

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

Designated Use Updates

Supporting Documentation for Drinking Water and Recreation Designated Use Additions for the 2022
Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards

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The Environmental Protection Division (EPD) issued a draft of the document titled “Guidance for Recommending a Change in Designated Use” during the opening hearing of the 2019 Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards on February 26, 2019. Simultaneously, a large number of designated use recommendations were submitted during the 2019 Triennial Review. While evaluating these recommendations, revisions were made to the draft document that incorporated refinements and lessons learned. EPD released a final revised draft of the guidance document prior to the opening hearing for the 2022 Triennial review in January 2022. A public meeting and comment period were held in February 2022 where interested parties were provided information on the revisions and expected evaluation process. EPD released a final version of the document “Guidance for Recommending a Change in Designated Use” on March 16, 2022. The following designated use changes are being considered based on guidelines included in the March 2022 guidance document.

Public Nominations for Designated Use Change

During this Triennial Review period, stakeholders and members of the public nominated twelve waterbody segments throughout the state for the addition of the recreation designated use. Eleven water body segments are being updated to include recreation as a designated use and one remains under evaluation awaiting further stakeholder engagement.

For waterbodies nominated for the addition of the recreation designated use, EPD worked with nominating parties and other stakeholders to gather relevant information for evaluation of appropriateness of a designated use change for each waterbody. Nominators were required to submit an initial nomination form which included a description of the waterbody segment being nominated along with a map depicting the location. Nominators were also asked to submit information on the type and location of recreation activities and investments on the waterbodies using a template provided by EPD, and to solicit letters of support from the surrounding community. The majority of the waterbodies nominated for a designated use change to recreation for the 2022 Triennial Review were nominated during the 2019 Triennial Review, but not prioritized at that time due to insufficient time for stakeholder outreach and/or incomplete nomination packages.

Additionally, EPD notified cities and counties adjacent to nominated waterbodies, as well as any permitted wastewater dischargers within 25 miles upstream of the nominated waterbodies, of the potential change and provided an opportunity for these stakeholders to submit any comments and/or request a stakeholder meeting. EPD did not receive any stakeholder feedback either in support of or in opposition to designated use changes for this Triennial Review period.

Following is a summary of information received for waterbodies nominated for a change in designated use to recreation:

Altamaha River – Jaycee Landing to Doctors Creek: Nominated by Altamaha Riverkeeper during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and one letter of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Long County, Wayne County, and to three permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the

waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The new recreation segment “Jaycee Landing to Doctors Creek” was combined with the existing recreation segment “Doctors Creek to Butler River.” The new combined segment appears in the Rule as Jaycee Landing Rd. to Butler River

Broad River – Hwy 17 to Clarks Hill Lake & Scull Shoal Creek to Briars Landing at Hwy 72: The Scull Shoals Creek to Briars Landing segment was nominated by Georgia River Network during the 2019 Triennial Review and was re-nominated by Broad River Watershed Association for the 2022 Triennial Review. The Hwy 17 to Clarks Hill Lake segment was newly nominated for the 2022 Triennial Review by Broad River Watershed Association. Nomination package included nomination form, maps, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and seven letters of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Wilkes, Elbert, and Madison Counties, and to ten permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The new recreation segment “Scull Shoal Creek to Athens Highway (Georgia Hwy. 72)” joins the existing recreation segments “Wildcat Bridge Rd. to Scull Shoal Creek” and “Comer Carlton Rd. (Athens Hwy) to Mill Branch.” The new combined segment appears in the Rule as “Wildcat Bridge Rd. to Mill Branch.”

Chattahoochee River – Sweetwater Creek to Snake Creek: Nominated by Chattahoochee Riverkeeper during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and three letters of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Carroll, Coweta, Douglas, and Fulton Counties, Chattahoochee Hills, City of Douglasville, City of South Fulton, and to twenty permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The new recreation segment “Sweetwater Creek to Snake Creek” was combined with the existing recreation segment “Snake Creek to Yellowdirt Creek.” The new combined segment appears in the Rule as “Sweetwater Creek to Yellowdirt Creek.”

Chattahoochee River – North Highland Dam to Bull Creek: Nominated by Chattahoochee Riverkeeper during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. EPD received a letter of opposition from Columbus Water Works during the 2019 Triennial Review and is still in the process of working to resolve the issues addressed in the letter. EPD is not moving forward with a designated use change for this segment until the issues are resolved.

South Fork Broad River – Watson Mill Bridge State Park to Lexington-Carlton Bridge Rd: Nominated by Madison County Clean Power Coalition and Savannah Riverkeeper during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and ten letters of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Oglethorpe and Madison Counties, and to four permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders.

Satilla River – Jamestown Rd. to Alabama River: Nominated by Satilla Riverkeeper during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination

form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and one letter of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Brantley, Pierce, and Ware Counties, and to two permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The new recreation segment “Jamestown Rd. to Alabama River” was combined with the existing recreation segment “Alabama River to Woodbine Boat Ramp at Hwy. 17.” The new combined segment appears in the Rule as “Jamestown Rd. to Woodbine Boat Ramp at Hwy. 17.”

South River – Panola Shoals to Honey Creek in Henry County: Nominated by South River Watershed Alliance during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and nine letters of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Dekalb, Henry, Newton, and Rockdale Counties, City of Stonecrest, and to twelve permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The new recreation segment “Panola Shoals (Snapfinger Rd.) to Honey Creek (Henry County)” was combined with the existing recreation segment “Honey Creek (Henry County) to Lake Jackson at Georgia Hwy. 36.” The new combined segment appears in the Rule as “Panola Shoals (Snapfinger Rd.) to Lake Jackson at Georgia Hwy. 36.”

St. Marys River – North Prong to Deep Creek, Boone Creek to Prospect Landing Rd.: Nominated by St. Marys Riverkeeper during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and four letters of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Charlton County and to one permitted discharger located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segments. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The segment of St. Marys River from Little St. Marys River to Atlantic Ocean was also nominated for designated use change to recreation, but EPD is not moving forward with a designated use change for this segment due to lack of documentation of year-round primary contact recreation. The new recreation segments “North/Middle Prong St Marys River to Deep Creek” and “Boone Creek to Prospect Landing Rd.” were combined with the existing recreation segments “Deep Creek to Boone Creek” and “Prospect Landing Rd. to Little St. Marys River.” The new combined segment appears in the Rule as “North/Middle Prong St Marys to Little St. Marys River.”

Withlacoochee River – Georgia Hwy. 37 to Tiger Creek: Nominated by WWALS Watershed Coalition during 2019 Triennial Review; re-nominated during 2022 Triennial Review. Nomination package included nomination form, map, documentation of year-round primary contact recreation and investments to support primary contact recreation, and two letters of support from the surrounding community. EPD sent notification letters to Berrien, Brooks, Cook, and Lowndes Counties, and to nine permitted dischargers located within 25 miles upstream of the waterbody segment. EPD received no responses from notified stakeholders. The new recreation segment “Youngs Mill Creek at Georgia Hwy. 37 to Tiger Creek” was combined with the existing recreation segment “Tiger Creek to State Line.” The new combined segment appears in the rule as “Youngs Mill Creek at Georgia Hwy. 37 to State Line.”

Designated Use Additions Based on Internal Review

Updating waterbodies designated as “Drinking Water” is an applicable consideration outlined in the March 2022 “Guidance for Recommending a Change in Designated Use” document. While GIS processing was being completed to incorporate the designated use changes that were adopted and approved in 2022 as part of the 2019 Triennial Review, EPD evaluated waterbodies with the existing designated use of “Drinking Water” to ensure all waterbodies were classified correctly. Waterbodies with the “Drinking Water” designated use were compared to the locations of all surface water withdrawal permits utilized by public water systems that have been issued by the EPD Water Withdrawal Permitting Program.

Five waterbody segments were identified where a water withdrawal permit had been issued and was in active use and where the designated use should be updated to include drinking water. One existing “Drinking Water” segment was extended to reflect a new active water withdrawal in an adjacent segment. Finally, one existing “Drinking Water” segment is being modified to reference the upstream tributaries that form the reservoir used as the water source.

The following table is a summary of waterbodies with a designated use change to include drinking water:

Table 1

New or Modified Segment	Waterbody	Existing Segment Description	New Segment Description	River Basin	County	Water Withdrawal Permit	Water Withdrawal Org	Notes
New	Richland Creek	n/a	Headwaters to Richland Creek Reservoir dam	Coosa	Paulding	110-1424-01, Confirmed active	Paulding County Water System	Reservoir and withdrawal constructed
Modify existing	Etowah River	Allatoona Dam to Ward Creek	Allatoona Dam to Pettit Creek	Coosa	Bartow	110-1424-02, Confirmed active	Paulding County Water System	Withdrawal constructed
New	Woolsey Creek	n/a	Headwaters to Horton Creek (including Horton Creek Reservoir)	Flint	Fayette	056-1102-12, Confirmed active	Board of Commissioners of Fayette County	Horton Creek - Headwaters to Flint Riv (including Horton Creek Reservoir) already named as DW use. However, Woolsey Creek and Antioch Creek are the two named headwaters creeks that are many tribs to Horton Creek Reservoir.
New	Antioch Creek	n/a	Headwaters to Horton Creek (including Horton Creek Reservoir)	Flint	Fayette	056-1102-12, Confirmed active	Board of Commissioners of Fayette County	Horton Creek - Headwaters to Flint Riv (including Horton Creek Reservoir) already named as DW use. However, Woolsey Creek and Antioch Creek are the two named headwaters creeks that are many tribs to Horton Creek Reservoir.
Modify existing	Horton Creek	Headwaters to Flint River (including Horton Creek Reservoir)	Confluence of Antioch Creek and Woolsey Creek to Flint River (including Horton Creek Reservoir)	Flint	Fayette	056-1102-12, Confirmed active	Board of Commissioners of Fayette County	Horton Creek - Headwaters to Flint Riv (including Horton Creek Reservoir) already named as DW use. However, Woolsey Creek and Antioch Creek are the two named headwaters creeks that are many tribs to Horton Creek Reservoir.
New	Ward Creek	n/a	Headwaters to Yahoola Creek (including Yahoola Creek Reservoir)	Chattahoochee	Lumpkin	093-1204-03, Confirmed active	Dahlonega, City of	Reservoir with active withdrawal constructed at confluence of Yahoola Creek and Ward Creek. Yahoola has DU of Drinking Water, but Ward Creek does not.

New or Modified Segment	Waterbody	Existing Segment Description	New Segment Description	River Basin	County	Water Withdrawal Permit	Water Withdrawal Org	Notes
New	Cedar Creek	n/a	Hood Branch to Panther Creek (including Sewell Millpond)	Chattahoochee	Coweta	038-1218-03, Confirmed active	Coweta County Water & Sewerage Authority	Small reservoir called Sewell Mill Pond on Cedar Creek. Pump station building visible from Sewell Rd street view. Check to see if in use.