

EPD Watershed Protection Branch

Guidance for Water Quality Trading in Georgia

This notice is to announce that the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Watershed Protection Branch has finalized the Guidance for Water Quality Trading in Georgia. The final document can be found on the EPD website at [Water Quality Trading | Environmental Protection Division \(georgia.gov\)](https://www.epd.georgia.gov/water-quality-trading).

Restoring and preventing water quality degradation is a difficult ecological, economic, and regulatory challenge that requires states and communities to rely on a diverse set of tools and strategies. Water quality trading is one tool that can be used to protect, maintain, and restore Georgia's waterways. Water quality trading enables facilities to buy and sell pollutant reduction credits for reductions beyond water quality-based effluent limitations (WQBELs) and gives nonpoint sources the opportunity to be compensated for reductions beyond those already required by law or regulation. These credits can be purchased by an entity to achieve less costly pollutant reduction than if the entity acted alone. Trading ultimately provides an equal or greater water quality benefit to the receiving water, as measured by pollutant load reductions.

This guidance document is the result of an extensive public process, including a stakeholder process held on a general trading framework in 2019 and a stakeholder process held on a draft guidance document in 2021. EPD received many comments during the 2021 stakeholder process, which resulted in several changes to the guidance document before finalization. A summary of that stakeholder process and a response to those comments can be found on the EPD website at [Water Quality Trading | Environmental Protection Division \(georgia.gov\)](https://www.epd.georgia.gov/water-quality-trading).