georgiarocks.us

PO Box 33522, Decatur GA 30033
Phone: 770-934-5644 Web: georgiarocks.us/events

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Geologist-Led Walk and Talk Nov. 9, South of Cartersville

Dr. Bill Witherspoon, co-author of the popular guide, *Roadside Geology of Georgia*, will present a slide show focused on Cartersville geology, and lead a 12:00 noon walk at Pettit Environmental Preserve, off GA 61 south of Cartersville, on Saturday, Nov. 9. To reach the preserve, turn off GA 61 8.4 miles south of Cartersville onto Douthit Bridge Road, continue to the end of the road, then follow signs. (GPS to "Pettit Environmental Preserve" may be unreliable.)

Witherspoon will present a slide show twice, at 10:30 and 1:30 PM, titled "From Etowah Mounds to Tinted Sidewalks: How Geology Made Cartersville." Cartersville's geology is unique and interesting for several reasons, Witherspoon says. "Nearly every common rock type in Georgia exists within a 20-mile radius of Cartersville. It is built on Georgia's oldest sedimentary rocks, laid down in a shallow sea more than half a billion years ago. Just to the east and south are metamorphic and igneous rocks, including some of Georgia's oldest rocks, about 1.1 billion years old."

Geology has helped determine the location of settlement in this area, likely going back to the builders of Etowah Mounds. Cartersville is lies in the fertile Great Valley, which runs from Pennsylvania to Alabama. It is situated at the exact point where the Great Valley bends closest to the South Atlantic coast. This makes a natural passageway for a major trade route. Witherspoon says that both the bend of the Great Valley and its fertile soils are geologic features. Moreover, iron, manganese, barite, and ochre deposits make the area one of the Southeast's leading mining districts. Today North America's only active mine of ochre, a pigment used to color concrete and other products, operates here.

The walk highlights Pettit Environmental Preserve's position in the edge of the metamorphic rocks south of town. It will visit the scenic rapids and rock outcropping at the "Boardroom of Planet Earth," where Witherspoon will point out rock layers folded under heat and pressure more than 300 million years ago. While supplies last, he will give away rocks from the Cartersville area that are more than three times that age, which contain unusual blue quartz.

Roadside Geology of Georgia, a full-color 320-page guide, is the 31st book in a Mountain Press Publishing series for the general reader and has sold more than 7,000 copies. "Our goal is to take the reader to Georgia's natural wonders and explain the science that lies behind the scenery," says Witherspoon, who taught geology to K-12 students and their teachers for 17 years at DeKalb County Schools' Fernbank Science Center. He co-authored the 2013 book with Dr. Pamela Gore of Georgia State University. The book will be available for sale and signing at the event.

Contact for information: Dr. Bill Witherspoon, bill@georgiarocks.us.