



Untapped resources

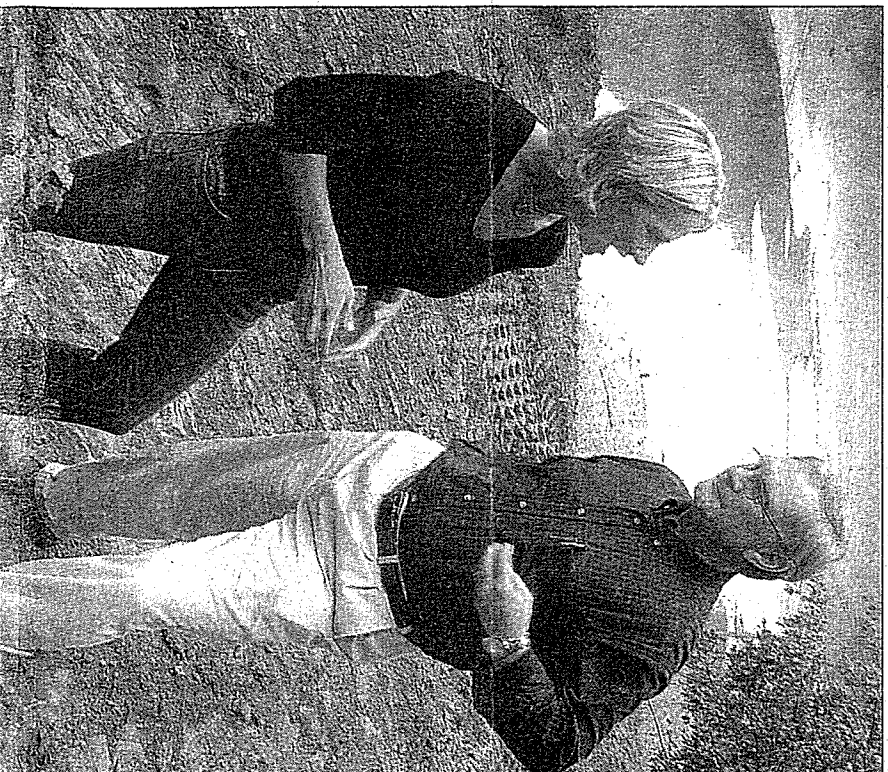
Preserve seeks funds for outdoor classroom

By Marie Nesmith
Bartow Neighbor News Editor

After seeing the animated reaction of her peers last year, Carley Smith, principal for South Central Middle School, said the benefits of having an environmental preserve in Bartow County became crystal clear.

As teachers from the Cartersville and Bartow County school systems toured The Margaret and Luke Pettit Environmental Preserve, 66-acres of forest and lake ecosystems, Ms. Smith said they were excited about the possibility of integrating the natural resource into their curriculum.

"[The Margaret and Luke Pettit Environmental Preserve Inc.] is a wonderful project," said Ms. Smith, who serves on the organization's board of directors. "It also is a great opportunity because it can be easily accessed. It is only a few miles away [at 29 Vineyard Road, near the border of Bartow and Paulding counties]. If enough funds are raised to build an outdoor classroom on



Rick Philabaum/Staff

Top, David Getman grinds a large pipe during the rebuilding of the 18-acre lakes dam. Above, Dee Bishop and Scott Panter, president of the board of directors for The Margaret and Luke Pettit Environmental Preserve, discuss uses for the 66-acre property.

the preserve, she said a variety of courses would benefit from the kindergarten to college level.

"English teachers who are studying poetry with their students could take them out into the environment for creative writing assignments," Ms. Smith said. "Art students also would benefit by having various landscapes and types of lighting. The preserve could be used as a cross-curriculum opportunity that could benefit a variety of subjects, including science and mathematics."

Managed by a 15-member board of directors, the land was donated to form the non-profit organization by Gay Dellinger in 1999. Along with long leaf pines, pink lady's slippers and fox squirrels, Ms. Dellinger said the land has many native plants and animals that can be explored by area children and residents. The first step in paving the way for students to experience the preserve, Ms. Dellinger said, is to create an outdoor classroom, equipped with restroom facilities.

"We have already raised \$13,000 [out of the estimated \$300,000]," said Dee Bishop, Ms. Dellinger's daughter and co-chair for Saturday's fund-raiser. "We are hoping through fund-raisers, grants and donations to be able to start construction next year."