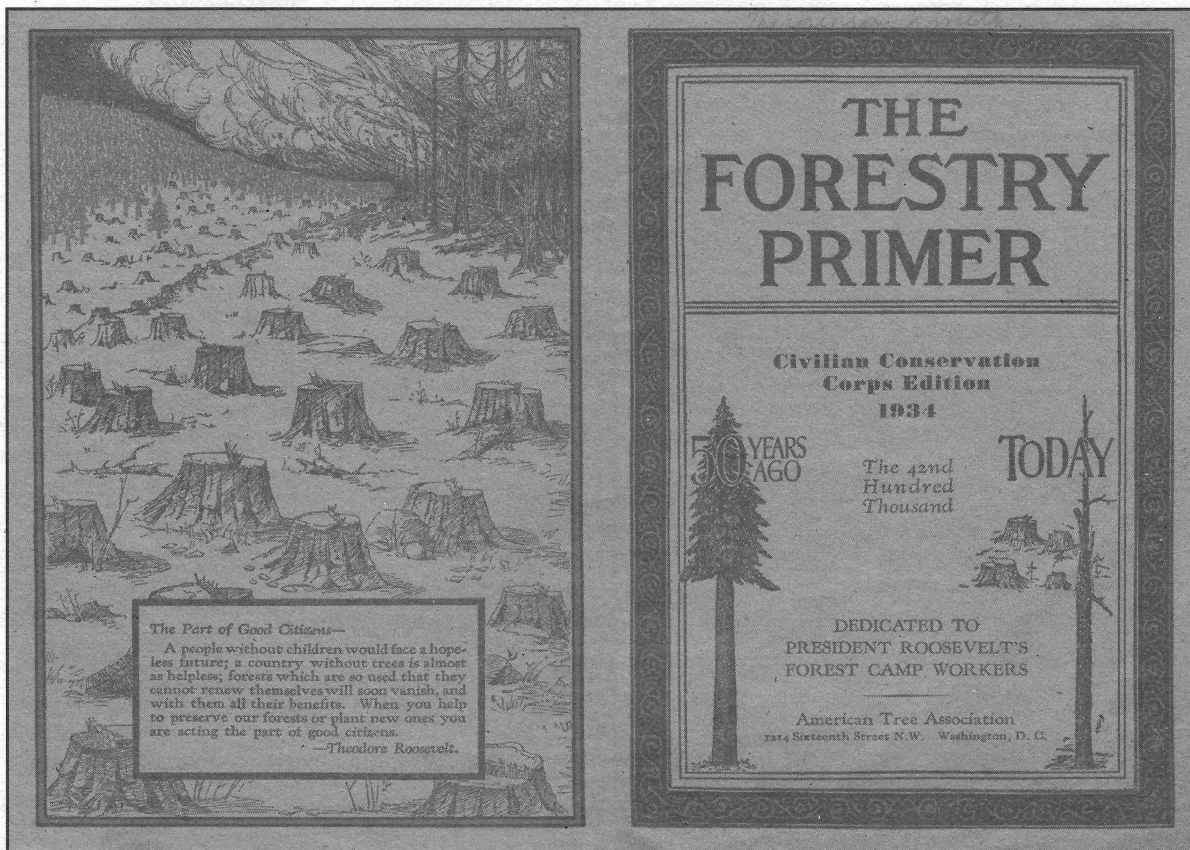
On April 5, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6106 Relief of Unemployment through the Performance of Useful Public Works, thus creating the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a "conservation army" of 300,000 unemployed young men hired for public works projects during the grip of the Great

Depression. Most of these projects were on public lands. The U. S. Forest Service supervised about 75% of these projects. Since a large portion of the Chattooga River watershed was then owned by the federal government as newly created national forest lands and was managed by the Forest Service, CCC camps were numerous in Rabun County, Georgia, Oconee County, South Carolina, and Macon and Jackson Counties in North Carolina.

CCC camps soon sprang up in South Carolina at Whetstone Community (Camp Ellison D. Smith, F-1) and Camp F-2 at Cherry Hill Recreation Area near Burrells Ford on the Chattooga River. In North Carolina, there was a camp at Horse Cove. In Rabun County, there were Camps F-5, F-6, F-9 and F-10, located along Warwoman Road and at Lake Rabun and Lake Burton.

At first, work projects were oriented towards forestry activities such as planting trees on eroded agricultural lands, thinning and harvesting timber, and fighting forest fires. Much of the lands that made up our national forests were worn out, abandoned lands purchased with federal money designated under the Weeks Act of 1911. These lands were in bad need of stabilization and restoration. After these "lands that nobody wanted" were purchased, a new forest had to be planted and tended, and game restocking programs were implemented. Soon the CCCs were charged with building roads, trails, picnic shelters, bridges, fire towers and camp grounds. CCC crews even laid telephone cables to connect local communities.

CCC men were sheltered, fed, and trained by the U. S. Army in tent camps organized in military fashion, much like a "boot camp." CCC workers were supervised during the work day by the Forest Service on work details in the national forests. Men were taught the values of conservation, and the necessary skills



The Forestry Primer was published in 1926 by the American Tree Association; in 1934, four million copies were given to the CCC forest camps to help guide their work.

Civilian Conservation Corps 2009

to carry out conservation projects on public lands. Starting pay was \$30 per month, \$25 of which was sent home to their families. Men were also taught discipline and leadership skills.

When the CCC program began in 1933, the program was supervised by Ranger Roscoe Nicholson, who was in charge of the Nantahala National Forest, which included all the national forest lands (across state lines) in the Chattooga River watershed. In 1936, national forest lands in South Carolina were split off to become part of the Sumter National Forest, and the North Carolina portion became part of the Nantahala National Forest. The Georgia national forest lands became the Chattahoochee National Forest. All the CCC camps were shut down after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. Many of the CCC men reported directly to the U. S. Army for service during World War II. After the war, many of the men who had enlisted as CCC workers returned and worked for the Forest Service.

The results of the CCC program were great successes. Today, we still use many facilities built by the CCC including beautiful picnic shelters at Warwoman Dell, Chattooga Campground, Yellow Branch and Cherry Hill. The CCC built Oconee State Park and the Walhalla Fish Hatchery. We stock our streams with trout raised in hatcheries built by the CCC, and we still use many of the trails and roads built by the CCC. Many of the skills learned by the men at CCC camps propelled them on in the military to defend our country during World War II, and others used their acquired skills to create their own businesses that helped rebuild our economy after the Great Depression.

Today, once again our economy is in bad shape, with unemployment rates climbing daily. Our economy in the Chattooga River watershed is a natural resource based economy, just like it was in the 1930s due to the existence of our national forest lands. Lately, because of drastic budget cuts and wildfire suppression costs, the Forest Service has few resources for even

basic maintenance operations on our national forest lands. The backlog for road maintenance alone on our national forests has reached into the billions of dollars.

We envision a reinstated CCC program that would embody the same values of conservation, skill development, self discipline, and public service as the original CCC program, but one that is open to both men and women. The program could be administered through the Forest Service in a cooperative agreement with local government and non-profit organizations. We encourage a bipartisan approach at all levels of government to gain support for recommending to the new Obama Administration that federal money should be spent on a pilot project in the Chattooga River watershed to reinstitute a public works program modeled on the values of the original CCC program, that would stimulate our economy and also protect valuable assets of national importance.

We would be on firm ground to approach federal officials in the new administration and the Forest Service with a proposal to revive a program much like the CCC to provide jobs for our community that would stimulate our natural resource based economy and at the same time restore and protect valuable forest, wildlife and recreation areas that are national assets, resources such as the Chattahoochee, Sumter, and Nantahala National Forests, and the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River. We would also reap the benefits of an empowered work force to help keep our local

economy strong. It worked once in very similar circumstances; why not try it again?

"I call your attention to the fact that this type of work is of definite, practical value, not only through the prevention of great present financial loss, but also as a means of creating future national wealth."

—Franklin D. Roosevelt



A monument to honor the CCC recruits stands in front of the Oconee State Park Visitors Center.

Oconee Station

Buzz Williams

This article about Oconee Station is a post script to the article entitled "Tamassee Quadrangle," that appeared in the Chattooga Quarterly, Winter/Spring 2008.

An old stone blockhouse known as Oconee Station, built circa 1792 as a military outpost on the South Carolina frontier, still stands today in the northeastern corner of Oconee County near the rural community of Picket Post off of Highway 11. The little fortress, along with a small two-story house built of hand made brick standing about fifty feet away that was constructed in 1805 by William Richards, who operated a trading post at Oconee Station and owned the surrounding 200-acre tract of beautiful native forest and streams, are preserved today as Oconee Station State Park. Oconee Station is thought to be the oldest building in Oconee County, and appears on the National Register of Historic Places.

George Washington was serving as our nation's first President after the Revolutionary War when Oconee Station was built to protect backcountry settlers from Creek Indians who had gone on the warpath in the late 1780's. It was one of at least 5 garrisons built by the South Carolina militia about a mile and a half to the southeast of the "Cherokee Line," which marked the limits of colonial expansion after the Treaty of Dewitts Corner in 1777. With this important treaty, the Cherokee Indians ceded the land between the forks of the Tugaloo and Keowee Rivers after having been soundly defeated by colonial forces in retaliation for British-inspired Cherokee raids against backcountry settlers during the revolution. According to the treaty, the new boundary between South Carolina and Cherokee lands would run from Currahee Mountain near Toccoa, Georgia, northeast across the Tugaloo River, up Brasstown Creek and across the Chauga River in South Carolina, and passing to the southeast of Tamassee Knob and on to the northwest of the old Cherokee town of Tamassee. The Cherokee now had their backs against the "Great Blue Wall."

It was during this period that the backcountry started to fill up fast. In 1778, only one year after the treaty of Dewitts Corner, South Carolina passed an act to help fill troop quotas for

Continental Army service by promising 200 acres on the new frontier to all takers. In the spring of 1784, the lands between the Tugaloo and Keowee Rivers were opened for settlement, up to the Cherokee Line, as "bounty lands" for those who fought in the American Revolution. On March 21st, 200 acres of land on which Oconee Station would later be built, was awarded to John Loumber for service during the war. Cheap prices for Carolina land, at 10 pounds per 100 acres, also enticed immigrants to move down the Appalachian Mountain chain from the northeast, populating the piedmont region of the Carolinas. In 1790, Pendleton County, recently formed from the land acquired from the Cherokee, swelled to a population of 9,568 people.

The reduced threat from Indian attack helped accelerate Carolina frontier expansion in the post-Revolutionary War



Oconee Station and the William Richards house were built on the "thoroughfare" to the Carolina frontier.

period. The beleaguered Cherokee had abandoned nearly all of their villages close to the "Cherokee Line" due to heavy losses suffered during the Revolution, when most of their villages, store crops, and orchards had been destroyed by the Williamson Expedition in 1776, and in a later campaign by Andrew Pickens in 1781.

However, the threat to the Carolina frontier from Indian attack was not over. A new danger from marauding Creeks, enraged over a broken treaty with Georgia and spurred by

a band of radical Cherokee from the lower towns that had fled to Tennessee, and who were taking full advantage of the void and killing settlers in north Georgia, threatened to cross into South Carolina. It was a very real threat: by the late 1780's the Creeks had already killed 82 settlers in Georgia, with 29 wounded and 140 captured. Many victims were brutally killed, mutilated and scalped.

On September 12, 1787, General Andrew Pickens, Revolutionary War hero of the battle of Cowpens and who owned a large tract of land and a home on the Seneca River near present day Clemson, South Carolina, wrote to Thomas Pinckney, Governor of South Carolina, informing him of the dangers looming on the Carolina frontier. Pickens had received a letter from his former comrade in arms, Colonel Robert Anderson, who also owned a nearby plantation, informing him that the Creeks had just raided the plantation of Samuel Isaacs

Oconee Station

on the west side of the "Toogolo" River in Georgia, and had killed and scalped his 13-year-old son and kidnapped a "woman child and little negroe." The governor of South Carolina and the state legislature immediately endorsed the proposition to raise an independent company of 50 men and officers to establish a post to protect settlers near the Cherokee Line.

Subsequent incursions by the Creeks into South Carolina, and new threats from a renegade band of Indians called Chickamaugas, caused Colonel Robert Anderson of the South Carolina Militia to write to Governor Pinckney on September 20, 1792, saying:

I have ordered the people to build blockhouses, where they are exposed and intimidated, to fly to with their families, in case of an alarm. I have frontier blockhouses built and building, at suitable places along the frontier, at a distance of about eight to ten miles apart; five are on the way, some of which are nearly completed, but I believe another must be appointed to complete the chain, I have ordered trusty spies to be constantly out at Tugulo and the Oconee mountain, as they are spots (in all appearance) which will be most exposed. I have ordered a few men from the most interior post; but in some places, there is difficulty in providing them with provisions, the settlements being thin on the frontier, the people poor, and their improvements and crops but small."

Oconee Station was probably built about in late 1791, and was maintained as a military outpost through 1779. Oconee Station was indeed constructed from a military perspective. The walls were built using native fieldstone chinked with mud, and were 20 inches thick. The 31' by 20' one story blockhouse, with a full basement, was built on a slope facing the northwestern frontier. In later years, after Oconee Station was abandoned as a military outpost, the main floor was accessed from the upslope side of the building from the southeast, facing the William Richardson House. But some historians believed that originally, the main entrance to Oconee Station was from a central door in the basement or northwestern side, facing the Lower Cherokee Path. The basement was one big room with a huge fire place, no doubt designed to accommodate a large group of men. There were only 3 windows in the basement; 2 centered at the gable ends, and 1 small window to the right of the main door. A set of stairs led to the upstairs that consisted of 2 rooms separated by the large chimney. The larger room to the northeast measured 16 by 16^{1/2} feet. The smaller room to the southwest, which was probably used for a kitchen, measured 6 by 17 feet. Each room had a brick fireplace with a fieldstone arch and hearthstone. Three evenly spaced windows were on the northwest, and 2 windows on the gable ends provided light and sight. The heavy door was constructed of two alternating layers of hand hewn boards, and was attached to the door frame of heavy timbers by hand wrought hinges and nails. The lock was a sturdy wood box lock.

Historical records show that the number of soldiers at Oconee Station varied, but probably peaked about 1794. In that year, Oconee Station, also called Fort Intelligence, was manned by one lieutenant, two sergeants, 12 privates / horsemen, 7 privates / infantry, a drummer, and two scouts or spies. One account describes the militia "...cloathed in blue Coats, Waistcoats and Overalls, and well armed and accoutred..." By this time, most of the planned garrisons across the Cherokee Line had been completed, including: Oconee Station, Little River Station, Coneross Station, Toxaway Station, Gigson's Station, Stewart's Station, and Tugaloo Station. Not surprisingly, Tugaloo Station was the largest, due to its strategic location at a main ford across the Tugaloo River into Georgia. Oconee Station was also an important outpost due to its location on the Lower Cherokee Path near the old Cherokee Village called Oconee. This major frontier "thoroughfare," where traders, settlers and Indians converged, was a perfect place to gather "intelligence."

In May of 1793, the U. S. Secretary of War wrote in a letter to Governor Telfair of Georgia, "... a few scouts, or spies who are formed of the hardiest and best hunters, and who shall be advanced a few miles of the settlement, traversing incessantly, at right angles, the paths most used by the Indians, are better calculated to give the alarm to the settlers, and secure them from danger, than any other species of troops whatever."

Oconee Station was not built to house whole communities of settlers defended by a large military force against a siege such as a fort would have been, but was designed as a small, defensible outpost to carry out surveillance and, if need be, a base for an early warning system in case of imminent attack. In theory, it was also intended that the militia would curb encroachment on Cherokee hunting grounds, but there is little or no evidence that this provision was ever a priority. In fact, William Richards' trading post, which was already in operation at Oconee Station shortly after it was commissioned, was very much dependent on trade for products poached from Indian lands.

By the late 1790's there was not sufficient threat of Indian attack to warrant the expense of maintaining frontier garrisons. Oconee Station was the last frontier blockhouse with active troops, but it too closed in 1799. Nonetheless, because of its location on a major trade route, Oconee Station thrived during the mid 1790's as a trading post until the early 19th century. As its military importance waned, its economic significance increased as hunters, trappers, traders and settlers crowded in to reap the harvest of vast natural resources.

William Richard, the "trader" who bought the land on which Oconee Station was built in 1793, supplied the troops with food and fodder, but also established a trade network across the frontier. The fact that Richards had an 80 gallon still gave him the added capacity to fill orders for one of the frontier's most sought after commodities. Evidence also exists that the area

Oconee Station

around Oconee Station was notorious for trafficking in stolen horses. Although there is no evidence that Richards participated directly in the horse "fencing" business, we do know that he did quite well with his "legitimate" business. There is some irony in the fact that Richards' thriving trade in furs, leather, ginseng, snakeroot, baskets and cattle was, to a large degree, a product of the encroachment on Cherokee hunting grounds that the militia at Oconee Station was supposed to discourage.

A visit to Oconee Station by Colonel Benjamin Hawkins, U.S. Indian Agent for the Southern Region, on November 24, 1796, gives a vivid picture of life at Oconee Station. Hawkins had been dispatched to mark a new boundary with the Creeks according to the Treaty of Colerain. He was also charged with reestablishing the Cherokee Line that had been reaffirmed in the treaties of Hopewell in 1785 and the Holston River in 1791. Oconee Station was the first stop on his mission.

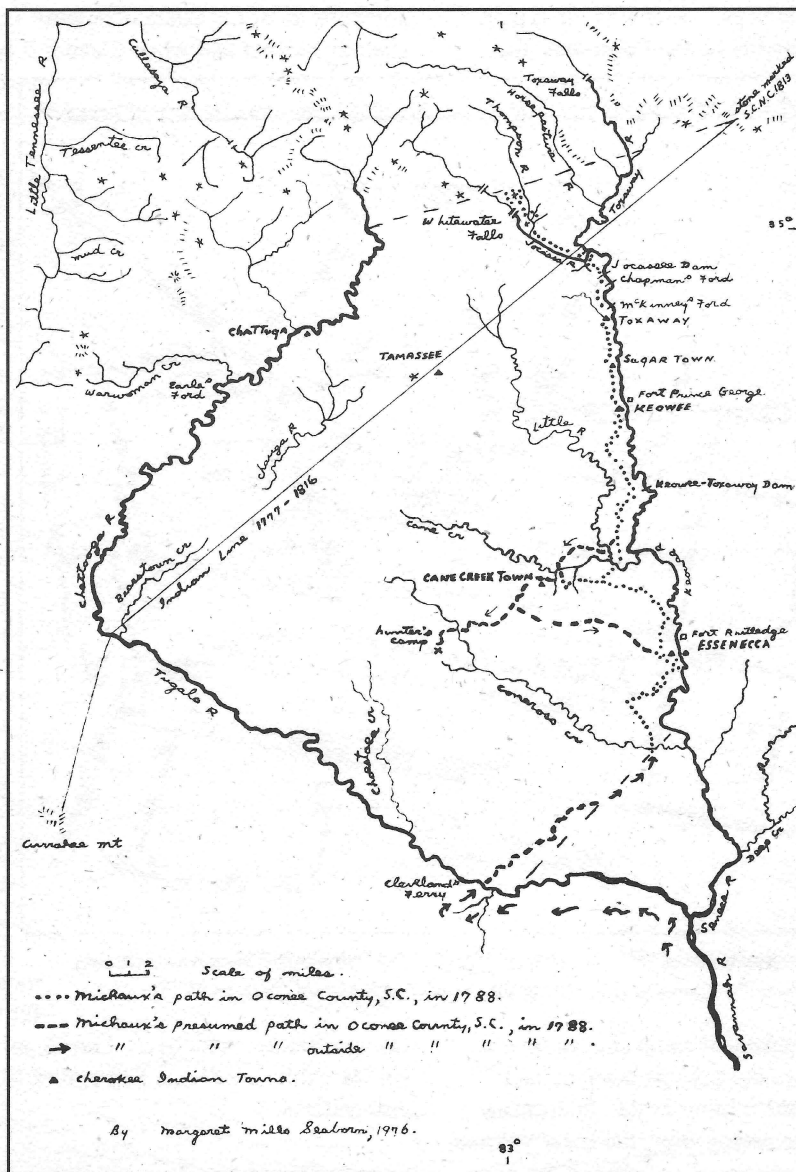
Hawkins played a visit to General Pickens at his plantation on the Seneca River to prepare for his trip through Cherokee country. While he was there, he recorded observing several traders that had just come from Oconee Station with pack horses and 30 wagon loads of furs and skins on their way to market in Charleston. After procuring a guide and interpreter, he proceeded to Oconee Station and arrived on the 24th. Hawkins observed that there were about 20 militia at the station, 4 of which were horsemen. Lieutenant Mosley was out on patrol. William Richards, who had established a trading post at Oconee Station, was also away but his clerk, a Mr. Cleveland, provided Hawkins with a bear skin and other supplies that he would need

to trade with the Indians for provisions on his journey to meet with the Creeks.

When Lieutenant Mosley returned, he accompanied Hawkins up Station Mountain to the Cherokee Line where he identified a suitable site "...for a station to secure the execution of the

law for regulating trade and intercourse among the tribes and as proper for a trading post." When Hawkins questioned Mosley about the obvious incursions by white hunters on Cherokee land and informed him of the law, Mosley replied that he had heard of the law but had "never seen it."

Hawkins' question to Lieutenant Mosley about enforcing provisions of a treaty to protect Native American rights was a bureaucratic formality. Mosley's answer was simply a reflection of reality. There was simply no reason to attempt to hold back the relentless, building pressure to push the Native Americans as far to the west as need be to accommodate an insatiable appetite for more real estate to hold a growing population of European immigrants. In four short years, there would not be a need for Oconee Station to protect settlers from the Indians, who were being pushed further and further west with each subsequent treaty. By 1799, both Mosley and Hawkins would be out of a job.



"The Cherokee Line" is shown on this map of Cherokee Indian towns. The map was drawn by Margaret Mills Seaborn.

The one man at Oconee Station who did thrive during this time of rapid development was William Richards, who owned and operated the trading post that was at the economic hub for all competing factions of the frontier. The Richards House was built in 1805 and was made with brick from a kiln on site. Richards supplied the militia for compensation, sold household goods and farm supplies to settlers, sold trade goods to the traders who lived and traded

Oconee Station

with the Indians, who also became dependent on the European goods from the trading post.

Records of transactions with two customers in 1805 and in 1802 show that Richards supplied them with "thread, linen, calico, needles, cotton cards, copperas [chemical used for tanning hides], handkerchiefs, knives, nails, door hinges, nippers, sugar, salt, allspice, and a pair of saddle bags." Richards often took home produce from settlers as credits on their accounts, that included beeswax, lard, homespun, ginseng, and deer skins.

Furs, deer skins, ginseng, and other medicinal herbs were the main driving force of Richard's trading post. The hunters poached game from Indian lands, and in many cases swindled the Indians out of their furs and skins for a jug of corn whiskey, all with no apparent attention from the militia. By the same token, the Cherokee were also learning to raise cattle and hogs, and make cane baskets and dig medicinal roots, to trade directly to Richards. All these goods were taken to Charleston by wagon caravans, up to 20 at a time, each pulled by a team of 5 to 6 horses. The trip was total of 240 miles on bad roads, and the wagon trains traveled about 24 miles

per day, often stopping at predetermined camp sites or taverns along the way. On the return trip, the wagons brought back more trade goods to perpetuate the trading cycle. Interesting records found in Richards' estate papers show the sheer volume of trade that he had built at Oconee Station. Some of the items listed in an inventory of Richards' estate after his death included 25 to 30 thousand deer skins, 329 bear skins, 79 cat and fox skins, 19 otter skins, 1 "Trunk otter," 18 wolf skins, 6 mink skins, and 12,125 pounds of snakeroot and ginseng.

William Richards was born in northern Ireland and migrated to America, where he appears in a record of a deed dated January 25, 1793, whereby he purchased the land on which Oconee Station was built, and in which he was referred to as a "trader." By 1795, Richards' trading post was thriving. He made enough

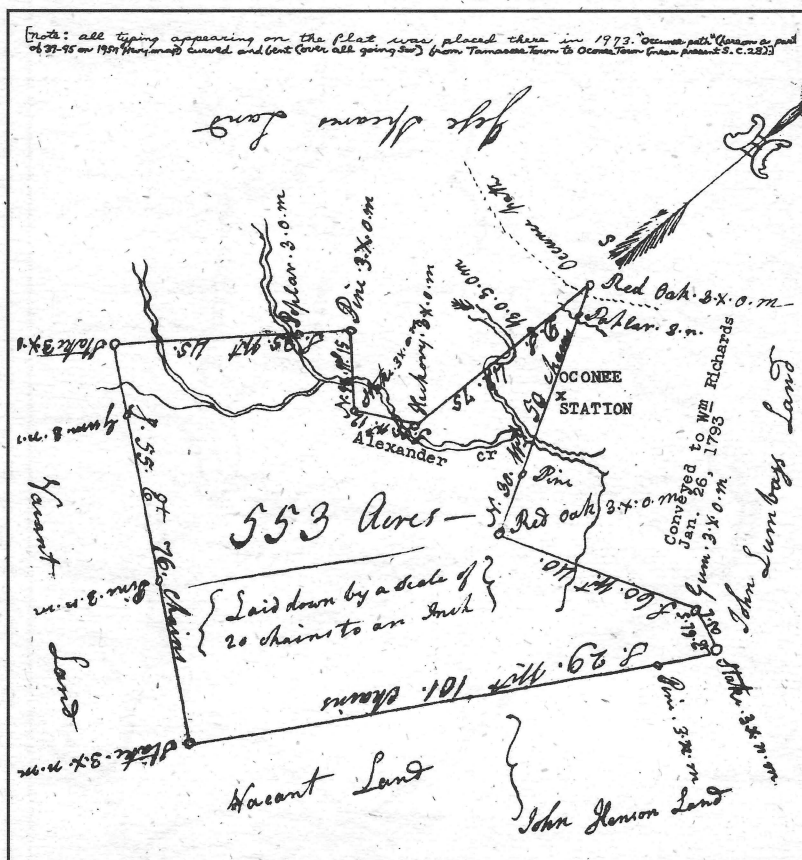
profit to purchase an additional 3,548 acres of land, and owned 12 slaves. William Richards died in 1809 and since he was a bachelor, his estate was tied up in a family claim dispute between two siblings. His brother, one of his rightful heirs, was declared a "lunatic" by the court. Richard's other immediate heir was his sister, Eleanor, who had married James McDaniel. McDaniel, on behalf of Eleanor, filed suit to be granted care and custody of the estate of Adam. The courts granted the custody request and when Eleanor died in 1810, a bitter battle

over custody of the estate raged between McDaniel and one of William Richards' second cousins, a Thomas Richards, who made a claim to the court that Eleanor could not legally pass land to her descendants because she was never a legal citizen of the United States. Eventually, the estate was divided between the two combatants with Thomas Richards getting the real estate and McDaniel getting the personal property.

Thomas Richards lived at Oconee Station, working as a shoe maker and subsistence farmer, from 1822 until his death in 1841. The Cherokee were long gone down the Trail of Tears by this time, and the wild game was mostly gone and with it, the fur trade. The glory days of

Oconee Station were over. The Oconee Station property was sold at public auction in September 1842 by Thomas Richards' descendants.

Oconee Station, the Richards House, and the several hundred acres on which they stand changed hands many times until today, when thankfully it is preserved as a state park. Many people lived at Oconee Station after William Richards. They includes a local sheriff, a Civil War soldier, a prosperous farmer, 4 old maid spinsters, and a professor of architecture. Each of these added color to the history and legends of Oconee Station, but it will be remembered most prominently as the little blockhouse that guarded the Carolina frontier when America was young, when the Indians were still a threat, and the land just beyond in the Chattooga River basin was still wild.



A plat dated "this 11th day of March 1793" shows the location of Oconee Station (the typing on the plat was placed there in 1973).

Watershed Update

CLEANING UP STEKOA CREEK PROGRESS IS ONE STEP CLOSER

The City of Clayton's Request for Proposals (RFP) for fixing the city's leaking sewage collection system, which is the main source of pollution in Stekoa Creek and the Chattooga River, is now "out of the chute." The RFP was issued for bids in mid-January, and has a closing deadline of March 1st. Chattooga Conservancy members, their associates, and others who are involved in the civil engineering field and who would like to review the RFP can request a copy from Clayton City Hall at tel. 706-782-4512.

The Chattooga Conservancy chairs the "Fix Sewer Group" that prepared the draft RFP that was approved by the Clayton City Council. The anticipated deliverables from the RFP will be the establishment of short and long term plans for the work to fix Clayton's leaking sewage collection system, and a prioritized schedule of actions along with a line item budget. The City of Clayton issuing this RFP is a milestone step, which has the potential to make great strides forward in improving Stekoa Creek's water quality.

WOODLAND SAVANNAH RESTORATION

The Chattooga River Ranger District is now the official name for the combined territories of two neighboring ranger districts in the northeast Georgia portion of the Chattahoochee National Forest that previously were separate entities called the Tallulah Ranger District of Clayton, and the Chattooga Ranger District based in Clarkesville.

The Chattooga River Ranger District is planning a 1,000-acre ecological restoration project in the lower end of the Chattooga River watershed, on the Water Gauge Road. The potential project is on the Georgia side of the Chattooga River, just outside the Wild & Scenic River Corridor above the Five Falls area.

The plan is to restore a woodland savannah and a wetland bog in the project area. This would require thinning out trees on about 500 acres to leave the largest diameter Shortleaf pine and oak trees; prescribed fire on 1,000 acres implemented on a rotating schedule of burning once every 3-5 years; and mountain bog enhancement through mechanical treatments on about 10 acres.

The project area has already suffered greatly from poor

agricultural and timber harvesting practices since the turn of the 20th century. Historical records do indeed show that woodland savannahs and wetlands were key components of the original landscape. The Chattooga Conservancy has expressed an interest in working with the Forest Service on this project, since it is directly aligned with our purpose to restore the natural ecological integrity of Chattooga River watershed ecosystems.

In our comments to the Forest Service, we also urged more emphasis on old growth restoration, road obliteration along the Chattooga River corridor, addressing the effects of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, and adhering to the principles of conservation biology with attention to potential wildlife corridors. One interesting phase of the project is to get rid of non-native, Loblolly pine plantations originally planted by the Forest Service. We told them not to do that! We'll be keeping a close watch on this one and will keep you posted.

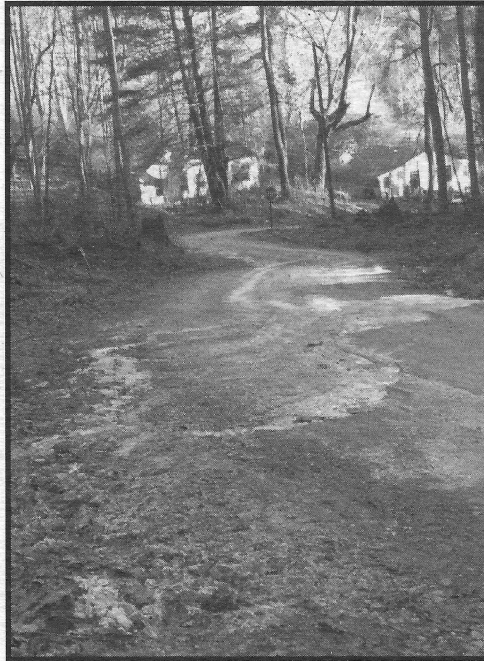
WATER, WATER, EVERY WHERE...

The City of Clayton, Georgia, is a small northeast Georgia community of 5,000 people, and has the 3rd highest rate of water loss in the state of Georgia from its municipal water supply delivery system. Leaks in the city's water lines amounted to 14,541,279 gallons of water during the month of August in 2008,

during the height of the worst drought in recorded history for the area. The city's percent of unaccounted for water has been estimated by city officials to be 50%.

In monetary terms, this water loss amounts to nearly three quarters of a million dollars per year. Clearly, there is a need to address this situation through a water leak detection and repair program, which would in turn lessen the demand on the area's springs, streams, and rivers by saving significant quantities of water (that would naturally recharge ground water supplies, especially during times of drought). As a bonus, the funds recovered by fixing the city's leaking water supply system could be a future source of revenue to maintain and repair the aging sewage system infrastructure in the City of Clayton, which is an infamous source of fecal coliform pollution in Stekoa Creek, a major polluted tributary to the National Wild & Scenic Chattooga River.

A 10% reduction in water loss by the City of Clayton would save 3,882,063 gallons of water per month, worth about \$200,000 in revenue recovery per year. City records of water line repairs clearly show where most leaks in the system are



Raw sewage flowed down a neighborhood street in Clayton during a winter 2008 sewage leak.

Watershed Update

prone to occur. These are usually older, galvanized lines that are in dire need of replacement. We believe that by replacing these older lines as a matter of immediate priority, the city could recover at least 10% of unaccounted for water.

The City of Clayton has some very limited funds that could be directed to the first phase of an effective water leak detection and repair program, that would begin to target replacing water lines with a known history of the greatest leaks. If the City of Clayton were the recipient of desperately needed federal stimulus dollars for green infrastructure, the city could conceivably obtain more leak detection equipment and the training to find water leaks, and could prioritize and implement replacements and repairs accordingly. The estimated recovery of lost water in the City of Clayton within one year could successfully convince the city to plan to continue its water recovery program, while yielding new revenues for the city's sorely needed sewage system infrastructure repairs.

SILVER SLIP FALLS DEVELOPMENT ON HOLD, FOR NOW

Remember A. I. G., the big insurance firm that made headlines because of bad investment strategies? In the latter part of 2008, the Chattooga Conservancy learned that A. I. G. had received an "expedited permit" to build a new subdivision at their recently purchased Millstone Inn property near Silver Slip Falls at the headwaters of the Chattooga River just outside of Cashiers, North Carolina. The permit would allow A.I.G. to use a "spray irrigation" system to dispense with effluent wastewater from the planned development.

The Chattooga River is classified as Outstanding Resource Waters in this headwaters section, which does not allow permits for new wastewater treatment plants. A.I.G. apparently got around this restriction by applying for a spray irrigation system, which is not covered by the Clean Water Act. In other words, A.I.G. found a loophole. When the Chattooga Conservancy questioned water quality regulators in North Carolina about the "expedited permit," we were told that when it was clear to the agency that a project will probably meet all permit requirements, and **if the applicant pays an extra \$10,000, the applicant can obtain an expedited permit without an opportunity for public comment.**

Given the steep terrain and erodible soils on the development site, it is highly suspicious that this project was permitted, especially without opportunity for public comment. Currently, the project seems to be on hold due to A.I.G.'s economic downfall. In the meantime, the Chattooga Conservancy is working to gather support for having state officials to close the obvious loophole in laws, to protect water quality in the Chattooga River. We will also be monitoring the proposed

development to see if the property is sold and restarted under the same permit. If so, there is an opportunity to request a public hearing. In this case the bad economy may give us a chance to make things better. Stay tuned.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The Chattooga Conservancy should start calling this our "Native Crops Project," because that's what it truly is. Native crops have evolved in a particular place and have therefore adapted to certain conditions of soil, location and climate. Native crops are usually more drought-resistant, with the added benefit that locally grown crops can be more easily marketed locally.



A bumper crop of "Chattooga Select," a strain of locally grown white corn, is ready for storage in the corn crib.

Two years ago the Chattooga Conservancy was given 20 ears of corn by a Rabun County farmer whose family had grown the corn here "as long as anybody can remember" as a high production crop for food and livestock. This past 2008 growing season we had a bumper crop, that thrived on the rich, black bottom land along Warwoman Creek. Use of the land for this project was generously donated by Lewis and Carol Kilby.

The best seed from the 2007 crop was saved, and the field was replanted this past spring and augmented by only organic fertilizer. On New Year's Day, we finished harvesting another outstanding crop of full-kerneled corn on ears as long as 18 inches. We had also shared the seeds with another local farmer, who had excellent results as well. Of course, one of the reasons for such success with our corn crop during the extreme drought of the '08 growing season is because Lewis and Carol's bottom land on Warwoman Creek is so rich and moist. Nonetheless,

Watershed Update

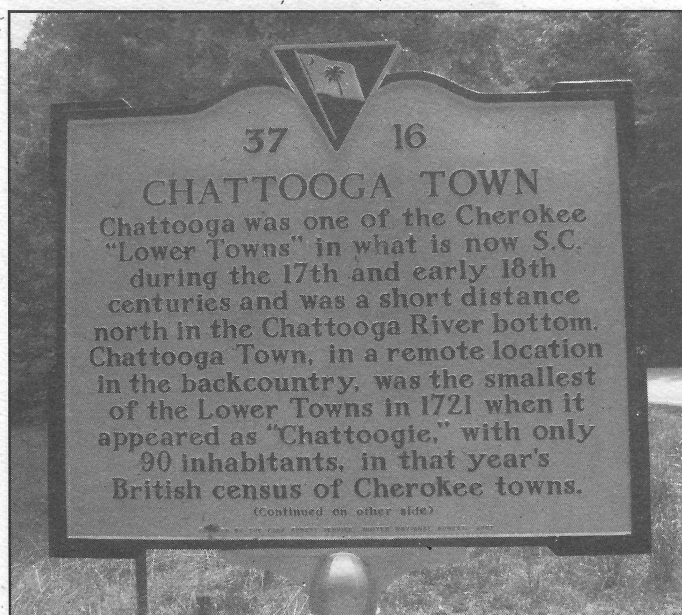
this demonstration project is on its way to proving to a lot of folks that native seed just does better in places where they evolved to grow. It also helps spread the message that local agriculture, organically grown, can produce more and better food, and may even reduce the consumption of fossil fuels that contribute to global warming.

CHATTOOGA OLD TOWN GETS HISTORICAL MARKER

The small Cherokee village that once stood on the flood plain across from the confluence of the Chattooga's West Fork and the main Chattooga River was abandoned in the 1740's, after its population had been devastated by small pox. This site, known as Chattooga Old Town, was excavated and studied by University of Tennessee archaeologist Dr. Gerald Schroedel between 1991 and 1994, with a grant from Passports In Time and in cooperation with the Forest Service, to discover more about the history of the village.

Chattooga Old Town, at the time of its demise, was populated by about 140 people. It is a very important site because the village was decimated and abandoned before European influence changed Cherokee culture. The Chattooga Old Town site was recently recognized with a historical marker, which is located on Highway 28 at the old Russell House farmstead on the South Carolina side of the Chattooga River.

On a related note, the Chattooga Conservancy is encouraging the Forest Service to restore native river cane to the bottom land near Chattooga Old Town. Restoring native cane to the old Indian site would help provide habitat for many sensitive species, and the river cane could also be used by Cherokee artisans to make their traditional river cane baskets.



The new historical marker for the Chattooga Old Town site is located at the Russell House farmstead on Highway 28 in South Carolina.

WOODALL SHOALS ROAD PAVED

The Andrew Pickens Ranger District of the Sumter National Forest has paved a section of the Woodall Shoals Road in South Carolina, which leads to a major access point on Section IV of the Chattooga River. The middle section of the road crosses private land and was paved this fall by the Forest Service, who has a right of way across the property. Speed bumps were also installed. The reason given by the Forest Service for the paving was to "eliminate erosion" problems. Meanwhile, local residents have been complaining for years about speeding traffic on the road, and it seems that the paving had more to do with this than erosion control, since much worse erosion problems exist further down the road, in the steep riparian area near the parking lot immediately above the Chattooga River.

Bird Walk

Friday, April 10th

Join expert birder **Jack Johnston**
on the Chattooga Conservancy's
annual bird watching expedition.

Jack will lead a short hike into the woods to look for Neotropical migratory birds, sharing his wealth of knowledge about bird songs and distinctive markings to identify the birds heard and seen on the expedition.

Meet at 8 a.m. sharp at the Ingles parking lot, on Highway 441 in Clayton. Gather over on the side of the parking lot closest to the Community Bank building. Bring binoculars.

**For more information,
call 706-782-6097.**

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH to everyone who recently renewed their membership, joined as a new member, or contributed gifts, services, and memorial donations to the Chattooga Conservancy. Your generous contributions will help us continue to work on all of the important conservation issues facing the Chattooga River watershed area.

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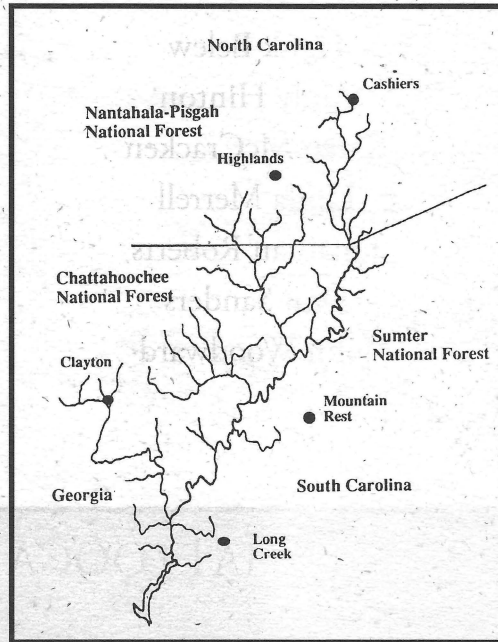
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tel. (706) 782-6097 fax (706) 782-6098 info@chattoogariver.org www.chattoogariver.org

Purpose: To protect, promote and restore the natural ecological integrity of the Chattooga River watershed ecosystems; 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.

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Monitor the U.S. Forest Service's management of public forest lands in the watershed, and work cooperatively to develop a sound ecosystem initiative for 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

Promote sustainable communities

Promote conservation by honoring cultural heritage

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