



Keeping Watch Over Our Waters

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## **Hundreds of Paddlers and River Enthusiasts to Participate in 7th Annual *Back to the Chattahoochee Race & Festival* on June 13**

May 26, 2009 – Atlanta, GA — Paddlers of all ages and skill levels will take to the water on **Saturday, June 13, for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Back to the Chattahoochee River Race and Festival**. The race course begins at Garrard Landing Park on Holcomb Bridge Road and ends at Riverside Park in Roswell, the site of the festival, music and the awards presentation. Organized and presented by **Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper** (UCR) in partnership with the National Park Service, Fulton County, and the city of Roswell, the event is designed to celebrate the Chattahoochee and foster a sense of community around the river that serves 3.5 million Georgians and 70% of metro Atlantans.

**The race begins at 9 a.m.** and includes open and recreational categories, various age divisions, solo and tandem canoe divisions, as well as kayak and sea kayak divisions. Paddlers wanting a competitive race will traverse the ten-mile course, while recreational paddlers will take the eight-mile course. Both include exciting Class I-II rapids and conclude at Riverside Park. Timing officials will be provided by **Georgia Canoeing Association**.

The **Festival at Riverside Park, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**, is free and family-friendly. Racers and others will enjoy live music from **The Watershed Project** - a collection of local musicians including Gareth Asher, Christopher Alan Yates, Amy Gerhartz, Brian Binsky, and Emily Kate Boyd, who regularly donate their time and talent to UCR events. Other highlights of the festival include Riverside Park's new "spray ground," face painting, balloon artists and other family-friendly activities, as well as vendors and an array of environmental exhibits.

**Awards** will be presented in all categories at the conclusion of the race, which including new awards for Best Costume and Best Boat Decoration. The race also includes a Team Challenge as a way to build pride, morale and camaraderie among groups such as companies, schools, and clubs. Race fans can cheer on their favorite craft from several locations: Island Ford, Don White Park and the take out. As a special treat for racers only, paddlers will be greeted at the end of the course by **the SweetWater Beer Barge** (UCR's own pontoon boat). Paddlers can enjoy sodas, water, or a SweetWater brew (for patrons 21 and over carrying a valid ID) before going ashore.

**Advanced registration** is available online (go to [www.chattahoochee.org/river-race-festival.php](http://www.chattahoochee.org/river-race-festival.php)) through June 9 for the fee of \$40 for solo boats and \$60 for tandem boats. Onsite registration costs \$50 for solo and \$70 for tandem boats and will be available based on capacity. All registered paddlers will receive a gift bag, a race T-shirt, a boxed lunch, and a one-year membership in UCR. Proceeds go to support UCR's mission to protect and preserve the Chattahoochee River system for the people, fish and wildlife that depend upon it.

**The Presenting Sponsors for the event are 97.1 the River and WSB Channel 2;** other sponsors include Chevron, The Coca-Cola Company, Sweetwater Brewing Company, SignUp4, Republic Services, United Parcel Service, Georgia Canoeing Association, New Orleans Fine Catering & The People's Restaurant, Tree Sound Studios, Twin Bear Management, Advanced Automation, Brown & Caldwell, Green Street Properties/Marthasville Development, Georgia Transmission, Coca-Cola Enterprises, HighCountry Outfitters.