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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Geologist-Led Walk and Talk June 20 in Cartersville**

Dr. Bill Witherspoon, co-author of the popular guide, *Roadside Geology of Georgia*, will present a free walk and slide show, both focused on Cartersville geology, on Tuesday, June 20.

At 10:00, the public is invited to a “Cartersville Fault Mystery” walk from the Pine Mountain West trailhead, on Komatsu Drive just east of I-75 Exit 288 (E. Main Street). The path ascending Pine Mountain crosses an ancient boundary called the Cartersville fault. According to Witherspoon, “This has been a site of controversy. Some geologists identify here a continuation of the Great Smoky fault, one of the most significant boundaries in the Southern Appalachians. Others have found no evidence for a fault at this location.” On the walk, Witherspoon will explain why such opposite views could be held, and how the truth might lie in between. Participants will also examine the area just north of the trailhead, which was mined in the early 2000’s for ochre and barite.

At 1:00, Witherspoon will present “From Etowah Mounds to Tinted Road Humps: How Geology Made Cartersville” at Cartersville Public Library, 429 W Main St, Cartersville, 30120. 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 located in the fertile Great Valley, which runs from Pennsylvania to Alabama, where it 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 as well as plastic shopping bags, operates here.

*Roadside Geology of Georgia*, a full-color 320-page guide, is the 32<sup>nd</sup> book in a Mountain Press Publishing series for the general reader that has sold over one million 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.

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