



ForestWatch Faces

Get to know the folks who make it happen

This web feature spotlights some of the special folks behind the scenes of Georgia ForestWatch. If you'd like to nominate someone for ForestWatch Faces, please contact our office by clicking the e-mail link below

Meet Sarah Francisco: Key legal advisor

Sarah grew up on a Shenandoah Valley farm to become a true “forestwatcher” of the Southern Appalachians, and one of the key members of the Georgia ForestWatch family, a legal advisor with a keen sense of balance. She is as comfortable writing legal briefs as trekking the mountainous wild backcountry of the Chattahoochee National Forest. She knows when to give a little, when to stand fast.

“Truth be told, Georgia ForestWatch would not be half as effective if we did not have her on our side,” said Wayne Jenkins, executive director for ForestWatch. Sarah is a senior attorney and leader of the National Parks and Forests program for the Southern Environmental Law Center, the non-profit environmental law and policy advocacy organization. Her more unofficial titles include that of negotiator, broker, advisor, writer, conciliator and backcountry hiker – all of which are brought to bear when facing the many challenges confronting our national forests.

“Here in the Southeast, we depend on the national forests for so many resources, like outdoor recreation of all kinds for millions of people every year, habitat for fish and wildlife, public land for hunting and fishing, clean drinking water, and I could go on,” Sarah said. “Add pressures like the Forest Service’s timber program, non-native invasive species that are pushing out native species, potential energy production from national forests, and now the effects of climate change. We will have to find a balance and reduce the pressures that we can control,” she added.

ForestWatch staff and district leaders have learned to truly appreciate her keen sense of language and ability to reduce government jargon to understandable and simple terms, and her willingness to pitch in when the time comes to provide the cogent responses to U.S. Forest Service proposals.

Thanks to Sarah, Georgia ForestWatch is a formidable defender of the forest.

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