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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Georgia's Climate Story Presented on May 25

Geologist Dr. Bill Witherspoon will present a slide talk on Georgia's climate through time, at Chattahoochee Nature Center in Roswell at 7:30 PM on Thursday, May 25. The talk, "Nature's Bumpy Ride to the Icehouse, Humanity's Flame" focuses on the last several million years of Georgia climate and its lessons for the future. Witherspoon, co-author of the popular guide *Roadside Geology of Georgia*, recently had the opportunity to take a Georgia Tech paleoclimatology graduate course, and has integrated up-to-date climate science with an overview of Georgia's geology to create a pair of public programs.

Roadside Geology of Georgia "takes the general reader to Georgia's natural wonders and explain the science that lies behind the scenery," says Witherspoon, who is current President of the Georgia Geological Society. The book has sold more than 5,000 copies. Since it appeared in 2013, Bill has presented more than 70 walks, talks, and workshops throughout the state. He retired in 2014 after teaching geology to K-12 teachers and their students for 17 years at DeKalb County Schools' Fernbank Science Center. Witherspoon began his career as a research scientist in the oil industry.

The talk relates that fifty million years ago, Earth was so warm that the Arctic hosted alligators and lush forests. Since then, cooling has dominated. Subtle shifts in Earth-Sun geometry have driven cycles of advancing and retreating continental ice sheets. Though Georgia never saw glaciers, the cycles have profoundly shaped Georgia's landscapes and biodiversity. In the past century, "humanity's flame," the burning of fossil fuels, has intervened, with a rare, possibly unprecedented "carbon spike experiment" on the climate system. Witherspoon concludes by examining how this might affect Georgia.

The Nature Club hosts the program at its monthly meeting. Admission is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. Chattahoochee Nature Center is located at 9135 Willeo Road, Roswell, GA 30075.

Dr. Witherspoon is also offering a separate slide talk to community groups, "Half a Billion Years of Changing Climate, Etched into Georgia," which relates climate over a longer time span to Georgia's rocks and mineral deposits, as well as Earth's five great extinctions. A schedule of his events is found at georgiarocks.us/events.

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