

# Welcome to this Public Meeting



- Please note that everyone is entering the meeting with their microphones muted.
- Please **keep your microphones muted** except when you are speaking. This will help us minimize background noise and feedback.
- Please take a moment to **open the Participants list and rename yourself** to show your full name and affiliation, so we have that for our records. You should see a “Rename” option next to your name (or click on “More” to find this option).
- **This meeting is being recorded** to document any questions or comments received during our time together.
- To make a comment or ask a question, please either:
  - Indicate you would like to make a comment using the Chat feature.
  - In the “Reactions” menu, select the “raise hand” option. The host will call on you to ask your question or make your comment.

# Designated Use Change Guidance Document Discussion Meeting

Gillian Gilbert-Wason

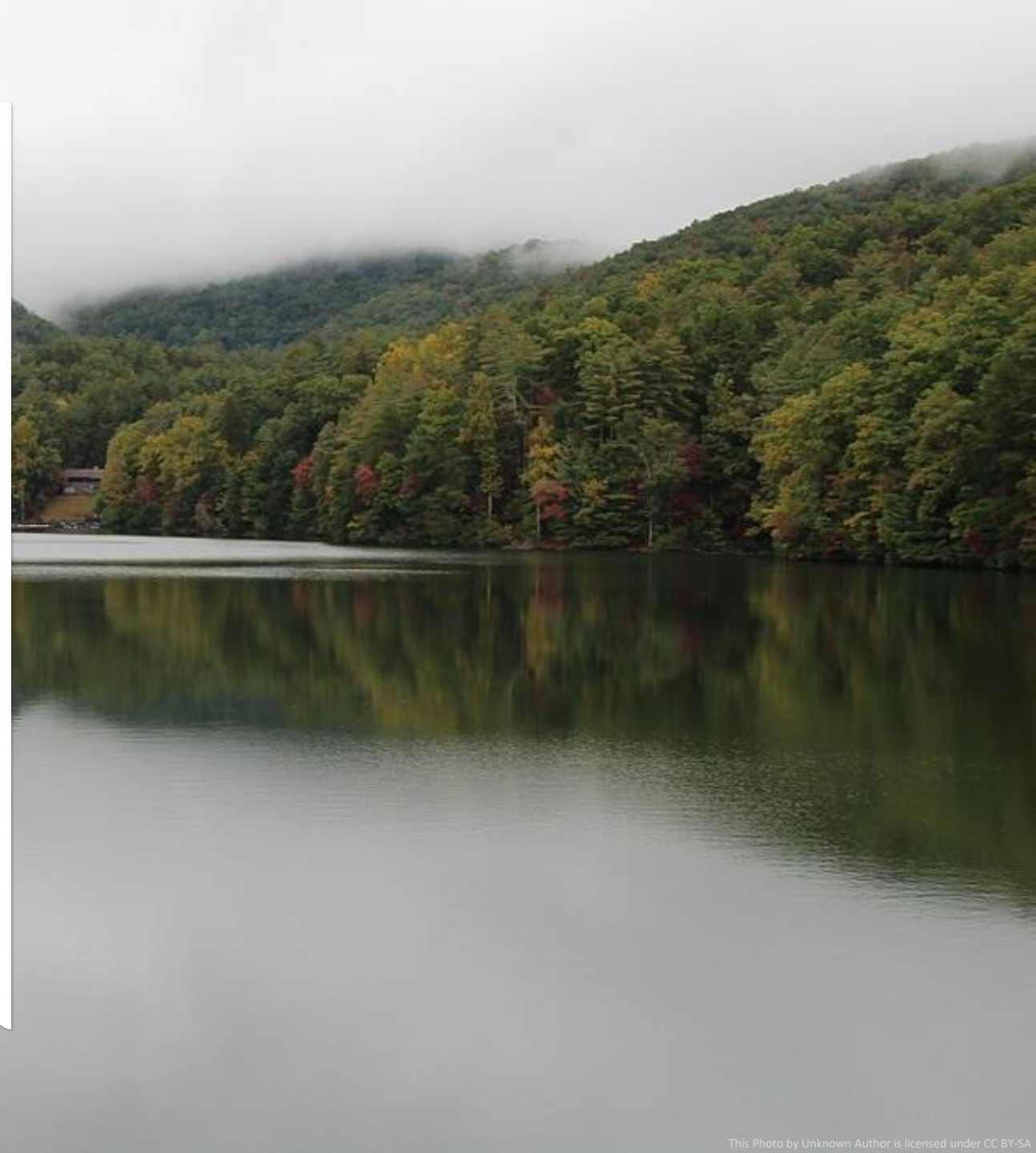
Water Quality Standards Coordinator

February 25, 2022



# Meeting Agenda

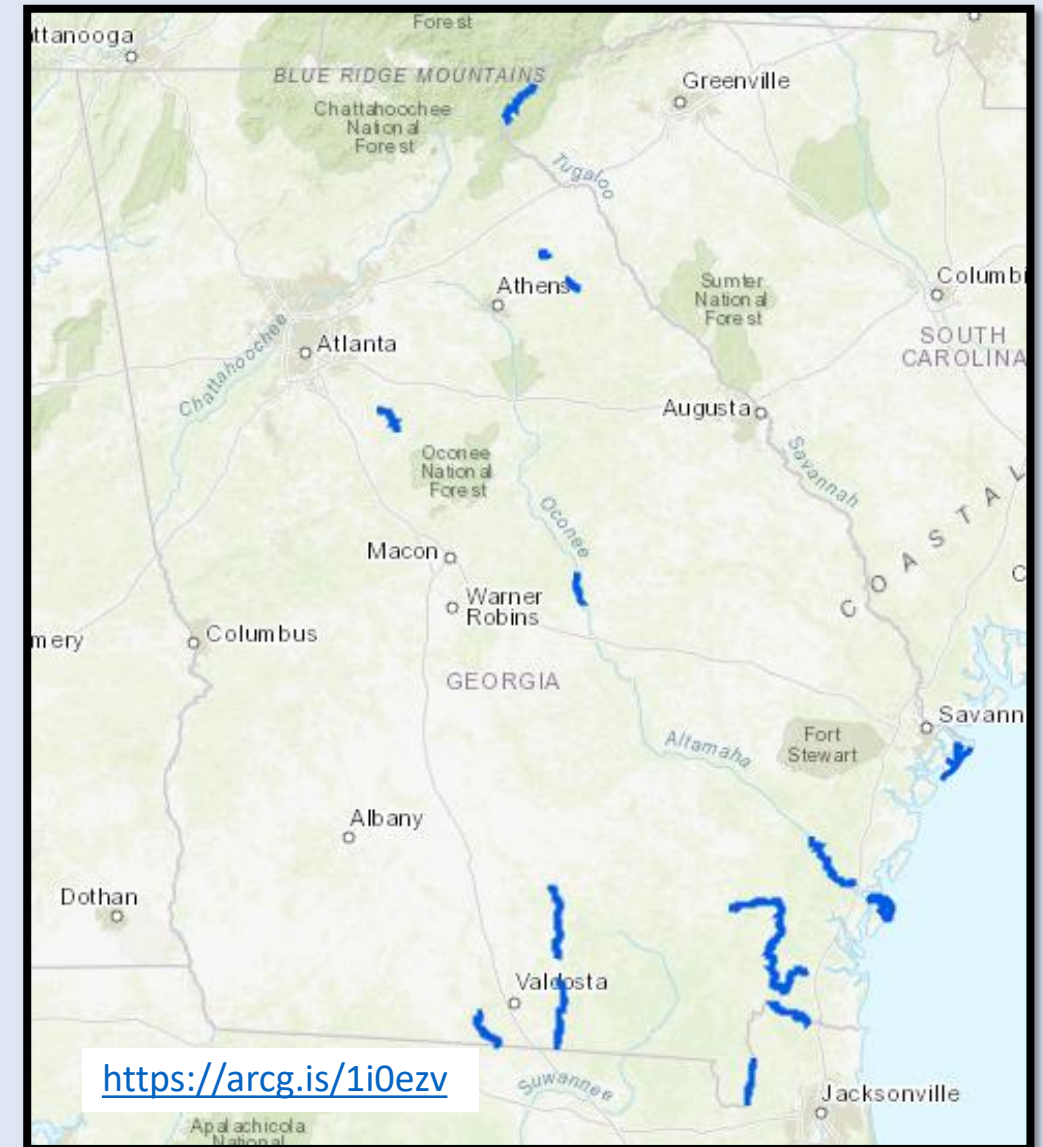
- 2019 Triennial Review Designated Use Changes
- Designated Use changes and water quality
- Waterbodies not prioritized in the 2019 Triennial Review
- Updates to the designated use change nomination process
- Updated “Guidance for Recommending a Change in Designated Use” document
- Discussion/Q&A





# 2019 Triennial Review Designated Use Changes

- Alapaha River - Cherry Creek to Stateline
- Alapaha River - Willacoochee River to Dampier Branch
- Altamaha River - Doctors Creek to Butler River
- Broad River - Comer-Carlton Rd (Athens Hwy) to Mill Branch
- Broad River - Wildcat Bridge Rd. to Scull Shoal Creek
- Chattooga River - confluence with West Fork Chattooga to Tugaloo Lake
- Little St. Simons Island - Littoral waters on the ocean and sound side of Little St. Simons Island
- Oconee River - Dead River to Flat Creek
- Satilla River - Alabaha River to Woodbine boat ramp at Hwy 17
- South River - Honey Creek (Henry County) to Lake Jackson at GA Hwy 36
- St. Marys River - Deep Creek to Boone Creek
- St. Marys River - Prospect Landing Rd. to Little St. Marys River
- Wassaw Sound - Open Sea and littoral waters of Wassaw and Little Tybee Islands
- Withlacoochee River - Tiger Creek to State Line





# Designated Use and Water Quality

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From our updated Guidance document (page 3)

- **Please note that changing the designated use is not a means to attain water quality standards.**
- Designated uses are intended to establish goals and acknowledge current uses of waterbodies, such as supporting aquatic life and protecting human health.

# What does “eliminated from consideration” mean?

- During the 2019 Triennial Review, EPD used a screening process for prioritizing certain waterbodies for designated use change.
- Those waterbodies that were not prioritized were said to have been “eliminated from consideration.”
- This term created some confusion and EPD would like to provide some clarification:
- This means that we decided not to consider them for **2019 Triennial Review** due to time constraints.
- These waterbodies can be re-nominated, and some of them are already being considered for the 2022 Triennial Review.



# How to resolve “reasons for elimination”

- Waterbodies impacted by conditions that could negatively affect human health were not prioritized for designated use change during the 2019 Triennial Review.
- Conditions that eliminated waterbodies from the priority list include:
  - Discharge within 10 miles of segment
  - Hazardous waste sites
  - Documented PFAS above health advisory levels
  - Limited riparian buffer
  - Close proximity to nonpoint sources, including:
    - Agricultural land, chicken houses, or livestock
    - Biosolids disposal areas
    - Urban areas
    - Landfills
    - Airports
- EPD would like to emphasize that these conditions do not disqualify a waterbody from being considered for a designated use change in the future. These conditions indicate that further stakeholder engagement may be required. Nominators should be prepared to participate in stakeholder meetings that may be necessary to gain full community support.





# Waterbodies Under Consideration for 2022 Triennial Review

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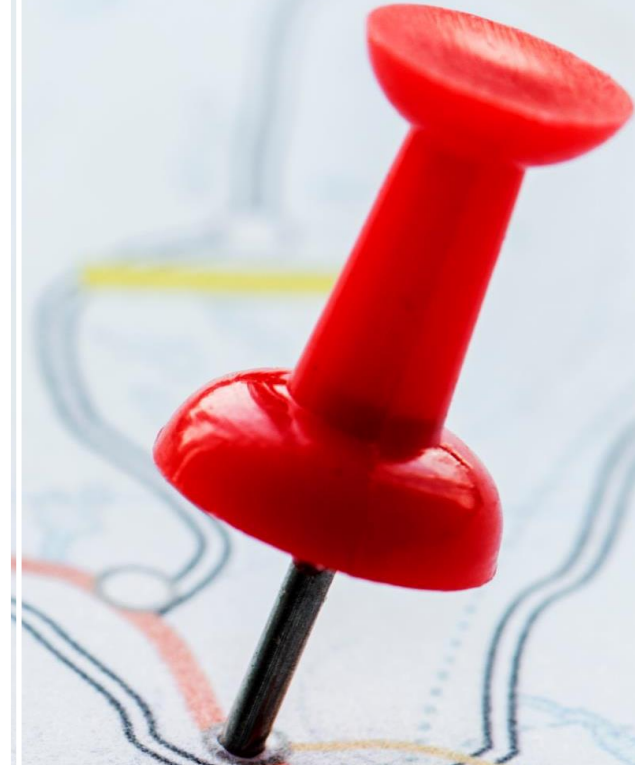
- Altamaha River - Savannah Hwy. (Georgia Hwy. 23/ U.S. Hwy. 25) to Doctors Creek
- Broad River - Scull Shoal Creek to Athens Hwy. (Georgia Hwy. 72)
- Chattahoochee River - Sweetwater Creek to Pea Creek
- Chattahoochee River - North Highland Dam to Bull Creek
- Satilla River - Jamestown Landing to Alabaha River
- Withlacoochee River – Georgia Hwy. 37 to Tiger Creek
- Etowah River
- South River - Panola Shoals to Honey Creek (Henry County)

EPD anticipates additional nominations. All initial nomination forms received by September 22, 2022 will be considered for the current Triennial Review.



# Nomination process – what's new?

- Each nominated waterbody requires a separate nomination package
- 3 stage process, successive information gathering
  - Initial nomination
  - Evaluation
  - Stakeholder outreach
- Updated guidance document



# Guidance document – what's new?

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- Updated document provides guidance for requesting a designated use change to any of Georgia's designated uses, not just recreation.
- Updates to what information is needed from nominators and what EPD will provide.
- New forms required for each stage of nomination. This is to provide better clarification of the information EPD is requesting from nominators and to increase efficiency of data evaluation by EPD staff.





# Initial Nomination

## Required information:

- Name of waterbody
- Description of nominated segment (where the segment starts and ends)
  - Examples:
    - Chattahoochee River - Snake Creek to Yellowdirt Creek
    - Broad River - Wildcat Bridge Rd. to Scull Shoal Creek
    - Withlacoochee River - Tiger Creek to State Line
- Length (in miles)
- Map depicting nominated segment
  - PDF, high-resolution JPEG files, or GIS map files



## Designated Use Change Recommendation - Initial Nomination Form

Nominating Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Waterbody Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Waterbody Name refers to the name of the river, creek or other waterbody being nominated. Please reference waterbody names as recognized in the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) national hydrography dataset (NHD) that are viewable on the USGS National Map Viewer (<https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/>). An organization wishing to nominate a water trail that includes a main river and portions of several tributaries must submit a separate nomination for each named waterbody associated with that trail.

Waterbody Description: \_\_\_\_\_

- Waterbody description should include starting (upstream) and ending (downstream) boundaries for the segment. Road crossings, creeks, lakes, and other waterbodies that merge or intersect with the nominated waterbody are preferred boundaries.
  - Examples:
    - Chattahoochee River - Snake Creek to Yellowdirt Creek
    - Broad River - Wildcat Bridge Rd. to Scull Shoal Creek
    - Withlacoochee River - Tiger Creek to State Line
- EPD can help nominators select landmarks for waterbody descriptions if needed.
  - EPD may amend the description provided by nominators for consistency with the format in the Rules.
- One waterbody (river) per nomination

Approximate Length of Waterbody (in miles): \_\_\_\_\_

File name of attached map: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominators must submit a map showing the location of the nominated waterbody with the initial nomination form. Please include the file name of the attached map on this form for record keeping purposes. Maps should be submitted as PDF or high-resolution JPEG files. GIS map files or packages are also welcome.

# Evaluation

Nominators are required to submit documentation of the waterbody's qualification for designated use change

- Section 3.2.1 of the guidance document describes acceptable forms of documentation for each designated use.
- For use change to recreation, nominators must complete the "Recreation Location Data Template," (updated from the last Triennial Review).
- Nominators must solicit letters of support from stakeholders.







# Evaluation

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- EPD will evaluate information received from nominators to determine if the proposed designated use change is appropriate.
- EPD will use the following methods to identify human health concerns that may necessitate further stakeholder engagement:
  - EPD will evaluate surrounding land area with satellite imagery
  - EPD may consult available water quality data and any 305(b)/303(d) impairments and/or TMDLs.
    - Nominators may submit additional water quality data if they have it.
  - EPD may request additional information from nominators as needed.
- If EPD determines that sufficient information has been provided, EPD will proceed to the Stakeholder Engagement Stage.

# Stakeholder Outreach

When a designated use change is deemed appropriate by EPD during the evaluation stage, EPD will initiate stakeholder engagement.

- Notification of the proposed designated use change will be sent to:
  - Point source dischargers within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody
  - Permitted nonpoint sources within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody
  - Local governments, municipalities, and counties through whose jurisdiction the waterbody flows
- Stakeholders will be given opportunity to respond, comment, or request further engagement.
- EPD will hold stakeholder meetings to help facilitate further discussions between stakeholders and nominators when necessary.
- Copies of all comments and communications with stakeholders will be shared with nominators.



# Final Nomination Package Checklist

- Nominators will submit all information gathered during the nomination process.
- Checklist serves as a coversheet, tracking sheet, and summary of information contained.
- Nominators should keep track of all documents and communications, including those shared with the nominator by EPD.
- This checklist will be used by EPD to confirm accurate organization and record keeping.

Click or tap here to enter text. is recommending Click or tap here to enter text. for designated use change to Choose an item.

Please provide the segment description(s) of the nominated waterbody below. Multiple segments of the same waterbody may be covered by a single checklist.

Segment Description(s):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Included in this package:

- ☐ Designated Use Change Initial Nomination Form

File name: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Waterbody segment(s) depicted on a map

File name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Completed Recreation Location Data Template

File name: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ # letters of support solicited by nominating party

File name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- May include letters from businesses, users of the waterbody, cities and counties, other affected parties identified by the nominator
- These letters may have been sent directly to EPD in which case a copy will be shared with the nominator for their records.

- ☐ # letter(s) of support or concern solicited by EPD

File name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- May include letters from dischargers, cities and counties, other affected parties identified by EPD
- These letters may have been sent directly to EPD in which case a copy will be shared with the nominator for their records.

- ☐ # file(s) containing relevant water quality data

File name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- Water quality data is not a requirement for a nomination package. EPD will be evaluating all relevant internal water quality data, but nominators are encouraged to submit any supplemental data that could help inform our decision.

- ☐ # communication document(s)

File name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

- Copies of emails, letters, meeting invitations, and other relevant communication documents between EPD and/or nominators and/or stakeholders



# Discussion





# Relevant Links and Contact Info:

- EPD's [Georgia Water Quality Standards webpage](#)
  - Draft [Guidance for recommending a Change in Designated Use](#)
  - [Initial Nomination Form](#)
  - [Recreation Location Data Template](#)
  - [Final Nomination Package Checklist](#)
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- Questions about the designated use change nomination process can be directed to Gillian Gilbert-Wason at [gillian.wason@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:gillian.wason@dnr.ga.gov)