



Summary of 2014 Accomplishments

Restoration Program

- ◆ Using a grant from the Duke Energy Riparian Habitat Enhancement Fund, two workshops on the value of native trees along streams and for planting/enhancing streamside areas were conducted. Thanks to our partners (CCCRA, CCHAC, Clay Co. Master Gardeners, Young Harris College, and Tri-County Early College) and volunteers, we had 52 participants in the workshops and well over 400 trees were planted along Town Creek in Hayesville and McComb Branch in Peachtree!
- ◆ Coordinated and provided volunteers for implementing the recommendations from a technical assistance (planting native trees and shrubs) call along 500 linear feet of Brasstown Creek.
- ◆ Completed initial designs and submitted permitting packages for restoration along 1,100 feet of Morgan Creek in the Tomotla community (Valley River watershed).
- ◆ Hosted three Alternative Spring Break groups from Radford University (VA), Bowling Green State University (OH), and University of North Florida generating more than \$22,000 in matching funds for grants while completing needed restoration project maintenance in all four counties in the watershed!
- ◆ Cleared invasive plants from more than 500 linear feet of riparian area along McComb Branch in partnership with students from the Tri-County Early College service learning program.
- ◆ Assisted the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee with tree planting efforts at their Welch Farm property along the Valley River.
- ◆ Continued working in partnership with the Riverwalk to eradicate invasive plants from riparian areas along Hiwassee and Valley Rivers along the trails in downtown Murphy.
- ◆ 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. It is mostly used for pasture renovation projects, which are a big win for water quality!
- ◆ Responded to five landowner calls for technical assistance. [One landowner decided to implement our recommendations; we helped with materials coordination and provided volunteers for the project!]
- ◆ Secured a second \$20,000 grant from Duke Energy for continued bank restoration and riparian enhancement along Town Creek in Hayesville. Secured a \$20,000 grant for expansion of the "Shade Your Streams" program.
- ◆ Secured a \$172,000 grant for restoration of the Valley River at the mouth of Taylor Creek.

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- ◆ 26 certified volunteers monitored 20 sites in the Lake Chatuge and Nottely watersheds, with a total of 234 sampling events completed! (www.georgiaadoptastream.org)
- ◆ Held six Adopt-A-Stream water chemistry and five bacterial training events.
- ◆ In partnership with Trout Unlimited, continued a water chemistry monitoring program in the Fires Creek watershed begun in 2013, focusing on the Rockhouse Creek subwatershed.
- ◆ Began a new bacterial monitoring program in the Valley River watershed to try to determine sources of high fecal coliform levels that resulted in a large length of the river being added to the NC 303(d) List of Impaired Waters in 2014.

Lakes Program

Chatuge

- ◆ Supported a full-time watershed coordinator for the Lake Chatuge watershed through May 31.
- ◆ Held a shoreline litter sweep with 103 volunteers and more than 3,100 pounds of trash collected, bringing the 3-year total to 3.25 TONS!
- ◆ Planted native trees and shrubs along a total of 1,800 linear feet of streams at two locations.
- ◆ Volunteers monitored water quality at five sites monthly.

Septic System Repair

- ◆ Delivered 120 septic system packets to households door-to-door in the watershed for a total delivery to 270 households around the lake shoreline in Towns County in 2013-14.
- ◆ Completed one more septic system repair/replacement project for a total of six over the 2-year period of the grant! [These repairs were conducted on a sliding scale cost-share system so that grants funds were only spent when homeowners truly couldn't afford to pay.]

Agriculture BMP Program

- ◆ Installed a heavy use area for livestock feeding on a large farm in Towns County, reducing phosphorus loading to the lake by 228 lbs/yr and nitrogen by 1,014 lbs/yr!
- ◆ Implemented cropland best management practices (BMPs) and installed a roof runoff structure on a farm along the Hiwassee River in Towns County, reducing phosphorus loading by 231 lbs/yr and nitrogen by 432 lbs/yr! The cropland BMPs also reduced sediment loading by 173 tons/year into the Hiwassee River in Towns County.

Stormwater BMP Program

- ◆ Completed designs for stormwater best management practices (BMPs) at the "Lloyd's Landing" boat ramp near the Hiwassee city limits and secured an initial seed grant from the Lake Chatuge Rotary Club.
- ◆ Completed designs for BMP installations at Hiwassee City Hall and for The Ridges Resort on Lake Chatuge.

Nottely

- ◆ Installed tree guards on newly planted trees and conducted ongoing control of invasive plants along 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.
- ◆ Monitored water quality monthly at four sites on the river and tributaries to the lake
- ◆ Continued to expand the bacterial monitoring program (started in 2013).
- ◆ Helped publicize Lake Nottely Improvement Association's events and clean-ups.

Hiwassee & Apalachia

- ◆ Completed a plan for improving access to rivers and lakes in Cherokee & Clay counties, including Hiwassee & Apalachia lakes and began work on a web site to publicize existing access.

Education Program

- ◆ Assisted with a 2-day “Kids in the Creek” event organized by Coweeta Hydrologic Lab staff serving the entire 8th grade from Hayesville Middle School.
- ◆ Held two “Day at the C.R.E.E.K.” summer youth education events; 19 students participated, bringing the total number of youth served by the C.R.E.E.K. program to 168!
- ◆ Participated in the GA Mountain Research & Education Center’s environmental education days, providing the interactive activity, “Everyone Lives Upstream!” for 420 middle school students from five counties in two states! [This requires 4 full days of our education coordinator’s time.]
- ◆ Participated in the Cherokee County Cooperative Extension Agriculture Field Day at the Mountain Folk Center.
- ◆ Participated in the Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District Field Day.
- ◆ 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 11 community presentations – 4 in Cherokee Co. (2 were in Andrews); 2 in Clay; 5 in Towns County. In addition, the executive director was the keynote speaker at the Southeastern North American Lakes Management Society conference in Asheville in March.

Other

- ◆ Completed a plan to improve public access to rivers and lakes in Cherokee and Clay counties and began work on a web site to publicize existing access.
- ◆ Participated in the Opportunity Initiative (aka “Opt-In”) in both Clay and Cherokee counties.
- ◆ Worked with other organizations to distribute facts and raise awareness about fracking.
- ◆ Continued participation in the US Forest Service process for revising the Nantahala National Forest plan in both the public setting and through the Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership.
- ◆ Submitted public comments on the third 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.

Organizational Development

- ◆ Increased membership in the organization, adding 14 new residential households, 2 new organizations and 4 new businesses. Also, the average donation per residential member also increased from \$72 in 2013 to \$95 in 2014!
- ◆ Increased revenues from local/sustainable sources of funding significantly over the past three years - from 38% of our operating budget in 2011 to 55% in 2014!
- ◆ Updated our Facebook page at least monthly and brought the number of “Likes” up from 378 to 647, a 71% increase! (as of Dec 8)

Please visit our web site for current events and accomplishments: www.hrwc.net

Our Facebook page is completely public, but if you are Facebook user, please engage with us there!
www.facebook.com/hiwasseeriver