

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@gafw.org). (Note: we reserve the right to edit stories and photos.)
Thanks for sharing!

Hiking and History on Moccasin Creek

by Donna Born



Brooks Franklin leads the way into the national forest.
Photo by Sue Harmon

At Hemlock Falls, we cooled our feet and then listened to some GFW history, narrated by Tom Partington.

Around 1986, the National Forest Service was preparing to clearcut 20 acres around Lake Lawson near Toccoa. Jim Sullivan knew that the Forest Service guidelines mandated that no clearcuts should occur on land with a slope greater than 30 degrees.

Sullivan enlisted Elmer Butler and Tom Partington and they went to the Lake Lawson site. Sullivan was able to measure the slope, which turned out to be greater than 30 degrees. Confronted with evidence that the NFS was preparing to clearcut in violation of their own guidelines and with some persistence and negotiating, the clearcut was prevented.

You can read about the history of Georgia ForestWatch by clicking the [About Us > Our History](#) link. You don't have to be a history buff to enjoy and appreciate the stories and the individuals who have contributed to ForestWatch's work for protecting our forests.



Everything looks better from the top of Hemlock Falls!
Photo by Sue Harmon

Brooks Franklin and Maureen "Mo" Keating led a June 5 hike to Hemlock Falls in the Chattahoochee National Forest near Moccasin Creek State Park and Lake Burton. This refreshing hike took us by several small waterfalls. The natural air conditioning from the Moccasin Creek cascades and the lush foliage kept us cool most of the way to Hemlock Falls, in spite of the summer heat.

As we continued on the Moccasin Creek trail to Hemlock Falls, we found late-blooming rhododendrons. Sourwood blossom tendrils decorated the path. Most of the hemlocks along the creek were in some stage of illness from the hemlock woolly adelgid. We were happy to see that in one area to the north of the trail, some of the hemlocks are being treated for suppressing the adelgids and saving the trees.



The hikers discovered an anonymous musician playing flute accompaniment to the music of Moccasin Creek.
Photo by Sue Harmon

We did not see any water moccasins on the hike. We did see one baby ring-necked snake that we could not identify. It was a very pleasant few hours spent with old and new friends in a wonderful setting—our forest. Thank you again, Brooks and Mo, for leading this refreshing summer hike!