

Summary of Listing Decisions

EPD used its 2012 Listing Assessment Methodology in making its listing decisions. This document provides more detail to explain why certain listing decisions were made including 1) how listings were made in relation to the 2010 Triennial Review; 2) why certain waters were placed (or remain) in Category 3; 3) the decision not to list the ocean off Georgia's coast for pH; and 4) the removal of numerous waters from the 305(b)/303(d) list of waters.

How listings were made in relation to the 2010 Triennial Review

Georgia's 2010 Triennial Review resulted in the revision of some of the State's water quality standards. The Georgia Board of Natural Resources adopted these revisions in March 2011. Georgia submitted our 2010 Triennial Review revisions to U.S. EPA for approval on November 7, 2011. 40 CFR 131.21(c) states that water quality standards adopted after May 30, 2000, must be approved by U.S. EPA before they can be used for Clean Water Act purposes. The data for the 2012 list was assessed prior to U.S. EPA approval of the Triennial Review changes and therefore did not use revised water quality standards for assessment, but instead used the most recently approved U.S. EPA standards. Should U.S. EPA approve the 2010 Triennial Review before February 29, 2012, then EPD will revise the assessments for the 2012 list in accordance with the new standards. Criteria that were revised in the 2010 Triennial Review that would impact listings decisions on the 2012 list include the removal of the minimum hardness of 25 mg/L that was used in calculating instream criteria for metals and the revision of chlorophyll a criteria for Lake Allatoona. U.S. EPA approval of the 2010 Triennial Review before February 29, 2012 would result in the following changes to the List of Waters:

- 1) The Allatoona River arm of Lake Allatoona would be changed from "Not Supporting" to "Category 3" based on there being one exceedence of the chlorophyll a criteria in the last 5 years.
- 2) Metals would be added as a pollutant to six waters:

R030701030320	Stone Mountain Creek	Headwaters to Stone Mountain Lake	Copper	Ocmulgee
R030701030433	Yellow River	Centerville Creek to Hammock Creek	Copper	Ocmulgee
R031102010203	Jones Creek (aka Tatum Creek)	Dry Branch to the Suwannee River	Lead	Suwannee

R031300020336	Dog River Reservoir	Douglas County	Copper	Chattahoochee
R030602030101	Canoochee River	Ga. Hwy. 192 to Fifteen Mile Creek near Metter	Lead	Ogeechee
R031102010301	Suwanoochee Creek	Lees Bay to Suwannee River	Lead	Suwannee

Waters in Category 3

There were 203 waters in Category 3 on the 2010 list of waters. The 2012 list of waters has 93 waters in Category 3. Forty-two of these are in Category 3 based on macroinvertebrate data that has a narrative rank of “fair”. Currently, Georgia’s listing assessment methodology states that macroinvertebrate data with a rank of “fair” are put in Category 3. One reason that this is the case is that EPD has been working to revise the metrics used to assess macroinvertebrate data. We believe that for the most part, waters that were assessed as “supporting” under the current metrics (narrative rank of very good or good) will still be assessed as “supporting” under the revised metrics. Likewise, we believe that waters assessed as “not supporting” under the current metrics (narrative rank of poor or very poor) will still be assessed as “not supporting” under the revised metrics. We are less certain how waters ranked “fair” under the current metrics will rank once new metrics are established. EPD has been working diligently for many months on establishing a new metrics system, but have been unable to complete the work as of this time. EPD plans to keep the waters with a narrative rank of “fair” in Category 3 until the new metrics can be established.

Thirty-two waters are in Category 3 while EPD works to determine the “natural dissolved oxygen (DO)” for the water. These waters are located in the Southeastern Plain and Coastal Plain where DO can be naturally below the State’s criteria of 5.0 mg/L (daily average) and 4.0 mg/L (minimum). Over the past year, EPD has been working to develop new DO criteria for the Southeastern and Coastal Plains. Some issues that are being studied are potential differences in DO between blackwater streams, clear water streams and tidal streams. EPD is planning to have draft criteria ready for public notice sometime in 2012. Once the new criteria have been adopted and approved by U.S. EPA, EPD will use these criteria for assessing whether waters in this portion of the State are meeting their uses for dissolved oxygen.

The remaining 19 waters were placed in Category 3 for various reasons. The most common reason was that while we had data that indicated that the water is “supporting” it’s use (such as fish tissue data, wastewater treatment plant effluent data, etc.), there is

no instream water quality data available. Without having instream data, we decided to put the water in Category 3 instead of Category 1.

Ocean Acidification

EPD received a letter from the Center for Biological Diversity dated June 29, 2011. In this letter, the Center for Biological Diversity requested EPD to list the oceans off of the Coast of Georgia as being impaired for pH. The letter also transmitted a CD which contained numerous scientific articles regarding the lowering of pH in ocean waters due to increased carbon dioxide emissions and the impact of lowering ocean pH on aquatic life.

U.S. EPA released a memo on November 15, 2010 that provided the States with information and guidance in regards to ocean acidification and the integrated report. According to this memo, States should list waters that are not meeting water quality standards (including marine pH) on their 303(d) lists. The memo also acknowledges that information to support listings for ocean acidification may be absent or limited in many states. EPA provided a list of potential data sources for States to examine in making their listing determinations.

On January 28, 2011, EPD sent a letter by postal mail or electronic mail to the USEPA, and individuals and/or organizations on the mailing list that is maintained by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) for notifying interested parties regarding proposed Rules pertaining to water issues. This letter stated that the GA EPD was gathering water quality data and information to be used in the development of Georgia's draft 2012 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters. In addition, on July 15, 2011, requests for data were also sent to the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, the Department of Marine Sciences at the University of Georgia, and the UGA Marine Institute at Sapelo Island. No data regarding ocean acidification was submitted other than the June 29, 2011 submission from the Center for Biological Diversity described above.

EPD determined not to list the waters off of Georgia's coast for pH based on the following reasons:

No data were provided that shows that the ocean waters off of Georgia's coast are impaired for low pH based on Georgia's pH criteria. The information submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity included pH data from different parts of the world, but did not provide pH data from Georgia's coast. EPD reviewed the data sources provided in U.S. EPA's November 2010 memo. EPD was able to find some pH data, but it was collected in our tidal streams, not in the ocean. The pH of the tidal streams met Georgia's instream water quality criteria.

In addition to looking for pH data, EPD also reviewed available information (including the papers submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity and the recommended EPA resources) to determine if there was information that indicated that ocean acidification was causing harm to aquatic life off the coast of Georgia (with the understanding that the Clean Water Act applies to waters within the 3-mile territorial waters). Most of the information provided discussed aquatic life in other parts of the world, very little dealt specifically with the East Coast of the United States and none of the papers focused on life off the coast of Georgia.

Removal of Waters from the draft 2012 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters

EPD removed approximately 120 waters that were on the final 2010 305(b)/303(d) list of waters. Almost all of these were either in Category 1 (supporting) or Category 3 (assessment pending). They were removed from the list because upon reevaluation, EPD has determined that there was not enough data available to make an assessment on use support and it is not likely that we will have sufficient data to make an assessment in the near future. More detailed information for removal of the waters is provided below along with tables showing which waters have been removed.

Ninety-three of the waters removed from the list were in Category 3 on the 2010 list based upon macroinvertebrate data. EPD began using macroinvertebrate data for making listing decisions on the 2008 list. There are a number of subcoregions in the State where macroinvertebrates were collected, but where EPD has been unable to develop metrics for various reasons (i.e. not enough reference sites, collection occurred during drought conditions, etc.). EPD put these waters in Category 3 in 2008 with the hope that we would be able to collect more data and develop metrics for these subcoregions in the near future. Upon reflection, these water should not have been included on the 2008 list. EPD has determined that due to a number of factors (including resource issues) we are unlikely to be able to develop metrics for these subcoregions any time soon. We have therefore made the decision to remove these waters from the list rather than keep them in Category 3. Should EPD ever develop metrics for these areas or collect other water quality data at these sites, then they will be assessed and placed back on the list of waters.

Twenty-four waters were removed from the list that had been in Category 1 on the 2010 (and earlier lists) based on biological data from Georgia's Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) and the Tennessee Valley Authority. The biological data had been collected a number of years ago and upon reevaluation it was determined that the data was insufficient for making an assessment of use support or non-support. For example, the sites removed from the list based on WRD's data were removed because fish had been collected in areas where the drainage area was less than 1 square mile. A number of

years ago, WRD determined that in order for an IBI to be valid for 305(b)/303(d) listing purposes, the drainage area needed to be greater than 1 square mile. EPD decided to remove these waters from the list rather than placing them in Category 3 because we have no immediate plans to resample these waters.

Two waters (Foxwood Branch and Carver Branch) had been listed as not supporting their uses on the 2010 (and earlier lists) for fecal coliform and were removed from the draft 2012 list. Both of these waters had been listed as impaired based on sampling that City/County governments had conducted in response to sewer spills in the early 1990's. However, upon further evaluation of the data, it was determined that the written description of where these samples were collected is not adequate to determine the sampling location. In fact, it is not clear what creeks were sampled. EPD is therefore removing these waters from the list on the basis that the original listing was incorrect.

Finally, the reach Savannah River (Cedar Creek to Coldwater Creek) was removed from the list. It was in Category 1 on the 2010 list, but it was determined that this reach of the Savannah River is located within the coverage for Lake Richard B. Russell. In order to prevent this overlap of coverage, the water quality data from this reach has now been included with the data used to assess Lake Richard B. Russell.

Ninety-three Waters Removed from Category 3 Based on Lack of Metrics to Evaluate Macroinvertebrate Data

Reach ID	Reach Name	Reach Location	Reach County	Water Type	Basin
R030701060304	Big Branch	Headwaters to Blocker Creek	Tattnall	Stream	Altamaha
R030701060406	Little Creek	Gum Creek to Honey Camp Branch	Wayne	Stream	Altamaha
R030602040516	Tributary to McClendon Creek	Headwaters to McClendon Creek	McIntosh	Stream	Altamaha
R031300040503	Odum Creek	Headwaters to Chattahoochee River	Early	Stream	Chattahoochee
R031501050602	Panther Creek	Headwaters to Stateline	Chattooga	Stream	Coosa
R031501030513	Tributary to Ruff Creek	Headwaters to Ruff Creek	Chattooga	Stream	Coosa
R031300090901	Keel Creek	Headwaters to Chickasawhatchee Creek	Calhoun/ Baker	Stream	Flint
R031300090802	Kiokee Creek	Headwaters to Tallahassee Creek	Terrell/ Dougherty	Stream	Flint

R031300060508	Lilly Branch	Headwaters to Pennahatchee Creek (formerly Headwaters to Little Pennahatchee Creek)	Dooly	Stream	Flint
R031300060507	Little Creek	Headwaters to Turkey Creek (near Lily and Byromville)	Dooly	Stream	Flint
R031300060509	Little Creek	Headwaters to Turkey Creek (near Unadilla)	Dooly	Stream	Flint
R031300060510	Pennahatchee Creek	Headwaters to Sandy Mount Creek	Dooly	Stream	Flint
R031300090705	Tributary to Chickasawhatchee Creek	Headwaters to Chickasawhatchee Creek	Calhoun	Stream	Flint
R031300100601	Tributary to Dry Creek	Headwaters to Dry Creek	Miller	Stream	Flint
R031300100802	Tributary to Fish Pond Drain	Headwaters to Fish Pond Drain	Early/ Seminole	Stream	Flint
R031300080103	Tributary to Flint River #1	Headwaters to Flint River (in Albany)	Dougherty	Stream	Flint
R031300060610	Tributary to Gum Creek #1	Headwaters to Gum Creek	Dooly/ Crisp	Stream	Flint
R031300060611	Tributary to Gum Creek #2	Headwaters to Gum Creek	Crisp	Stream	Flint
R031300090503	Tributary to Pachitla Creek	Headwaters to Pachitla Creek	Calhoun	Stream	Flint
R031300060511	Tributary to Sandy Mount Creek	Headwaters to Sandy Mount Creek	Dooly	Stream	Flint
R030701040405	Camp Creek	Headwaters to Big Creek	Dooly	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701040809	Fishing Creek	Headwaters to Ocmulgee River	Telfair	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701040808	Oppossum Creek	Headwaters to Ocmulgee River	Telfair	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701040810	Tributary to Red Bluff Creek	Headwaters to Red Bluff Creek	Ben Hill	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701040406	Wildcat Creek	Headwaters to Cedar Creek	Dooly	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701021008	Bay Branch	Headwaters to Rocky Creek	Laurens	Stream	Oconee
R030701021009	Stitchihatchee Creek	Headwaters to Rocky Creek	Laurens	Stream	Oconee
R030602040515	Atwood Creek	Headwaters to Dark Creek	McIntosh	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee

R030602030306	Billy Fork Creek (aka Bull Creek)	Headwaters to Bull Creek	Tattnall/ Evans	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602020507	Boggy Branch	Headwaters to Lower Black Creek	Bulloch	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602020506	Iric Branch	Headwaters to Pond 0.5 miles d/s US 80	Bulloch	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602010606	Mill Creek	Jenkins Lake to Carswell Lake	Burke	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040111	Placentia Canal	Headwaters to Wilmington River	Chatham	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040207	Raccoon Creek	Headwaters to Mt. Hope Creek	Liberty	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040512	Tributary to Black Island Creek #1	Headwaters to Black Island Creek	McIntosh	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040513	Tributary to Black Island Creek #2	Headwaters to Black Island Creek	McIntosh	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602030102	Tributary to Canoochee River	Paradise Lake to Canoochee River	Candler	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040109	Tributary to Hoover Creek #1	Headwaters (Skyline Rd) to Hoover Creek	Chatham	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040110	Tributary to Hoover Creek #2	Headwaters (Coffee Bluff Rd) to Hoover Creek	Chatham	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040514	Tributary to Hudson Creek	Headwaters to Hudson Creek	McIntosh	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040201	Tributary to Jones Creek	Headwaters to Jones Creek	Liberty	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040108	Tributary to Little Ogeechee River	Clyo Circle to Little Ogeechee River	Chatham	Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040517	Tributary to Sapelo River	Headwaters to Sapelo River	McIntosh	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602040402	Tributary to South Newport River	Headwaters to South Newport River	McIntosh	Coastal Stream	Ogeechee
R030602030507	Tributary to Taylors Creek #2	Headwaters to Taylors Creek	Long	Stream	Ogeechee
R030702011002	Briar Creek	Headwaters to Tenmile Creek	Bacon	Stream	Satilla
R030702010802	Burket Creek	Headwaters to Hurricane Creek	Jeff Davis	Stream	Satilla
R030702010504	Cat Creek	Headwaters to Seventeen Mile River	Coffee	Stream	Satilla
R030702010706	Fullwood Creek	Headwaters to Satilla River	Ware	Stream	Satilla

R030702010709	Hacklebarney Creek (aka Hakleberry Creek)	Headwaters to Satilla River	Pierce	Stream	Satilla
R030702010202	Indian Creek	Headwaters to Satilla River	Coffee	Stream	Satilla
R030702020408	Keene Bay Branch	Headwaters to Little Satilla Creek	Wayne	Stream	Satilla
R030702010708	Mill Creek	Headwaters to Big Creek	Ware/ Brantley	Stream	Satilla
R030702010203	Pudding Creek	Ruffin Creek to Park Bay Creek	Atkinson	Stream	Satilla
R030702011205	Sweeney Creek	Headwaters to White Oak Creek	Camden	Coastal Stream	Satilla
R030702011203	Todd Creek	Headwaters to Camp Creek	Camden	Coastal Stream	Satilla
R030702030526	Tributary to Brickhill River (S. Brickhill River)	Headwaters to Brickhill (S. Brickhill) River	Camden	Coastal Stream	Satilla
R030702010605	Tributary to Hurricane Creek	Headwaters to Hurricane Creek	Coffee	Stream	Satilla
R030702030305	Tributary to Little Satilla River	Headwaters to Little Satilla River	Glynn	Stream	Satilla
R030702011202	Tributary to Little Waverly Creek	Headwaters to Little Waverly Creek	Camden	Stream	Satilla
R030702030525	Tributary to Malkintooth Creek (aka Maclintooth Creek)	Headwaters to Malkintooth Creek (aka Maclintooth Creek)	Camden	Coastal Stream	Satilla
R030702010707	Tributary to Satilla River	Headwaters to Satilla River	Pierce	Stream	Satilla
R030702030215	Tributary to South Brunswick River	Headwaters to South Brunswick River	Glynn	Stream	Satilla
R030702030214	Tributary to Troup Creek	Headwaters to Troup Creek	Glynn	Coastal Stream	Satilla
R030702011204	Tributary to Waverly Creek	Waverly Swamp to Cross Swamp	Camden	Stream	Satilla
R030601050205	Bull Creek	Headwaters to Little River	Warren	Stream	Savannah
R030601040503	Centerville Branch	Headwaters to Dry Fork Creek	Wilkes	Stream	Savannah
R030601040605	Chickasaw Creek	Headwaters to Broad River	Wilkes/ Elbert	Stream	Savannah
R030601040504	Dry Fork Creek	Cowmire Branch to Centerville Branch	Wilkes/ Oglethorpe	Stream	Savannah

R030601031005	Dry Fork Creek	Headwaters to Clarks Hill Reservoir	Lincoln	Stream	Savannah
R030601031004	Florence Creek	Headwaters to Soap Creek	Lincoln	Stream	Savannah
R030601050203	Kemp Creek	Headwaters to Clarks Hill Reservoir	Lincoln	Stream	Savannah
R030601090606	Springfield Canal	Headwaters to Savannah River	Chatham	Coastal Stream	Savannah
R030601050402	Tributary to Cherokee Creek	Headwaters to Cherokee Creek	Lincoln	Stream	Savannah
R030601050204	Upton Creek	Rehoboth Branch to Clarks Hill Reservoir	Wilkes	Stream	Savannah
R030702040305	Clay Branch	Headwaters to Spanish Creek	Charlton	Stream	St Marys
R030702040304	Hatcher's Branch	Headwaters to Spanish Creek	Charlton	Stream	St Marys
R030702040409	Tributary to Cooner Branch	Headwaters to Cooner Branch	Charlton	Stream	St Marys
R031102020906	Bill Branch	Headwaters to Big Branch	Echols	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020504	Brushy Creek	Headwaters to Willacoochee Creek	Ben Hill/ Irwin	Stream	Suwannee
R031102010303	Camp Creek	Headwaters to Walker Creek	Clinch	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020603	Little Creek	Headwaters to Reedy Creek	Irwin	Stream	Suwannee
R031102021003	Meetinghouse Branch	Headwaters to Grand Bay Creek	Lowndes	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020904	Moore Branch	Headwaters to Alapaha River	Lanier	Stream	Suwannee
R031102021004	Otter Creek	Headwaters to Grand Bay Creek	Lowndes	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020905	Reedy Creek	Headwaters to Alapaha River	Lanier	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020903	Tributary to Alapaha River #1	Headwaters to Alapaha River	Echols	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020403	Tributary to Alapaha River #2	Headwaters to Alapaha River	Berrien	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020702	Tributary to Alapaha River #3	Headwaters to the Alapaha River	Berrien	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020701	Tributary to Alapaha River #4	Headwaters to the Alapaha River	Berrien	Stream	Suwannee
R031102030303	Tributary to Batterbee Branch	Headwaters to Batterbee Branch	Berrien	Stream	Suwannee
R031102020604	Tributary to Reedy Creek	Headwaters to Reedy Creek	Irwin	Stream	Suwannee

R031102020907	Ty Ty Branch	Headwaters to Ray Branch	Lowndes	Stream	Suwannee
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Twenty-four Waters Removed from the Supporting List (Category 1) Based on Insufficient Data to Maintain Category 1 Status.

Reach ID	Reach Name	Reach Location	Reach County	Water Type	Basin
R031300020510	Redbud Creek	Heard County	Heard	Stream	Chattahoochee
R031300020512	Caney Creek	Heard/Coweta Counties	Heard/ Coweta	Stream	Chattahoochee
R031300021004	Sulfur Creek	U/S White Sulfur Creek	Meriwether	Stream	Chattahoochee
R031300021005	Sulfur Creek	D/S White Sulfur Creek	Meriwether/ Troup	Stream	Chattahoochee
R031300050701	Hurricane Creek	Upson County	Upson	Stream	Flint
R031300050705	Long Branch	Upson County	Upson	Stream	Flint
R031300051306	Grace Branch	Crawford County	Crawford	Stream	Flint
R030701031003	Castleberry Creek	Tributary to Rocky Creek	Monroe/ Butts	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701031104	Gilmore Branch	Tributary to Towaliga River	Monroe/ Butts	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701031201	Briar Branch	Upstream Towaliga River	Monroe	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701031403	Reedy Creek	Tributary to Tobesofkee Creek	Monroe	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701031408	Yellow Creek	Tributary to Little Tobesofkee Creek	Monroe	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701031502	Lamar Branch	Tributary to Echeconnee Creek	Bibb/ Monroe	Stream	Ocmulgee
R030701011202	Tributary to Whitten Creek	Hancock County	Hancock	Stream	Oconee
R030701011502	Tributary to Gladly Creek	Putnam County near Reids Crossroads	Putnam	Stream	Oconee
R030701011504	Tributary #1 to Little River	Near Martin's Mill Road	Putnam	Stream	Oconee
R030701011612	Tributary #2 to Lake Sinclair	North of Key Cemetery	Putnam	Stream	Oconee
R030701011703	Tributary #1 to Lake Sinclair	Near Putnam Beach	Putnam	Stream	Oconee
R030701011704	Miller Creek	Jones County	Jones	Stream	Oconee
R060200020807	Coosa Creek	Union County	Union	Stream	Tennessee
R060200020109	Upper Bell Creek	Towns County	Towns	Stream	Tennessee
R060200020809	Kiutuestia Creek	Union County	Union	Stream	Tennessee
R060200020904	Moccasin Creek	Union County	Union	Stream	Tennessee
R060200030104	Charlie Creek	Fannin County	Fannin	Stream	Tennessee

Two Waters Removed from the Not Supporting List (Category 4a) for FC because upon Reevaluation of Data, it was not possible to determine from what stream the water quality samples were collected

Reach ID	Reach Name	Reach Location	Reach County	Water Type	Basin
R031300011110	Foxwood Branch	Tributary to Rottenwood Creek	Cobb	Stream	Chattahoochee
R030701010502	Carver Branch	Tributary to Trail Creek, Athens	Clarke	Stream	Oconee

Water Removed from the Supporting List (Category 1) to prevent an overlap of coverage with Lake Richard B. Russell

Reach ID	Reach Name	Reach Location	Reach County	Water Type	Basin
R030601030305	Savannah River	Cedar Creek to Coldwater Creek	Hart/ Elbert	Stream	Savannah