

Project Name: **YONAH MOUNTAIN**

State: Georgia

Size: 270 acres

Region/Forest: Region 8, Chattahoochee National Forest

9th Congressional District of Georgia – Representative Nathan Deal

Appropriation History:

1997 \$155,000 acres acquired 45.87

Request: \$2,000,000

Future Needs: None

SIGNIFICANCE:

Yonah Mountain is a unique recreational and scenic resource. It is one of the most recognizable landmarks on the Chattahoochee National Forest. With its 700' sheer rock cliffs, it is a highly coveted in the Southeast for the rappelling, mountain climbing, and related recreational opportunity it provides. The mountain has been used by thousands of people each year for recreation. The U.S. Army Ranger School and ROTC programs from area colleges also use the mountain for training exercises. In 1997, the Forest Service purchased 45.87 acres and an associated easement from the Trust for Public Land. This provided basic access to the Mt. Yonah, which was closed in 1995 when landowners adjacent to the only access road closed gated it.

An additional 270 acres that is adjacent to the original 45.87 acres has come on the market. The Trust for Public Land holds an option on the 270 acres. One of the objectives of this purchase is to provide an opportunity to develop the recreational infrastructure that will provide support for the 50,000+ annual users that utilize the property. This will allow the Forest Service to acquire the only suitable site for sanitation facilities, which are currently unavailable to the public. Once the property is acquired plans are to develop trailheads for mountain bike and hiking trails that are currently in place or under construction. More importantly the acquisition will protect the middle and foreground scenic areas of this highly important landmark on the Chattahoochee from the rapid urbanization that is occurring in part of Northeast Georgia. Contacts with local, state, and federal elected officials concerning Forest Service efforts to acquire land for the purpose of securing manageable public access to Yonah Mountain have resulted in favorable comments. The local public supports the acquisition and preservation of its scenic integrity, as Yonah Mountain is a historically significant landmark in the White County area.

Third party partner in this project is The Trust for Public Land.

Yonah Mountain Project

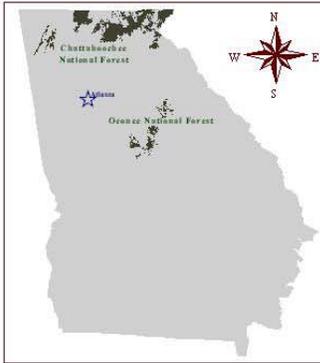
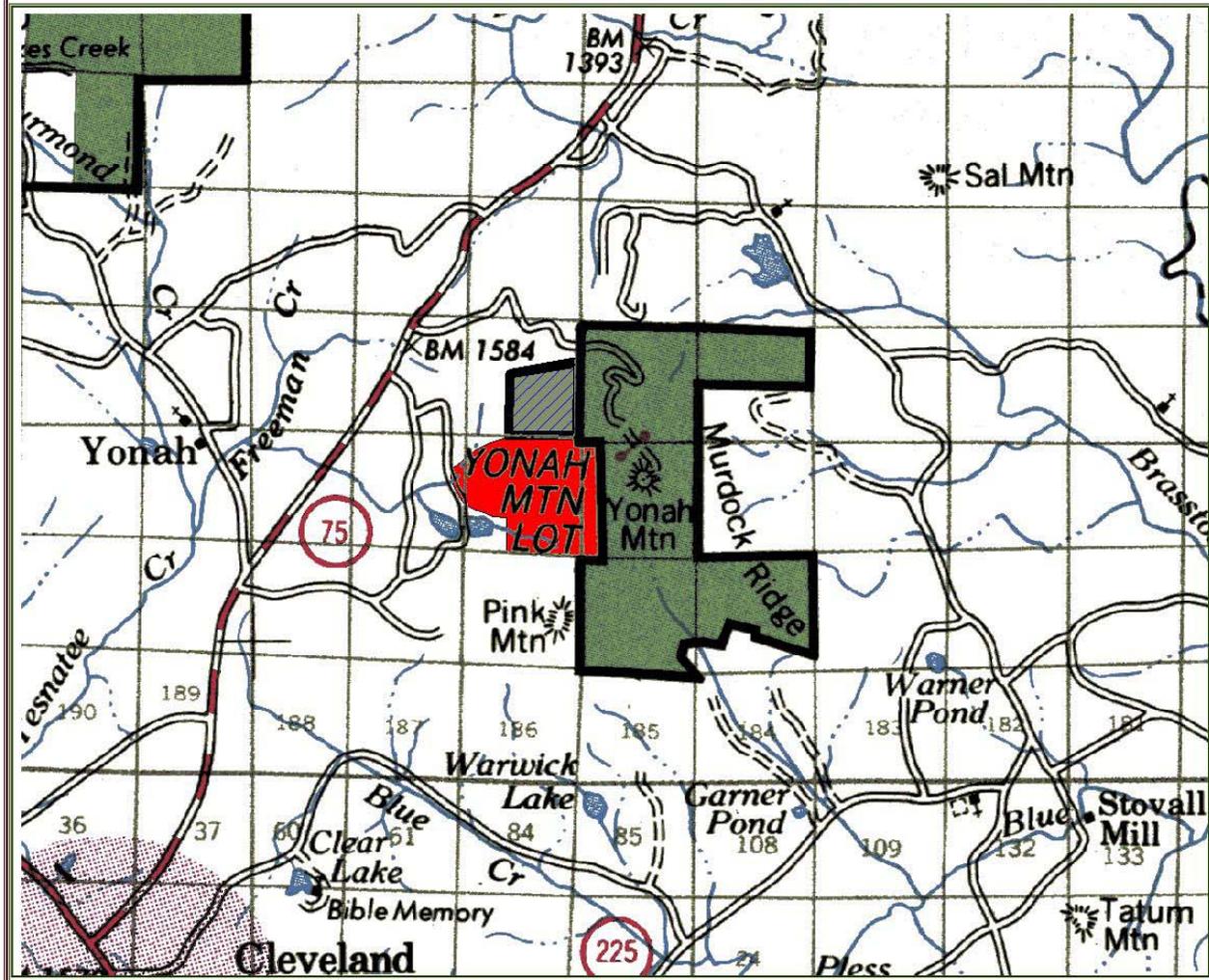


Photo: Chris Jenkins

- National Forest Lands
- 270 Acre Potential Purchase (option by TPL)
- Resent 48 Acre Purchase

0.5 0 0.5 1 Miles



Project Name: **CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FOREST RIPARIAN AREAS**

State: Georgia

Size: 10,000 acres

Region/Forest: Region 8, Chattahoochee National Forest

9th Congressional District of Georgia – Representative Nathan Deal

Appropriation History:

Previous L&WCF Funds have been appropriated for various inholdings and for access needs on the Forest.

Request: \$5,000,000

Future Needs: \$30,000,000

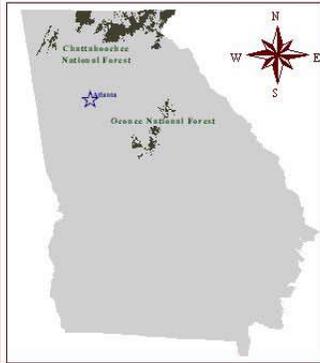
SIGNIFICANCE:

The Chattahoochee contains 749,689 acres of National Forest, and controls the headwaters of the majority of the river systems that supply drinking water to the largest urban areas in the State of Georgia. These rivers also provide unexcelled recreation opportunities for forest visitors and are critical habitat for dozens of threatened and endangered aquatic species. These riparian systems are under enormous pressure from urban influences as individuals seek second home opportunities, and the watersheds are converted from forest to housing developments. This development is seriously threatening water quality by generating non-point source pollution that impacts critical habitat and recreational opportunities. Family estates own many private inholdings. As a result of economic considerations, many families are in the process of divesting property that has been held for generations. The window of opportunity to acquire these inholdings is limited. Once sold and developed, these properties will not be available again, and will become a constant source of sediment pollution. Critical watersheds with significant opportunities are:

ETOWAH RIVER:

This important river has its headwaters in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The Etowah is globally significant in terms of freshwater aquatic diversity. There are 18 threatened or endangered elements, including nine fish, seven mussels, a snail and a mayfly that occur within the river. Two of the fish are endemic and exist nowhere else but the Etowah Basin. The species richness of the river's aquatic communities is one of the richest in the eastern U.S. and one of the best in the world for mussels and darters. With the exception of inholdings in the Forest, the tributaries are intact and protected by the Chattahoochee NF. Water quality is excellent and restorable in areas that might be acquired through purchase. The upper Etowah Basin is under tremendous pressure from second home development, with private inholdings being a favorite target for developers. At this time, many of the inholdings are owned in family estates that are for sale. It is essential that these critical inholdings, embedded in public land, be protected to provide for a continuing flow of clean water into the lower Etowah Basin. The Nature Conservancy has partnered with the Upper Etowah River Alliance, to work collaboratively to protect the resources of the Etowah Watershed.

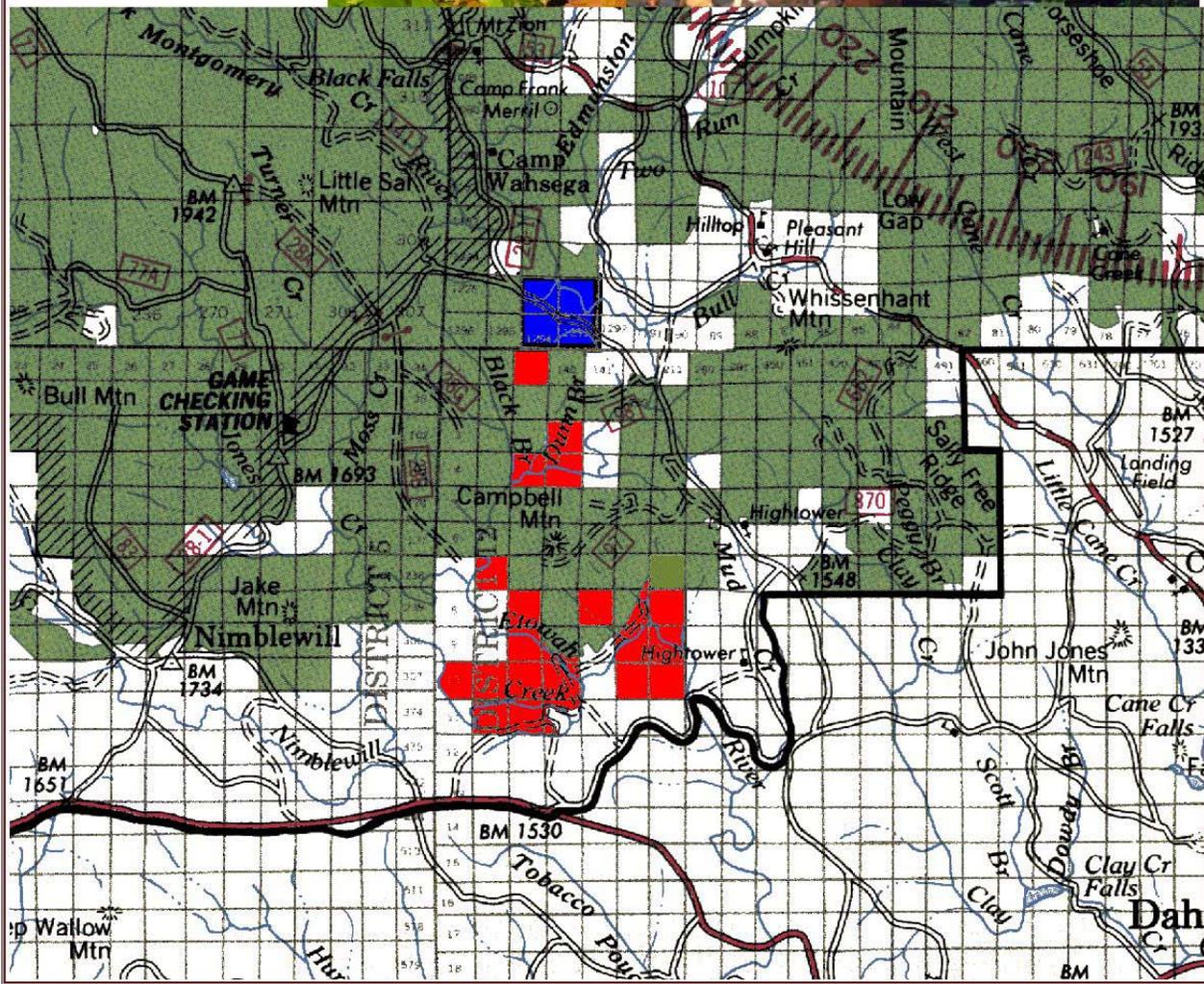
Chattahoochee National Forest Riparian Project



Etowah Watershed



- National Forest Lands
- Etowah Tracts Available
- Pending Acquisition Via Exchange



CONASAUGA/JACKS RIVER:

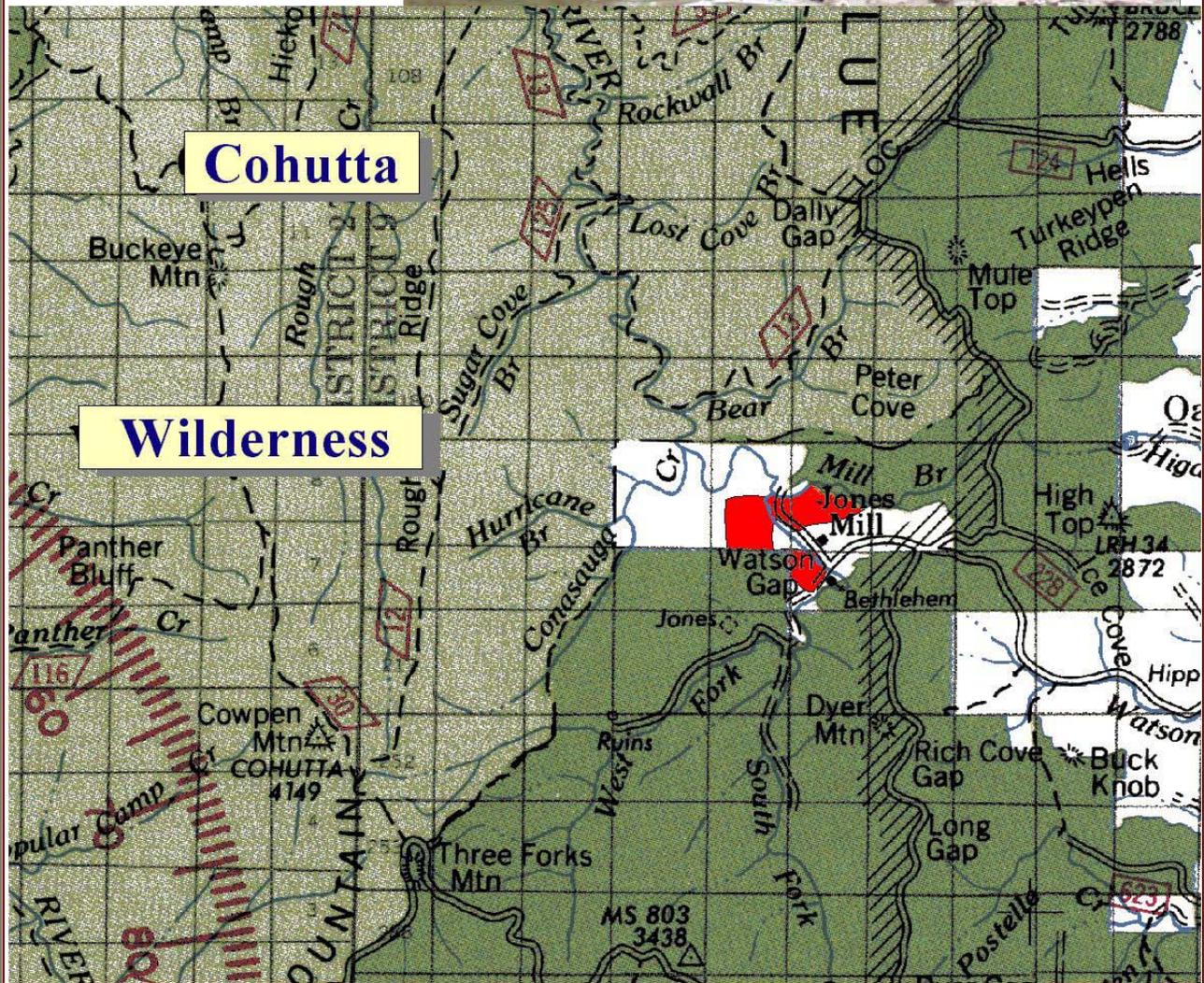
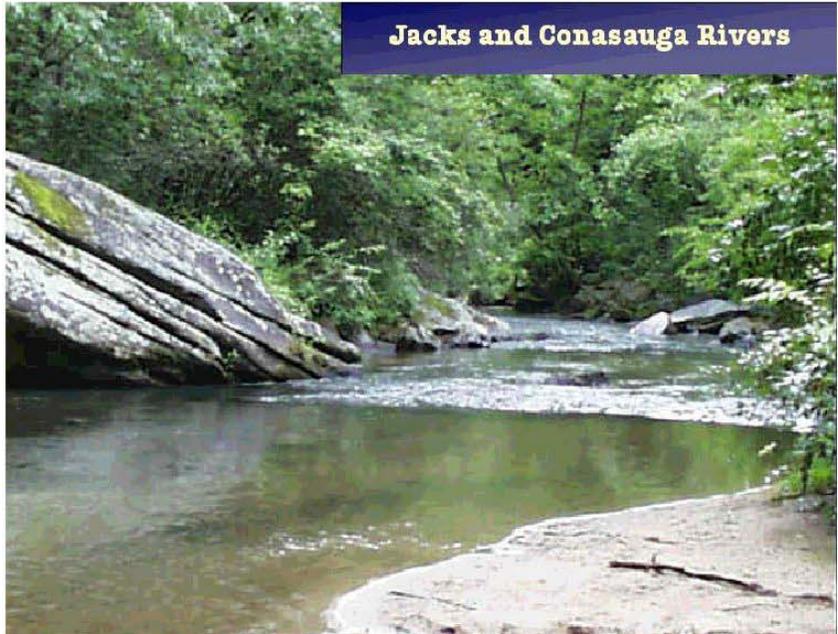
This 500,000 acre watershed contains approximately 119,000 acres within the Chattahoochee National Forest. The Conasauga is especially diverse with over 90 species of fish and 40 species of mussels. It is the home to three Federal threatened and endangered fishes and nine Federal threatened and endangered mussels. Another seven species are listed either on Georgia or Tennessee State threatened and endangered list. The Conasauga Logperch is found in a 15-mile section of the river and nowhere else in the world. This river system is listed by the Nature Conservancy as one of the top six of the 2,000 rivers in the U.S. in terms of diversity. The Conasauga river is the primary water source for Dalton Georgia, which produces 2/3 of the carpet in the US and uses 1/3 of the flow during the summer. There is a community based coalition led by local citizens with the goal of improving the watershed. One of its goals is to add public ownership, especially inholdings to the watershed. This group was formed in 1995 and consists of 30 agencies and organizations. The watershed has been selected as one of 12 UFSF National Watershed Projects

A headwater stream, the Jacks River, flows through the Cohutta wilderness, the largest Forest Service wilderness in the East. The river supports excellent fishing and water based recreational opportunities. There are purchase opportunities involving inholdings on both watersheds that can support Conasauga Alliance objectives and enhance the long-term management objectives of the National Forest. Many of these inholdings are estates that are being divested. There are willing sellers in the watershed that are interested in selling to the Forest Service. These inholdings are critical to the long-term health of the river basin.

Chattahoochee National Forest Riparian Project



National Forest Lands
Jacks River Tracts Available

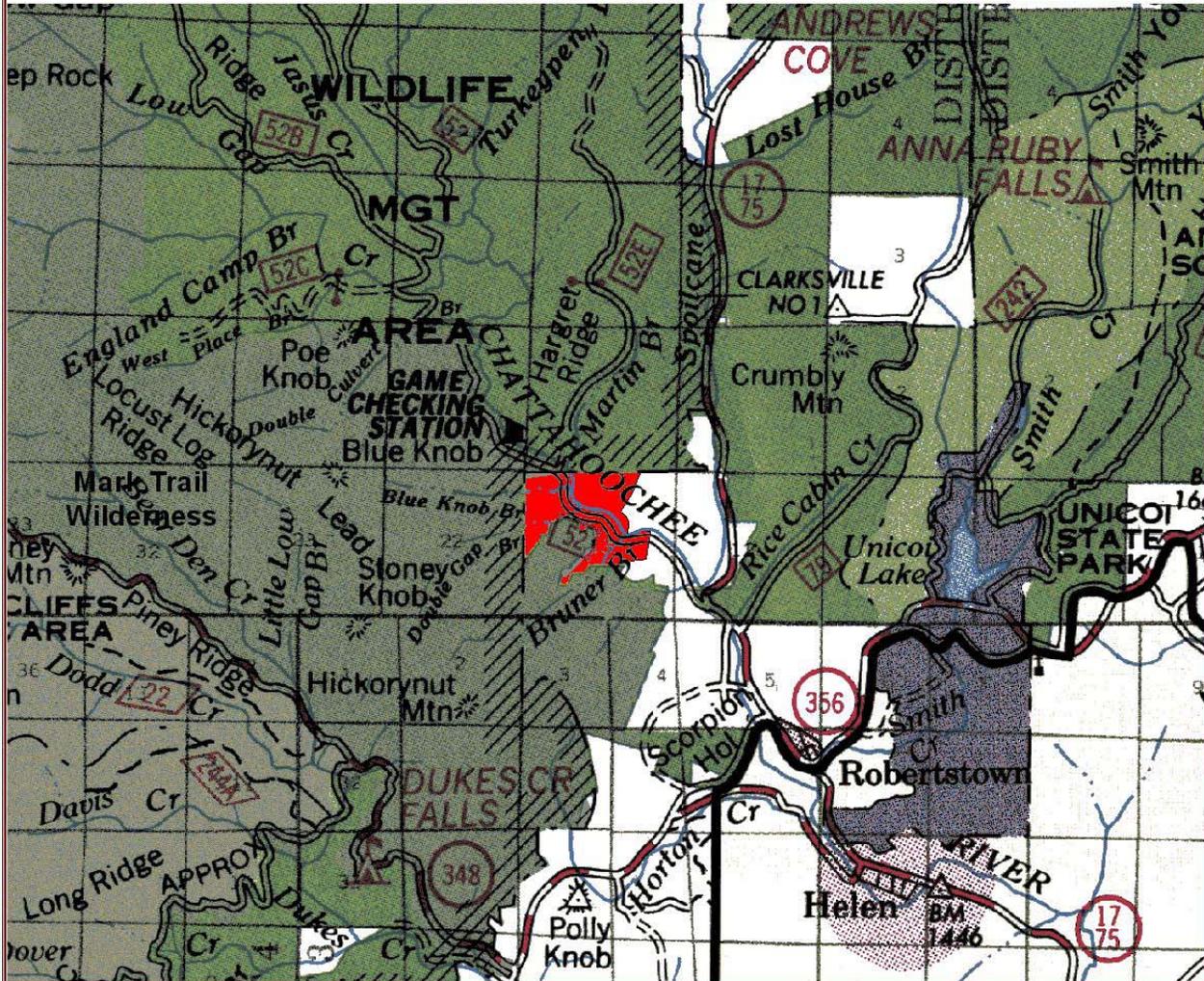
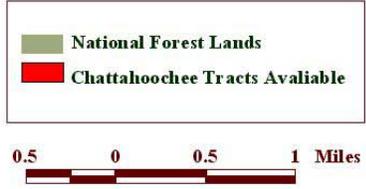
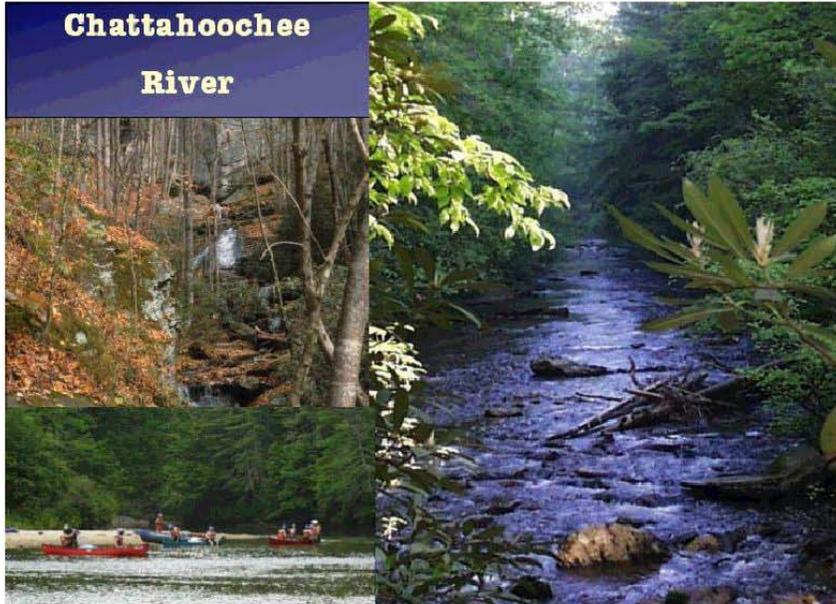


CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER:

The Chattahoochee is one of the most geologically and biologically diverse river systems in the world. The headwaters of the river are within the Chattahoochee National Forest with nearly all available land along the river within the NF boundary being acquired many years ago. An opportunity is available to purchase two of the remaining tracts. These two tracts are the Butell and Westmoreland tracts. The Butell tract features 3,315 of double frontage and 935 of single frontage. The tract also contains 5,000 feet of double frontage on three tributary branches. The Westmoreland tract has approximately 3000 feet of double frontage and 1000 feet of single frontage. Together the tracts will consolidate over one mile of frontage on the Chattahoochee River. The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land are working with the State of Georgia to protect property along the Chattahoochee River and are partners in the project. There is the possibility of significant funding to match the LWCF funding. These two tracts were removed from the market during FY 2001, but the landowners have reconsidered their position, and are willing to sell.

Project Supporters: The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, The Trust for Public land, Trout Unlimited, Georgia Forestry Commission, Ga Wildlife Resources Division, US Army Corp of Engineers, University of Georgia, NRCS, Georgia Forest Watch, and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Chattahoochee National Forest Riparian Project



Project Name: **OCONEE-OCMULGEE RIVERS**

State: Georgia

Size: 10,500 acres

Region/Forest Region 8, Oconee National Forest

Congressional Districts – 8th & 10th of Georgia, Representatives - Saxby Chambliss and Charlie Norwood

Appropriation History

1992-2000 \$3,218,263 acres acquired 2,392 (by direct purchase)

Additional 4,796 acres valued at \$2,629,500 acquired in four land exchanges in project vicinity during same period.

2003 Request: \$2,250,000 acres 755

Future Needs: \$22,000,000 Acres remaining - 8,920

SIGNIFICANCE:

Acquisition is very important to protect and preserve the integrity of the Ocmulgee River. The river at this location is one of the most productive and diverse fisheries and related riparian zone corridors in the middle portion of the state. These types of unique ecosystems are becoming very rare in Georgia due to industrial timber management.

The key features of the area include 12 miles of prime frontage along the 300 - 500 feet wide river. The river features a variety of micro habitats (shoals, riffles and pools) throughout its wide channel. Also the properties several hundred acres of riparian zone is unique in its ability to produce a diversity of plant flora and fauna representative of the entire Piedmont Plateau. The Ocmulgee and Oconee river offer some of the finest canoeing and associated activities in the piedmont section of Georgia.

The public will benefit from acquisitions by the addition of lands that are extremely well suited and most desirable for public recreation. The Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers offer some of the finest canoeing and associated activities in the piedmont section of Georgia. Public recreational opportunities also include hunting, fishing, horseback riding, trail hiking, viewing forest riparian plants & animals. Additional public benefits include improved water quality and protection for several major perennial streams and their tributaries. Significant riparian habitats such as wetlands, bottomland hardwoods and floodplains would be added to the public land resource base and protected for these types of communities which are disappearing in the Piedmont region of the southeastern United States. There is a high probability that Oglethorpe Oak, a nationally threatened plant species occurs on some of the lands. Other plants considered sensitive have been found in the general area and potentially occur on the proposed lands. These include Dwarf Palmetto, Carolina Anemone, Southern Twayblade Orchid, and the Relict Trillium. The latter is a Federally endangered trillium. The area is a key area in recovery plans for the Red Cockaded Woodpecker. Populations currently exist on the Piedmont National Wildlife Refuge and Hitchiti Experimental Forest to the south. Acquisition in this area of the Oconee NF would expand the habitat and travelways to other public lands.

Supporters and partners for this acquisition effort includes the State of Georgia which has

designated this area along Ocmulgee River, which is located on the Piedmont Fault Line of central Georgia, as a "Green Way". The Trust for Public Land has been instrumental in the acquisition of several tracts and is currently pursuing the purchase of additional properties. Also the Conservation Fund is negotiating on one tract and has expressed interest in a larger role in the acquisition effort. The Boards of County Commissioners of all three counties with lands within the project have been briefed about the project and expressed support. Within the past few years interest and efforts to preserve, protect and provide public benefits from the Ocmulgee River Green Way have accelerated with the formation of a group called the "Ocmulgee Heritage Green Way" and the State of Georgia establishment of a program entitled River Care 2000. It is possible that some of the acquisition can be done in partnership with the River Care 2000 program or Forest Legacy funding.

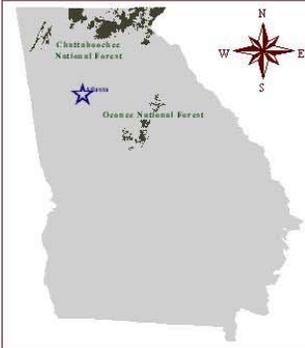
The management direction within the current Land & Resource Management Plan for the Oconee National Forest is compatible with the proposed acquisition. The new planning process has inventoried the Oconee and the Ocmulgee rivers and associated tributaries for their outstanding remarkable values and has determined that they are eligible to be considered for Wild and Scenic status.

Lands along the Ocmulgee/Oconee Rivers are being subdivided and developed both north and south of the project area. With the suburbs of Atlanta to the north and Macon, Georgia to the south, development of land along the Ocmulgee River within the project area is considered imminent.

Acquisition would improve Forest Service management by improving the fractured ownership pattern of the Oconee NF that has historically been a detriment to recreational opportunities associated with riparian corridors in this part of Georgia.

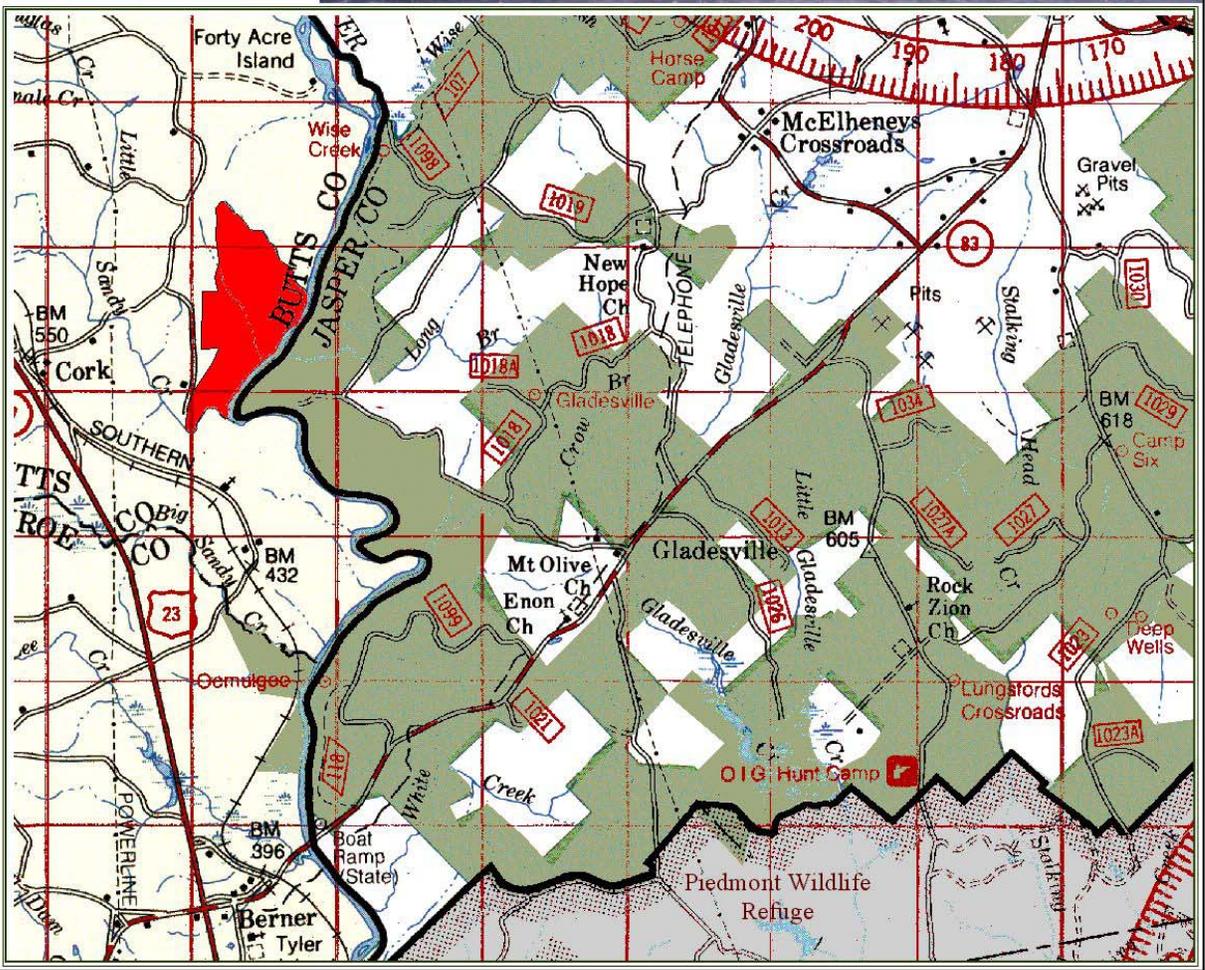
The Trust for Public Land has been an active partner in the purchase of property in the Ocmulgee/Oconee watersheds. It is anticipated that they will hold an option on 650 acres of the Smith estate by December of 2001. This very desirable property has been in negotiations for several years. The property contains approximately 3,500 feet of the Ocmulgee river and is essential to consolidate this portion of the project area. If not acquired at this time, the estate will be sold on the open market and the opportunity to acquire the tract will be lost. Other smaller tracts are available that will protect the watersheds and consolidate the forest.

Ocmulgee / Oconee Watershed Initiative



 National Forest Lands
 Smith Estate / TPL Option
650 Acres

1 0 1 Miles



Project Name: CHATTOOGA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER (GA)

State: Georgia

Region/Forest: Region 8, Chattahoochee National Forest (GA)

9th Congressional District of Georgia - Representative Nathan Deal

Appropriations History (Project)

1992-2000	<u>\$10,550,000</u>	acres acquired <u>730</u>	(GA) 92-2000
2001	<u>\$ 297,000</u>	acres acquired <u>240</u>	(GA)
2002 Request	<u>\$ 700,000</u>	acres acquired <u>50</u>	(GA)
2003 Request	<u>\$1,400,000</u>	acres acquired <u>300</u>	(GA)
Future Needs	<u>\$5,000,000</u>	acres acquired <u>400</u>	(GA)

SIGNIFICANCE:

Acquisition is important to protect and preserve the integrity of the congressionally designated Chattooga Wild and Scenic River corridor. Although much progress has been made in Georgia, there are still several critical inholdings that need to be acquired. Areas identified for 2003 are as follows:

Acquisition of a portion of a total inholding in the Cliff Creek area of the Tallulah Ranger District. At present the property owner has divided the property into five-acre tracts, which he intends to sell for development purposes. The acquisition of this 45-acre tract will eliminate the threat of development and the long-term impacts of sediment from roads and house sites. The property includes approximately 2000 feet of Cliff Creek frontage. The property is stocked with large white pines and hemlocks. Cliff Creek is a primary tributary to the Chattooga River and is an excellent cold water fishery.

A 241+/- acre headwaters property on Stekoa Creek, a direct tributary of the Chattooga River, is completely timbered and bounded on all sides by the National Forest. The tract would significantly facilitate consolidation of Forest ownership in this portion of the Chattooga River headwaters. It is likely inhabited with the Small-Whorled Pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*), a federally endangered plant and several other PET plant species. Federal ownership of this tract affords considerable protection from siltation of a wild & scenic river especially since the logically highest & best use of the property is subdivision and development of moderate to high-density second homes. Additionally, as the property is a total inholding within the Chattahoochee National Forest, federal ownership would result in increased efficiency of national forest management and cost savings.

Partners and supporters of the acquisition include the Chattooga Coalition, the Chattooga River Watershed Coalition, The Trust for Public Land, The Conservation Fund, the Georgia Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the State of Georgia. Also the citizenry of the project area (northeastern

CHATTOOGA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

Rabun County) and the Board of County Commissioners have been very supportive of acquisition in the wild & scenic river corridor and within the Chattooga River watershed.

The Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest list three categories of priorities for acquisition. Priority 1 includes tracts that are within congressionally designated areas. Also the plan emphasizes the objective of consolidation and states that within all priorities first priority for acquisition will be given to those tracts that offer the greatest degree of consolidation. With both tracts being total inholdings adjacent to the W&SR they are consistent with the forest plan and a top forest priority.

Chattooga Wild and Scenic River (Georgia)

