

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION
PUBLIC NOTICE
WATERSHED PROTECTION BRANCH

August 20, 2025
Advisory Issue Date

Toombs County
City/County

September 18, 2025
Advisory Close Date

BV-138-25-01
Control Number

Vidalia Rail Trail Phase I
(GPS Coordinates: 32.203313, -82.424275)

Activity

This notice is issued to inform the public of a receipt of an application for a variance submitted pursuant to a state environmental Law. The public is invited to comment during the 30-day period on the proposed activity. Site plans are available for review and are located in the following EPD office: Watershed Protection Branch File Room, 2 MLK Jr. Drive, SW, West Tower, Balcony, Suite 418, Atlanta, GA 30334. Please contact GORArequest.Water@dnr.ga.gov to schedule an appointment to review the plans. Since the EPD has no authority to zone property or determine land use, only those comments addressing environmental issues related to air, water, and land protection will be considered in the application review process. Comments may be submitted via e-mail to: EPDcomments@dnr.ga.gov. Comments may also be provided in writing to: Program Manager, Nonpoint Source Program, Erosion and Sedimentation Control, 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive SW, Suite 1452 East, Atlanta, GA 30334. The words “Buffer Variance Comment”, including the Control Number shown above, should be placed in the e-mail subject line (if sent via e-mail) or on the top of the first page of written comments to ensure that your comments will be forwarded to the appropriate staff.

Type of Permit Application: Variance to encroach within the 25-foot State waters buffer.

Applicable Law: Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act O.C.G.A. § 12-7-1 et seq.

Applicable Rules: Erosion and Sedimentation Control Chapter 391-3-7

Basis under which variance shall be considered {391-3-7.05 (2)(a-k)}: (f)

Description and Location of Proposed Activity:

The proposed project will impact the buffer of ditch (d) 1 and will construct a bicycle and pedestrian facility within the existing right-of-way of the former Georgia and Florida Railway Mainline between Dewayne Dykes Road and downtown Vidalia in Toombs County, with part of the trail being proposed as a boardwalk. The project will impact the state mandated 25-ft buffer within the Ochoopee River Watershed (03070107). The disturbance will cover 95,127 square feet (4,161 linear feet) and include clearing and grubbing for contractor access, construction of slopes necessary for proposed boardwalk, placement of driven boardwalk piles within the buffer and the paved trail, and installation of stormwater best management practices.

Name and Address of Permit Applicant: Mr. Eric Duff
Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
600 W. Peachtree Street, NW, 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Summary of Rules Requirements for Variance Application:

The application for a variance must include an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan with control measures based on sound conservation and engineering practices which meet or exceed the standards in the "Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia" and which will minimize erosion and deposition of sediments on adjacent lands or into State waters.

For Additional Information Contact: Jonathan Calabria-Russell,
Environmental Compliance Specialist II
EPD, Watershed Protection Branch
Non-Point Source Program
2 MLK Jr. Dr. SW, Suite 1462 East
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Telephone (work): (470)-512-9182