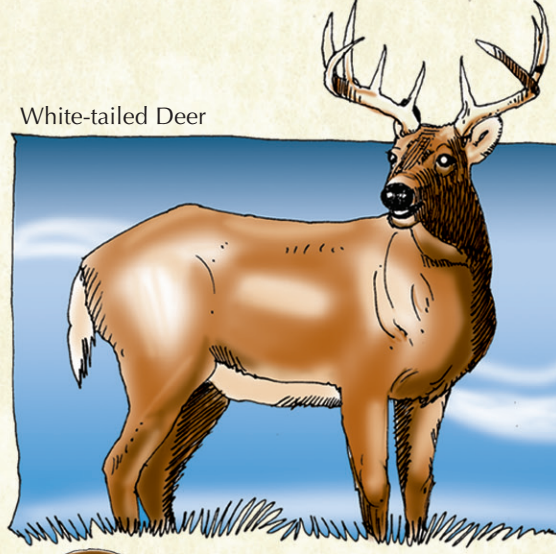


Ochlockonee RIVER



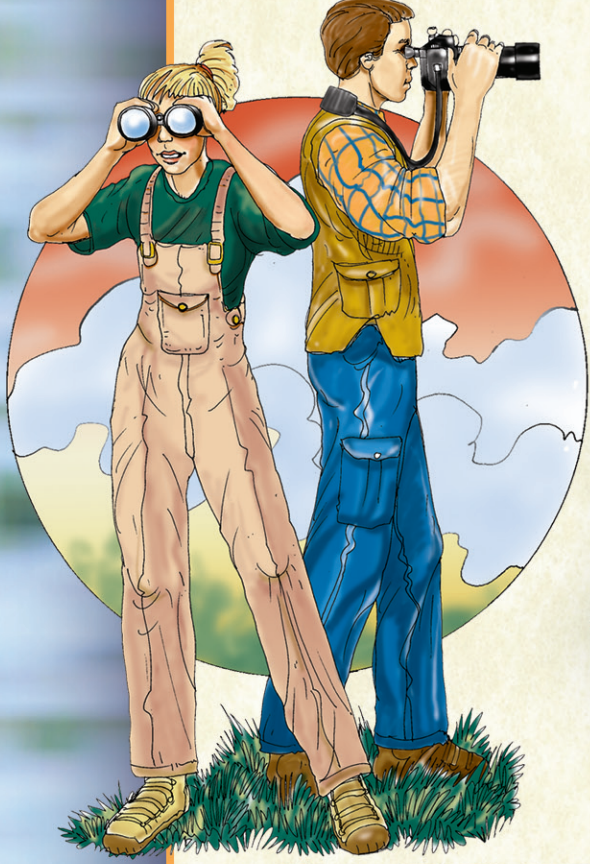
Short-eared Owl

The Ochlockonee River originates in Worth County, Georgia and flows 190 miles south and southwest through the Florida Panhandle, where it then empties into the Gulf of Mexico at Ochlockonee Bay.

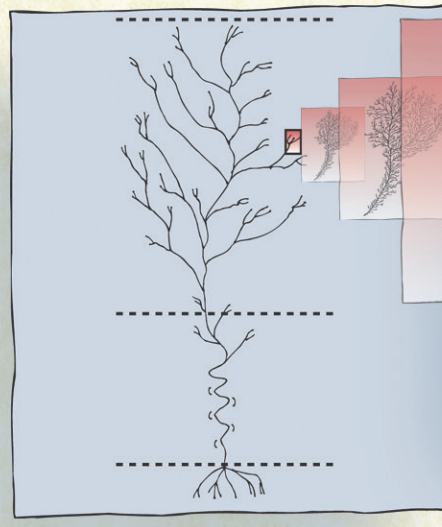


White-tailed Deer

The Ochlockonee River corridor is home to a wide variety of birds, mammals, reptiles and fish.



Insect-eating pitcher plants grow in bogs along the Ochlockonee.



A River System

A river system is a network of connecting channels. Water from rain, snow, groundwater and other sources collects into the channels and flows to the ocean. A river system has three parts: a collecting system, a transporting system and a dispersing system.



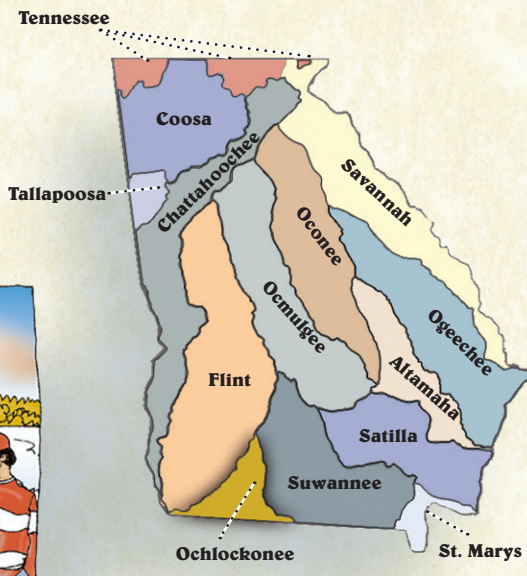
Tributary Network

One of the most surprising characteristics of a river system is the intricate tributary network that makes up the collecting system. This detail does not show the entire network, only a tiny portion of it. Even the smallest tributary has its own system of smaller and smaller tributaries until the total number becomes astronomical. Most of the earth's surface is some type of drainage system.



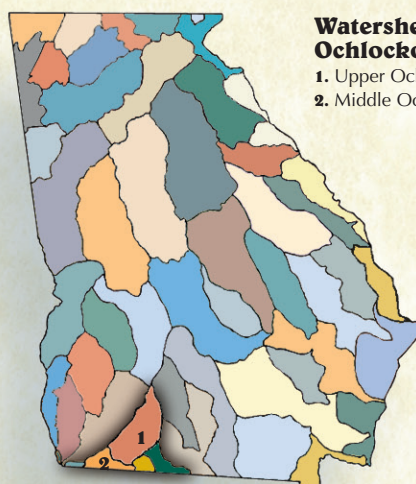
The Watershed

A ridge of high ground borders every river system. This ridge encloses what is called a watershed. Beyond the ridge, all water flows into another river system. Just as water in a bowl flows downward to a common destination, all rivers, creeks, streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands and other types of water bodies in a watershed drain into the river system. A watershed creates a natural community where every living thing has something in common – the source and final disposition of their water.



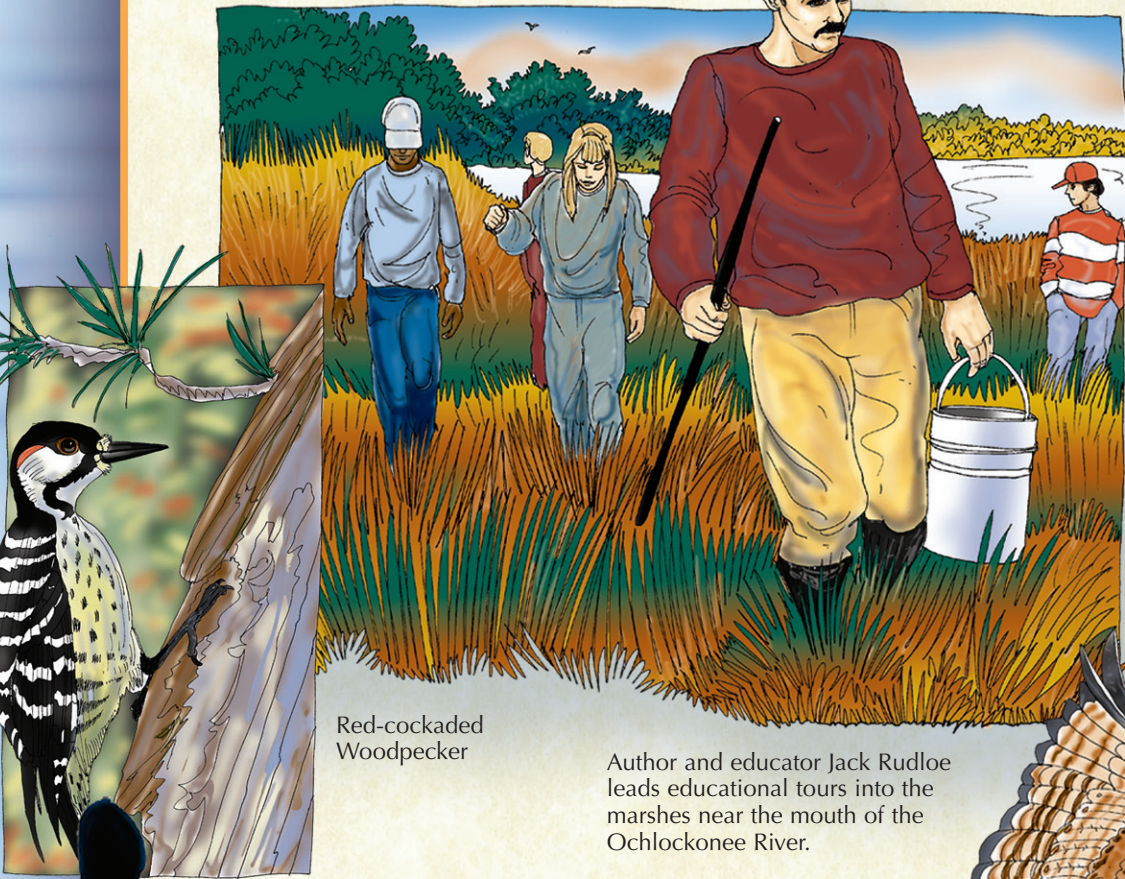
Georgia's 14 Primary Watersheds

Georgia has 14 primary watersheds: Altamaha, Chattahoochee, Coosa, Flint, Ochlockonee, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Ogeechee, Satilla, Savannah, St. Marys, Suwannee, Tallapoosa and Tennessee.



Georgia's 52 Secondary Watersheds

The state's 14 primary watersheds are divided into 52 secondary watersheds, shown here. Those 52 watersheds are further divided into 395 even smaller watersheds and those into 1,960 watersheds. Theoretically, you can continue dividing watersheds until each one is the size of the "Tributary Network" illustrated above.



Author and educator Jack Rutledge leads educational tours into the marshes near the mouth of the Ochlockonee River.



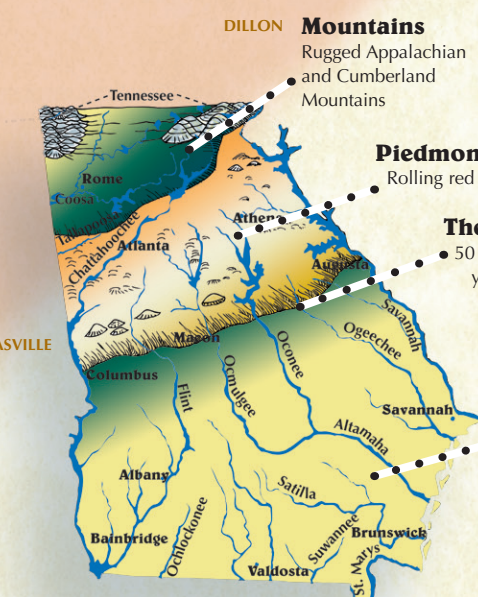
Over 300 species of birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, including black bears, inhabit the watershed.

Rock Bluff



Red-tailed Hawk

Georgia



Mountains

Rugged Appalachian and Cumberland Mountains

Piedmont

Rolling red clay hills

The Fall Line

50 million years ago the ocean came to here

Coastal Plain

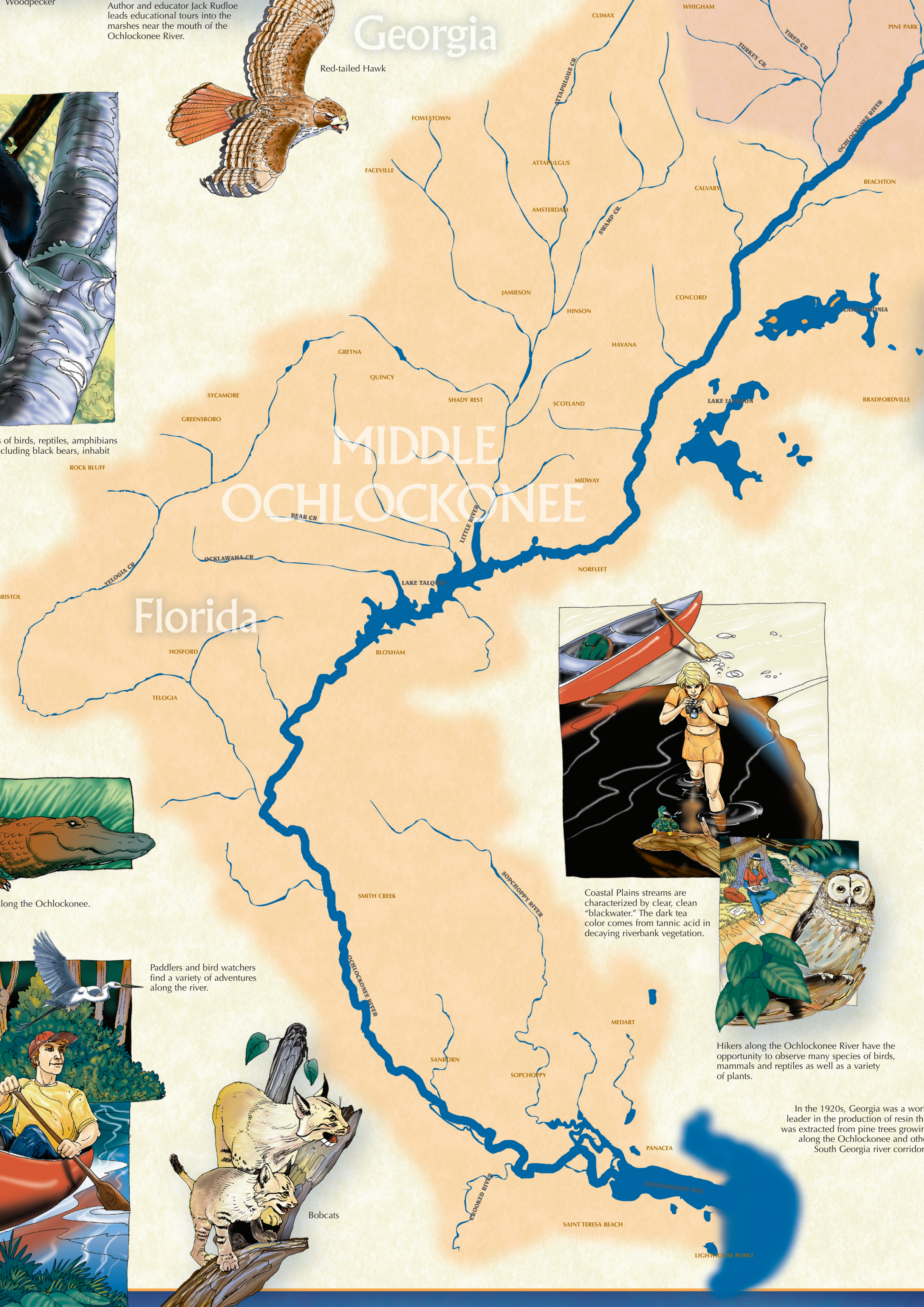
Fertile farm lands, environmentally rich wetlands and swamps

Nature's Organization

Mother Nature gave Georgia two natural organizing principles that determine the courses and characteristics of its rivers. One is its watersheds. The other is the state's three distinct regions: the Mountains, the Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. Rivers that originate in the Mountains or Piedmont are "alluvial" rivers that carry heavy loads of silt. Rivers that begin in the Coastal Plain are dark, clear streams, often referred to as "blackwater" rivers. Sometimes alluvial rivers merge with Coastal Plain rivers. Originating below the Fall Line, the Ochlockonee is a Coastal Plain blackwater river.

The Ochlockonee River System

The Ochlockonee River originates in Worth County, Georgia at an elevation of 420 feet. It flows 190 miles south and southwest past Thomasville, Georgia and Tallahassee, Florida into Lake Talquin. From Lake Talquin, it flows in a westerly semicircle to enter the Gulf of Mexico at an easterly direction through Ochlockonee Bay. The watershed totals 2,677 square miles. Principal tributaries of the Ochlockonee are the Little Ochlockonee River, Tired Creek, Little River, Telogia Creek and Crooked River.



Coastal Plains streams are characterized by clear, clean "blackwater." The dark tea color comes from tannic acid in decaying riverbank vegetation.



Horse trails wind through the Ochlockonee watershed.



As Georgia pioneers moved west, many Creek Indians fled south into Florida where they became known as Seminoles, a word that means one who lived out in the wilds away from main settlements.

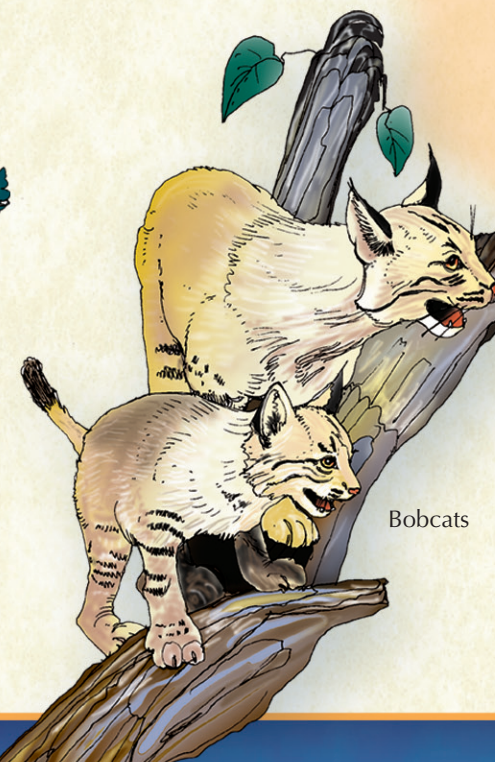


In the 1920s, Georgia was a world leader in the production of resin that was extracted from pine trees growing along the Ochlockonee and other South Georgia river corridors.

Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto fought fierce battles with the Apalachee Indians in the Ochlockonee River watershed. In the winter of 1539-1540, he camped near present-day Tallahassee, Florida.



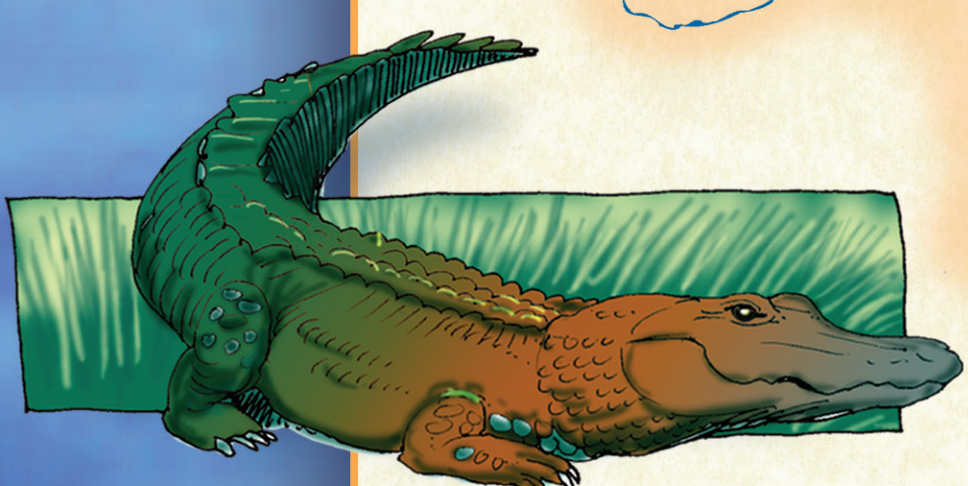
Paddlers and bird watchers find a variety of adventures along the river.



Bobcats



Monarch Butterfly



Alligators live along the Ochlockonee.