

Outings and Events Stories

Member Memories of Past Hikes and Events

Memories are made in the National Forests: we learn, we experience beauty, we find joy with friends. This is where you can share your photos and stories of GFW Outings and Events.

Send your story and photos to your hike leader or to: [info at gafw.org](mailto:info@gfw.org).
(Note: we reserve the right to edit stories and photos.)
Thanks for sharing!



ForestWatch Fall Retreat is a resounding success

On Saturday, September 25, 2010, 83 ForestWatch members and friends joined board leaders and staff at Vogel State Park for our annual membership Retreat. This year's program theme was "Why Wilderness?", addressing the challenge and promise of securing more protected forestland in Georgia. We learned, visited, hiked, climbed trees and shared great food.

Thanks to all who came, all who presented or led activities, and all who helped out. If you were not there, we missed you! Be sure to come next year so you won't miss out on another great event.



Our Program

Keynote speaker Doug Scott, policy director for the Campaign for America's Wilderness, described the national scene, gave an inspiring overview of the history that led to the Wilderness Act of 1964, and recounted what's happened in gaining more wilderness since then.

Brent Martin, former executive director of Georgia ForestWatch and currently southern Appalachian senior associate with the Wilderness Society, presented an overview of the history of wilderness preservation in Georgia and some of the social challenges to gaining more.

A "**New Wilderness**" panel discussed what wilderness means for Georgia. Panelists included:

- Doug Scott—Manager, Policy and Research, Campaign for America's Wilderness, Pew Environment Group, The Pew Charitable Trusts
- Brent Martin—Southern Appalachian Senior Associate, Wilderness Society
- Sally Bethea—Executive Director, Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
- Wayne Jenkins—Executive Director, Georgia ForestWatch
- Will Wingate—Vice President, Advocacy and Land Conservation, Georgia Conservancy
- Bob Kerr —President, Bob Kerr & Associates, LLC and past Executive Director, Georgia Conservancy



Darren Wolfgang's hike group. Photo by Bill Goldstrom.

wetland filled with grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia asarifolia*), an uncommon and strikingly beautiful wildflower—the largest and showiest population Govus said he'd ever seen. Up higher, they saw some infrequent northern species, including yellow birch, umbrella leaf magnolia (*Diphylleia cymosa*) and minnie bush (*Menziesia pilosa*).

A new activity was added to the retreat this year: tree climbing. Renowned tree-climbing instructor and facilitator Genevieve Summers of Dancing with Trees and GFW District Leader Jim Walker rigged climbing ropes in a big hickory tree, and as many as six new tree climbers at once, young and old, climbed as high as 50 feet. Not even a sudden rain shower could dampen their enthusiasm for getting off the ground and into the canopy.

Hikes and Highjinks

Rain did not dissuade hikers accompanying hike leaders Tom Govus and Darren Wolfgang.

Govus' group hiked 5.4 miles round trip from Lake Winfield Scott to Slaughter Gap, fortunately dodging the unexpected but greatly appreciated rain showers. The gentle slope of the bottom portion of the trail contrasted with steep and rocky terrain toward the gap. They saw a fantastic small



ForestWatchers dangled at various heights on the old hickory tree. Photo by Robin Hitner.



In the kitchen, Honor Woodard, Melinda Edwards, and Jill Gottesman served up desserts, corn bread, cole slaw, pasta salad, and more.

Great Food

The event began with a bounty of food during Friday evening's potluck, which offered pesto, lasagna, quinoa, sweet potato pie, bean salad, fruit salad, hummus and more. Hungry participants piled their plates with plenty of delicious and wholesome home-cooked food.

Saturday lunch featured Donna Born's vegetarian chili and plenty of Jill Gottesman's iron cornbread. For dinner, grillmaster David Govus made ham and Brunswick stew while Michael Griffith roasted vegetables, rounded out with coleslaw, salad, sweet potatoes



Neill Herring, Andy Edwards and David Govus took a break from cooking dinner Saturday.

Photo by Dan Bowden.

and various breads. This fantastic meal was followed by mellow fellowship around the campfire.

Volunteers and Sponsors

Thanks to all our sponsors who make this once-a-year event possible: Jean and Lewis Caputa, Ted and Lynda Doll, Tom Fowler and Glenda Warwick, Peg and Michael Griffith, Dr. Robert Harbin, Sue Harmon, Robin and Janet Hitner, Roger and Jean Johnson, Bob and Jane Kibler, George Lee, Pete and Sally Parsonson, R.E.M., Doug and Elaine Riddle, Dennis and Jan Stansell, Howard and Lavonne Markel, Kasey Sturm, Base Camp Bakery, Donna Born, Calendula Catering, Crescent Moon Bakery, Dancing with Trees' Genevieve Summers, Andrew and Melinda Edwards, David Govus, Grapes and Beans, Lori Jenkins, La Gracia, Lucas Imagery Associates, and mcintoshmountains.com's Peter McIntosh. We appreciate the help of all our volunteers and those who brought food for the potluck. Thank you!

Volunteers of the Year

This year's Volunteers of the Year appreciation segment honored two long-time district leaders, Howard Markell and Dennis Stansell, who have focused their energies on the Blue Ridge district.



Dennis Stansell and Howie Markel were honored as Volunteers of the Year, as wives Jan Stansell and Lavonne Markel looked on.

Want to give us feedback or suggestions? Call our office at 706-635-8733, or send an e-mail to [info at gafw.org](mailto:info@gafw.org).