



Reporting Our Progress in Caring for the Land and Serving People



Snorkeling Adventures in National Forest Freshwaters NatureWatch Program FY2012 Accomplishments Cherokee National Forest, Southern Region

State: Tennessee

Accomplishments:

- FY 2012 was a banner year for freshwater snorkelers, with 731 participants in 38 aquatic ecology trips;
- Trips included the Conasauga, Citico, Hiwassee and Tellico Rivers;
- Underprivileged and inner city youth were targeted with funding provided by partners; 120 were able to participate this year.

Internal Partners:

Fish and Aquatics Program,
USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service.



Forest Service Contribution: \$ 10,500 (from previous year's receipts - 95% Rec Fee Demo Program)

Partner Contribution: \$5,000 includes grants for inner city and underprivileged youth and in-kind services

External Partners:

Southeast TN Resource Conservation, & Devt Council
World Wildlife Fund,
Freshwaters Illustrated,
Conservation Fisheries, Inc.,
Tennessee Aquarium,
Trout Unlimited,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Freshwater snorkeling events at Cherokee National Forest enrich the public's understanding and appreciation for the incredible aquatic diversity in the Southern Appalachian Mountains and demonstrate the Forest Service's commitment to protecting those resources intact for future generations. The NatureWatch Program hopes to expand environmental education opportunities in freshwater settings in different forests and ecosystems.

Snorkeling is a particularly effective educational tool because people get the feeling that they are floating in an aquarium with thousands of fish; large and small, colorful and plain, close enough to touch. Fish are observed feeding, schooling and spawning.



Turtles, tadpoles, crayfish and other aquatic animals are observed up close.

Underprivileged and inner-city kids are welcomed to this unique experience free of charge. Teachers receive continuing education credits.

The snorkeling program is self-sufficient. Through the 95% Rec Fee Demo Program, fees collected in one fiscal year fund the program expenses in the next. Excess funds are used to replenish supplies and replace worn out gear.

People Attending Organized Snorkeling Events Cherokee National Forest



Nature watching underwater has experienced an enthusiastic increase in participation since 2009. Trips to Cherokee National Forest rivers are filled almost as soon as they are available.

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