

EPD Watershed Protection Branch

Bacteria Equivalency Strategy for Using the Optimal Indicator Organisms for WQS and NPDES Permitting

This notice is to announce that the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Watershed Protection Branch has finalized the Bacteria Equivalency Strategy for Using the Optimal Indicator Organisms for WQS and NPDES Permitting (Bacteria Strategy). The final document can be found on the EPD website at <https://epd.georgia.gov/forms-permits/watershed-protection-branch-forms-permits/wastewater-permitting/permitting-strategies>.

During the 2013 Triennial Review, Georgia adopted *E. coli* and enterococci as the pathogen indicators for waters designated as recreation where primary contact recreational activities such as swimming, water skiing, and white-water boating occur. As part of the 2019 Triennial Review, Georgia proposed *E. coli* and enterococci criteria for waters designated as fishing, coastal fishing, and drinking water to protect secondary contact recreators who may inadvertently ingest water. The Bacteria Strategy provides a framework for the implementation of the proposed changes to the bacteria criteria for water quality monitoring, 303(d)/305(b) listing purposes, Total Maximum Daily Loads, and wastewater and stormwater permitting.

EPD previously released a draft Bacteria Strategy in November 2021 for public review and comment, and input received during the public comment period and during a December 2021 public meeting informed the final Bacteria Strategy.

Please share this information with persons who may be interested.