

President Jimmy Carter Joins Paddle Georgia-Flint Celebration

President Jimmy Carter joined Paddle Georgia participants on the last night of their adventure for their End of Trip Celebration and fish fry in Oglethorpe, GA on Friday, June 27. President Carter addressed the group about the importance of Flint River and his fight to protect it from being dammed in 1970s.

The Paddle Georgia 2008 route traversed what is arguably the most scenic stretch of river in all of Georgia, and one that would not exist today were it not for the leadership of President Carter who stopped plans to dam the river as Georgia governor in 1974. From its birthplace beneath Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the Flint winds through Southwest Georgia

and remains one of Georgia's longest stretches of free-flowing river.

The Flint River is a window into the issues that have come to the forefront of public debate as a result of the ongoing drought. As the state looks to build new reservoirs to meet growing water demands, the beauty of Sprewell Bluff speaks to what can be lost when free-flowing rivers and streams are dammed.

The River and Harbor Act of 1945 authorized three power-storage reservoirs on the Flint River above Albany - Sprewell Bluff, Auchumpkee Creek and Potato Creek. The most controversial was Sprewell Bluff, a popular scenic and fishing spot on the Fall Line that Paddle



President Carter addresses paddlers and Flint River supporters at the Paddle Georgia End of Trip Celebration in Oglethorpe, GA. Photo: Tom Wilson

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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

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non-profit organization.. Contributions are
fully tax-deductible.*

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Georgia participants got to experience first hand. Jimmy Carter successfully fought to de-authorize these dam projects as both Governor and President.

Recently, plans to introduce legislation that would "re-authorize" the three dams on the Flint River and its tributaries have been revived by Georgia Congressmen Lynn Westmoreland and Nathan Deal.

The Flint River is a critical piece of the contentious ACF, or Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint, "water wars" between Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Many fear that that the Flint will be looked to once again as a place to build dams and store its water in reservoirs, to take the pressure off the Chattahoochee River and its reservoirs to provide flows into the Apalachicola River. The Flint River joins the Chattahoochee River at Lake Seminole at the Georgia-Florida state-line and then becomes Florida's Apalachicola River.

Carter told the crowd, "You ought to prepare for a massive fight because the Chambers of Commerce, and the promise of employment and the promise of recreation and in this case the promise of more water somehow getting into Atlanta and taking pressure off Lake Lanier. All of those are going to be put forward and you need to be organized

and willing to work on it and prepared."

As fate would have it, a new Flint Riverkeeper organization has formed to protect the river to address this threat and any others down the road. (see story on pg. 6)

Carter's parting words were, "If you need my help, I'll be here."



Photo: Tom Wilson



Paddle Georgia Coordinator, Joe Cook, and GRN Executive Director, April Ingle, share a laugh with President Carter. Photo: Tom Wilson

Paddle Georgia 2008 : 340 Paddlers, 95 Miles, 7 Days, and 1 Great Time!

There's no better way to build relationships with rivers than to spend an extended time getting to know them. June 21-27, Georgia River Network's 4th Annual Paddle Georgia introduced over 340 paddlers to 95 miles of the Flint River from Thomaston to Montezuma over 7 days. Continuing drought made for much dragging of boats across shoals and sandbars that are now part of the library of Paddle Georgia "war stories" remembered fondly along with sublime swimming holes, thrilling encounters with Georgia's natural wonders and a chance to shake hands with President Jimmy Carter (see cover story).

Along the event route, participants had the opportunity to visit Sprewell Bluff State Park, a 1540 Uchee Indian Village, Lane Southern Orchards & Packing Co., and Masee Lane Gardens.

Highlights of the trip included Sprewell Bluff, Dripping Rocks, Yellow Jacket Shoals and Big Lazer Creek WMA, Magnolia and Bryants swamps and the Montezuma Bluffs Natural Area.

Paddlers camped at nearby schools, camps and community centers. Nightly activities included entertainment, games, and programs about the river's cultural and natural history. Joe Cook, who has traveled the length of the Chattahoochee and Etowah Rivers, led the trip. Paddlers experienced the Flint as never before:

Day 1: June 21: Pine Mountain Merengue - Perhaps the most scenic stretch of river in Georgia, this 14-mile jaunt offered breathtaking views of towering Pine Mountain.

Day 2: June 22: Sprewell Bluff Slide- Where there could be a dam, the Flint

now flows free past Sprewell Bluff, across 11-miles of Class I-II rapids and a portage around the infamous Class III obstacle dubbed Yellow Jacket Shoals.

Day 3: June 23: Po Bidy Polka- Paddlers navigated through stretches of flat water interrupted frequently by shoals and braided paths through numerous island complexes.

Day 4: June 24: Auchumpkee Cha Cha- Midway through this 12-mile paddle near Auchumpkee Creek, paddlers traded the rocky islands and shoals of the Piedmont for the sandbars and high bluffs of the Coastal Plain.

Day 5: June 25: Magnolia Swamp Stomp- Flanked by the massive Magnolia Swamp, this remote 18-mile paddle wound between forested banks where oxbow lakes, the remnants of the river's old channel, dot the map.

Day 6: June 26: Cut Off Conga- Twenty years ago, this 12-mile paddle would have been a 13-mile paddle; such is life on the Coastal Plain where rivers seek new paths to the sea.

Day 7: June 27: Montezuma Bluff Bump- The journey's final day was along Montezuma Bluffs, a 450ft-high ridge covered in hardwoods and draped in Spanish moss, ending between the river towns of Oglethorpe and Montezuma.

Paddlers raised almost \$10,000 for Georgia River Network and the new Flint Riverkeeper through a Canoe-A-Thon. Top money earners received prizes. Tom Beman, of Colbert GA, was the top fundraiser, winning a Wenonah canoe.

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream led a water monitoring and training project

throughout the week, certifying participants as "Adopt-A-Stream" monitors and documenting water quality along the trip. Ten Georgia teachers received scholarships to participate in the trip and receive Project WET and Adopt-A-Stream training. The scholarships were made possible by Oglethorpe Power.

With support from the Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation and Chattahoochee Nature Center, 20 underserved youth from Metro Atlanta ranging in age from 7 to 18 participated in the journey. Led by the Chattahoochee Nature Center, Girls, Inc. and the Outdoor Wisdom Leadership School, these youth enjoyed the experience of a lifetime while adding to the experience for other paddlers.

A special thanks goes to all the sponsors and partners who made the event a success: Georgia Power, Simmons Mattress Company, Tom's of Maine, Stack and Associates, Coca-Cola Enterprises, REM, Earth Fare, Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation, Hennessy Land Rover, Kettle Chips, Lake Allatoona Preservation Authority, Oglethorpe Power, China Clay Producers, Laura and Rutherford Seydel, Chattahoochee Nature Center, Outside World, Café Campesino, Patagonia, REI, Menasha Ridge Press, Garden and Gun Magazine, and Current Designs/Wenonah Canoes. Special Items: Bear Naked Granola and Sahale Snacks. Paddle Georgia Partners: Georgia Adopt A Stream, Project WET, and Georgia Canoeing Association.



Paddle Georgia 2008 participants at the Trip's End Celebration in Oglethorpe, GA. Photo: Joe Cook

State Moves Forward with Water Planning

Five days into the 40 day, 2008 legislative session, the House and Senate both passed resolutions adopting the Water Council Statewide Water Plan. Since that time, the state has moved forward with several elements of the Water Plan.

Regional Water Planning

The next step in the State's water planning is to conduct regional planning. The 4 main regional water planning actions over the next three years include resource assessments; designation of Regional Planning Councils; development of rules and guidance; and development of Regional Water Development and Conservation Plans.

EPD has moved forward and solicited private sector contracts for work in four main areas: Assimilative Capacity Water Quality Modeling and Water Quality Standard Review; Technical Guidance Documents, including guidance on Regional Water Planning, Water Conservation, Stormwater/ Green Infrastructure, Fertilizer Management Practices, and Return flows associated with Septic Systems and Land Application Systems; Groundwater Resource Assessments; and Surface Water Availability Modeling and Technical Analyses.

Water Planning Regions

On July 16, EPD finalized the boundaries for the regional water planning areas. Visit this link for a map and list of counties by region: www.georgiawaterplanning.org/. The Water Plan calls for regional water planning areas based on county boundaries instead of watershed boundaries. Georgia River Network and the Georgia Water Coalition advocated for regional planning using watershed boundaries, not political boundaries.

Region Council Nominations

On July 16, 2008, EPD issued a call for nominations for regional water planning council membership. Each council will have 25 members: 13 appointed by the Governor, and 6 each by the Lieutenant

Governor and the Speaker of the House. Eight of the 25 members are required to be city or county officials. According to the Statewide Water Plan, the nominees should include representatives from "agriculture, forestry, industry, commerce, local governments, water utilities, regional development centers, tourism, recreation, and environment." Nominees may be residents of any county with the exception of the counties in the now 15-county Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, because these members are designated by the 2001 Metro District statute.

According to EPD, nominees must meet the following minimum qualifications: have primary residency in the water planning region; commit to at least 3 years of continuous service; and commit to undergoing training on water issues.

Each Regional Council will be responsible for drafting their region's "Water Development and Conservation Plan" that will guide water management in the their region. EPD will announce the membership of the 10 regional water planning council membership on January 1, 2009 and the councils will draft regional plans beginning in the spring of

2009.

The deadline for nominations is August 29 and forms are at: www.georgiawaterplanning.org.

Water Conservation Implementation Plan (WCIP)

Under "Water Demand Management Practices" section of the Statewide Water Plan, EPD is called on to develop a Water Conservation and Implementation Plan (WCIP). The WCIP is not a regulatory document but instead is to be used as a resource for the regional water planning councils. Additionally, the DNR Board is called on to consider rules based on the WCIP and the Regional Water Councils are called on to prepare their Regional Water Development and Conservation plans (the Regional Plans) to include the provisions in the WCIP. In May, EPD began the process of drafting parts of the WCIP for seven major water use sectors.

Follow this link for information on the WCIP:

www.conservewatergeorgia.net/Documents/wcip.html



Low water levels on the Flint forced paddlers to walk in addition to paddling during this year's Paddle Georgia. Photo: Joe Cook

5 Things You Can Do to Make a Difference for Georgia's Streams

Protecting Georgia's rivers and streams can't be left to the "professional" water advocates if we want to see meaningful change in the quality and quantity of Georgia's waters. If you've been wondering what you can do to become a part of the solution, here are some ideas:

#1: Monitor Who is Polluting your River

The Clean Water Act requires that anyone planning to discharge pollution into a water body through "any discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance" (e.g. a pipe) receive a permit. This includes municipalities, industrial facilities and significant animal waste operations. All new and renewed "discharge permits" are subject to public comment.

What Can You Do?

- Learn who is seeking or renewing discharge permits in your river, what they want to discharge, and when existing permits are up for renewal.
- Review and comment on all permit applications impacting your river.

#2: Reduce Polluted Runoff

Polluted runoff comes from rainwater that picks up contaminants and sediments from the land and deposits them in water bodies. This type of pollution is regulated under the Federal Clean Water Act. In Georgia, major sources of runoff come from your neighborhood driveways and yards (fast-moving water picks up oil and other chemicals off your driveway and fertilizers and pesticides off your lawn and carries them into local streams) as well as construction sites that aren't properly maintained.

What Can You Do?

- Get trained in Get the Dirt Out, a program that helps Georgia citizens spot sources of polluted runoff on local construction sites and get the problems fixed. For more information on this program, go to www.getthedirtout.org, or call Jesslyn at GRN at 706.549.4508.
- Learn about techniques you can use on your property to keep rainwater on your land. For more information on this,

contact the Watershed Protection Branch of the EPD (404.675.6240) and ask for their Life at the Water's Edge guide to stream care in Georgia.

- Encourage your county or municipality to adopt strict stormwater ordinances.

#3: Get Involved in State or Countywide Campaigns that Impact Your Community

Strong statewide or local river/water protection laws and programs make it easier for your community members and environmental groups to protect your watershed. Your voice is needed to demonstrate that there are citizens across the state who are looking out for the health of our rivers. And yet, far too many critical initiatives fail each year because not enough people speak up to ensure state laws reflect their values and priorities.

What Can You Do?

- Sign up for the Georgia Environmental Action Network (GEAN) to receive action alert emails about the issues you care about. Sign up at www.protectgeorgia.net.
- Stay involved with Georgia River Network. We keep our members up to date on efforts to get strong protections for Georgia's rivers.
- Become involved in the Georgia Water Coalition: www.garivers.org/gawater. The Georgia Water Coalition is a group of 165+ organizations working together to ensure that Georgia waters are managed fairly for all Georgians, with the interest of all citizens, existing businesses and farms in mind.
- Write letters to the editor of your local newspapers to keep water issues in the local press.
- Let the people who represent you know what you think! Call, write and email your representatives!

#4: Organize a River Clean Up

If there's a local stretch of river or stream that you've noticed is pretty trashed, take the initiative and organize a river clean up! It can be a fun way to

meet your neighbors while enhancing the beauty and health of your local streams.

What Can You Do?

- Get involved in Georgia's Rivers Alive program: www.riversalive.org. Rivers Alive is a volunteer cleanup program that facilitates river clean ups all over the state. October is River clean up month all over the nation, so start planning yours today

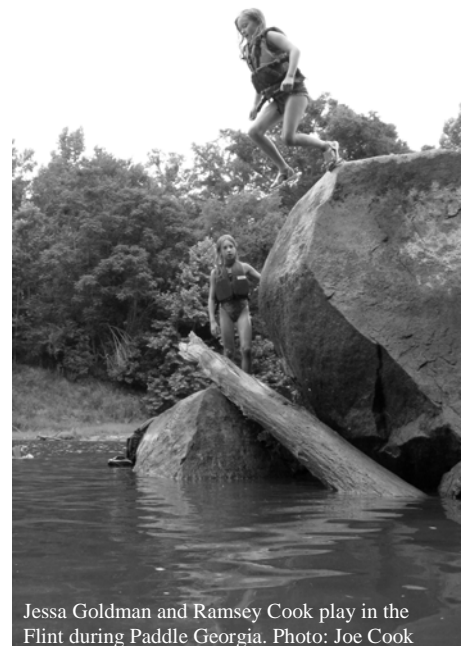
#5: Monitor the Quality of Your River or Stream

Water quality monitoring can be a powerful river protection tool. Monitoring can help define the problems facing a river, pinpoint the sources of those problems, or help you measure the impact of river protection or restoration activities.

What Can You Do?

- Become a certified Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) monitor and learn how to monitor the health of a stream. Find an AAS coordinator in your area, get certified, and adopt the stream of your choice at www.aesl.ces.uga.edu/aascd/home.html#.

Thanks to the River Alliance of Wisconsin for their contributions to this piece.



Jessa Goldman and Ramsey Cook play in the Flint during Paddle Georgia. Photo: Joe Cook

Grassroots Spotlight: New Flint Riverkeeper

Earlier this spring and through the summer, a dedicated group, joined by their devotion to the Flint River, began work creating a new Flint Riverkeeper. On the final evening of Paddle Georgia 2008, President Jimmy Carter joined a crowd of 200 people, including paddlers who had just finished their week-long adventure on the Flint, to celebrate the formation of the new group. The night was a culmination of many exciting events throughout the week that drew attention, raised awareness, and left the Flint better protected. A week earlier, 325+ paddlers began their week-long, 95 mile adventure down the river. In the middle of the week the Waterkeeper Alliance granted the Flint Riverkeeper their Riverkeeper license. And at the Paddle Georgia Trip's End Celebration, President Carter addressed the group about the importance of the Flint River and his fight to protect it from being dammed in 1970s.

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Waterkeeper Alliance said "The Waterkeeper Alliance is excited that such a dedicated, strong group of grassroots citizens has mobilized to form the Flint Riverkeeper to be the eyes, ears, and voice for this extremely important river." The Waterkeeper Alliance is the national organization that connects and supports local Waterkeeper programs to provide a voice for waterways and their communities worldwide.

The time is right for the Flint Riverkeeper. Recently, plans have been revived by Georgia Congressmen Lynn Westmoreland and Nathan Deal to introduce legislation that would "re-authorize" three dams on the Flint River and its tributaries. The River and Harbor Act of 1945 authorized three power-storage reservoirs on the Flint River above Albany - Sprewell Bluff, Auchumpkee Creek and Potato Creek. The most controversial was Sprewell Bluff, a popular scenic and fishing spot on the Fall Line that Paddle Georgia participants experienced first hand.

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The Flint River is a critical piece of the contentious ACF, or Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint, "water wars" between Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Many fear that that the Flint will be looked to once again as a place to build dams and store its water in reservoirs, to take the pressure off the Chattahoochee River, and its reservoirs, to provide flows into the Apalachicola River. The Flint River joins the Chattahoochee River at Lake Seminole at the Georgia-Florida state-line and then becomes Florida's Apalachicola River.

Georgia River Network decided to hold Paddle Georgia 2008 on the Flint River to raise awareness about the river. It was one of the only major river basins in Georgia without a river protection organization in place. Georgia River Network supports citizens with forming new river protection organizations and supports Georgia's 30+ river organizations that already exist. "Our hope was that by bringing Paddle Georgia to the Flint, an effort to protect the Flint would rise up. We are so glad

that a Flint Riverkeeper is now in place to be a voice for this special river," said Ingle.

Each year, Paddle Georgia proceeds benefit local watershed groups. This year, through Paddle Georgia participants soliciting donations from friends, family and co-workers for the Canoe-A-Thon, and a portion of the proceeds, Paddle Georgia provided the Flint Riverkeeper with over \$6,600 in seed money.

The Flint Riverkeeper is well on its way. Group leaders held a forum earlier in the spring to gauge support for a Riverkeeper by citizens in the river basin. The answer was a resounding "yes!" Since then, the group has applied for, and received, its Riverkeeper license, formed its board of directors, and began fundraising to hire a Riverkeeper and begin their much needed work. Georgia River Network has provided support to help them form.

The Flint Riverkeeper is Georgia's 7th Riverkeeper organization.

For more information or to join the Flint Riverkeeper, contact Paul Deloach at pdeloach@pellicanoconstruction.com.



The Flint River at Sprewell Bluff. Photo by Tom Wilson

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 8/08

GRN Welcomes Jan Kearce to the Staff

Jan Kearce joined Georgia River Network as the Director of Development in July 2008. In this position her primary responsibilities include all activities related to fundraising - working with the Board, major donors, foundations, corporations and individuals to raise funds to support the Engage, Empower and Advocate programs and administration of Georgia River Network. Jan is originally from Florida and has lived in Georgia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and, more recently, Maine. She graduated from the University of Georgia's School of Journalism with a degree in Radio, TV and Film; has a Master's Degree from American University / NTL in Human Resource Development; and is working on a Leadership Coaching certification through Georgetown University. Jan's work experience includes positions in both the private and not-for-profit sectors. Most recently she worked with the Hurricane Island Outward Bound School and the national Outward Bound organization. Her leadership experience with Outward Bound includes Director of Human Resources, Director of Development, Director of Program and Safety, and Director of Transition. She also has experience with coaching and consulting to achieve leadership, team and organizational potential.

Georgia River Network Announces 08-09 Re-grants

Thanks to a grant from the Turner Foundation, Georgia River Network is pleased to offer 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. Grants will range from \$2,000 to \$10,000. Up to \$75,000 will be awarded to grassroots river groups through the grant program. Deadline for applications: September 10, 2008. Funds will be disbursed to grantees in October. Projects must be completed by March 1, 2009. For more information, visit <http://www.garivers.org/resources/tools/grantprogram.html> or contact Dana Skelton at 706-549-4508.

Save the Date: GRN 09 Conference in Athens

Each year, Georgia River Network (GRN) puts on a conference for water advocates all over the state of Georgia. GRN is committed to providing all you water lovers with an interesting and compelling annual conference, full of useful information, interesting speakers and lots of time to talk to one another about the issues that affect us all.

We are pleased to announce that February 20-21, 2009, GRN's 9th Annual Conference will be held in Athens, Georgia on the University of Georgia campus. Details will follow, but please email us at info@garivers.org if you do not currently get email alerts from GRN, but would like to be kept informed about conference details.

If you would like to have a say in the programming for the 2009 conference, please fill out the online survey—it only takes 5 minutes! To access the survey, go to www.garivers.org, and click on the link labeled "Take the GRN Conference 2009 Survey" in the yellow box. The survey will go offline on September 15th, so let us know what you think!

Georgia River Network
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10 Year Anniversary
A Decade of Working
Together for Healthy Rivers!

Upcoming Events

September 24, 2008
Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Patron Appreciation Dinner
<http://www.chattahoochee.org/getinvolved5c.htm>

October: Rivers Alive Clean Up Month
<http://www.riversalive.org>

October 3-4, 2008
Symposium-Aquatic Conservation Science: Merging Theory and Application
<http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu/helfmeyer.htm>

October 3-6, 2008
Coastal Plain Meander, a 4-day trip down the Savannah
<http://www.savannahriverkeeper.org>

October 4, 2008
Altamaha Riverkeeper Clam Jam
www.altamahariverkeeper.org

October 14-16, 2008
Southeast Stormwater Institute - Savannah
Visit www.cwp.org.

October 23, 2008
RiversRock, a benefit for Ogeechee Canoochee Riverkeeper, Satilla Riverkeeper and Savannah Riverkeeper
Moon River Brewing-Savannah
For information visit www.riversrock.org.