

DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TOWNS COUNTY

OPINIONS & COMMENTARY

Forget Not October 13th!

The Veterans' Corner Scott Drummond USCG Veteran



As a kid, I always knew that one day I would volunteer for military service. The Army was my first choice, second being the USMC. That being said, after I volunteered for the draft, down at Army 89th recruiting HQ, Pete Winfrey, a cable splicer I was assigned to, and a US Navy WWII Veteran forcefully talked me into joining the USCG. He even drove me down to the USCG recruiting station and I passed all the tests and in my youthful anticipation became a Coastie. However for some reason, I never considered the U.S. Navy. Nor the USAF. Don't ask why. This column is dedicated to those Honorable Veterans who did, those who are now in the Navy as well as those who never came home.



Moles and Voles

Watching and Working Jacob Williams



Moles and voles can be very damaging to your yard. Moles can dig up long tunnels through your yard, and voles make a meal out of the plant roots. This can leave your yard with a lumpy look and wilted dying plants. The key to treating these issues is figuring out whether you have moles or voles in your yard.

Understanding some of the differences between moles and voles is important to decide how to treat them. Technically speaking voles are rodents, but moles are not. Moles are carnivorous animals that eat insects and grubs that they find underground. If you look at a picture of a mole they have very large front feet. They're able to use these big, meaty claws to 'swim' through the soil creating the tunnels in your yard. They are looking for insects to eat in the soil. They won't eat the roots of plants, as those aren't in their diet.

Water Quality After a Natural Disaster

RC&D Frank Riley Executive Director



Natural disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires not only leave property destruction and loss of life in their wake, but the long-range aftereffects and damage to our environment is much more serious than property damage alone which can be repaired. The environmental damage is much more serious and is repaired only with time, a lot of work, a lot of money and a lot of help from Mother Nature. Sometimes it can never be repaired and changes our environment forever.

Water is something we take for granted until we turn the handle on the faucet in the morning, and nothing comes out like is happening to the people in Florida in the aftermath of hurricane Ian. "Water, Water everywhere and not a drop to drink" has serious meaning after a natural disaster.

Water is one thing that all natural disasters have an effect on. Many times, it's water that actually causes the damage and then we can't use it until it is "cleaned up". Our ancestors survived very well and drank from a well bucket before they had deep electric well pumps or municipal water coming out of a pipe by simply turning a handle.

I still remember drinking out of the oak bucket at the end of the well chain that ran over a pulley with another bucket on the other end. I would lean over the edge of the well side and try to dip up the frogs swimming in the pool of drinking water 40 feet below. We actually lived in town with running water and the well was on our farm in the country, but I still remember the taste of the cool water and the lip of the oak well bucket. Now we just turn the handle and water comes from the pipe from an underground well or a commercial source a long way off.

A large percentage of the water supply in the United States is supplied by water from forests, which generally yield higher quality water than any other source. Approximately 80 percent of the freshwater resources in the U.S. originate on forested land, and more than 3,400 public drinking-water systems are located in watersheds containing national forest lands. More than 15 million acres of land, including important forested water-supply watersheds, have burned in the U.S. in the past 30 years. Wildfires increase susceptibility of watersheds to both flooding and erosion, and thus can impair water supplies.

Wildfires can compromise water quality both during active burning, and for months and years after the fire has been contained. During active burning, ash can settle on lakes and reservoirs used for drinking water supplies. Storms following wildfires are known to impair drinking water supplies in the U.S., as burn areas are prone to greater rates of erosion, increasing the downstream accumulation of sediment in streams, rivers, and reservoirs. Thus, the potential impacts from past, current, and future wildfires on the quantity and quality of runoff are considerable, and may greatly impact water used for domestic, agricultural, and ecological water supplies.

Wildfires increase susceptibility of watersheds to flooding and erosion and can have both short and long term impacts on water supplies, such as increased treatment costs, need for alternative supplies, and diminished reservoir capacity. The degree to which wildfire degrades water quality and supply depends on multiple factors. These include the extent and intensity of the wildfire, post-wildfire precipitation, watershed topography, and local ecology.

Drinking-water utilities strive to provide safe drinking water for their communities. Unfortunately, the unpredictable nature of wildfire makes it challenging to develop treatment-plant-specific strategies for treating source water degraded by the effects of wildfire. High-intensity rainfall events in steep, burned watersheds are likely to move large amounts of suspended and dissolved material into downstream water supplies. High-intensity storms can affect water quality years after a wildfire. Post-fire runoff can also harm ecosystems and aquatic life such as fish and frogs that live in affected watersheds, some of which are critically endangered.

Understanding the effects that wildfires have on local water quality helps resource managers plan for and manage water contaminants, conservation, and treatment processes. Urban fires, more than forest fires, result in an increase in chemicals and debris that can be mobilized by the rainfall runoff and associated wind. These contaminants have the potential to seriously affect the quality of water supplies and sensitive habitat areas or ecosystems. We can't do anything about storms and floods, but we can do things to reduce the risk of wildfires that can affect our water quality and way of life.

If we don't want to go back to drawing water from a well and drinking from an oak bucket, (today it would be from a "never-going-away" plastic bottle) then we must do what we can to reduce the risk of wildfires in our mountains. Imagine what the effect of Lake Chatuge or Lake Nottely becoming contaminated would have on our way of life! It can happen! Be Firewise!

For more information, contact ChestChatt RC&D at info.ccrd@gmail.com.

Guest Columns

From time to time, people in the community have a grand slant on an issue that would make a great guest editorial. Those who feel they have an issue of great importance should call our editor and talk with him about the idea. Others have a strong opinion after reading one of the many columns that appear throughout the paper. If so, please write.

Please remember that publication of submitted editorials is not guaranteed.

Because moles and voles have different diets and behavior they must be treated differently for control. There are a couple of different methods for mole control. The first one is to use a granular insecticide to get rid of all the insects and grubs in your yard. Once the food source is removed the moles will move on to find a new food source. A second way of removing moles is by placing a trap in their main tunnel. Go out into your yard and tamp down all the tunnels that you can find. Wherever the ground has popped back up the next day is the main tunnel. Repeated trapping may be necessary because a single yard could be host to several moles. Some of the grubs that moles eat, such as earthworms, are a sign of healthy soil. Moles also like moist soil because it is easier for digging. This means that if you do a good job taking care of your garden you will also inadvertently be encouraging moles to tunnel!

Voles can also be trapped. Place a mouse trap with peanut butter near an active site to catch the voles. If you are able to get rid of the moles in your yard oftentimes the voles will also leave because they can't do a good job of digging their own tunnels. If you're unsure if you have voles or moles take a slice of apple and tie a piece of string around it. Place it in the hole and let it sit for a couple of days. When you pull it back out, if the apple is gone you have voles (herbivores), if the apple is still there you have moles (carnivores).

If you have questions about vole and mole control please contact your local Extension Office or send me an email at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Leather Britches and October Tomatoes

Nothing tastes better than an October tomato. From the late season tangle of a retired corner of the garden, propped up on the fading purple of a stand of opal basil going to seed, the last tomato plants of the year glow in unexpected viridescence.

These are the late bloomers. They were planted at the same time as their neighbors, but took their time and slowly put down deep roots, overlooked and forgotten while everyone else grabbed the headlines over the summer. Now the rest of their clan have withered, and they shake off the cold nights to make new blooms and the sweetest fruit of the year. As the old wisdom maintains, it's not how well you start, but how well you finish.

Yesterday we gathered the seed beans from the garden, the rugged outdoor descendants of the strands of "leather britches" my grandmother and her peers would string together and hang in the attic. The rehydrated beans cooked with a bit of pork were an open secret for generations, only recently rediscovered by haute cuisine.

A feeling of satisfaction always rewards the effort to preserve for another year the seed which has been in the family for generations. The weather was an ally this year, with a perfectly timed dry spell which wrapped the beans in a tight, leathery protective coat. We will have seed to share this year to keep alive the heirloom tradition stretching back to the 1840's and beyond.

It takes time to gather the beans. It's not that the work is hard or complicated, but a bright October sky on a cool morning with the warm sun on my back leaves me standing still and gazing at the mountain, just as I remember my grandparents doing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SHOULD BE E-MAILED OR MAILED TO:

Towns County Herald, Letter to the Editor P.O. Box 365, Hiawassee, GA 30546 Our email address: tcherald@windstream.net

Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, signed, dated and include a phone number for verification purposes. This paper reserves the right to edit letters to conform with Editorial page policy or refuse to print letters deemed pointless, potentially defamatory or in poor taste.

Letters should address issues of general interest, such as politics, the community, environment, school issues, etc. Letters opposing the views of previous comments are welcomed; however, letters cannot be directed at, nor name or ridicule previous writers.

Letters that recognize good deeds of others will be considered for publication.*

Note: All letters must be signed, and contain the first and last name and phone number for verification.

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Letters To The Editor

We are in a Spiritual Battle for the very Soul of America!

Dear Editor, These are the issues facing the American Voter this year: The Economy, Inflation, Interest Rates, Supply Chain, Food Shortages, Energy, Crime and no Bail Prosecutors. There are a lot of things trying to divert the attention from the Major Issues facing Voters! All Families and all People are affected by the Major Issues! America's success is based on the principles of its Faith, Freedom and Liberty, not Government! The results of the coming Election will be determined by Freedom Loving People of Faith!

VOTE, VOTE, VOTE for Leaders who understand the Exceptionalism of America!, Strong Leaders who will help Restore America to the Shining City on the Hill!! God Bless America! Chuck Luca

Poetic Justice

Dear Editor, Last week Joe Biden hosted the World Series champion Atlanta Braves at the White House. This was poetic justice after what Biden did to them and the city of Atlanta last year. Biden was a strong supporter of Major League Baseball's decision to relocate the All-Star game from Atlanta to punish Georgia for its election integrity law. As we all witnessed, time and time again, Biden referred to the law as "Jim Crow on steroids."

What is so surprising is that the Braves team accepted the invitation to the White House after being so ridiculed by the president. In my opinion, since Biden never formally apologized for his disparaging comments about the State of Georgia, maybe the team would have been better off skipping the photo op. And right on cue, soon thereafter, Biden's moronic press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, suggested it was probably time to talk about changing the team's "racist" name.

The Braves should always be the Atlanta Braves. In fact, it's time to bring back Chief Noc-A-Homa. Tim Groza

Midterm Elections

Dear Editor, Have you noticed how few Walker and Warnock yard signs are out in front of homes and businesses this 2022 midterm election? I think it's because we the hard working public, that play by the rules, pay our taxes, respect our laws and love our country, have to choose from two flawed candidates.

I cannot vote for Raphael Warnock. He has voted 96% + with the Biden administration. In just 21 months, look what those poor judgments and no common sense policies have cost this country. Crazy high gas prices, high food costs, open borders, defunding the police, more crime, more debt, higher utilities costs and so much more.

Do not let Raphael Warnock's misleading ads fool you, he will continue voting for the Biden no-common-sense policies. He will not work on the major problems (inflation, open borders, etc.) that are crushing the poor and the middle class.

Please get out and vote. Tom Dudley

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