

**CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA**  
**Annual Narrative Report - FY 2003**

**Summary**

Fiscal year 2003 presented an exciting and challenging year for the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) and its staff. August 15, 2003 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area. On Friday August 15th, the park hosted a special luncheon to honor the individuals that played significant roles in the establishment of the park. Over 150 guests viewed exhibits and demonstrations followed by a luncheon with several guest speakers. A special resolution by Georgia Governor Sonny Purdue was presented by Commissioner Lonice Barrett of the Department of Natural Resources. The resolution acknowledged the 25th anniversary of the park and its significance to the people of Georgia.

On August 16 and 17, anniversary events continued as the park hosted an open house and family celebration at the Chattahoochee River Environmental Education Center. Approximately 2,000 visitors endured the hot, humid summer weekend enjoying a variety of activities including wildlife demonstrations, children's arts and crafts, blacksmith demonstration, Native American dancing, storytelling and an amazing performance by the Centennial High School Chamber Orchestra. The weekend was a great success with many participants requesting it become an annual event.

Increasing serious impacts and threats coupled with serious budget reductions created a situation in which impacts to the park far outpaced our ability to effectively and proactively address the threats. Field staff and citizens identified significant issues and impacts to the park, including over 200 sewage spills, which dumped millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries within the park. Park waters did not meet federal water standards for safe recreational use for at least 37 percent of the time. The parks BacteriAlert program continuous to be very successful and is a critically important part of how the park's 3,000,000 visitors safely use the river. Unfortunately, this program is not base funded and will have to be reduced in scope if funds are not made available for future years.

Encroachment and construction practices by developers and impacts of neighborhood residences and local agencies on the river, along with exotic vegetation, erosion, and limited park staff, limited time and funds for planning and compliance pose serious threats to the park's natural and cultural resources. Park staff numbers are small and actual amount of time spent in the field is limited. The "Catch 22" is that the more time spent by staff (biologist/rangers/maintenance workers) out in the park working on issues, commensurately, the more issues and impacts that are identified. With the serious staffing and funding shortages at CHAT, only a few of the incidents/impacts are adequately documented or investigated. Therefore, the conditions continue to get worse, with minimal progress in protecting the park or deterring future impacts. An example of staffing shortages is that in 1988 the park had 13 patrol rangers on staff, compared to 5 funded patrol rangers on staff in 2002.

Considerable time was spent by senior park management in establishing and maintaining working relationships with various public agencies and private entities. Examples include:

- Met with DeKalb County Water & Sewer Department to discuss renovation and replacement of their water treatment facility adjacent to park's Holcomb Bridge unit. Issues included site improvement, possible land swap, easement rights and traffic safety.
- Met with Fulton County Lands Office to solidify conservation easement on eleven acre property the county owns directly between the Island Ford unit and the approximately 56 acre Coward tract the park acquired in 2001.
- Met with Cobb County Commissioner and Department of Transportation staff to resolve NPS trespass on Riverview Condominium Association property and to discuss traffic flow improvements along Columns Drive.
- Continued meetings with Fulton County Parks and Recreation staff and representatives of Sandy Springs Civic Association concerning the possibility of a pedestrian bridge crossing near Morgan Falls Dam. Assisted in developing Scope of Work for contracted study and in preparation for public meetings to introduce concept that supports linkage opportunity with NPS lands in Cobb County.
- Continued active involvement with the Tri-State Water Allocation Compact and representatives of several federal agencies to maintain NPS presence and role as a player in Tri-State water matters involving the Chattahoochee River.
- Continued meetings with Cobb County and other partners concerning a trail link at Rottenwood Creek. Once constructed, the park's trails within the Palisades Unit will connect with the greater Cobb County regional trail system.
- Continued participation on City of Duluth task force to develop and implement the conceptual plan for a proposed Greenway connecting the park's Abbotts Bridge and McGinnis Ferry Units.
- Continued participation on North Metro Greenway committee to develop plans for model greenways for the Atlanta Region that will link natural areas, parks, and trails in the city of Roswell and Cobb, Fulton, DeKalb, and Gwinnett counties and NPS lands.
- Continued participation on Georgia Regional Transportation Authority's Interagency Chartering Committee for their Northwest Connectivity Study, a regional planning initiative focused on determining the best alternatives to improve transportation connections within the Northwest Corridor of metropolitan Atlanta region, from both transportation and land use planning perspectives.
- Continued participation on Georgia Department of Transportation's Citizens Advisory Committee which provides input into the concept for the Johnson Ferry Road and Abernathy Road widening projects. This included assisting with several public meetings held during the year.

- Continued meetings with the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Cobb County, Douglas County, and the Trust for Public Land for the purpose of developing a Tri-County Chattahoochee River Corridor Plan, a greenspace initiative which encompasses ten miles of the river, extending from the confluence of the Chattahoochee River and Peachtree Creek to the Old Campbellton historic site.

The Superintendent also served in the following capacities:

- Continues as NPS Coordinator for the State of Georgia. Initiated planning for first annual State/NPS Partnership Meeting.
- Served on National Park Service Southeast Region Leadership Committee established to provide requested advice and services to the Regional Director on regional matters.
- Participated in the planning and coordination of the first Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group workshop involving all Department of Interior agencies, the Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Forest Service.
- Participated in the Second Annual Parks Leadership Conference sponsored by the Piedmont Park Conservancy and the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites to promote local conservation efforts.
- Participated in Georgia State Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee.
- Served on committee to plan, coordinate and present the New Superintendent's Course held in Astoria, Oregon in June.

The park continues to maintain or make progress in such matters as work force diversity and safety. The draft GMP was completed and received park, Regional and Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC) review.

**Land Acquisition**

Name	Tract #	Acres	Purchase Price	Date
Glass	116-03	73.84	\$6,000,000	11/07/2002
Glass	116-04	12.00	\$1,600,000	11/07/2002
Ashley	113-65	14.00	\$ 476,000	12/26/2002
Pruitt	113-64	5.16	\$ 243,000	12/23/2002
Childress exchange	102-43/44	<u>n/a</u>	<u>n/a</u>	02/25/2003
Total		105.00	\$8,319,000	

## SCIENCE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION

### **Staffing**

Fiscal year 2003 saw several significant staff changes in the Science and Resource Management (SRM) Division.

- Hired Nina Hemphill as a Term employee to coordinate the park's natural and cultural compliance activities.
- Biological Science Technician Lauren Theodore left the National Park Service to enter graduate school. Biological Science Technician Sandra Sneckenberger left the NPS for a promotion within the Fish and Wildlife Service. Due to budget constraints, these positions are still vacant.
- We hired four Student Conservation Association (SCA) Interns: Lael Vetter spent three months under a PLC grant conducting Geographic Information System (GIS) activities relating to mapping kudzu; David Degennaro spent three months conducting resource assessments under a corporate sponsored grant; Megan Sommers spent three months also on a corporate sponsored grant conducting hydrologic and water quality monitoring assistance; and Sara McCort spent one year conducting boundary surveys and resource assessment surveys and incorporating them into GIS.
- Park volunteers include long-term GIS volunteer Tim Fenn, who worked on trail maps and boundary issues; Jennifer Pylant volunteered for boundary surveys and restoration events; and Dave Carlin volunteered with boundary surveys and the park's anniversary event.

### **Water Quality - BacteriAlert**

The BacteriAlert program proceeded well in FY2003. The BacteriAlert is the cooperative water quality monitoring and public notification project that the NPS has been working with the U.S. Geological Survey, the private non-profit Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeepers and the Georgia Department of Environmental Quality, with financial assistance from the Trust for Public Lands. Daily water samples are collected and analyzed for *E. coli* bacteria. From these lab results, the public is notified via website and by on-site information/warning signs (changed daily) at all major water access points on the river. The public is able to utilize this information in order to make an informed decision as to their degree of comfort and tolerance that they are willing to accept for themselves and their families. A new remote operated flashing BacteriAlert warning sign was bought and tested. This new BacteriAlert warning sign has promising results by reducing driving and staff time when signs have to be changed.

During an eight-month period during February to September, the park switched to a water quality alert program based on real-time turbidity readings from USGS dataloggers located at the sample sites. A mathematical formula is being tested and modified that correlates turbidity to bacterial levels. This is a less labor-intensive method and alerts the public on a real time basis. Also, the park lowered the water sampling intensity to three days a week. In October, the park switched back to the actual water sample e-coli results, as additional work on the mathematical correlation formula was required during non-draught conditions.

The summary of the BacteriAlert program activities is as follows:

- The Medlock Bridge Sample site was out of compliance with established federal standards for recreational waters a total of 19 percent of the time.
- The Paces Mill site was out of compliance a total of 37 percent of the time.

#### **Inventory and Monitoring**

Due to recent inventories and new GIS capabilities, park staff discovered 108 new populations of rare and threatened plants within the park. This amounts to a 415 percent increase in protected plants in one year alone! The protected species includes American ginseng, pink lady slipper, bay star vine, and Georgia aster. This highlights the little known fact that Chattahoochee River NRA, while experiencing some of the highest visitation of the National Park Service and is located within metropolitan Atlanta, the park also contains high biodiversity.

- Approximately 40 pink ladyslipper orchids were rescued from private property threatened by residential development. These protected plants were transplanted in the Jones Bridge Unit into suitable protected habitats.
- Began mapping, using GPS/GIS technologies existing easements and rights-of-way in the park. The project's goal is to identify what areas within the disturbance corridors could be restored or managed as wildlife/wildflower habitats.
- Oversaw baseline surveys for Reptiles, amphibian, fish, small mammal, bird, and bats.
- With new GIS capabilities, park staff created a GIS vegetation map based on 1998 aerial photography. This baseline map has been extremely useful for the Wildland Urban Interface project and drafting of the Vegetation Management Plan.
- Park staff mapped all water intakes, water outfalls, and docks within the 48-mile reach of the Chattahoochee River within Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area.
- Continued the park's on-going effort of inventorying and mapping streams and general stream conditions within the park.
- Baseline WQ monitoring of Cabin Creek. Cabin Creek is one of the more pristine creeks within CHAT, as most of its water shed is within park boundaries.

#### **Cooperative Activities**

Considerable time was spent by park management in establishing and maintaining working relationships with various public agencies and private entities. This included, but not limited to: attendance on regional coordination meetings, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Complex Projects meeting; meetings with the Corps over stream classifications; Fish and Wildlife Service partnership for the development, management and control strategies for the aggressive and exotic Asian rice eel; native endemic Shoal Bass reintroduction; Morgan Falls pedestrian bridge planning efforts; participation on the Duluth Greenway

Advisory Committee; assisted high school science classes with field projects; participated in the USGS National Water Quality Monitoring Day; initiated an oral history of a long-term resident; coordination meetings with organizations wanting to move the Holcomb Bridge Water Intake facility; worked with the Solicitor's Office and corporate neighbors in straightening out complex easement ownership deeds; participation on the Network Resource Steering Committee; participation on the Georgia TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) Technical Advisory Committee; as well as assisting numerous landowners concerning property, lands, and land acquisition. An example of a success is Cobb County is now more responsive to sewer spills within the park.

- Formed a partnership with the Old Castle Corporation and CH2MHill for the restoration of the Johnson Ferry wetlands and the construction of interpretive wetland walks. They will be donating approximately one million dollars in cash and in-kind services to ensure this restoration is successful.
- Extensive dealings and meetings with Regional Office, Water Resources, and the Regional Solicitor's Office staff over water intake, water withdrawal issues facing the park. This also involved producing many briefing and position papers for a variety of audiences.
- Worked with Cobb County and Cousins Properties Incorporated in the settlement of various stormwater, sewer easement, and resource impact issues that occur within the Cochran Shoals Unit of the park.
- SRM staff assisted in the planning and organizing of the Safe Water Seminar, a collaborative effort between the National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Georgia Environmental Protection Division, The Georgia Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.
- Coordinated with Cousins Properties Incorporated for installation of a new sewer line within the Cochran Shoals Unit; the City of Roswell for the development of their Garrard Landing Park and their placement of several pedestrian bridges/linkages with the park.
- Working with the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council, Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Adopt-A-Stream program, Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Keep Georgia Beautiful program, the Youth Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association, Atlanta Botanical Gardens, and a host of individual volunteers, exotic species are being eliminated within the Paces Mill area of the park.
- Met with the EPA and assisted the initiation of a special EPA initiative (the "Chattahoochee River Initiative") that will focus EPA funds and effort on the enforcement of certain water-related violations and resource impacts occurring within the park.
- With Hand on Atlanta, SRM staff initiated a new restoration initiative focused solely upon the park. Various corporate sponsors and partners are anticipated.
- Met with Georgia's Department of Environmental Quality (DNR) and Gwinnett County staff to discuss a proposed Intergovernmental Agreement between DNR and the county regarding having the DNR turn over ownership of the West tract over to the NPS.

- Received several corporate sponsored SCAs, including Unilever and Suntory. In addition, we received a PLC grant for SCA interns.
- Further coordination and planning for the restoration of the riverbank within the Cochran Shoals unit via corporate streambank mitigation funds. The involvement of greater funds and partners within FY2003 allowed us to expand the scope of the project and utilize more resource-friendly restoration techniques such as natural channel design.
- The spring 2003 issue of *Wildland Weeds*, a national magazine devoted to native plant conservation, featured an article on vegetation projects involving partnerships within the park.

#### Research

- There were eleven new scientific research permits issued in FY2003.
- The Atlanta Botanical Garden has agreed to cultivate Georgia aster seeds for the park. Georgia aster is listed as a candidate species on the Endangered Species List and the populations found in CHAT are some of the only left of public land in the world. The seeds were collected on a Fulton County Right-of-Way that is just outside of the park. The plants will be transplanted into suitable protected habitats within the park while increasing the number of populations located on federal lands. In addition, analysis of propagation techniques and growth rates data will be collected for continuation of propagation and introduction efforts.

#### Resources Management

The primary emphasis in submitting project funds was to receive alternate sources of funding, other than Fee, of existing SRM activities. SRM received project funds from Small Park NRPP (four projects totaling \$68,000); CRPP (\$50,000); Water Resources (\$100,000); and Regular Cyclic Maintenance (\$50,000). Funding was also received from 80-percent Fee money, restitution and donations. One donation was for \$10,000 from the Trust for Public Lands. We were awarded a \$64,340 "Pulling Together" grant for exotic plant removal involving cooperative partnership, however needed to turn it back because we were unable to meet the required non-federal match.

- The State of Georgia adopted new sewer spill notification requirements. In response, SRM staff initiated a draft park policy regarding procedures for responding and managing sewer spills within the park.
- SRM staff provided extensive guidance and support for other park programs, in particular the park's trail program and to assist all park staff with compliance support, as well as wetland delineations, trail design planning, a step down ramps construction project, Threatened and Endangered species surveys, and other high priority projects, etc. This level of cross-divisional support was in spite losing two Biological Science Technicians in FY2003.
- Produced a draft park policy on dock use and permitting. This involved coordinating with many diverse agencies and organizations.
- Developed carrying capacities for fishing within the lower reaches of the park in support of a proposed public fishing tournament.
- Appeared on news programs (Fox 5 News and NBC's Channel 2 News) and were

interviewed several times regarding various resource issues.

- Attended training that assists the park in better meeting our survey and compliance needs. Other training authorized SRM staff to operate boats, cultural compliance training, as well as to remain current in firefighting response.
- Evaluated two separate proposals to accept "fee in lieu of detention" options from neighboring developers and county officials.
- Park staffs were a significant contributor to the decision for the Atlantic Coast Network in obtaining an Exotic Plant Management Team.
- Initiated meetings and discussions over the FERC relicensing of Morgan Falls Dam and which will potentially involve mitigation funds and activities within the park. SRM staff also investigated and resolved rumored safety issues of Morgan Falls Dam.
- Implemented and coordinated an Instream-flow Study that investigates and assesses the potential biologic impacts to park resources based upon different river flow conditions. As part of thesis project, SRM staff selected the research sites for this project, based upon mapped habitats.

#### **Restoration**

Several restorations were successfully accomplished in 2003 at Vickery Creek, Island Ford, Abbotts Bridge, and Jones Bridge. EcoWatch volunteers, a division of AmericaCorps, planted 2,150 native trees in various disturbed areas throughout the park. Georgia Forestry Commission donated the trees to improve public lands. The restoration events were a great success in slowing erosion and improving the natural forest conditions.

- SRM staff organized and initiated the Chasmanthium project. This restoration project is designed to have partners propagate native Chasmanthium grass for use to transplant for the purpose of out-competing aggressive non-native grasses within the park's floodplain.

#### **Cultural Resources**

- SRM oversaw the contract for the stabilization of the historic Ivy Mill site.
- Stabilization of two remaining walls of the Ivy Mills historic site was completed. Actions included the removal of vegetation from the site, installation of erosion control devices in the raceway, pointing and capping of the walls, and installation of a chain link fence. A multi-use trail connecting the City of Roswell parks will be constructed adjacent to the Ivy Mills historic site.
- SRM staff completed a contract for archeologists to survey proposed Wildland Urban Interface projects throughout the park units.
- All Blue Ridge Parkway museum collections have been removed from the Bally Building near the dispatch office.

#### **Impact Mitigation**

- There were 94 damage assessments within FY2003. Among these 94, 69 are

still considered open, while 25 (27%) were resolved and considered closed. SRM staff reported and produced 66 (70%) of these 94 assessments.

- Approximately \$12,000 was collected, in five separate incidents, in restitution funds for damages to park property. Damages included poaching, damages to vegetation, encroachment damages, to the careless setting of a fire. In addition, several incidents are underway, including erosion issues, encroachments, impacts to the Sope Creek Ruins due to improper stormwater management. We are also working cooperatively with entities to avoid restitution settlements. A formal agreement with General Electric and Cousins Properties resulted in the collection of restoration (cooperatively presented restitution) funds that will enable the park to restore inadvertently damaged by the construction of their non-authorized trail in the park.
- Worked to resolve several outstanding sand and gravel dredging issues facing the park.
- Negotiated with an adjacent developer for a win-win situation involving the interpretation of flowage easements within the park.
- SRM Staff worked with Cobb County to resolve damage to Sibley Creek that occurred when portions of two abandoned pipelines that crossed the stream were removed without prior notification of park staff.
- Initiated and nearly completed an intense inventory of the encroachments within the Cochran Shoals Unit.

#### **Safety**

- SRM staff completed writing Job Hazard Analyses.
- There were 389 hazard trees removed within the boundaries of Chattahoochee River NRA. The park held chainsaw and felling safety trainings for park staff and associated private tree felling companies. Park staff felled 368 trees while contractors felled 21 trees (5%). The park used \$50,000 of Regular Cyclic Maintenance Funds were utilized to mitigate hazard trees.
- The park developed an Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity" (IDIQ) contract document for hazard tree removal in the park.

#### **WUI**

The park initiated a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Environmental Assessment in 2003. The park identified 14 potential WUI project sites throughout the park. To be compliant with the National Environmental Policy Act, the park analyzed the effects of the Wildland Urban Interface Program. SRM arranged and coordinated a hazardous fuels assessment for the entire park, using detailed Forest Service Fire Management employees, as well as our own staff. SRM staff drafted the dominant portion of an Environmental Assessment for this project.

#### **Compliance**

- SRM staff was able to hire and fill a full time (Term) Compliance Coordinator for the park.
- 50 NEPA Categorical Exclusions and one Finding of No Significant Impact

(FONSI) statements were completed and one Environmental Assessment was drafted. There were six Section 106 cultural planning documents completed.

**Partnerships**

An updated and revised cooperative agreement was signed with the Friends of the Chattahoochee River. The group was formerly known as the Friends of the Geosphere. With the name change for the education center (CREEC), the group changed their name. In addition, the original cooperative agreement had expired. One other notable change to the agreement includes the expansion of support to the entire park for environmental education and not solely focused on the education center.

**ADMINISTRATION**

**Staffing**

In Fiscal Year 2003, the Office Automation Assistant position remained vacant in the division.

**Fiscal**

Chattahoochee River NRA managed a total of \$4,288,910.00 from a variety of fund sources. These funds are broken out into the following groups:

Base Funds:

Fiscal Year	Base	Assessments	Final Operating Funds	Percentage Used for Personnel
2003	2,836,000.00	96,700.00	2,739,300.00	83%

Soft Money:

Approved Funded Projects	Amount
Basement Rehab	224,400.00
Rehab of ADA (OPS deck)	10,000.00
Install and replace signs on a cyclic basis	17,000.00
Cyclic Replacement/trash	51,144.00
Removal of hazardous trees	50,000.00
Construct a GIS Database	16,500.00
Control Exotic Asian Rice Eel	24,500.00
Document Land Use Easements	24,000.00
Cooperative Water Quality Project at Local Schools	3,000.00
BacteriAlert Program	2,021.60
Restoration of Shoals Bass in Morgans Fall Tailwater	10,000.00
Permanent Change of Station	39,300.00
Leslie McMullen (02)	0.00
Nancy Poe (03)	0.00
Victor Leyva (03)	0.00
PCS - Lanshe	0.00
Support Existing VIP FY03	1,000.00
<b>Total Soft Money</b>	<b>472,865.60</b>

Construction, Equipment Replacement, Storm Damage and Fire Management:

Approved Funded Projects	Amount
Remove Park House (quarters 7)	66,696.00
Equip Replacement	10,634.00
Asian Rice Eel	77,200.00
Resource Protection	9,453.70
River Recreation Access	31,305.00
River Recreation Access (Supp)	16,000.00
River Recreation Access (Pre-design)	117,500.00
Abbotts Bridge	50,200.00
Provide River Access Nat Res	47,000.00
CFF holding	40,131.40
Rehab Paces/Concessions	18,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>574,744.47</b>

Fee Demo:

Approved Funded Projects	Amount
Rehabilitation Park Trails	174,000.00
Cost of Collection - Operations	255,000.00
Water Quality Safety Monitoring	73,000.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>502,000.00</b>

Personal Services:

Fiscal Year	Base	Fee Demo
2003	2,276,799.00	431,687.00
2002	1,979,890.00	452,950.00
2001	1,859,340.00	422,527.00
2000	1,628,516.00	119,576.00

FTE:

Fiscal Year	Base	Fee Demo
2003	36.23	10.71
2002	33.96	11.90
2001	33.93	12.23
2000	31.65	3.82

Training and Travel:

Fiscal Year	Training	Travel
2003	2,890.00	16,820.59
2002	6,610.00	23,957.17
2001	23,921.00	27,946.00

**Property:**

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area reported 24 buildings in the World Wide Inventory, which remains the same as last year. The total number of square footage remains 54,153. The number of urban acres of land reported increased to 4678.16

**CHAT Recruitment Initiatives:**

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area filled 8 positions (permanent, temporary, YCC, SCA, etc). Of those positions, six were diversity candidates.

The Superintendent and Administrative Support Specialist of Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area participated in a strategic recruitment-planning workshop hosted by the Southeast Region Employee Development Office. The goal was to design and develop strategies for effective diversity recruitment throughout the region. The Superintendent produced the first draft of the Southeast Region Recruitment Plan performing significant revisions to the format and content of the document.

The Administrative Support Specialist attended the Minority in Agriculture and Natural Resources Related Sciences (MANRRS) Conference in Atlanta in March 2003. The park also hosted a bus tour from the conference.

The Ranger Activities Division hired one female Law Enforcement Ranger, one Hispanic Law Enforcement Ranger, one African-American Dispatcher, one African-American Office Automation Assistant, one female Visitor Use Assistant.

The Resources Education Division hired a female Division Chief.

The Superintendent's Office hired one female Management Assistant.

Recruitment sources utilized this fiscal year include the Student Conservation Association (SCA), in which the several SCA interns were hired to work in the different divisions throughout the park during FY 2003. Two of the interns were females. Many SCA volunteers later become employees, which we are encouraging a career track with the National Park Service.

All of our vacancies are advertised through the Office of Personnel Management. This offers the opportunity for non-government employees in the metro Atlanta area to pursue a career in federal service with the National Park Service.

Under the Student Employment Program, Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area hired two students as Visitor Use Assistants this summer. The STEP hires were an asset to the Fee Demo Program this summer. They accommodated the workload of the under staffed Visitor Use Assistants with minimal supervision and their work performance was satisfactory.

1. Jessica Schneider - Visitor Use Assistant - STEP - Edison Community College
2. Graham McDonald - Visitor Use Assistant - STEP - The University of Georgia

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area continues to provide on site satellite broadcast courses to all employees through Technological Enhanced Learning.

There were a total of 1688 hours of training completed this fiscal year at no cost to the park.

The Ranger Activities Division has delegated one of the Visitor Use Assistants as Acting Supervisory Visitor Use Assistant until the position can be filled. The division also sent a Law Enforcement Ranger to the Federal Law Enforcement Center to further her training.

The Resources Education Division up-graded their Biological Technician positions by changing them to Biologists, which is a professional series.

The Maintenance Division assigned a maintenance worker to assist the Facility Management Specialist with monitoring renovations of the headquarters basement by the contractors.

The Administration Division encouraged park employees to use [www.golearn.gov](http://www.golearn.gov) web site for free on-line training courses.

The Resources Education Division planned the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the park. The event was advertised to a diverse cultural population, including Hispanic and Asian neighborhoods. The division promoted the celebration of Black History Month, Asian American Month, and Native American Month, Women's Month, and Hispanic Month by posting posters on bulletin boards in the park for each special month.

A Memorandum of Agreement was established with Chattahoochee River Friends

The Superintendent remained active with Atlanta Community Partners Program.

Chattahoochee River NRA supports and solicits Boys and Girls Scout activities in the park.

The Superintendent attended the Second Annual Parks Leadership Conference.

During Special Emphasis Month, flyers were posted on public bulletin boards throughout the park by the Visitor Use Assistants to bring awareness to the community.

The Visitor Use Assistants attend meetings held by special emphasis groups, which support the park, such as Trout Unlimited and Chattahoochee Road Runners.

Press releases about the park go out to Hispanic newspapers and television channels to increase the visibility of the National Park Service within the Hispanic community.

The park staff has noted that more Hispanic visitors have been using the trails this year compared to fiscal year 2002.

## RANGER ACTIVITIES

### **Staffing**

- Hired in the division:
- Johnetta Robinson, Office Automation Assistant
- Janette Birmingham, Supervisory Visitor Use Assistant
- Melissa Lanshe, Visitor Protection Ranger
- Clinton Morton, Dispatch/Communications Technician
- Departing for other assignments this year were:
- Renee Suber, Office Automation Assistant to the Superintendents Office
- Cheryl Revis, Fee Business Supervisor to the Veterans Administration
- Keith Ray, Visitor Protection Ranger to Gulf Islands National Seashore

### **Resource Protection**

The park began the year with five permanent GS-9 protection rangers, two supervisory park rangers, and two dispatchers. In January of 2003 Keith Ray left for Gulf Islands NS.

Clinton Morton was hired in April 2003 to replace Dispatch/Communications Technician Doug Coyle. The park hired Melissa Lanshe in July to replace Keith Ray. Melissa immediately reported to the Basic Law Enforcement Training raining at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and completed the training in November of 2003.

Overall all Quality of Life crimes decreased again this year. This is a result of Homeland Security and out of park security commitments. Ranger Steve Reynolds and Supervisory Park Ranger Connie Vogel-Brown completed assignments at and Independence NP. Ranger Victor Leyva completed one three week assignment to Cape Hatteras to assist in hurricane relief efforts. Personnel support was provided throughout the year to Ocmulgee NHS, Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park for special events.

Park Rangers investigated 24 Damage to Natural Resources inside the park this year. All these investigations have been completed and four have been favorably adjudicated. Assessments have been recovered by the park for mitigation efforts. Among the adjudicated incidents were \$84,000 from the trail system installed by the General Electric Company in the Cochran Shoals unit.

There were three fatalities in the park during FY 2003. Two of the fatalities were found to be suicides. These investigations were conducted between the Federal Bureau of Investigation, City of Roswell and Cobb County Police Departments. The third fatality was confirmed as natural causes. This investigation was coordinated through the Fulton County Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There were five search and rescue incidents during this period. All incidents we completed with cooperative emergency services represented by Cobb and Fulton County Fire and City of Roswell Fire Departments.

This year rangers provided security and rescue services for the first annual Back to the Chattahoochee River race. Rangers coordinated river safety efforts with the City of Roswell and Department of Natural Resources. There were no documented injuries or rescues during the event.

Working relationships continue to be strengthened with local agencies. Cooperative efforts this year included Gwinnett County Police Department,

Roswell Fire/Rescue and Police Departments, Fulton County Fire and Police Departments, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. General Radio Agreements have been signed by Fulton County and City of Roswell to access their 800 MHz radio systems during emergency operations and special events.

The park began utilizing one radio channel on the Fulton County 800 MHz system. Fulton County has granted the Chattahoochee River access to this one channel for park law enforcement operations until the new narrow band compliant system is installed.

The park hired a new alarm company to address fire and security concerns at the Sam Hewlett lodge and the Park Operations Building. New alarm and fire monitoring equipment was added to the buildings as needed. The conduit and ADT panels that were mounted in the large conference room at the lodge were removed and wires rerouted elsewhere through the building. The result being a much improved look in a well used office area. New alarm codes were issued to staff.

Work was begun in earnest to begin planning the re-keying of the park's lock system. BEST locks are being used, with an improved security rating from the last key system which the park was using.

The park held a 32 hour Law Enforcement Refresher, including a speaker from the Southeast Regional Archeological Center, speaking on Archeological Resource Protection Act issues. Other topics included: Terrorism Awareness, Gangs, Health and Fitness for the Law Enforcement Professional, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Recent Court Decisions, RM-9, 36 CFR, Use of Force and FLETC Updates. Rangers attended from five parks and one WASO Special Agent.

#### **Fire Management**

In May 2003, two Basic Wildland Firefighter Refresher Courses and in November, 2003, Pumps and Water S-211 training courses were held at the park that included members of all park Divisions. The pumps course was taught in-house with an in-house instructor over several weeks, in order to allow minimal disruption to park operations. Three personnel were dispatched to wildland fires this year on three western fire crews and one firefighter was dispatched on a chainsaw crew on the east coast for hurricane recovery. Two suspicious wildland fires occurred in the park resulting in approximately two acres burned.

#### **Visitor Services**

The fiscal year started with five Visitor Use Assistants on staff.

This marks the seventh year of the park's fee operation under the fee demonstration program and the third year it was totally run by the National Park Service. Fee revenues totaled \$455,384 in FY03 with 10,856 annual Park Passes sold. Visitation reflected 2,694,540 recreation visits in CY 2003, a decrease of 3.4 percent over CY 2002.

For the second year, Incidental Business Permits were issued to provide visitor services in the park. Fourteen businesses received permits for a variety of activities including guided hiking, catering, river trips and fly fishing; raft, canoe, kayak, tube rentals; and environmental education field trips. The park's previous concessionaire was in the process of completing property sales with the park. The new Park Concession Management plan was not yet started by the region. Some IBPs had taken large amounts of staff time to manage and to try to

keep the permittees in compliance with both business permits and environmental concerns.

Twenty-two Special Use Permits were issued for a variety of special park uses, most commonly involving filming, regular team boating activities, regular team track activities, picnics and special events. Some SUPs included the issuance of IBPs to businesses that were serving the SUPs.

## FACILITY MANAGEMENT

### **Staffing**

No hires in the Division:

- 

Departing to other assignments:

- Kevin DeGraff, Office Automation Assistant to Internal Revenue Service

### **Maintenance Management Program**

Staff initiated the Facility Management Software System (FMSS) and completed 86 facility asset condition assessments which verified the inventory and condition of the equipment and features of each asset. The end result was a completed inventory and assessment with estimated \$17,071,987.62 dollars in deferred maintenance, versus \$2,254,089,211.00 in Current Replacement Value (CRV).

### **Trails**

The Trail crew, funded from the Fee Demonstration Program, continued to make progress on the rehabilitation and the operational maintenance of the 100 mile trail system. The trail Dingo Machine and attachments were purchased. The use of this machine greatly increased trail construction and maintenance capabilities, productivity, and overall scope of work accomplished.

Two SCA crews completed nearly 3.5 miles of repairs at two different park units. SORBA, various Boy Scouts and other volunteer groups completed another 1.25 miles of much needed repairs. We began a partnership with the AmeriCorps project. AmeriCorps contributed 1,333 hours of maintenance and repair assistance.

The total amount of volunteer hours donated to the maintenance division was 3,765 hours.

### **Accessibility:**

A study and a work plan were completed for the upgrade and repair of all facilities bringing them into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) legal requirements. Projects based on this plan were funded through Fee Demonstration program will be accomplished during FY 04.

### **Facilities:**

A storm damaged the roof of the Maintenance Facility. Forward-looking engineering from the facility management staff concluded that a standing seam metal roof would perform better and be more cost efficient than a conventional asphalt shingle roof. This project was funded with emergency funds from the regional office and the roof was replaced.

The outside rehabilitation (envelope) of Allenbrook including air conditioning system, roof, and windows was completed.

Quarters Number 5 located in the Palisades unit was removed and the area rehabilitated.

**Settles Bridge:**

This newly acquired area of the park continues to be a problem with off-road vehicles. Large boulders, post and chain fences and signage were placed in the area. However, all were quickly circumvented by off road vehicle drivers. In one case, boulders as large as a small car were moved by these drivers to permit access to a closed are for off-road vehicle access. With improved surveillance, arrests and successful prosecution will hopefully deter this activity. Local home owners and the home owner association were contacted to solicit their assistance in monitoring the park and notifying park dispatch of any future observations of illegal activities.

**Major Repairs:**

- Replaced one of six heater units in the Operations building, and the dispatch office
- Repaired sewage line behind Operations building
- Hazardous waste clean up and disposal. Staff removed all items listed on 2000 Environmental Audit
- Purchased boat/equipment shelter for SRM and Ranger Division and installed it at Maintenance yard
- Replaced leach field at Ranger Operations Center, also Rehabbed septic tank
- Replaced 10 grills at picnic sites throughout the park
- Installed 20 new trash/recycle containers at various sites in park
- Moved and installed new furniture at quarters #3
- Rearranged several offices in the Headquarters (HQ) and Operations buildings
- Rehabilitated furnace room in basement of the Operations building
- Rehabilitated office space for the Regional Office staff duty stationed at the park
- Rehabbed several new office spaces in basement of the Operations building including Facility Management and SRM division chief areas
- Installed 911 emergency address signs at all Park locations
- Cleaned chimneys at the Chattahoochee River Environmental Education Center (CREEC), HQ and Quarters #3
- Installed water heaters at Quarters #7 to support SCA crew

- Installed new barricades at Island Ford, Gold Branch, McGinnis Ferry, and Settles Bridge
- Replaced sewer line at CREEC and rehabilitated septic system during restroom closure due to system failure
- Removed major dumping at Gold Branch (The person responsible for the trash was apprehended, charged and required to pay restitution to park in excess of \$3,000.)
- Installed retaining wall and safety mirror behind the Operations building
- Improved the gutters and drainage system of the Operations building

## RESOURCE EDUCATION

### **Staffing**

Hired in the Division:

- Nancy Poe, Chief of Resource Education - As of October 22, 2002, the interpretive and education staff have been moved out of Ranger Activities and currently work under the Division of Resource Education.

### **Interpretation/Outreach**

Park staff presented 65 formal interpretive programs to 1,691 participants. Twelve community programs were presented during the year reaching 4,013 persons. 656 informal contacts were made.

In February the park was invited to staff an exhibit at the Shallow Water Fishing Expo. Rangers were able to meet people who have used the river and those who are just learning about it while selling over \$1,000 in Annual Parking Passes. We also participated in the "First Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival" and have been included in the planning for next year's race and festival.

Visitation for the Island Ford Visitor Contact station was 4,848. The station was redesigned with a new information desk being installed in the lobby area of the station. The room where the desk had been located along with Eastern National sales was dedicated to Eastern sales only. A chair and table for visitor use was provided in the sales area and a mural depicting the river was painted on one of the walls in the lobby. New information racks were installed in the station. The overall appearance of the station was improved and friendlier to the visitors. The selection of sales items offered in the store was increased from 178 to 243. A donation in the amount of \$4,500 by Eastern National was used for the construction of the information desk. Eastern National sales were offered offsite on 7 additional occasions including evening programs and festivals. Sales for the year totaled \$6,652.98 showing a 62% increase over last year.

A publication program was begun in the park this year following the guidelines set forth in the Graphic Identity Program. The QuarkXPress software package was purchased to produce the publications produced by the park. Posters announcing interpretive programs and special events were produced and posted in the park and businesses. A brochure on the parks VIP program was produced for distribution at various festivals. Several site bulletins were produced for program advertisement and interpretive purposes. The program for the 25th Anniversary celebration was laid out using the newspaper format.

A new professional exhibit was designed by park staff and created by a local graphics company. The exhibit is of professional quality and can be easily transported to other events. It is currently on display at Hewlitt Lodge.

Through the aide of the Friends of the Chattahoochee River, the park was able to select a full time intern to assist with the interpretive operations of the park. The Friend's group provided the intern a stipend of \$100/week.

Local news media covered the CRNRA 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary event with two articles published in the Atlanta Journal Constitution (August 15<sup>th</sup> and August 17th) and a segment on Fox 5 television evening news.

#### **Environmental Education**

Park staff presented six educational programs to 557 participants. These programs were provided to students and educators at the Chattahoochee River Environmental Education Center, various areas in the park and at schools throughout the greater Metro-Atlanta area. Park staff with assistance from other educators developed, planned and presented programs that enhanced classroom instruction and met/exceeded the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum elements and requirements.

Environmental education volunteer staff, the park's Friends organization and the Chattahoochee Nature Center assisted park staff with the development, organization, advertisement and presentation of special night programs designed to educate participants about the importance of the park's resources, the natural processes and components of these resources. These popular "after hours" educational events utilized storytelling, singing songs and guided night hikes which often involved wading into Sibley Creek and the riparian wetlands of Cochran Shoals.

Autumn night events were presented at Johnson Ferry and the education center. These programs were successfully marketed as Frog Frolics, Evening Stream Strolls and Owl Prowls. Live owl programs were presented at the Owl Prowls courtesy of the Chattahoochee Nature Center. Park staff designed and printed event announcements, distributed the announcements to appropriate agencies, organizations and education facilities. Media releases were sent to proper outlets.

As a member of the Georgia Outdoor Classroom Council's Conference Planning Committee, the park's staff helped plan, develop and implement the annual conference which was attended by several hundred educators, including many school principals. The park provided the educators with information on environmental education and training opportunities in the park.

Park staff presented one Water Education for Teachers (WET) certification workshops. Participants included private and public school teachers, youth organization leaders, resource agency educators and nature center staff. The participants learned how to relate the interdisciplinary, hands-on activities in the 550 page curriculum guide to the resources of the Chattahoochee River Corridor. Chattahoochee River's creative, innovative and award winning WET program has been used as a model to all 50 states, several territories and several countries.

A 40 hour fully accredited environmental education training course was presented at the park's environmental education center and on the river through the

Palisades Area. Certified educators received four staff development units of credit. Educators must earn ten credits every five years to maintain their certification to teach.

These certification workshops are fully accredited, national and international programs, and provide the educators with exciting activities through superior lesson plans to give their students curriculum based learning opportunities that relate to resource awareness, appreciation, and protection. Educators receive nationally sponsored curriculum activity guides, adaptations to directly relate to the Chattahoochee's resources and the NPS mission, lesson plans developed by park staff, posters and other education resources.

The park maintained strong working relationships with North Georgia College and University, Georgia State University, Oglethorpe University, Columbus State University, Oxford College of Emory University, University of Georgia and Perimeter College. We have also maintained excellent working relationships with school system science curriculum coordinators, staff development and general curriculum chairpersons and administrators.

CRNRA is represented on the following:

- Environmental Protection Division WET Advisory Board
- The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia
- Kennesaw State University Biological Sciences Advisory Board
- The Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper Science and Education Advisory Board
- The Georgia Outdoor Classroom Board

Partnerships were maintained with the:

- Chattahoochee Nature Center
- Dunwoody Nature Center
- Elachee Nature Centers
- Georgia Parent Teacher Association
- Audubon Society
- Georgia Conservancy
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

### **Safety**

The Central Safety Committee and Safety Advisory Committee continued to meet on a regular basis in order to communicate park safety policy, goals and new operating procedures.

The park converted to the new OSHA reporting requirements completing the annual Form 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses and the 300A Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses and posting the 300A in park offices.

The park recorded eight cases into the Safety Management Information System (SMIS). There were eight cases (one employee was entered twice yielding a SMIS total of 9) for full time and term appointments. There were 93,708 hours logged with a lost time rate of 6.403. The incident rate for DOI employees was 21.343 with 9 cases reported.

The OWCP cases for charge back year 2003 totaled \$6,218.05.

Eight property damage cases were recorded into SMIS involving eight vehicles with estimated damages of \$10,600.00

**Volunteers in the Park (VIP)**

The VIP program continued to expand in FY2003. Additional long term volunteers as well as corporate groups were added to the VIP program. The RiversAlive 2003 campaign, a month long event, brought in 704 volunteers yielding 2,521 hours of river clean ups.

The Park celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> Silver Anniversary on August 15-17. The park visitors were hosted by park staff with the assistance of 50 VIP's contributing 592 volunteer hours over the course of the event.

The park hosted six SCA volunteers who contributed 3,749 hours to resource management.

Community service hours totaled 270 with five individuals completing maintenance tasks.