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## Georgia Chapter

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Footnotes Issue #71: March 29, 2013

### Environmental Victories Abound in 2013 Session



The Georgia Chapter's legislative team of Contract Lobbyist Neill Herring and Volunteer Legislative Chapter Chair Mark Woodall worked tirelessly to keep the bad bills at bay, and this year was one of their most successful. Here are just a few of the highlights.

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- We stopped HB 264 and 265, which would have forced MARTA to privatize specific functions, jeopardizing federal funding. It also would have given the Governor a larger role on the board, even though the state still would provide no funding for MARTA.
- We fixed HB 402 to keep coastal marsh protections in place, while allowing the movie industry a more streamline path to get permission to film on the coast.
- At 11:55 p.m. on Sine Die, the Senate passed HB 276, which fixes the problem of the General Assembly stealing the revenues generated by fees collected for specific purposes, for example, the \$1 fee for tire disposal. The bill reduces the amount the state is allowed to collect every year they don't appropriate those fees to clean up tire piles, as the fee was intended to do.
- And of course, the big ticket item this year was SB 213, which dealt with the Flint River Drought Protection Act. This bad bill would have allowed private companies to do expensive experiments called "aquifer storage and recovery" and take away the property rights that landowners on Georgia rivers have to reasonable use of the water. The Georgia Water Coalition generated opposition to this proposal in every corner of the state, and the proponents were unable to secure enough support to bring it to the floor for debate. It will go back to the House Agriculture Committee for the 2014 session.

The Georgia Chapter is the only statewide environmental organization with two full-time people at the legislature who work on every environmental issue. From transportation and energy to stream buffers, from ethics reform to the budget, our legislative team is helping protect the Georgia we love. [Please support this important work by making a donation today](#).



### QuickLinks

Congratulations to our Centennial Group's recent Extraordinary Volunteer Watershed

**Effort Award from Georgia Adopt-A-Stream!** The dedicated members of the Sierra Club Cobb Centennial Group, Ina Allison, Jeff Hite, Stacey Haire, Tim Phillips, Carina O'Bara, Delon Barfuss, and Charles Roebuck, work together to make a solid core of chemical, bacterial, and biological monitoring volunteers. This group has consistently monitored three sites on Rottenwood Creek since 2004, with 324 monitoring events to date, but their efforts extend beyond the monthly site visits. These volunteers have walked the entire watershed and photo documented the length of the main channel. Click [here](#) to learn more about the program and get involved.



## Sierra Club Meetings

**Smart Energy Team Meeting**, Monday, April 1, 7:00 p.m.  
Robert Feria, [rferia@gmail.com](mailto:rferia@gmail.com)

**Atlanta Inner City Outings (ICO)**, Monday April 8, 6:00 p.m.  
Naomi Bock - Chair, [atlantaico@gmail.com](mailto:atlantaico@gmail.com)

**Wildlands Committee Meeting**, Monday, April 15, 7:00 p.m.  
Mike Murdock - Chair, [murdock1@mindspring.com](mailto:murdock1@mindspring.com)

**RAIL**, Monday, April 22, 7:00 p.m.  
David Emory - Chair, [david.emory@gmail.com](mailto:david.emory@gmail.com)

**Fundraising Committee**, Wednesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m.  
Sybil Cypress, [sybil.cypress@sierraclub.org](mailto:sybil.cypress@sierraclub.org)

## Other Events



**Saturday April 6 - Take a Ride on the Lovejoy** - The proposed commuter rail line connecting Atlanta to Macon has been in the works for over a decade. If Clayton were to join MARTA, the missing piece of the operating money would finally be in place for these plans to move forward. Take a ride to check out some of the stops along the way! We'll depart via bus from the East Point MARTA station and make stops at the Ford Plant/Hapeville, Fort Gillem, Clayton State/Reynolds Nature Preserve, and Jonesboro.

**Saturday April 6 - Coastal River Paddle on Skidaway** - Our Georgia coasts are an integral part of our state's beauty and healthy environment. Join the Coastal Group and guest speakers, Dr. Clark Alexander, professor at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography and David Kyler of the Center for a Sustainable Coast, for a discussion of the impacts that climate change is already having on our Georgia coast. This three mile loop takes you south on the Skidaway River from Butterbean Beach and up into a small tidal creek where the low tide reveals large oyster reefs where shorebirds like to feed, continuing past a little marsh hammock and then back out to the river and Pigeon Island to view nesting bald eagles before returning to the start.





**Saturday April 13 - Sierra Club 101** - Each quarter we host Sierra Club 101, a presentation about our organization and chance to learn about our forms of activism. We would like to take an opportunity to also highlight a bit of history about our founder and our vision for a more sustainable Georgia! Join us and learn more about the Sierra Club and how to get involved in our local efforts. Bring a friend! Breakfast will be provided.



**Saturday April 20 - Etowah Paddle** - The Beyond Coal Campaign and Coosa River Basin Initiative will lead a beautiful 10-mile jaunt down the Etowah River outside Euharlee Georgia on arguably the most scenic stretch of the Etowah in Bartow County. This stretch of river features numerous Native American fish weirs, the Island Ford island complex, a beautiful "rock garden", and has had numerous otter and bald eagle sightings. This section is also highlighted by a large threat to Georgia's precious water resources: one of the largest carbon polluting coal-fired power plants in the country, Plant Bowen. We will spend the early morning examining the threat of archaic coal-power to Georgia's beautiful fresh waters, and the afternoon exploring the scenic natural wild river.



**Saturday April 27 - Ellicot Rock Wilderness Hike** - Join our Wildlands and Wildlife Committee for a 7 mile moderate hike as we explore Georgia's only designated Wild and Scenic River, the Upper Chattooga, which forms the border of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia in the middle of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness. Brent Martin, Southern Appalachian Regional Director for the Wilderness Society based in Sylva, NC, will provide an overview of some of the threats faced in this area and how increased protection is needed to make sure that commercial encroachment and overuse do not occur. Wilderness areas are necessary protectors of wildlife, bio-diversity, and watersheds and provide critical habitat corridors that will be needed for species to adapt as our climate continues to change.

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