



## Major Accomplishments

### Monitor

- Certified volunteers through the GA Adopt-A-Stream program actively monitor 47 sites across the 4-county area, including multiple stations on all three major rivers and Brasstown Creek.
- We now have 15 years of water chemistry data for 12 locations in the upper Hiwassee and Nottely River watersheds in north Georgia!
- Added bacterial sampling (E.coli) to most water chemistry stations in 2013.
- Serve as a data clearinghouse.

### Restore

- Conducting restoration activities along more than 14 miles of stream, river and lake shorelines to reduce bank erosion/failure and improve aquatic habitat. We currently assist with management of 107 acres of riparian buffer at 32 locations across the 4-county area.
- Planting more than 8,000 native trees & shrubs along stream since November 2011. This figure does not include live stakes!
- Lake Chatuge nutrient reduction. From 1998-2006, the ecological health rating that TVA assigned to Lake Chatuge averaged 54.1 out of 100 (Poor). There was only one Fair rating in 2001, when all the mountain reservoirs scored unexplainably higher. From 2007-2015, the average ecological health rating was 61.4 (Fair), representing a 7.3-point improvement since the Lake Chatuge Watershed Action Plan was released! This success was accomplished by employing a full-time watershed coordinator and repairing leaking or failing septic systems, installing agricultural best management practices, and assisting landowners and local governments with stormwater management.

### Educate

- There are now more than 200 graduates of our C.R.E.E.K. (Creative & Recreational Environmental Education for Kids) Days events in summer, many of whom are now young adults! This number doesn't include participants in the "Kids in the Creek" programs we have co-hosted in recent years through the school systems.
- Working extensively with other nonprofit organizations in southwestern NC on a Regional Erosion and Sediment Control education Initiative (RESCEI), securing funding for, and developing, curriculum for training grading contractors locally!
- Developing and teaching adult seminars and multi-session courses on topics such as building roads in mountain terrain, native and invasive plant ID & management, and bioengineering stabilization methods.
- For years, we've taught almost every 4th grader in five counties about watersheds and non-point source pollution through annual field days at the GA Mountain Research & Education Center.

- Helping create and maintain the Marble Springs Outdoor Education Area (MSOEA)
- Awarding Carson Conservation scholarships for graduating seniors who choose to pursue college education in one of 18 natural resource-related courses of study.

#### Connect

- Hosting Alternative Spring Break groups from 13 different colleges and universities in seven states, generating \$17,000-\$25,000 in grant matching funds annually, in addition to getting a ton of restoration project stewardship work done!
- Organizing an annual shoreline litter sweep on Lake Chatuge. Nearly 11 tons of trash has been removed from the shoreline by volunteers since the clean-ups began in 2011.
- Completing a plan for improving public recreational access and developing a comprehensive web site for providing information about recreation access points in the watershed.

#### Protect

- From 2008-2017, HRWC and its partners worked through the US Forest Service's public process to protect the designated Outstanding Resource Waters of Fires Creek and its tributaries from excess sedimentation and potential acid runoff associated with proposed road building activities to access a 50-acre private parcel of land completely surrounded by the Nantahala National Forest. After nearly 10 years, the landowners finally agreed to sell the property to our local land trust partner for eventual transfer into Forest Service ownership!
- Working with the City of Hiwassee to develop and adopt a stormwater ordinance – the first such tool to be used by a local government in the Hiwassee River watershed!
- Encouraging local governments to adopt native plant landscaping policies.
- Participating in the Nantahala Pisgah Forest Partnership, which is working collaboratively with diverse interests to help the US Forest Service revise its 15-year management plan.