



David Wood
2014 recipient of the Holman Award

A champion of our rivers

By Tom Bennett

David Wood is chairman of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners for 2014, and he is its unrelenting champion of water quality. Minutes prove how the only elected official here in a core county of the watershed ever to say the words “water quality” has been Wood, and he has done so repeatedly.

“We’ve got to get those dumpsters off the lake,” Wood said in March 2011. Now the county nears completion of relocating two horrid “green-box” rows – so often missed by errant throwers of trash – that serially have polluted Hiwassee Lake.

“The county should live up to its water-quality standards and put buffers in” at locations hard by the Valley River, Wood said in November 2013.

“Well, I’ve had bad luck with the Water Coalition,” Steve Jordan, another commissioner, quickly retorted. “Well, Steve, you’re not supposed to have a backhoe in the river anyhow,” Wood replied.

Avid fishermen do more than observe the river from the bank and gravely opine. They’re wader-clad (or not), up to their waists in the bright, endangered water. Better than anyone, Wood and his fellow anglers understand there must be controls on pollution. The water temperature must be right, too, if their darting prey, the trout, are to thrive.

You face no fashion pretense when you attend a Holman banquet honoring Wood. His regular apparel from the head down is late camo.

Each day from the aptly named Hothouse community west of Murphy, he sets out upon his latest board or committee mission, and the county braces.