

**GAEPD Website Notice of Updates of the
Watershed Assessment/Watershed Protection Plan Guidance Documents
and
Bioassessment Changes For Protection Plan Long-term Monitoring**

Watershed Protection Plans are required to have a Long-term Monitoring Plan that consists of water quality and biological monitoring. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) is modifying the frequency that bioassessments are to be performed for the Long-term Monitoring. Bioassessments are currently required to be conducted every two years. Beginning July 1, 2015, bioassessments shall be conducted following the schedule as outlined below:

1. Once the Watershed Protection Plan is approved by GAEPD, bioassessments shall be conducted at least **twice** every five years at the monitoring sites designated for that purpose.
2. Bioassessments shall not be performed in consecutive years.
3. All bioassessments shall include both macroinvertebrate assessments and fish assessments. However, as long as the macroinvertebrate and fish assessments follow the schedules noted above, they do not have to be conducted in the same year.

Bioassessments for the Watershed Protection Plan Long-term Monitoring shall be conducted using the most recent Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which are periodically updated. The current GAEPD macroinvertebrate SOP and Multi-Metric Index (MMI) spreadsheets can be obtained at the following website:

<http://epd.georgia.gov/macroinvertebrate-bioassessment-standard-operating-procedures-sop-and-metric-spreadsheets>

The current Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) Fish SOP and Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) Scoring Criteria can be obtained at the following website: <http://www.georgiawildlife.org/fishIBI>.

The GAEPD guidance documents for the Watershed Assessment/Watershed Protection Plan process have been updated. The revised Watershed Protection Plan guidance document includes the changes in bioassessment frequency for the Long-term Monitoring Plan as described above. The description of Annual Reporting requirements that was included under the Watershed Protection Plan guidance now is a separate guidance document. This document provides a more detailed description of what is to be included as part of the Annual Report submittal.

If you have any questions regarding the changes in conducting bioassessments, or about other aspects of the Watershed Assessment/Watershed Protection Plan process, feel free to contact GAEPD. General questions or water quality questions can be addressed by:

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