

FALL, 2008



GEORGIA RIVER NETWORK
CONFLUENCE

GRN Celebrates 10th Birthday at Parties Across the State

Three parties. Three cities. We are continuing to celebrate Georgia River Network's 10th Anniversary of protecting and restoring Georgia's rivers. Friends, old and new, are gathering in Athens, Gwinnett County (Berkeley Lakes) and Savannah. The first gathering took place on October 16, on the banks of the Oconee River, in the home of Laurie Fowler, Co-Director of UGA's River Basin Center, and Tim Johnson, Director of Athens-Clarke County's Family Connection. Two more parties are scheduled for November 6th and 13th in Gwinnett County and Savannah, respectively.

Hosts Christine Rodick and Dorinda Dallmeyer, both GRN board members, UGA staff members and advocates for Georgia's rivers, welcomed Athens area guests. GRN Executive Director, April

Ingle's overview of GRN's Engage, Empower and Advocate programs highlighted recent success stories and continuing environmental challenges. Dr. Dallmeyer, who is also a writer, shared a poem that brought attention to the severity of the drought while providing some levity to sustain one's spirit when the water is so low. Dorinda, who grew up near the banks of the Ocmulgee River, read an excerpt from her own literary work, *My Heart Bends Toward a River*:

*Attapulgis
Auchumpkee
Cooleewahee
Kinchafoonie
Tobesofkee*

What a blessing it is to be here in Georgia, in a place where the names of our rivers,



Guests listen intently as Dorinda Dallmeyer reads from "My Heart Bends Toward a River."

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10th Anniversary - 2008
A Decade of Working Together for
Healthy Rivers

MISSION:

Georgia River Network is working to ensure a clean water legacy by engaging and empowering Georgians to protect and restore our rivers from the mountains to the coast.

GOALS:

- ◆ Increase the number of people involved in the protection and management of Georgia's waters.
- ◆ Improve awareness of the issues that threaten the health of our waters.
- ◆ Establish infrastructure for the exchange of resources among parties working to improve the protection of Georgia's waters.
- ◆ Provide necessary means to advocate for the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of our waters

Board of Directors

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Julie Goldberg,
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Georgia River Network is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Contributions are fully tax-deductible.

(Continued from page 1)

like our island setting today, add piquancy to our lives. As they roll on our tongues, these names make found poetry even if you know nothing about their meaning.

Nacoochee
Alapaha
Ichaway-Notchaway
Nottely
Connesena
Echeconnee

And knowing the translation, you can make a poem of joy and longing. Take the following:

Ocmulgee
Euharlee
Amicalola
Muckalee

It means....

Up from the bubbling waters
She laughs as she rises.
Tumbling waters,
Pour on me.

Even beyond its name, a river connects generations across time. My relationship to Georgia's rivers formed during my childhood in Macon, on the banks of one particular river, the Ocmulgee. That's my theme for today, that my heart bends toward a river, a river serving as a role model by which you judge every other river you cross in life.

There are life lessons waiting for all of us to learn from our rivers and streams, lessons to pass on to those who will follow in our footsteps. We often think that we need to take children to spectacular places like Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon to instill in them a love of nature. But today I want to advocate on behalf of the everyday, the local, the places all around us that may not seem special to us but can be unforgettable landmarks in a child's mind. This is part of how we develop a sense of place. We need to take the time to look around ourselves, to notice the natural world going on about its business, and to realize that nature is not just a backdrop, some stage-set against which we play out our lives, but truly the crucible of our creation, the world which has made us what we are.

And so I return to my Ocmulgee. For me it remains a living, protean, elemental part of my understanding of landscape, part of nature's context for living my life, just as it was for my people and for those who were there long before us.

Many thanks go to Laurie, Tim, Christine and Dorinda for their support. Loco's, Dondero's, Weekday Gourmet, Marti's at Midday, Lindsey's, and Earthfare, along with delicious food supplied by board members and staff. Beverages were courtesy of Dorinda, Earthfare and local merchants.



Guests Kyle McKay, Amy Walker and Stinson Ferguson

Nov. 4: Amendment 3 is Poor Public Policy for GA

The following Opinion Editorial was authored by Representatives Stephanie Stuckey Benfield, Wendell Willard and Mark Hatfield, and ran in the Atlanta Journal Constitution on October, 7, 2008.

Amendment #3, "Infrastructure Development Districts," on the November ballot represents several threats to Georgia:

1) Powers currently reserved to government, that is the general public, such as the power to levy property taxes and the right to borrow money by selling low-interest, tax free bonds will be given to private business. There is no public review of these taxes or this debt after this power is handed over by one vote by any county commission. This represents a huge public subsidy to selected developers.

2) There is no legal prohibition on such "Development Districts" being partially owned by members of the local county commissions approving their creation. This is ethically unacceptable, and encourages corruption of local government. Local government control over these Development Districts ends as soon as the vote to create one is taken.

3) Because the bond debt of Development Districts is to be funded by a tax obligation imposed on the people who buy land in the Districts, non-payment of those taxes will create a tax lien that the host counties are obligated to collect. Failure to collect that debt shifts ownership of the defaulting property to the county and its taxpayers. The taxpayers may then become liable for the debt.

4) There is no legal requirement that any "Development District," (which is actually no more than a business-owned government, a Private City), meet any of the costs that will be incurred by its host county government in meeting infrastructure needs caused by the development that are located outside the District boundaries.

5) There is no legal requirement that such Districts demonstrate adequate water supplies or suitable plans for disposal of waste water before they are

authorized to go into debt and levy taxes to fund that debt. The only legal requirement the Districts must meet is that they own the land where they are to be built.

6) Many tracts of Georgia timberland that currently provide clean air and water as well as recreational opportunities, and which may soon become vital fuel sources, will be permanently ruined by developers if the Amendment #3 Subsidy Package is enacted. The irreplaceable Oaky Woods tract in Houston County is one such parcel, among many others located all over Georgia.

A coalition of developers, currently desperate because of the economic slowdown associated with the national mortgage credit crisis, are pushing for Amendment #3, as a bail-out for their overextended industry. The developers are making sweet talk about "quality development" and "infrastructure for underserved areas," but they are really looking for a handout.

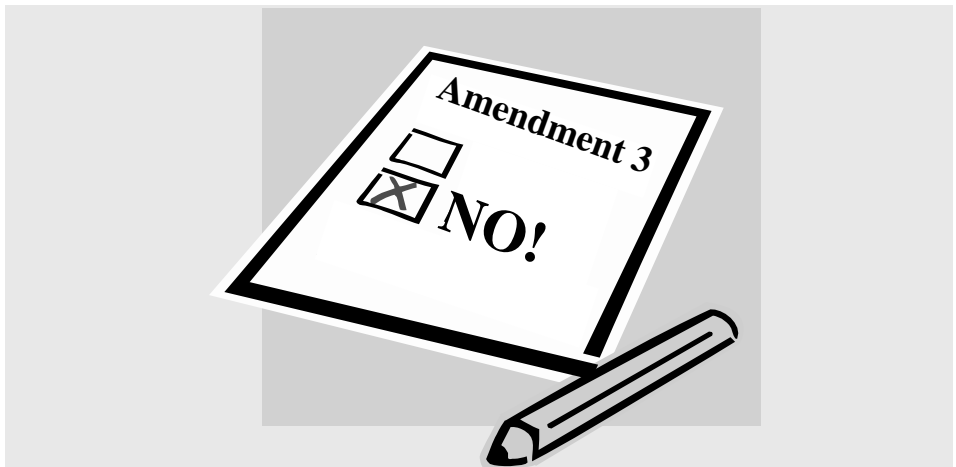
They want private businesses that are currently unable to meet their financial obligations to banks and mortgage companies to be able to levy taxes on their customers to pay the costs of lower interest loans this Amendment will allow. These taxes will be in addition to ordinary property taxes and in addition to mortgage payments on the houses in these "Development Districts." These new subsidized loans can legally

be used to pay off earlier, private debt, and those costs can be shifted onto unwary home buyers in the new Districts.

All that will be required for the developers to cash in on this golden opportunity is to persuade a majority of a county commission, one time, to vote to allow the creation of a Development District. There is a requirement that only two hearings be held before taking such a vote. Little imagination is required to envision the combination of promises and threats that will accompany the rush to such a vote in many counties. Never mind the fact that county commissioners themselves can be made financial partners to the Development District, and in voting approval also will vote themselves handsome rewards.

Georgia does not lack for development. The state has grown dramatically over the last two decades, and if anything, **it is now time to stop and take a break to assess what is needed to accommodate the growth we already have.**

What Georgia really needs to do, instead of figuring out ways to help developers build more housing, is to encourage new businesses and new jobs in areas of the state that have eager workers and natural resources such as ample water supplies. Amendment #3 will be of little use in most of the "Other Georgia."



Sign Up for GRN Emails

Georgia River Network offers several email lists that allow you to receive timely river news:

News Stream — News Stream is a monthly publication containing the latest news in water, updates on river policy news, fundraising ideas and deadlines, spotlights on Georgia’s watershed groups, a calendar of upcoming events and workshops and more. This is an excellent resource for watershed groups and those serving on a Board of Directors. To be added to the News Stream mailing list, email info@garivers.org.

Paddle Georgia - Receive announcements about Paddle Georgia, our 7 day canoe/kayak adventure that visits a different Georgia river every June. To be added to this list, email paddlega@garivers.org.

Action Alerts - Georgia River Network uses GEAN (Georgia Environmental Action Network) to send out action alerts on important environmental issues. GEAN allows you to find contact information for your state and federal decision makers, make your voice heard about important policy issues and offer your opinion to decision makers on key issues. To sign up to receive alerts from GEAN, go to: <http://www.protectgeorgia.net>. Indicate that you are a friend of Georgia River Network.

Paddle Georgia 2007 on the Ocmulgee Featured on “Georgia Outdoors”

Paddle Georgia 2007 was recently featured on “Georgia Outdoors,” a program produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting. Visit www.gpb.org/georgiaoutdoors/ocmulgee_river_watershed to watch online! The program will re-air on your local GPB station on Dec 19 at 9:30 PM, Dec 20 at 6 PM and Dec 23, 7:30 PM.

River Advocates Unite!

Your Georgia River Network membership provides an easy way to unite with others who are passionate about healthy rivers. Whatever you do, wherever you go in the state of Georgia, you are in a watershed— in amazingly beautiful countryside or in the midst of development. Whatever the location our rivers are challenged by rising water usage and pollution. Your membership unites you with others in the common cause of ensuring our rivers are protected and restored. Your membership comes with benefits:

- A newsletter that provides information about issues important to you
- Invitation only opportunities
- Discounts
- An up-to-date website
- Access to volunteer opportunities
- A forum for sharing your river stories
- Access to Facebook, Twitter or the Paddle Georgia blog

Most importantly, **YOUR VOICE WILL BE HEARD, TOGETHER, WE WILL LEAVE A LIVING LEGACY – CLEAN WATER.**

Join us! Maintain your membership! We need you to support our programs to ensure clean water for today and future generations. Go to www.garivers.org. Click on Join to become a member or renew your membership today!

GRN is on Facebook and Twitter



Become a part of the GRN community on Facebook. We have a fan page and a group for Georgia River Network as well as a separate fan page for Paddle Georgia. Visit www.facebook.com to join.

Do you twitter? Follow Georgia River Network and Paddle Georgia twitters at www.twitter.com.

GRN Announces 08-09 Re-grant Winners

Thanks to a grant from the Turner Foundation, Georgia River Network is pleased to award grants for watershed work by grassroots river groups in Georgia that address documented water quality degradation from non-point source pollution or water efficiency needs, through advocacy, campaigns, on the ground project implementation, or legal work. 2008 Grantees are:

1. Altamaha Riverkeeper - Darien
To ensure buffer protection for salt marsh and fresh water streams.
2. Chattooga Conservancy—Clayton
To organize a campaign to implement a Water Leak Detection and Repair Program that would aim to reduce water loss from water supply lines in Clayton by

10%.

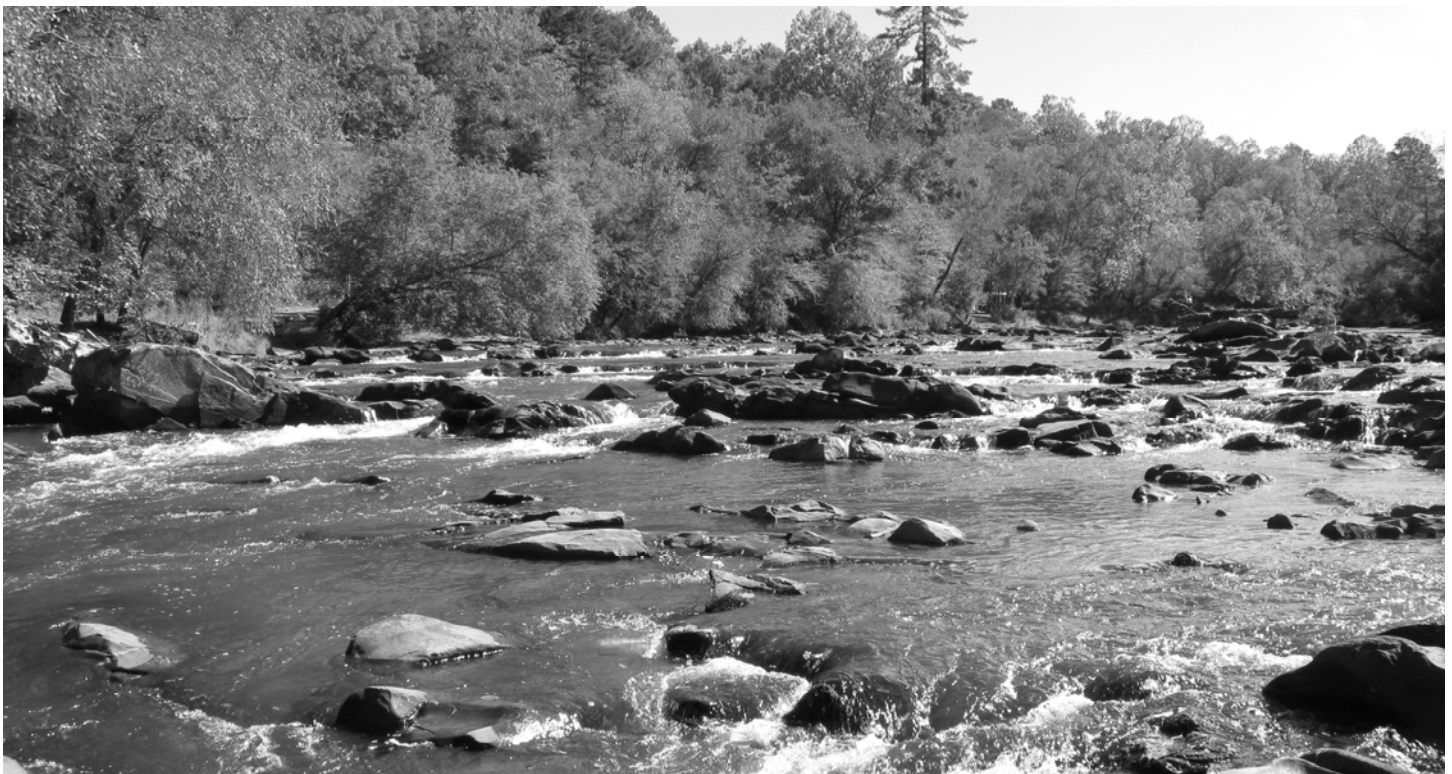
3. Coosa River Basin Initiative—Rome
To address land development and associated non-point source pollution in the Upper Coosa River Basin by facilitating Get the Dirt Out Trainings, monitoring active construction sites and addressing stream buffer variance applications.

4. Ogeechee Canoochee Riverkeeper – Statesboro
To educate communities, respond to citizen complaints, and advocate for meaningful solutions to prevent nonpoint source pollution. This will be accomplished by conducting Get the Dirt Out Trainings, continuing staff monitoring of the watershed, responding to hotline calls, and advocating for

stronger local and state regulation of nonpoint source pollution.

5. Satilla Riverkeeper –Waynesville
To protect wetlands and riparian floodplains to manage stormwater flows in the watershed and to support riverine habitat land acquisition.

6. Savannah Riverkeeper – Augusta,
To create, update and maintain the interactive, statewide, Get the Dirt Out database and make changes to the website to support the database, to create a database for Get the Dirt Out reports and follow up, to update the Get the Dirt Out website to reflect changes in the general permit and DNR rules, and to continue to train Get the Dirt Out volunteers.



GRN Starts New Blog About Paddle Georgia

Joe Cook, Paddle Georgia Trip Coordinator, has started a blog. A blog is an online journal, and Joe is writing about his experiences as he scouts out the Coosawattee and Oostanaula rivers in preparation for Paddle Georgia 09. Follow the blog at <http://garivernetwork.wordpress.com> to learn how Paddle Georgia comes together each year.

Photo by Joe Cook

Grassroots Spotlight: Chattooga Conservancy

The Chattooga Conservancy was founded in 1991 by a small group of activists that shared a vision to promote conservation based on a “watershed” approach, as opposed to the traditional model of managing natural resources according to political boundaries. The organization became one of the first watershed protection groups in the eastern United States.

The Chattooga River watershed provided an ideal place for implementing this innovative approach to conservation, due to the fact that 70% of the watershed is publicly owned land managed by the U. S. Forest Service and includes 3 national forests in 3 states: the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia, the Sumter National Forest in South Carolina, and the Nantahala National Forest in North Carolina. A request to the Forest Service in 1991 by the Chattooga Conservancy to focus on the Chattooga River watershed as a pilot project to explore the idea of “ecosystem management” resulted in nearly 8 million dollars spent over the next 5 years by the Forest Service on their “Chattooga River Watershed Ecosystem Management Demonstration Project.” The Chattooga Conservancy played a pivotal role by providing critical oversight and input during this pilot project, which resulted in a paradigm change in Forest Service management philosophy toward ecosystem management.

The Chattooga Conservancy began staffed operations in 1995, and has since evolved into one of the most effective grassroots membership organizations in the Southern Appalachian Mountain region, whose initial work can be credited with causing a major reduction in intensive timber harvesting and road-building on national forest lands in the watershed. In addition to public land issues, the organization has diversified to include programs addressing conservation on private lands, promoting cultural heritage, and has also formed a land trust. The Chattooga Conservancy’s flagship publication, the *Chattooga Quarterly*, features a variety of articles

and interviews related to conservation and cultural heritage issues, as well as program updates.

The hallmark of the Chattooga Conservancy is innovation, with a diverse record of program work including a horse-logging demonstration project on the Nantahala National Forest; the recovery of a 250-year-old Cherokee canoe from the Chattooga River; establishing a seed bank to preserve native crops; an inventory of native Brook Trout streams; and even editing a book entitled *Sound Wormy: The Memoirs of Andrew Gennett*, that was published by the University of Georgia Press and chronicles the massive logging operations in the Chattooga River watershed after the turn of the century. In addition, the Chattooga Conservancy’s “Speakers Forum” has netted such noted speakers as Senator Sam Nunn, and *Newsweek* Paris Bureau Chief Christopher Dickey.

The Chattooga Conservancy has been most effective, however, as a powerful advocate for conservation. Most recently, the organization’s investigation into failures by the City of Clayton, Georgia, to enforce their Floodplain Protection Ordinance resulted in stopping all illegal floodway filling in the Stekoa Creek watershed in the city

limits. Similarly, the Chattooga Conservancy’s water quality testing on Stekoa Creek, in partnership with Trout Unlimited, has documented major problems with Clayton’s aging sewer collection system, forcing the city to address short and long term plans for repairing the system. Together, these two efforts promise to make great strides in cleaning up Stekoa Creek, which the Forest Service has determined to be the greatest source of pollution into the National Wild & Scenic Chattooga River.

The successes of the Chattooga Conservancy hinge on community involvement. Examples include helping the kids at the local Montessori school build a nature trail; working to help local governments with grant writing; and, lending assistance to landowners to craft sustainable forest management plans for their forest lands. The Chattooga Conservancy’s motto is “promote conservation by becoming a part of the community.”

The Conservancy has been honored by the Georgia Wildlife Federation with its “Conservationist of the Year Award” and by the Forest Service with its “Outstanding Partnership” award. To learn more visit the website www.chattoogariver.org.



The Chattooga Conservancy works to involve the community in a wide range of conservation issues, as seen here in the successful recovery of a 250-year-old Cherokee canoe from the Chattooga River.

Join Georgia River Network

Type of Membership:

- \$1,000 River Patron \$500 River Guardian \$250 River Supporter \$100 River Friend \$50 River Watcher
 \$40 Family Membership \$25 Individual River Enthusiast \$20 E-Membership \$15 Student/Limited Income

Additional Tax Deductible Contribution: \$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____ Check #: _____ Date: _____

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. First and Last Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____ Fax #: _____ E-mail: _____

We occasionally have the opportunity for our members to receive information from other conservation organizations.

Check here if you do not want us to share your name and address with other organizations.

Mail To: Georgia River Network, 126 S. Milledge Ave, Ste. E3, Athens, GA, 30605

GRN is classified by the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

Confluence 11/08

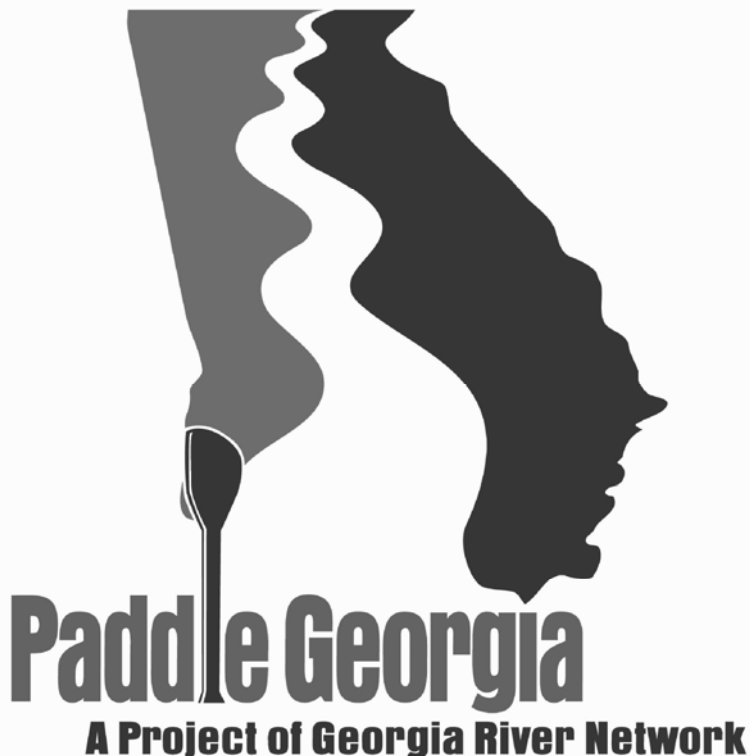
Paddle Georgia 09 on the Coosawattee & Oostanaula Rivers

Paddle Georgia 2009 will be held on the Coosawattee and Oostanaula rivers from Ellijay to Rome June 20-26, instead of the previously announced Broad and Savannah rivers. Prepare yourself for the Coosawattee, Carters Lake and the Oostanaula--part of the most biologically diverse river basin in North America.

This is the area that once inspired James Dickey's novel *Deliverance*. Today, it inspires biologists with its incredible diversity of fish, snails, crayfish and mussels. Keep your ears peeled for banjo music and your eyes peeled for mussel shells. It's going to be a great trip! Off river, you'll have the opportunity to learn more through water monitoring, visits to historic sites and area attractions and tours of industrial facilities. Nightly activities at campsites will include entertainment, games and programs highlighting the river's cultural and natural heritage. An educational adventure for the whole family, Paddle Georgia will show you Georgia as you've never seen it before.

- Day 1 13.1 miles Ellijay to Ridgeway Boat Ramp/Carters Lake
- Day 2 5-6 miles Carters Lake Paddle
- Day 3 13 miles Rereg Dam to Farm Boat Ramp
- Day 4 12 miles Farm Boat Ramp to GA 225 New Echota Historic Site
- Day 5 16.9 miles Ga. 225 to Ga. 156
- Day 6 17.6 miles Ga. 156 to Ga. 140
- Day 7 14.5 miles Ga. 140 to Downtown Rome

Registration opens in February and can be accessed at www.garivers.org/paddle_georgia/pghome.html or by calling 706/549-4508.



Georgia River Network
126 South Milledge Avenue
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10 Year Anniversary
A Decade of Working
Together for Healthy Rivers!

Upcoming Events

December 4, 2008

Georgia Water Coalition Partner Meeting

10-4pm at Georgia Wildlife Federation in Covington

<http://www.garivers.org/gawater/events.html>

December 19, 20, and 23, 2008

Georgia Public Television's "Georgia Outdoors" featuring Paddle Georgia on the Ocmulgee

Show re-airs Dec 19 at 9:30 PM, Dec 20 at 6 PM and Dec 23, 7:30 PM. Go to www.gpb.org to find your local station.

SAVE THE DATE!

February 20-21, 2009

Georgia River Network Annual Conference

The Classic Center in Downtown Athens

http://www.garivers.org/events/grn_conference.html

February 24-27, 2009

Clean Water Week

Washington DC

<http://cleanwaternet.org/>

June 20-26, 2009

Paddle Georgia on the Coosawattee / Oostanaula Rivers

Prepare yourself for the Coosawattee, Carters Lake and the Oostanaula--part of the most biologically diverse river basin in North America. This is the area that once inspired James Dickey's novel Deliverance. Today, it inspires biologists with its incredible diversity of fish, snails, crayfish and mussels. Keep your ears peeled for banjo music and your eyes peeled for mussel shells. It's going to be a great trip! Registration opens in 2009. E-mail paddlega@garivers.org to be put on the info list.