



Summary of 2013 Accomplishments

Restoration Program

- ◆ Completed stream restoration activities along 1,100 linear feet of Town Branch, removing 45 tons of sediment per year from the Valley River and improving habitat and aesthetics at the Cherokee County Heritage Park in Andrews. We also planted 600 more trees at the Cherokee County Heritage Park, bringing the total number of trees planted since October 2011 to more than 3,100!
- ◆ Began initial planning work for the next stream restoration project in the Valley River watershed along 1,100 feet of Morgan Creek in the Tomotla community
- ◆ Working under a partnership contract with LTLT, developed a plan for restoring the riparian areas along Valley River, Welch Mill Creek and several other tributaries on the Welch Farm, including reestablishing the native rivercane. Then began implementation of the plan by eradicating invasive plants and planting native trees and shrubs
- ◆ Working under a partnership contract with the Riverwalk, eradicated invasive plants from riparian areas along Hiwassee River and a tributary to the Valley River along the trails in downtown Murphy
- ◆ Cleared invasive plants from more than 700 linear feet of riparian area along McComb Branch in partnership with students from the Tri-County Early College service learning program
- ◆ Developed an assessment of all Cherokee County-owned properties near rivers, lakes and streams and provided recommendations for protecting and improving water quality
- ◆ Hosted two Bonner Leaders from Young Harris College. These students function like part-time staff for the restoration program and provide good work experience for young adults!
- ◆ Hosted one Alternative Spring Break group from Northwestern University, generating more than \$7,000 in matching funds for grants while completing needed restoration project maintenance in all four counties in the watershed!
- ◆ Conducted a community meeting and survey about outdoor recreation on the Valley River and Welch Farm property, also under a partnership contract with LTLT
- ◆ Secured a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission for developing a plan to improve public access to rivers and lakes in Cherokee and Clay counties. Held community meetings and conducted a survey to get residents' input on the topic.
- ◆ Continued to administer a low cost no-till grain drill rental program in partnership with the Cherokee and Clay county soil and water conservation districts and Peachtree Farm & Home Supply, conducting major repairs to the large Great Plains grain drill. Since its purchase in 1999 the drill has seeded more than 2,200 acres of land in six counties.
- ◆ Worked with Clay County Communities Revitalization Association (CCCRA) to implement a restoration plan for a short reach of Town Creek
- ◆ Secured a \$20,000 grant from Duke Energy for conducting workshops on the value of native trees along streams and for planting/enhancing riparian areas along the Hiwassee River and its tributaries
- ◆ Responded to nine landowner calls for technical assistance

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- ◆ 29 certified volunteers monitored 26 sites in the Chatuge and Nottely watersheds with a total of 179 sampling events!
- ◆ Held two water chemistry and three bacterial workshops
- ◆ Hosted and one visual/habitat assessment workshop
- ◆ Designed and established a new monitoring program in the Fires Creek watershed, focusing on the Rockhouse Creek subwatershed.

Education Program

- ◆ Participated in the GA Mountain Research & Education Center's environmental education days, providing the interactive activity, "Everyone Lives Upstream!" for 420 students from eight schools in five counties in two states!
- ◆ Held two "Day at the C.R.E.E.K." summer youth education events; 21 students participated, bringing the total number of youth served by the C.R.E.E.K. program to 149!
- ◆ Participated in the Cherokee County Cooperative Extension Agriculture Field Day at the Mountain Folk Center
- ◆ Participated in Union County Cooperative Extension's 4-H geology field day at GA Mountain Research & Education Center.
- ◆ Taught several different age groups about native and invasive plants along the Riverwalk in Murphy
- ◆ Continued the partnership with Tri-County Early College for a service learning project in the McComb Branch watershed
- ◆ Worked extensively with other nonprofit organizations and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in southwestern NC on a regional erosion and sediment control education initiative and completed a base curriculum for training grading contractors locally!
- ◆ Made six community presentations – 1 in Cherokee; 1 in Clay; 2 in Towns; and 2 in Union Co.

Lakes Program

Chatuge

- ◆ Supported a full-time watershed coordinator for the Lake Chatuge watershed
- ◆ Held a shoreline litter sweep with 49 volunteers and nearly 2,000 pounds of trash collected
- ◆ Assisted with a City of Hiwassee Earth Day litter sweep event
- ◆ Conducted bi-monthly "targeted monitoring" events from 14 locations in the watershed starting in January 2013; samples are analyzed by the City of Hiwassee's laboratory personnel.
- ◆ Volunteers monitored water quality at nine sites monthly

Septic System Repair

- ◆ Established a sliding scale cost share system with Towns County Health Department to insure that people who have the ability to pay (or to help pay) contribute toward the project
- ◆ Delivered 150 septic system packets to households door-to-door in the watershed
- ◆ Completed five septic system repair/replacement projects
- ◆ Working with several other landowners on septic system repair projects

Stormwater BMP Program

- ◆ In spring of 2013, on-the-ground efforts to identify sites for commercial stormwater best management practices began and five initial sites were selected for conceptual designs.

- ◆ Partnered with University of Georgia Professor, Jon Calabria, and master's degree students for designs
- ◆ Began working with the City of Hiwassee and TVA on BMP installations as part of the Mayor's Park project on Lake Chatuge
- ◆ Began working with the City of Hiwassee and The Ridges Resort on BMP installations at city hall at the resort property on the lake
- ◆ Held two rain harvesting workshops with 21 participants making 15 rain barrels.

Agriculture BMP Program

- ◆ Initiated an pilot project for a heavy use pad & other livestock best management practices plan on a farm in the upper Hiwassee River watershed
- ◆ Identified several other sites for BMPs
- ◆ Completed five nutrient management plans

Nottely

- ◆ Monitored water quality monthly at seven sites on tributaries to the lake
- ◆ Began a bacterial monitoring program and trained 11 volunteers
- ◆ Helped publicize Lake Nottely Improvement Association's events and clean-ups
- ◆ Worked to eradicate invasive plants and planted native trees and shrubs along 1,043 linear feet of Butternut Creek at the Union County Farmers Market
- ◆ Provided data, information, and comments to the US Forest Service to insure that water quality is protected during forest management operations around the lake

Hiwassee & Apalachia

- ◆ Worked with US Forest Service to fix erosion and improve access to Hiwassee Lake at Caney Creek near the Cherokee County solid waste convenience center
- ◆ Documented wild hog damage in headwaters of North Shoal Creek (and Shuler Creek which flows into Hiwassee River below Apalachia Dam) and ATV damage in the headwaters of South Shoal Creek; working with US Forest Service on a management plan to address these problems
- ◆ Provided assistance for the Hiwassee Lake Big Sweep event
- ◆ Began work to develop a plan for improving access to rivers and lakes in Cherokee & Clay counties, including Hiwassee & Apalachia lakes

Other

- ◆ Participating in the US Forest Service process for revising the Nantahala National Forest plan
- ◆ Submitted public comments on a revised Environmental Assessment for the Laurel Creek Property Owners' request to build a road to an inholding on the rim of the Fires Creek watershed. Then participated in an administrative appeal of the US Forest Service decision and won!

Planning & Organizational Development

- ◆ Increased membership in the organization, adding 16 new residential households and 2 new businesses. The average donation per residential member also increased from \$60 in 2012 to \$76 in 2013!
- ◆ Updated our Facebook page at least weekly and brought the number of "Likes" up from 194 to 378, an increase of 95% increase! (as of Dec 3)