

**Total Maximum Daily Load
Evaluation
for
Nine Stream Segments
in the
Ocmulgee River Basin
for
Sediment
(Fish Community Impacted)**

Submitted to:
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 4
Atlanta, Georgia

Submitted by:
The Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Division
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state of Georgia assesses its water bodies for compliance with water quality criteria established for their designated uses as required by the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Assessed water bodies are placed into one of three categories, supporting designated use, not supporting designated use, or assessment pending, depending on water quality assessment results. These water bodies are found on Georgia's 305(b) list, as required by that section of the CWA that defines the assessment process and are published in *Water Quality in Georgia 2018-2019* (GA EPD, 2020). This document is available on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) [website](#).

The subset of the water bodies that do not meet designated uses on the 305(b) list are also assigned to Georgia's 303(d) list, named after that section of the CWA. Although the 305(b) and 303(d) lists are two distinct requirements under the CWA, Georgia reports both lists in one combined format called the Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List, which is found in Appendix A of *Water Quality in Georgia*. Water bodies on the 303(d) list are denoted as Category 5, and are required to have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) evaluation for the water quality constituent(s) in violation of the [water quality standard](#). The TMDLs in this document are based on the [2020 303\(d\) list](#), which is available on the GA EPD website. The TMDL process establishes the allowable pollutant loadings or other quantifiable parameters for a water body based on the relationship between pollutant sources and instream water quality conditions. This allows water quality-based controls to be developed to reduce pollution and restore and maintain water quality.

The state of Georgia has identified nine (9) stream segments located in the Ocmulgee River Basin as Biota Impacted. The Biota Impacted designation indicates that studies have shown a degradation of the biological populations in the fish community of each stream. The water use classification of all the impacted streams or rivers is Fishing. The general and specific water quality criteria for Fishing, Recreation, and Drinking Water streams are stated in Georgia's [Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control](#), Chapter 391-3-6-.03, Sections (5) and (6) (GA EPD, 2021).

Starting in 1998 and continuing periodically through 2020, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) [Wildlife Resources Division](#) (GA WRD) has conducted studies of fish populations in rivers and streams across the state. GA WRD used the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) to classify fish populations as Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Very Poor. For this TMDL evaluation, nine (9) stream segments in the Ocmulgee River Basin have fish populations rated as Poor or Very Poor. For these stream segments, the criterion violated is listed as Bio F, denoting Biota Impacted (Fish Community). These stream segments are included on the list of streams not supporting their designated use and placed in Category 5. These streams are water quality limited due to sedimentation. Twenty (20) stream segments in the Ocmulgee River Basin were rated as Excellent or Good and assessed as supporting their designated use. These Excellent and Good rated supporting stream segments were used to set the sediment yield target for the not supporting streams.

The most common cause of low IBI (fish) scores is the lack of in-stream habitat due to stream sedimentation and hydrological modifications. However, high levels of heavy metals, ammonia, chlorine, elevated temperatures, low dissolved oxygen levels, and extreme pH levels are possible sources of toxicity, and can adversely affect the aquatic communities. These parameters are typically due to point source discharges and are regulated through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. They are not the focus of this TMDL evaluation.

To determine the relationship between the in-stream water quality and the source loadings, each watershed was modeled. The analysis performed to develop sediment TMDLs for the not supporting stream segments and their watersheds utilized the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE). The USLE predicts the total annual soil loss caused by sheet and rill erosion. The USLE method considers the characteristics of the watershed including land use, soil type, ground slope, and rainfall intensity. NPDES permitted discharges were also considered in the final sediment load reduction calculations. Modeling assumptions were considered to be conservative and provide the necessary implicit margin of safety for the TMDL.

This TMDL evaluation determined the sediment loads that can enter the 303(d) listed streams in the Ocmulgee River Basin without causing sediment impairments to the streams. This is based on the hypothesis that if an impaired watershed has a total annual sediment loading rate similar to a biologically unimpaired watershed, then the receiving stream will remain stable and will not be biologically impaired due to sediment. For fish populations, Georgia's [305\(b\)/303\(d\) Listing Assessment Methodology](#) defines a stream as supporting its designated use when a biological assessment results in an IBI narrative rating of Excellent, Good, or Fair.

The USLE was applied to the supporting watersheds, as well as the not supporting 303(d) listed watersheds in the same ecoregion, to determine both the existing sediment yields and the sediment load reductions needed to support the beneficial uses (i.e., least impacted conditions). In this TMDL, fish community health rankings are analyzed and compared at an ecoregion level (Level III). Table 1 provides the average, minimum, and maximum modeled sediment yield for the ecoregions in which fish communities have been monitored and observed.

Table 1. Modeled Sediment Yield Summary for Fish Bioassessment Streams

Modeled Sediment Yield (Tons/Acre/Yr)						
Ecoregion	Supporting Streams			Not Supporting Streams		
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Minimum	Maximum
Piedmont – 45	0.72	0.37	1.43	0.71	0.36	1.06
Southeastern Plains - 65	1.49	0.50	2.15	1.35	1.04	1.98

Currently, agricultural lands may be the major source of sediment to the state's rivers and streams. However, over the last century there has been a significant decrease in the amount of land farmed in Georgia. Since 1950, there has been a 57 percent reduction in farmland. With the reduction in farmland, there has also been a decrease in the amount of soil erosion. This suggests that the sedimentation observed in the impaired stream segments may be legacy sediment resulting from past land use practices. It is believed that if sediment loads are maintained at acceptable levels, the streams will repair themselves over time.

In the case of fish watersheds evaluated, the average sediment yield of supporting watersheds was utilized to formulate the total allowable sediment load for the not supporting watersheds. The total allowable sediment loads for the not supporting fish watersheds are summarized in Table 3 along with required sediment load reductions.

Table 2. Total Allowable Sediment Loads and the Required Sediment Load Reductions

Stream Segment Assessment Unit ID	Station ID	Current Load				TMDL		
		WLA (tons/yr)	WLA _{sw} (tons/yr)	LA (tons/yr)	Total Load (tons/yr)	Total Allowable Sediment Load (tons/yr)	Maximum Allowable Daily Load (tons/day)	Percent Reduction Required
Not Supporting Segments - Fish Community								
Big Creek GAR030701040409	WRD 281	1.0		45070.0	59931.6	45071.0	1189.9	24.8%
Cornish Creek GAR030701030717	WRD 1267		18.0	466.4	484.4	484.4	62.8	0.0%
East Bear Creek GAR030701030807	WRD 1251			3047.3	3047.3	3047.3	394.9	0.0%
Gaithers Branch GAR030701030806	WRD 1231			1494.6	1494.6	1494.6	193.7	0.0%
Little Ocmulgee River GAR030701050405	WRD 383	109.6		208575.4	208794.6	208685.0	5509.3	0.1%
Prairie Creek GAR030701031206	WRD 188			1342.0	1955.2	1342.0	173.9	31.4%
Sugar Creek GAR030701050304	WRD 337	54.8		124436.2	124545.8	124491.0	3286.6	0.0%
Tobesofkee Creek GAR030701031415	WRD 48	51.1		12760.1	16790.6	12811.2	1660.3	23.7%
Turnpike Creek GAR030701050303	WRD 1298			40559.7	40559.7	40559.7	1070.8	0.0%

Definitions:

Total Load - Sum of modeled sediment load and approved waste load allocations (WLA)

WLA - waste load allocation for discrete point sources

WLA_{sw} - waste load allocation associated with storm water discharges from a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4)

LA - portion of the total allowable sediment load attributed to nonpoint sources and natural background sources of sediment

Total Allowable Sediment Load - allowable sediment load calculated using the target sediment yield and the stream's watershed area

Maximum Allowable Daily Load - total allowable sediment load (annual) converted to a daily figure based on the bankfull sediment transport relationship

Percent Reduction Required - percent reduction applied to current total load in order to meet total allowable sediment load

Management practices that may be used to help maintain and/or reduce the total allowable sediment loads include:

- Compliance with NPDES (wastewater, construction, industrial stormwater, and/or MS4) permit limits and requirements;
- Implementation of recommended Water Quality management practices in the *Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan* (GA EPD, 2017), *Middle Ocmulgee Regional Water Plan* (GA EPD, 2017), *Altamaha Regional Water Plan* (GA EPD, 2017),);

- Implementation of *Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry* (GFC, 2019);
- Implementation of *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture* (GSWCC, 2013) and Adoption of National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practices for agriculture;
- Adherence to the Surface Mining Land Use Plan prepared as part of the Surface Mining Permit Application;
- Implementation of the *Georgia Better Back Roads Field Manual* (GA RCDC, 2009) and adoption of additional practices for proper unpaved road maintenance;
- Implementation of individual Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plans for land disturbing activities; and application of the *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia* (GSWCC, 2016)
- Implementation of the *Georgia Stormwater Management Manual* (ARC, 2016) to facilitate prevention and mitigation of stream bank erosion due to increased stream flow and velocities caused by urban runoff through structural storm water BMP installation.
- Where applicable, implementation of the *Coastal Stormwater Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual* (CCSMPC, 2009).

Although the measurement of sediment delivered to a stream is difficult to determine, by monitoring the implementation of these practices, their anticipated effects will contribute to improving stream habitats and water quality, and thus be an indirect measurement of the TMDLs.

1) INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The state of Georgia performs a detailed water quality assessment every two years by comparing water quality and biological monitoring data collected throughout the state against [water quality standards](#) established for all water bodies. Water quality standards consist of a water body's designated use(s) and applicable general and specific water quality criteria, in addition to an antidegradation policy meant to protect waters, as required by the Federal [Clean Water Act](#) (CWA). Depending on water quality assessment results, water bodies are placed into one of three broad categories that reflect their overall attainment of water quality standards, supporting designated use(s), not supporting designated use(s), or assessment pending. The complete set of assessed water bodies constitutes Georgia's 305(b) list, named after the corresponding section of the CWA that defines the assessment process.

On the same two-year cycle, Georgia compiles a list of water bodies that do not support designated uses and require a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) formulation for the pollutant(s) that are contributing to water quality standard violations. This list is a subset of water bodies on the 305(b) list, and is referred to as the 303(d) list, named after the corresponding section of the CWA. Although the 305(b) and 303(d) lists are two distinct requirements under the CWA, Georgia reports both lists in one combined format called the Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List, which is found in Appendix A of the Integrated 305(b)/303(d) Report, titled *Water Quality in Georgia 2018-2019* (GA EPD, 2020). This document and supporting information is available on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) [website](#). Water bodies on the 303(d) list are denoted as Category 5 on the Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List. The TMDLs in this document are based on the [2020 Integrated 305\(b\)/303\(d\) list](#), which is available on the GA EPD website. The TMDL process establishes the allowable pollutant loadings or other quantifiable parameters for a water body based on the relationship between pollutant sources and instream water quality conditions. This allows water quality-based controls to be developed to reduce pollution and restore and maintain water quality.

1.2 Fish Community Sampling

During the years 1998 through 2020, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources [Wildlife Resources Division](#) (GA WRD) conducted studies of fish community populations in several streams in the Ocmulgee River Basin. From the data collected, two indices of fish community health were established and used to assess the biotic integrity of the aquatic systems: the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) and the modified Index of Well-Being (IWB). The IBI and IWB numerical scores were developed by analyzing field data collected at each sampling site according to ecoregion-specific scoring criteria developed by GA WRD. These numerical scores were further classified into the integrity classes of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Very Poor.

According to the 2020 [305\(b\)/303\(d\) Listing Assessment Methodology](#) in Appendix A of *Water Quality in Georgia 2018-2019* (GA EPD, 2020), fish sampling sites and their corresponding stream segments with fish population IBI rated as Poor or Very Poor do not support their designated uses. Starting in the 2014 305(b)/303(d) listing cycle, the IWB is no longer used in assessment and listing decisions. The fish sampling sites and corresponding stream segments that do not support their designated use are included in the Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List with the criterion violated noted as Biota Impacted - Fish Community, and the segments are placed in Category 5 until a TMDL is completed.

In the Ocmulgee River Basin, five (5) stream segment in the Piedmont ecoregion and four (4) segments in the Southeastern Plains ecoregion are rated as Poor or Very Poor, are on the 303(d) list as not supporting their designated use, and are scheduled for a TMDL evaluation, as presented in Table 3. Fifteen (15) stream segments in the Piedmont ecoregion and five (5) stream segments in the Southeastern Plains are rated as Excellent or Good, and assessed as supporting their designated use. The supporting stream segments rated Excellent and Good are used to set the sediment yield target from which the total allowable sediment load for the not supporting stream segments is calculated.

Table 3. Stream Segments on the 2020 303(d) List as Biota Impacted - Fish Community

Stream Segment	Location	Assessment Unit ID	Segment Length (mi)	Ecoregion	Designated Use
Big Creek	Elko Creek to Burnham Creek	GAR030701040409	7	Southeastern Plains	Fishing
Cornish Creek	Headwaters to Upper Williams Lake	GAR030701030717	7	Piedmont	Fishing
East Bear Creek	Pond 0.7 miles upstream Marks Road to West Bear Creek	GAR030701030807	7	Piedmont	Fishing
Gaithers Branch	Headwaters to Bear Creek	GAR030701030806	3	Piedmont	Fishing
Little Ocmulgee River	Wilcox Creek to Alligator Creek	GAR030701050405	12	Southeastern Plains	Fishing
Prairie Creek	Headwaters to Turner Creek	GAR030701031206	5	Piedmont	Fishing
Sugar Creek	Turnpike Creek to Little Ocmulgee River	GAR030701050304	5	Southeastern Plains	Fishing
Tobesofkee Creek	Cole Creek to Todd Creek	GAR030701031415	8	Piedmont	Fishing
Turnpike Creek	Hwy 280 to Sugar Creek	GAR030701050303	24	Southeastern Plains	Fishing

1.3 Water Quality Criteria

The stream segments listed in Table 3 have the water use classification of Fishing. The general criteria for all waters and specific criteria meant to protect relevant water use classifications are stated in [Georgia's Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control](#), Chapter 391-3-6-.03, Sections (5) and (6) (GA EPD, 2021). The listed criterion violated is Biota Impacted (Fish Community) and is a violation of Georgia's general criteria, 391-3-6-.03(5)(c).

“All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.”

Studies conducted by GA WRD indicate significantly degraded fish communities. The potential causes listed include nonpoint sources (NP), unknown sources, and urban runoff/urban effects (UR).

1.4 Watershed Description

The nine (9) not supporting fish community stream segments and their associated watersheds, located in the Ocmulgee River Basin, are within the boundaries of Bleckley, Dodge, Dooly, Houston, Jasper, Lamar, Laurens, Monroe, Newton, Telfair, Twiggs, Walton, and Wheeler Counties. The twenty (20) supporting stream segments and their associated watersheds are located in Bleckley, Butts, Dooly, Gwinnett, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Monroe, Newton, Pulaski, Rockdale, Spalding, Twiggs, and Walton counties.

Figure 1 shows a state-level view of the fourteen river basins in Georgia, with the Ocmulgee River Basin highlighted in yellow. Figure 2 shows a detailed view of the Ocmulgee River Basin, its USGS 8-digit subbasins, major streams and waterbodies, counties, and county seats. Figures 3 and 4 show the not supporting stream segments and their associated watersheds where fish communities were. All supporting and not supporting watersheds are located either in the Piedmont or Southeastern Plains ecoregions.

1.4.1 Ecoregions

In Georgia, the criteria and metrics used to evaluate the health of fish communities has been developed for geographically specific regions due to the diverse terrestrial landscape and aquatic habitats found throughout the state. GA EPD, in collaboration with other state and federal agencies, have worked to establish a general-purpose, geographical framework that categorizes the state into logical divisions of similar geology, physiography, soils, vegetation, land use, and water quality.

This collaborative group of agencies, led by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), established and further refined a nationwide framework of ecological regions for the research, assessment, management, and monitoring of ecosystems and ecosystem components. These ecological regions, or ecoregions, denote areas of general similarity in ecosystems and in the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources. The current level III ecoregions were refined from the dataset created in 1987 by James Omernik at the USEPA National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory. Level IV ecoregions, or subcoregions, are a further subdivision of the level III ecoregions that display details at a high resolution (Griffith et al. 2001). The six level III ecoregions established in Georgia are listed in Table 4. Figure 5 shows the distribution of Level III ecoregions in Georgia. When fish community health is being studied and evaluated, ecoregions are used as a means to divide the state into geographic areas with similar characteristics.

Table 4. Ecoregions in Georgia

Ecoregion Name	Ecoregion ID	Ecoregion Description
Piedmont	45	The Piedmont ecoregion comprises a transitional area between the mostly mountainous ecoregions of the Appalachians to the northwest and the relatively flat coastal plain to the southeast. It is a complex mosaic of Precambrian and Paleozoic metamorphic and igneous rocks with moderately dissected irregular plains and some hills. The soils tend to be finer-textured than in coastal plain regions. Once largely cultivated, much of this region has reverted to pine and hardwood woodlands, and, more recently, spreading urban- and suburbanization.
Southeastern Plains	65	These irregular plains with broad interstream areas have a mosaic of cropland, pasture, woodland, and forest. Natural vegetation is mostly oak-hickory-pine and Southern mixed forest, and soils consist of Cretaceous or Tertiary-age sands, silts, and clays. Elevations and relief are greater than in the Southern Coastal Plain (75), but generally less than in much of the Piedmont. Streams in this area are relatively low-gradient and sandy-bottomed.
Blue Ridge	66	The Blue Ridge varies from narrow ridges to hilly plateaus to more massive mountainous areas with high peaks. The mostly forested slopes, high-gradient, cool, clear streams, and rugged terrain occur on a mix of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary geology. The southern Blue Ridge is one of the richest centers of biodiversity in the eastern U.S.
Ridge and Valley	67	This is a relatively low-lying region between the Blue Ridge (66) to the east and the Southwestern Appalachians (68) on the west. As a result of extreme folding and faulting events, the roughly parallel ridges and valleys come in a variety of widths, heights, and geologic materials. Springs and caves are relatively numerous. Land cover is mixed, and present-day forests cover about 50% of the region. Forested ridges, and valleys with pasture and cropland, are typical. Its diverse habitats contain many unique species of terrestrial and aquatic flora and fauna.
Southwestern Appalachians	68	These low mountains contain a mosaic of forest and woodland with some cropland and pasture. The mixed mesophytic forest is restricted mostly to the deeper ravines and escarpment slopes, and the summit or tableland forests are dominated by mixed oaks with shortleaf pine.
Southern Coastal Plain	75	This is a heterogeneous region containing barrier islands, coastal lagoons, marshes, and swampy lowlands along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. This ecoregion is generally lower in elevation with less relief and wetter soils than ecoregion 65. Once covered by a variety of forest communities that included trees of longleaf pine, slash pine, pond pine, beech, sweetgum, southern magnolia, white oak, and laurel oak, land cover in the region is now mostly slash and loblolly pine with oak-gum-cypress forest in some low-lying areas, citrus groves, pasture for beef cattle, and urban.

1.4.2 State Water Planning

The Georgia Legislature enacted the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District Act in 2001 to create the [Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District](#) (MNGWPD) to preserve and protect water resources in the 15-county metropolitan Atlanta area. The MNGWPD is charged with the development of comprehensive regional and watershed specific water resource management plans to be implemented by local governments in the metropolitan Atlanta area. The MNGWPD issued its first water resource management plan documents in 2003.

In 2004, the Georgia Legislature enacted the Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Planning Act to ensure management of water resources in a sustainable manner to support the state's economy, to protect public health and natural systems, and to enhance the quality of life for all citizens on a state-wide level. GA EPD later developed the 2008 Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan, which established Georgia's ten Regional Water Planning

Councils (RWPCs) and laid the groundwork for the RWPCs to develop their own Regional Water Plans. The boundaries of these ten RWPCs, in addition to the MNGWPD, are shown in Figure 6.

In 2011, each RWPC finished development of individualized Regional Water Plans, which were later adopted following GA EPD review. These Regional Water Plans identify a range of actions or management practices to help meet the state's water quality and water supply challenges. The MNGWPD and each RWPC subsequently updated and revised their respective management plan documents in 2017. Implementation of these plans is critical to meeting Georgia's water resource challenges. The specific Regional Water Plan(s) applicable to this TMDL are discussed in Sections 6 and 7.

1.4.3 Land Use

The land use characteristics of the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds were determined using data from the 2015 Georgia Land Use Trends (GLUT). This raster land use trend product was developed by the University of Georgia – Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Laboratory (NARSAL) and follows land use trends for years 1974, 1985, 1991, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2008, and 2015. The raster data sets were developed from Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) and Enhanced Thematic Mapper Plus (ETM+), with a resolution of 30 meters.

The distribution and percent land uses for stream segments and their associated watersheds assessed for fish communities are given in Table 5. This table includes information for both supporting and not supporting stream segments. This table is divided into sections by use support and ecoregion.

1.4.4 Soils

The soil characteristics of the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds were determined using data from the Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database. SSURGO soil data represents a higher spatial resolution and degree of detail when compared to the State Soil Geographic (STATSGO) Database used in previous sediment TMDLs drafted by GA EPD. Currently, SSURGO soil data represents the most detailed level of soil geographic data available from the NRCS within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This database provides detailed soil map units characterized by hydrologic soil group; percentages of clay, silt, sand, and organic matter; soil erodibility factor (K-factor); and soil hydraulic conductivity (K_{sat}). Table 6 provides a summary of the hydrologic soil groups in each watershed associated with stream segments not supporting and supporting designated uses that were evaluated for fish community health. The detailed soil data for each individual soil map unit is not included in this document due to the sheer volume of tabular data. The complete soils data is available upon request from GA EPD.

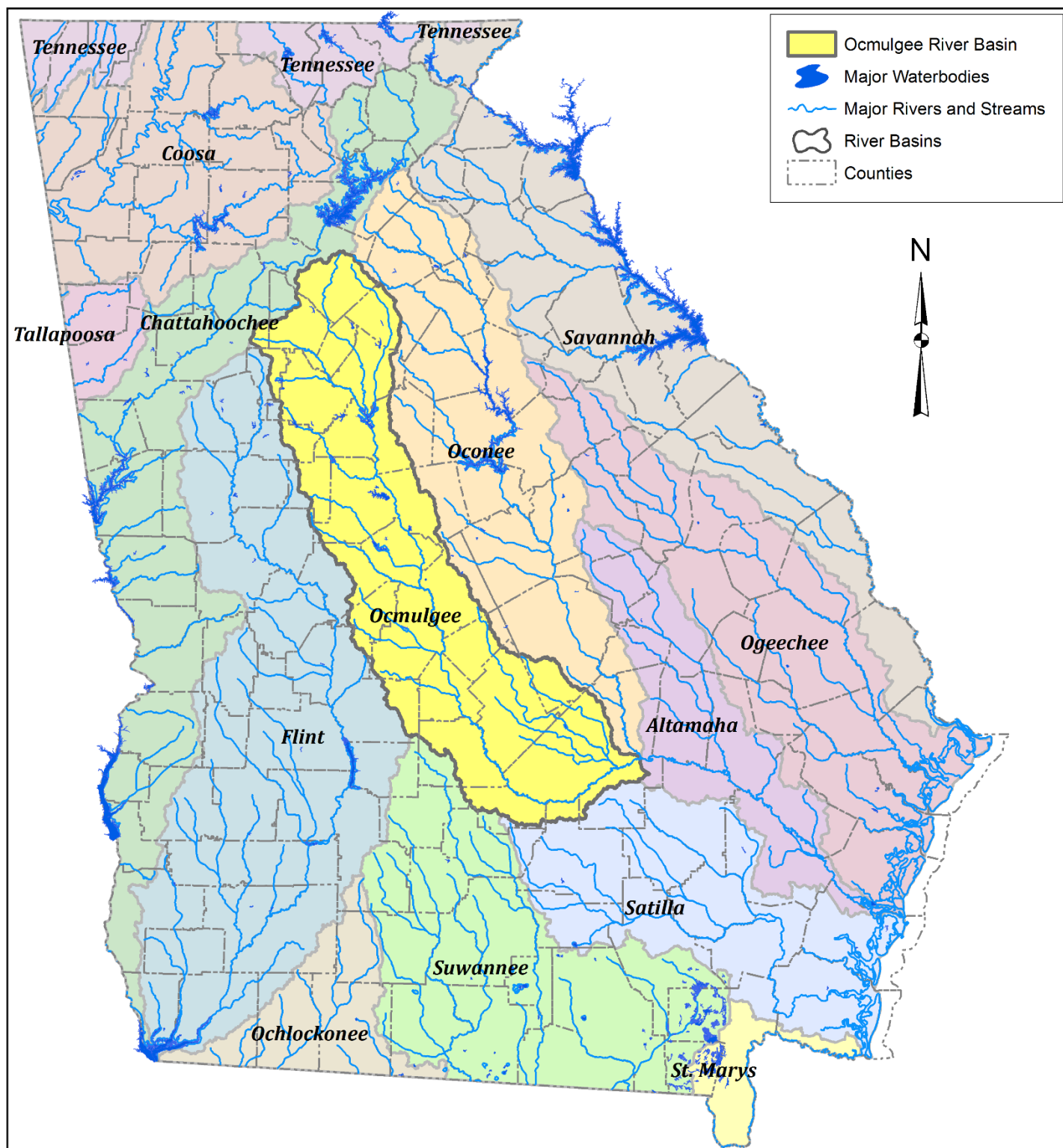


Figure 1. Ocmulgee River Basin and the River Basins of Georgia

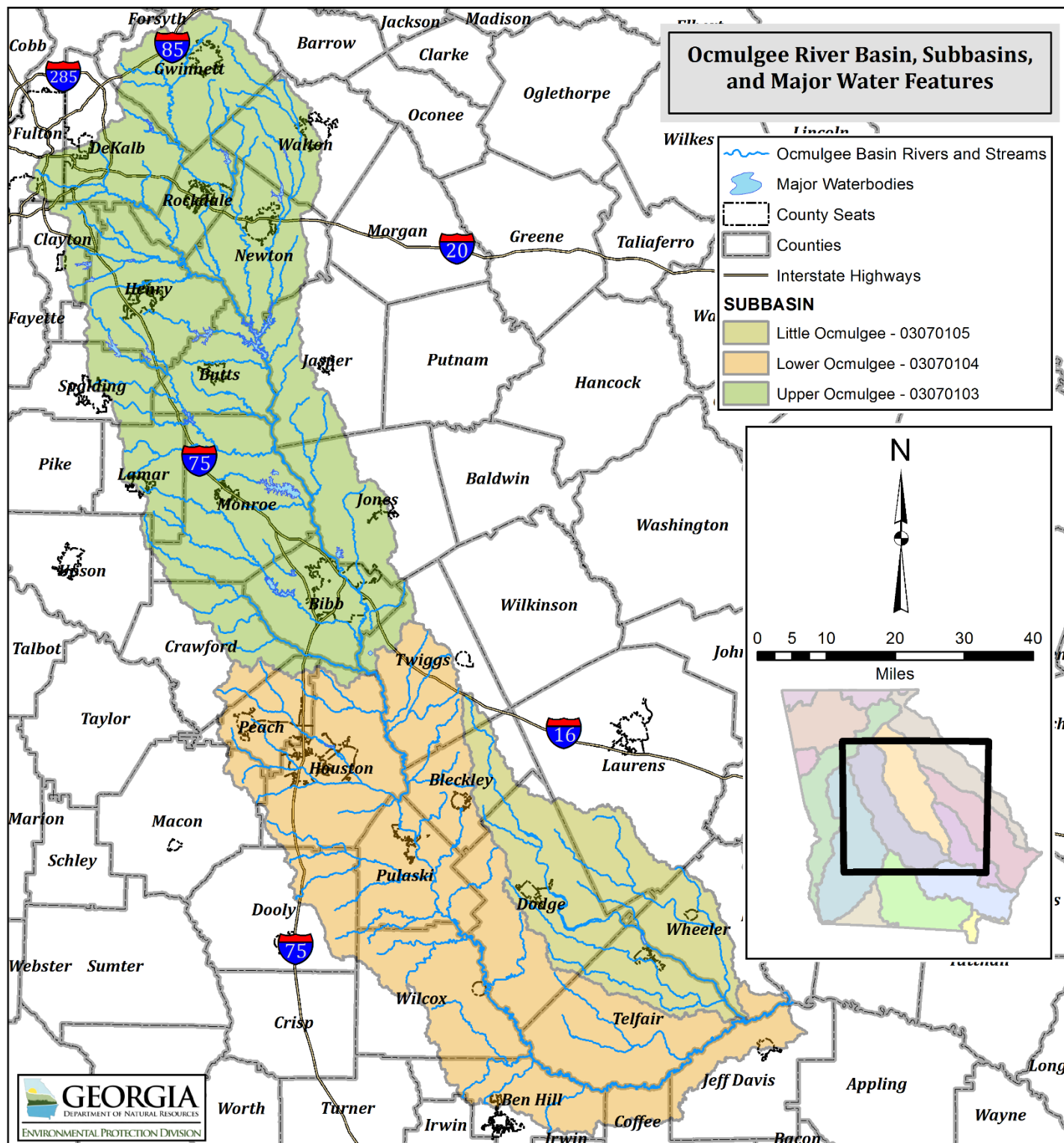


Figure 2. Ocmulgee River Basin
Major Water Features and Political Boundaries

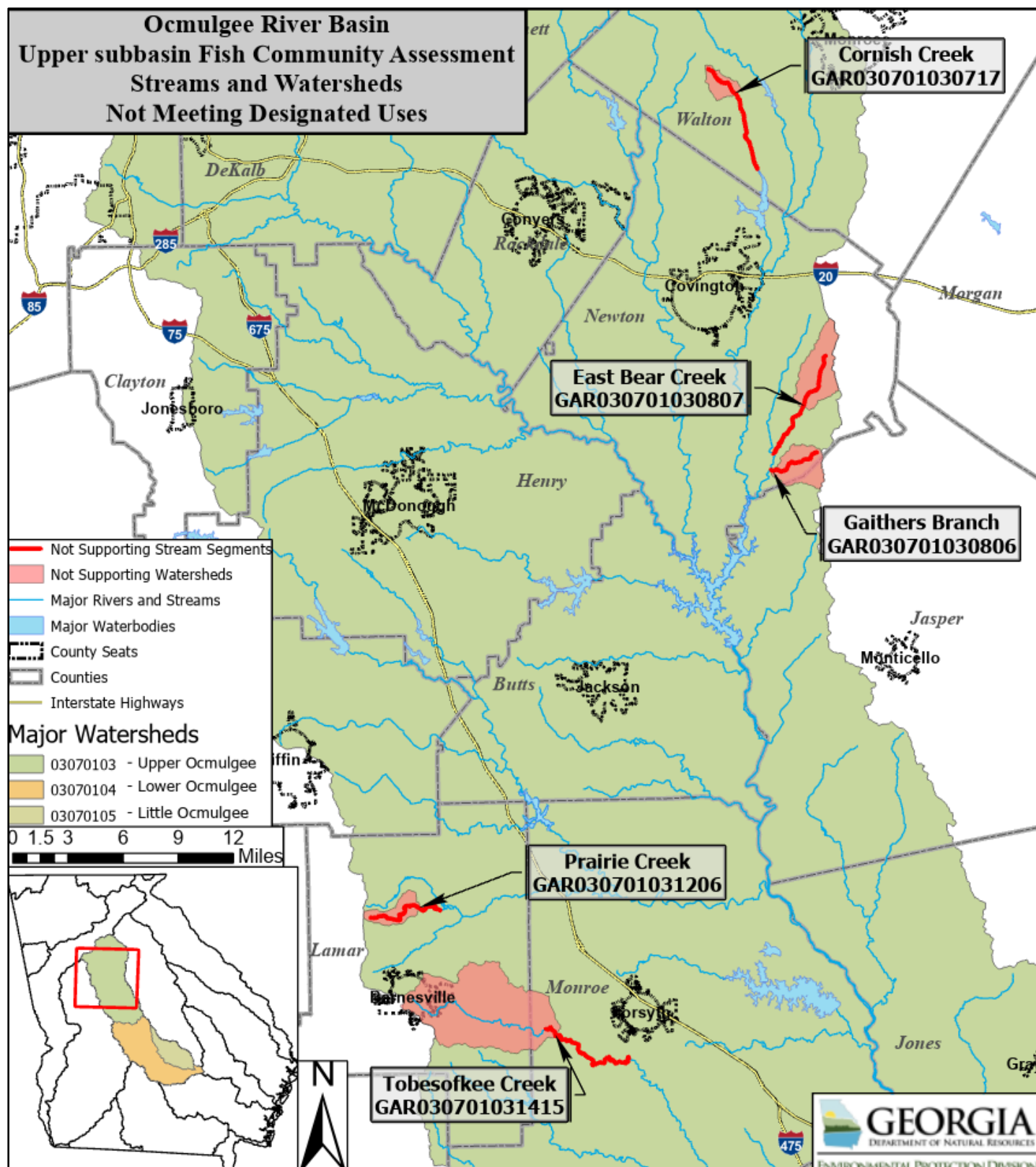


Figure 3. Fish Community Not Supporting Stream Segments and their Associated Watersheds - Upper Ocmulgee Subbasin

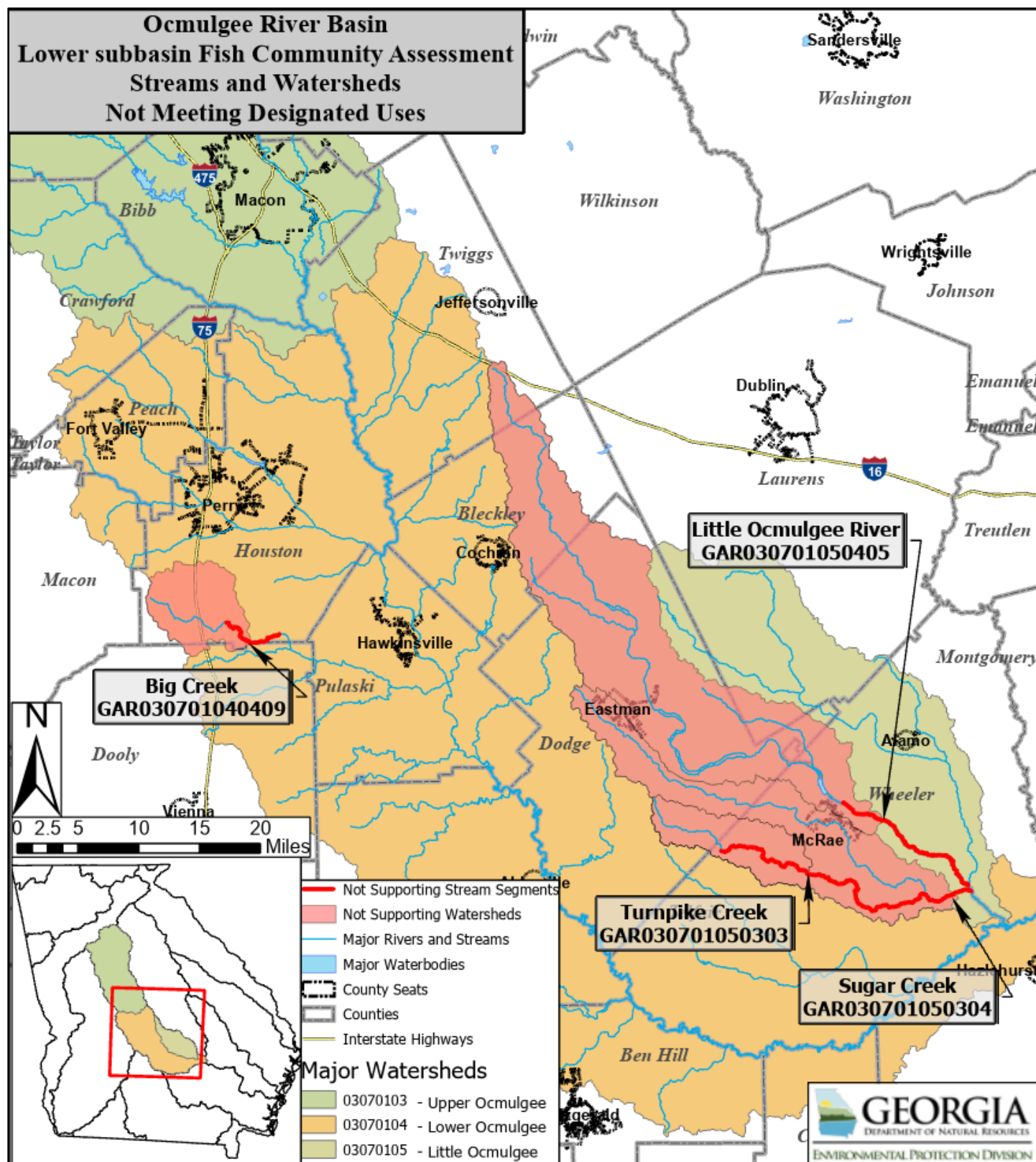


Figure 4. Fish Community Not Supporting Stream Segments and their Associated Watersheds - Lower Ocmulgee Subbasin

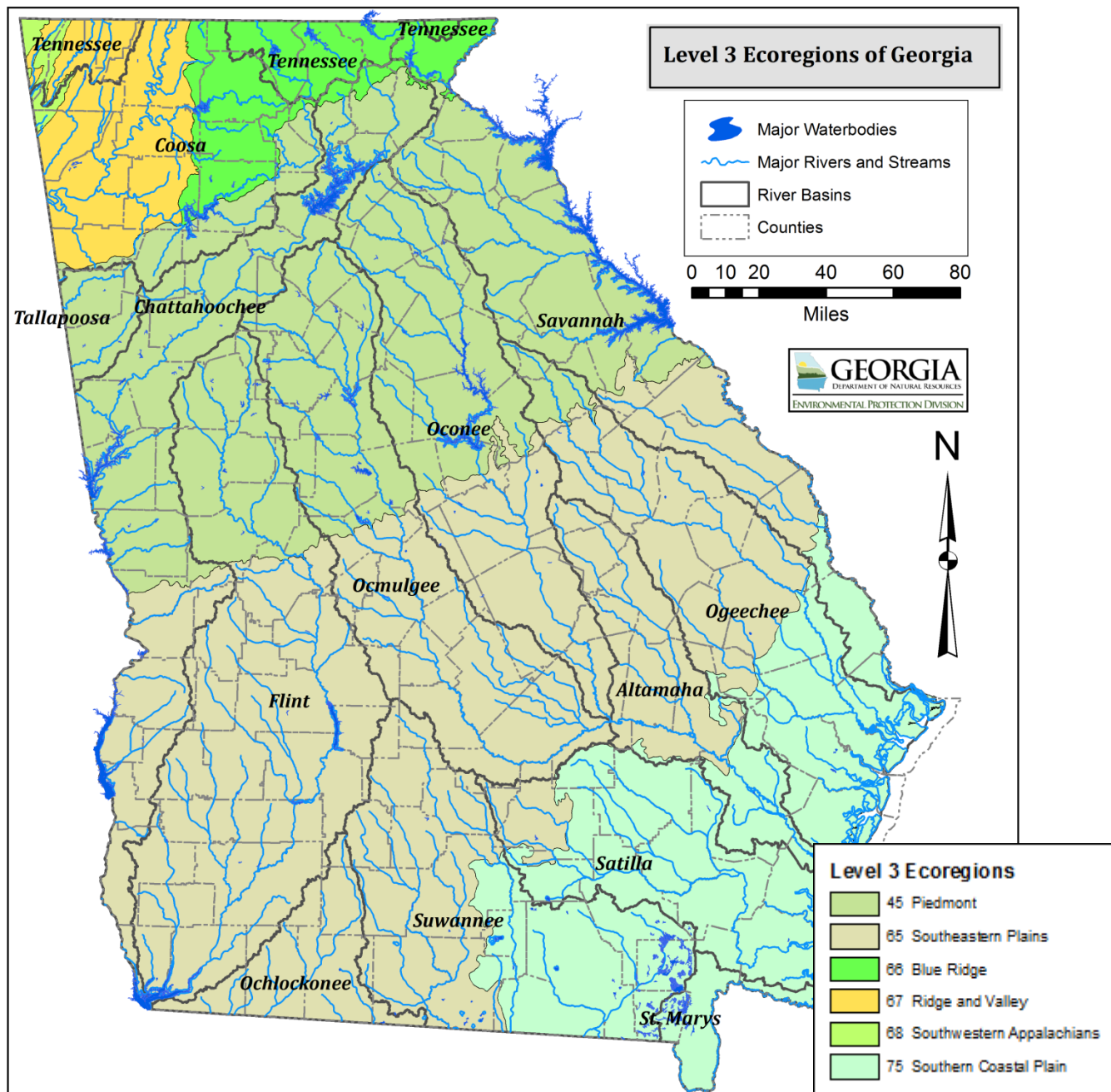


Figure 5.
Level III Ecoregions in the State of Georgia

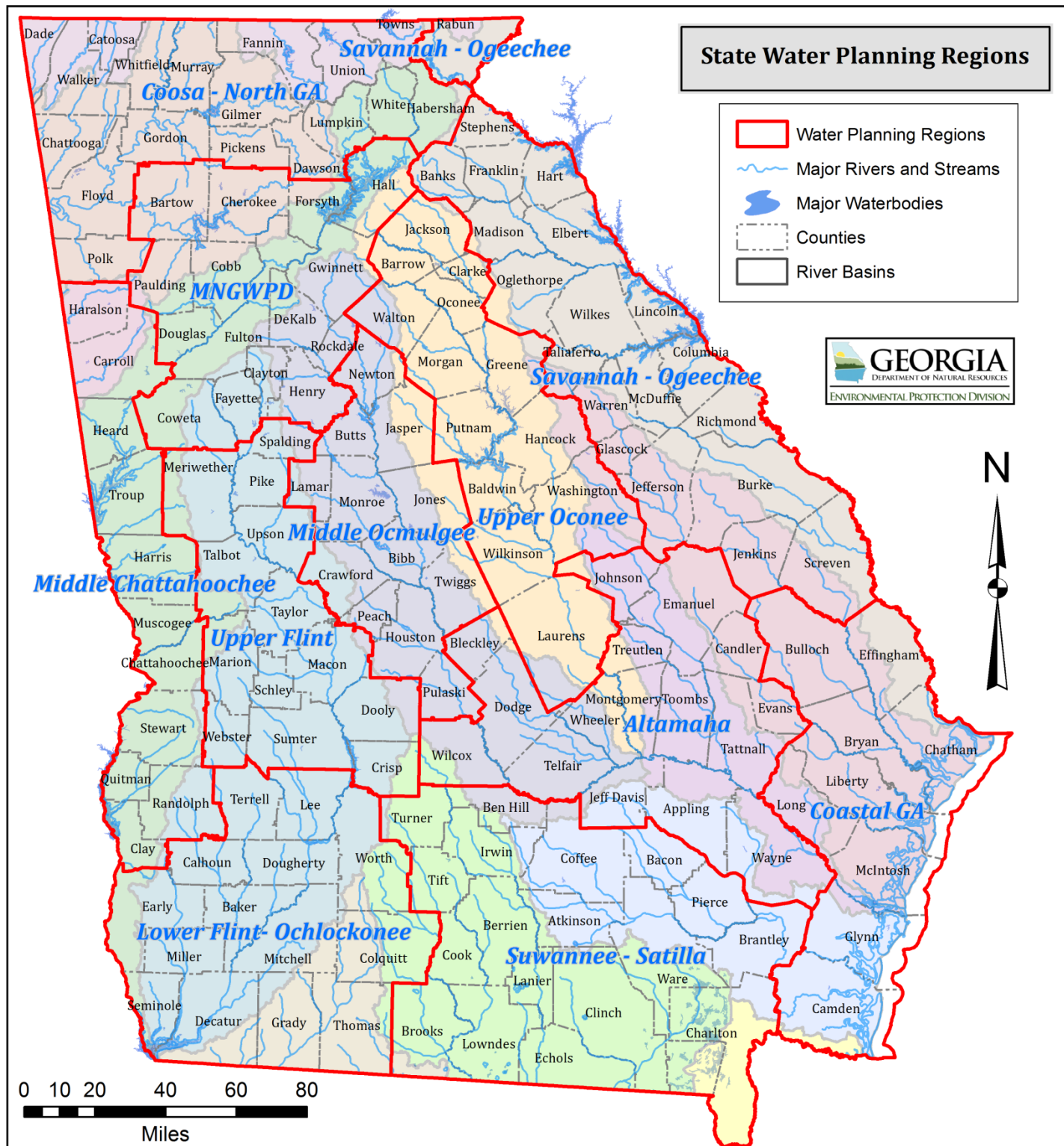


Figure 6. Water Planning Regions in Georgia

**Table 5. Land Use Distribution and Percentages for Fish
Community Assessment Streams**

Land Uses (acres)																			
Stream Segment and Station ID	Beaches, Dunes, Mud	Open Water	Utility Swaths	Developed, Open Space	Developed, Low Intensity	Developed, Medium Intensity	Developed, High Intensity	Transitional, Clearcut, Sparse	Quarries, Strip Mines	Rock Outcrop	Deciduous Forest	Evergreen Forest	Mixed Forest	Golf Courses	Pasture, Hay	Row Crops	Forested Wetlands	Non-Forested Wetlands (Freshwater)	Total
Piedmont Ecoregion (45) - Not Supporting Stream Segments																			
Cornish Creek	0.0	0.0	23.1	96.3	80.1	15.1	8.9	30.7	0.0	86.1	347.8	225.3	6.0	0.0	331.8	13.1	87.2	0.0	1351.5
WRD 1267	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	7.1%	5.9%	1.1%	0.7%	2.3%	0.0%	6.4%	25.7%	16.7%	0.4%	0.0%	24.6%	1.0%	6.5%	0.0%	100%
East Bear Creek	1.3	59.4	0.0	262.9	167.7	10.9	1.3	66.1	0.0	0.0	718.8	624.0	14.2	0.0	2071.8	236.9	163.0	0.0	4398.3
WRD 1251	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	6.0%	3.8%	0.2%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	16.3%	14.2%	0.3%	0.0%	47.1%	5.4%	3.7%	0.0%	100%
Gaithers Branch	0.4	4.7	0.0	198.6	74.7	1.1	0.2	88.1	0.0	0.0	640.7	751.5	25.1	0.0	1170.0	8.5	177.7	0.0	3141.3
WRD 1231	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	6.3%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	20.4%	23.9%	0.8%	0.0%	37.2%	0.3%	5.7%	0.0%	100%
Prairie Creek	0.2	9.6	0.0	135.7	94.5	12.9	2.4	77.2	0.0	0.0	318.7	479.7	0.4	0.0	405.6	160.6	152.8	1.3	1851.7
WRD 188	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	7.3%	5.1%	0.7%	0.1%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	17.2%	25.9%	0.0%	0.0%	21.9%	8.7%	8.3%	0.1%	100%
Tobesofkee Creek	13.3	54.5	0.0	1089.7	633.2	199.7	118.8	896.5	0.0	0.0	5093.3	4245.3	168.6	0.0	3885.2	323.1	954.5	1.1	17676.8
WRD 48	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	6.2%	3.6%	1.1%	0.7%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%	28.8%	24.0%	1.0%	0.0%	22.0%	1.8%	5.4%	0.0%	100%
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion (65) - Not Supporting Stream Segments																			
Big Creek	26.0	87.0	172.1	1138.9	291.1	99.4	57.4	651.2	0.0	0.0	5651.3	4921.4	1878.3	0.0	3372.0	9235.2	2622.9	36.7	30243.9
WRD 281	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%	3.8%	1.0%	0.3%	0.2%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	18.7%	16.3%	6.2%	0.0%	11.1%	30.5%	8.7%	0.1%	100%
Little Ocmulgee River	330.7	1098.9	998.3	7681.5	2707.4	675.6	443.2	11257.2	38.7	0.0	27575.2	59071.9	7973.3	334.3	26457.4	26182.5	28195.9	165.2	201217.1
WRD 383	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	3.8%	1.3%	0.3%	0.2%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	13.7%	29.4%	4.0%	0.2%	13.1%	13.0%	14.0%	0.1%	100%
Sugar Creek	69.4	767.0	316.7	4980.3	1840.1	593.3	389.9	8373.8	0.0	0.0	13862.8	39619.6	4901.4	7.1	12532.8	11217.8	15962.6	38.5	115489.0
WRD 337	0.1%	0.7%	0.3%	4.3%	1.6%	0.5%	0.3%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	12.0%	34.3%	4.2%	0.0%	10.9%	9.7%	13.8%	0.0%	100%

Land Uses (acres)																			
Stream Segment and Station ID	Beaches, Dunes, Mud	Open Water	Utility Swaths	Developed, Open Space	Developed, Low Intensity	Developed, Medium Intensity	Developed, High Intensity	Transitional, Clearcut, Sparse	Quarries, Strip Mines	Rock Outcrop	Deciduous Forest	Evergreen Forest	Mixed Forest	Golf Courses	Pasture, Hay	Row Crops	Forested Wetlands	Non-Forested Wetlands (Freshwater)	Total
Turnpike Creek	17.3	182.6	93.0	1150.2	238.6	28.2	6.2	2453.2	0.0	0.0	4506.4	9232.9	1300.8	0.0	4652.3	3634.6	4026.7	17.1	31545.6
WRD 1298	0.1%	0.6%	0.3%	3.6%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%	7.8%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	29.3%	4.1%	0.0%	14.7%	11.5%	12.8%	0.1%	100%
Piedmont (45) - Supporting Stream Segments																			
Cole Creek	2.4	2.2	0.0	33.6	14.7	0.9	0.0	13.1	0.0	0.0	282.4	130.1	10.9	0.0	356.3	16.0	66.3	0.0	928.9
WRD 187	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	3.6%	1.6%	0.1%	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	30.4%	14.0%	1.2%	0.0%	38.4%	1.7%	7.1%	0.0%	100%
Falling Creek	4.9	162.8	64.9	2508.2	137.4	32.2	10.5	981.0	46.0	0.0	15510.0	22044.2	1309.9	0.0	1012.1	3.6	2629.2	3.8	46460.7
WRD 58	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	5.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	2.1%	0.1%	0.0%	33.4%	47.4%	2.8%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	5.7%	0.0%	100%
Freeman Creek	2.9	11.8	26.9	323.8	337.8	32.9	10.9	104.3	0.0	0.0	354.3	576.7	32.0	0.0	333.4	0.0	73.6	0.0	2221.3
WRD 640	0.1%	0.5%	1.2%	14.6%	15.2%	1.5%	0.5%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	15.9%	26.0%	1.4%	0.0%	15.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	100%
Lee Creek	0.0	0.0	0.0	54.7	17.8	0.9	0.0	84.5	0.0	0.0	764.1	839.1	43.1	0.0	211.9	0.0	35.6	0.0	2051.8
WRD 118	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	37.2%	40.9%	2.1%	0.0%	10.3%	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	100%
Little Buck Creek	2.9	16.7	7.3	230.6	179.3	6.9	3.8	78.1	0.0	0.0	706.8	542.6	0.7	0.0	961.9	49.6	217.5	0.0	3004.6
WRD 18	0.1%	0.6%	0.2%	7.7%	6.0%	0.2%	0.1%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	18.1%	0.0%	0.0%	32.0%	1.7%	7.2%	0.0%	100%
Little Deer Creek trib	4.0	8.9	2.2	39.1	27.1	34.9	42.7	53.2	89.4	0.0	133.7	266.4	13.3	0.0	22.9	0.0	8.5	0.0	746.4
WRD 237	0.5%	1.2%	0.3%	5.2%	3.6%	4.7%	5.7%	7.1%	12.0%	0.0%	17.9%	35.7%	1.8%	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	100%
Little Haynes Creek	4.0	87.4	115.6	1448.0	2006.9	516.0	237.3	925.2	28.2	232.0	2882.7	3762.3	223.1	140.6	3029.9	67.4	631.8	0.0	16338.2
WRD 1284	0.0%	0.5%	0.7%	8.9%	12.3%	3.2%	1.5%	5.7%	0.2%	1.4%	17.6%	23.0%	1.4%	0.9%	18.5%	0.4%	3.9%	0.0%	100%
Long Branch	0.0	0.0	25.6	49.1	2.0	0.0	0.0	71.6	0.0	0.0	706.8	733.7	43.4	0.0	8.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	1645.3
WRD 142	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	3.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	43.0%	44.6%	2.6%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	100%
Long Branch	0.0	15.8	0.0	59.4	26.5	0.4	0.0	29.4	0.0	0.0	186.6	372.1	11.6	0.0	161.0	0.0	33.8	0.0	896.5
WRD 151	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	6.6%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	20.8%	41.5%	1.3%	0.0%	18.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	100%

Land Uses (acres)																			
Stream Segment and Station ID	Beaches, Dunes, Mud	Open Water	Utility Swaths	Developed, Open Space	Developed, Low Intensity	Developed, Medium Intensity	Developed, High Intensity	Transitional, Clearcut, Sparse	Quarries, Strip Mines	Rock Outcrop	Deciduous Forest	Evergreen Forest	Mixed Forest	Golf Courses	Pasture, Hay	Row Crops	Forested Wetlands	Non-Forested Wetlands (Freshwater)	Total
Panther Creek	0.7	7.3	0.0	76.9	52.5	7.3	13.8	76.7	0.0	0.0	184.8	282.0	17.6	0.0	302.9	5.6	66.5	0.0	1094.6
WRD 147	0.1%	0.7%	0.0%	7.0%	4.8%	0.7%	1.3%	7.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.9%	25.8%	1.6%	0.0%	27.7%	0.5%	6.1%	0.0%	100%
Sand Branch	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0	4.7	0.2	0.0	26.7	0.0	0.0	266.0	385.6	16.0	0.0	11.8	0.0	2.9	0.0	749.9
WRD 236	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	35.5%	51.4%	2.1%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	100%
Swan Creek	2.2	2.9	0.0	86.7	36.0	3.1	1.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	272.2	147.4	6.2	0.0	504.6	55.2	52.5	0.0	1183.1
WRD 67	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	7.3%	3.0%	0.3%	0.1%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	23.0%	12.5%	0.5%	0.0%	42.7%	4.7%	4.4%	0.0%	100%
Tobesofkee Creek	23.8	221.7	73.6	2288.7	1199.2	398.3	187.5	1581.4	38.5	0.0	9288.3	10882.2	516.8	0.0	6730.1	466.8	1261.9	1.1	35160.0
WRD 47	0.1%	0.6%	0.2%	6.5%	3.4%	1.1%	0.5%	4.5%	0.1%	0.0%	26.4%	31.0%	1.5%	0.0%	19.1%	1.3%	3.6%	0.0%	100%
Town Branch	2.2	2.4	0.0	214.2	222.0	98.7	67.6	133.2	0.0	0.0	155.0	384.7	15.3	0.0	60.5	0.0	76.5	0.0	1432.4
WRD 177	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	15.0%	15.5%	6.9%	4.7%	9.3%	0.0%	0.0%	10.8%	26.9%	1.1%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%	100%
Wildcat Creek	0.0	2.9	0.0	144.3	174.8	21.3	4.4	26.2	0.0	0.0	86.3	78.5	0.9	0.0	87.6	0.0	14.2	0.0	641.6
WRD 1192	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	22.5%	27.2%	3.3%	0.7%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	13.4%	12.2%	0.1%	0.0%	13.7%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	100%
Southeastern Plains (65) - Supporting Stream Segments																			
Big Creek	0.7	2.2	11.8	186.4	34.5	2.2	0.0	75.2	0.0	0.0	748.6	1011.7	326.0	0.0	632.9	2103.9	449.7	8.5	5595.0
WRD 282	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	3.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	13.4%	18.1%	5.8%	0.0%	11.3%	37.6%	8.0%	0.2%	100%
Big Creek	55.8	169.2	249.5	3161.8	1253.0	421.4	293.8	1563.2	0.0	0.0	11138.4	12238.8	3637.3	0.0	9421.8	33243.8	11928.6	275.1	89058.5
WRD 1390	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	3.6%	1.4%	0.5%	0.3%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	13.7%	4.1%	0.0%	10.6%	37.3%	13.4%	0.3%	100%
Little Shellstone Creek	0.9	0.0	0.0	17.8	1.3	0.0	0.0	52.3	0.0	0.0	168.6	418.1	60.5	0.0	51.2	8.2	12.7	0.0	791.5
WRD 394	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	6.6%	0.0%	0.0%	21.3%	52.8%	7.6%	0.0%	6.5%	1.0%	1.6%	0.0%	100%
Richland Creek	0.4	14.9	99.9	403.6	159.9	85.0	43.1	490.8	0.0	0.0	4767.7	3673.7	472.6	0.0	896.9	650.3	556.0	0.0	12315.8
WRD 380	0.0%	0.1%	0.8%	3.3%	1.3%	0.7%	0.4%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	38.7%	29.8%	3.8%	0.0%	7.3%	5.3%	4.5%	0.0%	100%

Land Uses (acres)																			
Stream Segment and Station ID	Beaches, Dunes, Mud	Open Water	Utility Swaths	Developed, Open Space	Developed, Low Intensity	Developed, Medium Intensity	Developed, High Intensity	Transitional, Clearcut, Sparse	Quarries, Strip Mines	Rock Outcrop	Deciduous Forest	Evergreen Forest	Mixed Forest	Golf Courses	Pasture, Hay	Row Crops	Forested Wetlands	Non-Forested Wetlands (Freshwater)	Total
South Prong Creek	7.1	9.3	0.0	612.5	453.5	220.2	164.6	114.1	0.0	0.0	581.6	107.2	95.4	0.0	1581.7	8938.5	2943.2	153.2	15982.6
WRD 381	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	3.8%	2.8%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.0%	9.9%	55.9%	18.4%	1.0%	100%

**Table 6. Hydrologic Soil Group Distribution for Fish
Community Assessment Streams**

Stream Segment	Station ID	A				B				C				D				Other	
		Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%
Piedmont Ecoregion (45) – Not Supporting Stream Segments																			
Cornish Creek	WRD 1267	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	1102.3	81.6	0.02	0.28	108.8	8.0	0.22	0.30	34.2	2.5	0.28	0.30	106.4	7.9
East Bear Creek	WRD 1251	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	3876.5	88.0	0.16	0.28	436.0	9.9	0.26	0.28	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	92.7	2.1
Gaithers Branch	WRD 1231	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	2852.6	90.9	0.13	0.34	271.6	8.7	0.26	0.27	2.2	0.1	0.25	0.25	13.2	0.4
Prairie Creek	WRD 188	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	1584.0	85.5	0.24	0.28	144.9	7.8	0.27	0.30	101.9	5.5	0.29	0.29	22.2	1.2
Tobesofkee Creek	WRD 48	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	15931.4	90.1	0.08	0.34	1012.3	5.7	0.14	0.30	607.9	3.4	0.19	0.29	129.6	0.7
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion (65) – Not Supporting Stream Segments																			
Big Creek	WRD 281	1402.6	4.6	0.10	0.21	23415.1	77.4	0.18	0.37	419.6	1.4	0.19	0.26	4843.0	16.0	0.10	0.33	167.0	0.6
Little Ocmulgee River	WRD 383	21949.9	10.9	0.10	0.24	85086.4	42.3	0.12	0.36	49315.0	24.5	0.11	0.32	4908.1	2.4	0.10	0.34	39955.0	19.9
Sugar Creek	WRD 337	12261.3	10.6	0.10	0.22	45259.2	39.2	0.12	0.28	21226.8	18.4	0.11	0.29	1486.3	1.3	0.12	0.32	35258.4	30.5
Turnpike Creek	WRD 1298	3250.1	10.3	0.10	0.14	12205.7	38.7	0.12	0.28	6651.2	21.1	0.11	0.29	331.8	1.1	0.12	0.32	9102.9	28.9
Piedmont Ecoregion (45) – Supporting Stream Segments																			
Cole Creek	WRD 187	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	862.0	92.7	0.27	0.34	4.9	0.5	0.27	0.27	61	6.56	0.29	0.29	2	0.24
Falling Creek	WRD 58	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	35491.3	76.4	0.17	0.33	8050.7	17.3	0.08	0.31	118	0.25	0.26	0.29	2801	6.03
Freeman Creek	WRD 640	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	2150.0	96.9	0.19	0.34	34.1	1.5	0.26	0.27	12	0.52	0.25	0.25	24	1.08
Lee Creek	WRD 118	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	1852.8	90.2	0.20	0.31	201.3	9.8	0.15	0.28	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Little Buck Creek	WRD 18	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	2628.7	87.5	0.18	0.34	207.0	6.9	0.21	0.30	130	4.33	0.28	0.30	38	1.27
Little Deer Creek trib	WRD 237	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	469.4	62.9	0.19	0.31	62.4	8.4	0.15	0.15	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	214	28.72
Little Haynes Creek	WRD 1284	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	14373.1	88.0	0.02	0.34	1202.3	7.4	0.20	0.31	139	0.85	0.28	0.30	622	3.81
Long Branch	WRD 142	2.3	0.1	0.153	0.153	913.9	55.5	0.17	0.33	729.5	44.3	0.13	0.31	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00

Stream Segment	Station ID	A				B				C				D				Other	
		Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%	Min K Factor	Max K Factor	Area (Acres)	%
Long Branch	WRD 151	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	865.7	96.6	0.23	0.28	18.4	2.0	0.28	0.28	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	12	1.35
Panther Creek	WRD 147	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	941.6	86.0	0.14	0.27	64.8	5.9	0.22	0.22	63	5.72	0.25	0.25	25	2.32
Sand Branch	WRD 236	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	749.3	100.0	0.19	0.31	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Swan Creek	WRD 67	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	1085.1	91.7	0.24	0.34	41.8	3.5	0.27	0.30	46	3.84	0.29	0.29	11	0.97
Tobesofkee Creek	WRD 47	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	32057.4	91.2	0.08	0.34	1995.1	5.7	0.13	0.30	694	1.97	0.09	0.29	417	1.19
Town Branch	WRD 177	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	1318.4	91.9	0.14	0.31	72.1	5.0	0.28	0.28	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	44.1	3.1
Wildcat Creek	WRD 1192	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.000	619.8	96.5	0.17	0.34	22.4	3.5	0.27	0.27	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.0	0.0
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion (65) – Supporting Stream Segments																			
Big Creek	WRD 282	396.9	7.1	0.10	0.2	4090.8	73.11	0.2	0.4	146.1	2.6	0.2	0.25	958.0	17.1	0.10	0.3	3.3	0.1
Big Creek	WRD 1390	2368.8	2.7	0.10	0.2	65522.9	73.57	0.2	0.4	4842.9	5.4	0.2	0.27	14497.6	16.3	0.10	0.3	1827.3	2.1
Little Shellstone Creek	WRD 394	0.0	0.0	0.00	0.0	652.2	82.44	0.2	0.4	66.4	8.4	0.2	0.23	4.5	0.6	0.32	0.3	67.9	8.6
Richland Creek	WRD 380	154.6	1.3	0.13	0.2	10144.6	82.36	0.2	0.4	256.5	2.1	0.2	0.24	1733.1	14.1	0.10	0.3	28.9	0.2
South Prong Creek	WRD 381	92.6	0.6	0.10	0.2	9954.8	62.28	0.2	0.4	1967.9	12.3	0.2	0.26	2895.8	18.1	0.10	0.3	1073.5	6.7

2) WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT

2.1 Fish Community Sampling

The GA WRD conducted studies of fish community populations at a number of monitoring sites in the Ocmulgee River Basin. Biological monitoring of fish communities is a method used to evaluate the health of a biological system to assess degradation from various sources, both point and nonpoint. GA WRD's biological monitoring of fish communities is based on direct observations of the aquatic communities within a stream. The results of these studies were the basis for the listings of Biota Impacted - Fish Community stream segments on Georgia's 303(d) list.

The work performed by the GA WRD consisted of looking at patterns of fish communities within the various ecoregions in Georgia. From this, GA WRD has established reference sampling sites within each ecoregion. These sampling sites represent the least impacted sites that exist given the prevalent land use within the ecoregion.

Of all the sampling sites GA WRD evaluated in the Ocmulgee River Basin, twenty (20) least impacted sites were used in this TMDL evaluation. Tables 7, 8, and 9 provide the data collected during the field investigations and subsequent laboratory analysis. All sampling sites had to be accessible, wadeable, and representative of the stream under investigation. The length of each fish sampling site was thirty-five times the mean stream width, up to a maximum length of 500 meters. This sampling length has been found to be long enough to include the major habitat types present. Electrofishing and seining techniques were used for sampling the fish population (GA WRD, 2005a).

From the data collected, two indices of fish community health were established and used to assess the biotic integrity of the aquatic systems: the Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI) and the modified Index of Well-Being (IWB). The IBI and IWB numerical scores were developed by analyzing field data collected at each sampling site according to ecoregion-specific scoring criteria developed by GA WRD. These numerical scores were further classified into the integrity classes of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Very Poor.

The IBI assesses the biotic integrity of aquatic communities based on the functional and compositional attributes of the fish community. The IBI consists of twelve measurements or metrics that assess three facets of the fish population: 1) species richness and composition, 2) trophic composition and dynamics, and 3) fish abundance and condition. For each sampling site, each metric is calculated by comparing the site value of a particular scoring criterion to that of the regional reference site. Factors that affect the structure and function of a fish community include stream location and size. Thus, the metrics were developed for ecoregional drainage basins. To account for the fact that streams with larger drainage basins normally have greater species richness, Maximum Species Richness plots were developed for the species richness metrics.

The modified IWB measures the health of the aquatic community based on the abundance and diversity of the fish community. The IWB is calculated based on four parameters: 1) the relative density of fish, 2) the relative biomass of fish, 3) the Shannon-Wiener Index of Diversity based on number, and 4) the Shannon-Wiener Index of Diversity based on biomass (GA WRD, 2005b). As of April 2013, the modified IWB is no longer calculated or used for listing assessment decisions.

This has resulted in all streams receiving an IBI rating of Fair being placed in the supporting designated use list.

Table 7 summarizes GA WRD's fish community study scores. The IBI and Habitat Assessment scores are listed for each study watershed and are grouped according to supporting or not supporting status. In addition, the table includes the drainage areas upstream of the monitoring sites and the county in which the monitoring sites are located.

To supplement the findings of the fish community data, visual habitat assessments were performed at each sampling site. Habitat scores evaluate the in-stream habitat, morphology, and riparian characteristics of a stream as they affect and influence the quality of the water resource and its resident aquatic community. These scores may help clarify the results of the biotic indices. The visual habitat assessment was developed by personnel within the Watershed Protection Branch (WPB) of GA EPD and is a modification of the USEPA Rapid Bioassessment Protocol (GAWPB, 2000). It incorporates different assessment parameters for riffle/run prevalent streams and glide/pool prevalent streams. In Georgia, streams in the Blue Ridge, Piedmont, Ridge and Valley, and Southwestern Appalachian ecoregions are considered riffle/run prevalent streams, while streams in the Southeastern Plains and Southern Coastal Plain ecoregions are considered glide/pool prevalent streams.

The visual habitat assessment evaluates the stream's physical parameters and is broken into three levels. Level one describes in-stream characteristics that directly affect biological communities (bottom substrate / available cover, pool substrate characterization, and pool variability). Level two describes the channel morphology (channel sinuosity, channel alteration, sediment deposition, and channel flow status). Level three describes the riparian zone surrounding the stream that indirectly affects the type of habitat and food resources available in the stream (bank vegetative protection, bank stability, and riparian vegetation zone width). Table 8 provides detailed habitat assessment scores for both supporting and not supporting streams.

During the fish community studies, physical characteristics of the stream were measured at the monitoring sites. These characteristics included the number of pools, depth of the deepest pool, number of bends, average stream depth, and average stream width. In addition, water quality measurements were taken at the time of the fish sampling. The parameters measured included water temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, pH, turbidity, total hardness, and alkalinity. Table 9 provides a summary of these field measurements.

Table 7. GA WRD Fish Community Study Scores

Stream Name	GAWRD Site ID	Drainage Area upstream from the monitoring point (sq miles)	County	Sampling Date	IBI Score	IBI Category	Habitat Score Total (Max: 200)
Piedmont Ecoregion – Not Supporting Stream Segments							
Cornish Creek	1267	2.11	Walton	9/20/2012	22	Very Poor	71.8
East Bear Creek	1251	6.88	Newton	8/1/2012	28	Poor	69.3
Gaithers Branch	1231	4.90	Newton	6/13/2012	16	Very Poor	101.7
Prairie Creek	188	2.89	Lamar	7/27/1998	32	Poor	59.7
Tobesofkee Creek	48	27.59	Monroe	6/8/1999	34	Fair	53.2
Tobesofkee Creek	48	27.59	Monroe	10/1/2013	32	Poor	0
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion – Not Supporting Stream Segments							
Big Creek	281	47.22	Dooley	5/9/2000	28	Poor	126.6
Little Ocmulgee River	383	314.33	Telfair	8/23/2000	26	Poor	69.7
Sugar Creek	337	180.44	Telfair	7/12/2000	32	Poor	97.1
Turnpike Creek	1298	49.28	Telfair	8/14/2013	22	Very Poor	135
Piedmont Ecoregion - Supporting Stream Segments							
Cole Creek	187	1.45	Lamar	7/24/1998	44	Good	64.3
Falling Creek	58	72.54	Jones	9/10/2013	44	Good	85.4
Freeman Creek	640	3.46	Newton	7/10/2003	44	Good	105.2
Lee Creek	118	3.21	Monroe	5/12/1998	44	Good	74.7
Little Buck Creek	18	4.69	Lamar	5/4/1999	44	Good	74
Little Deer Creek trib	237	1.16	Monroe	5/6/1998	44	Good	96.3
Little Haynes Creek	1284	25.50	Rockdale	10/17/2012	50	Good	145
Long Branch	142	2.57	Jasper	5/16/2013	48	Good	117.3
Long Branch	151	1.40	Butts	6/18/1998	44	Good	86.3
Panther Creek	147	1.71	Butts	6/8/1998	44	Good	111.3
Sand Branch	236	1.17	Monroe	5/7/1998	46	Good	128.7
Swan Creek	67	1.85	Lamar	8/14/1998	54	Excellent	153
Swan Creek	67	1.85	Lamar	7/15/1999	48	Good	103.2
Tobesofkee Creek	47	54.88	Monroe	10/21/2008	46	Good	77.7
Town Branch	177	2.24	Butts	7/15/1998	48	Good	94
Wildcat Creek	1192	1.00	Newton	5/14/2010	48	Good	91.2
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion - Supporting Stream Segments							
Big Creek	282	8.73	Houston	5/9/2000	44	Good	112.9

Stream Name	GAWRD Site ID	Drainage Area upstream from the monitoring point (sq miles)	County	Sampling Date	IBI Score	IBI Category	Habitat Score Total (Max: 200)
Big Creek	1390	139.04	Pulaski	10/20/2016	46	Good	140.3
Little Shellstone Creek	394	1.24	Bleckley	6/10/1999	48	Good	111.6
Richland Creek	380	19.24	Twiggs	10/1/2013	44	Good	117.7
South Prong Creek	381	24.96	Dooly	8/22/2000	50	Good	130.3
South Prong Creek	381	24.96	Dooly	10/15/2001	46	Good	136.2
South Prong Creek	381	24.96	Dooly	8/20/2002	44	Good	125.1
South Prong Creek	381	24.96	Dooly	6/15/2006	42	Fair	112.8
South Prong Creek	381	24.96	Dooly	10/9/2013	50	Good	164.3

Table 8. GA WRD Fish Community Habitat Assessment Scores - High Gradient Streams

Stream Name	GAWRD Site ID	Sampling Date	Instream Epifauna	Instream Cover	Epifauna Substrate	Velocity Depth Combinations	Embeddedness	Riffle Frequency	Channel Alteration	Sediment Deposition	Channel Flow Status	Bank Vegetation (Left)	Bank Vegetation (Right)	Bank Stability (Left)	Bank Stability (Right)	Riparian Zone (Left)	Riparian Zone (Right)	Habitat Score Total (Max: 200)
Piedmont Ecoregion – Not Supporting Stream Segments																		
Cornish Creek	1267	9/20/2012	5.2	0	0	5.5	4.5	0	13.5	3.5	4.5	4.5	5.5	3	4	9	9	71.8
East Bear Creek	1251	8/1/2012	6.3	0	0	7.3	2.3	0	14.7	1.7	5.3	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.3	6.7	7.3	69.3
Gaithers Branch	1231	6/13/2012	5.7	0	0	8	3.7	10	16	3	8.7	7.7	7.3	7.8	7.5	8	8.3	101.7
Prairie Creek	188	7/27/1998		11	1.7		3	0	4.3	5	9.3	4	4	5	5	3.7	3.7	59.7
Tobesofkee Creek	48	6/8/1999		4	3.2		1.9	0	15.7	2.2	7.5	4.3	3.5	2.8	2.7	0.8	4.7	53.2
Tobesofkee Creek	48	10/1/2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion – Not Supporting Stream Segments																		
Big Creek	281	5/9/2000		0	0		0	0	16.9	12.4	10.7	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.3	9	8.7	126.6
Little Ocmulgee River	383	8/23/2000		0	0		0	0	12.3	10	4	4.3	4.3	2.7	2.7	8.3	8	69.7
Sugar Creek	337	7/12/2000		0	0		0	0	16.7	8.3	6.7	1.3	2	3.8	4.8	2.1	3.1	97.1
Turnpike Creek	1298	8/14/2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	9.7	12.3	7.3	7.3	6	6	8.7	8.3	135
Piedmont Ecoregion - Supporting Stream Segments																		
Cole Creek	187	7/24/1998		6	4.7		4.3	2	5.3	3.7	7.7	4	4	4	3.7	9	6.3	64.3
Falling Creek	58	9/10/2013	7.3	0	0	11.7	5	0	16	2	10.3	5.4	4.9	2.8	2	9	9	85.4
Freeman Creek	640	7/10/2003	8.1	0	0	11.1	8.9	16	14.9	10.7	8.8	2.2	2.4	4.7	4.7	6.4	6.2	105.2
Lee Creek	118	5/12/1998		5	3.3		4.3	1.3	7	2	15	6	6	3.3	3.3	8.7	9	74.7
Little Buck Creek	18	5/4/1999		4	7.6		1.7	16	11	2	9.1	4.8	5	2.8	3.6	3	3	74
Little Deer Creek trib	237	5/6/1998		5	13		6	14	5	6	9.7	5.7	5.3	4	3	9.7	9.7	96.3
Little Haynes Creek	1284	10/17/2012	18.7	0	0	15.3	11	19	15.3	11.7	13.3	6.3	6.3	5.3	4.7	8.3	9.7	145

Stream Name	GAWRD Site ID	Sampling Date	Instream Epifauna	Instream Cover	Epifauna Substrate	Velocity Depth Combinations	Embeddedness	Riffle Frequency	Channel Alteration	Sediment Deposition	Channel Flow Status	Bank Vegetation (Left)	Bank Vegetation (Right)	Bank Stability (Left)	Bank Stability (Right)	Riparian Zone (Left)	Riparian Zone (Right)	Habitat Score Total (Max: 200)
Long Branch	142	5/16/2013	14.7	0	0	12	11.7	14	16	8.3	11.3	3.7	3.7	2.5	2.5	9.3	7.7	117.3
Long Branch	151	6/18/1998		8	10		6	4.7	9.7	4	17	4	3.7	3.7	3.7	6	6.3	86.3
Panther Creek	147	6/8/1998		10	10.3		7	12	10	9.3	13.3	6.3	5.7	4.3	4.3	9	9	111.3
Sand Branch	236	5/7/1998		13	13.7		10	14	6.7	11.7	15.3	7.3	7.3	7	7	7.3	8.3	128.7
Swan Creek	67	8/14/1998		14	17.3		14	15	14.3	13	12	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.3	9.3	9.3	153
Swan Creek	67	7/15/1999		6	7.8		7.2	15	16.3	6.1	10.2	4.9	3.5	5.3	4.6	9	8	103.2
Tobesofkee Creek	47	10/21/2008	8.7	0	0	10.3	2.3	0	13	4	10	4	3.2	3.5	2.7	8	8	77.7
Town Branch	177	7/15/1998		9	9.3		6	11	7.3	5	9	5.3	5.3	4	4.3	9	9	94
Wildcat Creek	1192	5/14/2010	10	0	0	11.2	3	17	14	2.3	8.3	5	4.7	3	2.7	5.7	4.3	91.2
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion - Supporting Stream Segments																		
Big Creek	282	5/9/2000		0	0		0	0	16.7	10.7	7.1	6.8	7	5.8	6	9.3	9	112.9
Big Creek	1390	10/20/2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	11.3	8.7	5.3	5.3	8.5	8.5	9.5	8.5	140.3
Little Shellstone Creek	394	6/10/1999		0	0		0	0	16.2	11.5	8	3.4	3.3	4.5	4.7	9	5.8	111.6
Richland Creek	380	10/1/2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	16.3	7.3	14.3	6.7	6.7	2.7	2.7	8.3	8.3	117.7
South Prong Creek	381	8/22/2000		0	0		0	0	16.7	15	8	4	4	5.3	5.3	8.7	8.7	130.3
South Prong Creek	381	10/15/2001	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.2	15.2	7	5.1	5	5.3	5.4	9	9.1	136.2
South Prong Creek	381	8/20/2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.7	10.3	8.7	2.2	2.2	4.5	4.8	9.3	9.5	125.1
South Prong Creek	381	6/15/2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	18.7	15.5	9.3	3.5	3.5	4.2	4.2	9	9	112.8
South Prong Creek	381	10/9/2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	17.7	14.3	6.3	6.3	7.7	7.7	9	9	164.3

Table 9. GA WRD Fish Community Field Measurements

Stream Name	GAWRD Site ID	Sampling Date	Sampling Reach Length (m)	Average Stream Width (m)	Average Stream Depth (m)	Number of Pools	Deepest Pool (m)	Number Riffles	Water Temp (deg C)	Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)	Conductivity (uS)	pH (SU)	Turbidity (NTU)	Total Hardness (mg/L)	Alkalinity (mg/L)	# of Individual Fish
Piedmont Ecoregion – Not Supporting Stream Segments																
Cornish Creek	1267	9/20/2012	60	1.7	0.08	0	0	0	19.2	6.1	65	6.5	27.7	17	30	94
East Bear Creek	1251	8/1/2012	150	4.3	0.19	2	0.82	1	23.5	7.5	75	7	3.24	24	30	100
Gaithers Branch	1231	6/13/2012	91	2.6	0.09	0	0	2	24	7.4	58.6	7	13.7	17	25	23
Prairie Creek	188	7/27/1998	182	5.2	0.39	14	0.99	0	22.8	6.93	47	6.8	12.8	-	-	177
Tobesofkee Creek	48	6/8/1999	182	5.2	0.18	1	0.65	0	20.6	6.76	262.4	7.48	14.6	16	65	479
Tobesofkee Creek	48	10/1/2013	224	6.45	0.15	3	0.6	0	16.3	8.8	71.9	7	10.9	15	20	795
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion – Not Supporting Stream Segments																
Big Creek	281	5/9/2000	301	8.6	0.37	8	1.4	-	18.1	6.91	99.4	7	24.3	68.4	80	287
Little Ocmulgee River	383	8/23/2000	140	4	0.15	2	0.7	-	23.9	6.65	160.6	7	2.1	68.4	80	160
Sugar Creek	337	7/12/2000	186	5.4	0.37	9	2	-	24.4	3.38	96.5	6.5	8.91	30	30	348
Turnpike Creek	1298	8/14/2013	154	4.4	0.47	8	1.3	-	25.5	2.9	56.7	6	10	34.2	15	337
Piedmont Ecoregion - Supporting Stream Segments																
Cole Creek	187	7/24/1998	77	2.22	0.08	2	0.43	3	18.4	7.8	33.9	7.02	15.8	-	-	175
Falling Creek	58	9/10/2013	436	8.87	0.19	5	99	0	24.5	7.1	126	7.5	4.9	49	12	668
Freeman Creek	640	7/10/2003	172	4.89	0.19	1	0.6	5	22.5	9.03	45.8	7	8.6	14	20	237
Lee Creek	118	5/12/1998	122	3.48	0.16	1	0.5	0	16.8	10.2	43.5	7.22	16.9	-	-	243
Little Buck Creek	18	5/4/1999	102	2.92	0.09	2	0.7	2	14	8.04	37.6	-	28.7	16	20	225
Little Deer Creek trib	237	5/6/1998	84	2.42	0.2	3	0.55	2	18	8.5	185.1	-	-	-	-	86
Little Haynes Creek	1284	10/17/2012	318	9.08	0.21	12	1.1	8	15.3	9.4	46	7	-	16	30	1092
Long Branch	142	5/16/2013	140	3.97	0.2	5	0.64	4	18	8	113.4	7	13.7	51.3	80	544

Stream Name	GAWRD Site ID	Sampling Date	Sampling Reach Length (m)	Average Stream Width (m)	Average Stream Depth (m)	Number of Pools	Deepest Pool (m)	Number Riffles	Water Temp (deg C)	Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)	Conductivity (uS)	pH (SU)	Turbidity (NTU)	Total Hardness (mg/L)	Alkalinity (mg/L)	# of Individual Fish
Long Branch	151	6/18/1998	90	2.54	0.25	6	0.7	0	20.2	10.64	38.2	6.65	6.94	-	-	277
Panther Creek	147	6/8/1998		3.14	0.17				19.4	9.04	36.7	-	-	-	-	146
Sand Branch	236	5/7/1998	97	2.78	0.14	5	-	5	16.8	9.76	35.8	7.1	19.7	-	-	87
Swan Creek	67	8/14/1998	123	3.54	0.12	5	0.46	3	22.9	7.93	38.3	-	6.14	-	-	579
Swan Creek	67	7/15/1999	98	2.76	0.17	0	0	5	21.9	8.55	46.8	6.87	8.53	13	20	117
Tobesofkee Creek	47	10/21/2008	310	8.85	0.2	10	1.17	1	16	9.22	68	6.55	8	15	25	1153
Town Branch	177	7/15/1998	102	2.94	0.08	4	0.68	3	22.1	7.74	56	7.31	7.14	-	-	121
Wildcat Creek	1192	5/14/2010	84	2.38	0.1	1	0.63	2	17.94	9.47	43	4.86	5.2	19	20	212
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion - Supporting Stream Segments																
Big Creek	282	5/9/2000	168	4.91	0.2	1	0.68	-	19.9	6.49	85.7	7	12.7	49	45	200
Big Creek	1390	10/20/2016	244	6.69	0.37	18	1.08	-	18.4	6.86	220.6	8	4.44	107	90	851
Little Shellstone Creek	394	6/10/1999	91	2.64	0.19	2	0.55	-	21.4	7.54	78.7	7.39	5.77	40	45	138
Richland Creek	380	10/1/2013	196	5.55	0.33	8	0.9	-	19.1	8.3	95.3	7	11.4	41	40	410
South Prong Creek	381	8/22/2000	150	4.27	0.27	7	0.95	-	19.8	8.73	159.1	7	2.64	100	100	537
South Prong Creek	381	10/15/2001	196	5.57	0.29	9	0.95	-	18.5	8.52	157.9	7	1.2	119.7	120	501
South Prong Creek	381	8/20/2002	210	6.01	0.35	5	0.9	-	20	7.57	173.3	7.5	1	102.6	100	780
South Prong Creek	381	6/15/2006	171	4.92	0.27	6	0.95	-	20.6	6.31	154.6	7.5	1.4	102.6	85	664
South Prong Creek	381	10/9/2013	214	6.1	0.27	9	1	-	19.5	7.9	184	7	1.7	102.6	100	664

3) SOURCE ASSESSMENT

A healthy aquatic ecosystem requires a healthy habitat. The major disturbance to stream habitats is erosion and sedimentation. As sediment is carried into the stream, it changes the stream bottom and smothers sensitive organisms. Turbidity associated with sediment loads may also impair recreational and drinking water uses (GA EPD, 1998).

A source assessment characterizes the known and suspected sources of sediment in the watershed for use in a water quality model and the development of the TMDL. Sources are broadly classified as either point or nonpoint sources. A point source is defined as a discernable, confined, and discrete conveyance from which pollutants are or may be discharged to surface waters. Nonpoint sources are diffuse, and generally, but not always, involve accumulation of pollutants on land surfaces that wash off as a result of storm events.

3.1 Point Source Assessment

Title IV of the Clean Water Act establishes the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program. There are two basic kinds of NPDES permits: 1) municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities, and 2) regulated stormwater discharges.

3.1.1 Wastewater Treatment Facilities

In general, municipal and industrial wastewater treatment facilities have NPDES permits with effluent limits. These permit limits are either based on federal and state effluent guidelines (technology-based limits) or on water quality standards (water quality-based limits).

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has developed technology-based guidelines, which establish a minimum standard of pollution control for municipal and industrial discharges without regard for the quality of the receiving waters. These are based on Best Practical Control Technology Currently Available (BPT), Best Conventional Control Technology (BCT), and Best Available Technology Economically Achievable (BAT). The level of control required by each facility depends on the type of discharge and the pollutant.

The USEPA and the states have also developed numeric and narrative water quality standards. Typically, these standards are based on the results of aquatic toxicity tests and/or human health criteria and include a margin of safety. Water quality-based effluent limits are set to protect the receiving stream. These limits are based on water quality standards that have been established for a stream based on its intended use and the prescribed biological and chemical conditions that must be met to sustain that use.

For purposes of this TMDL, NPDES permitted wastewater treatment facilities will be considered point sources. Discharges from municipal, industrial, private and federal NPDES permitted facilities are the primary point sources of sediment as total suspended solids (TSS) and/or turbidity. Based on a GIS analysis of currently available permitting databases, there are four (4) permitted NPDES facilities discharging effluent within the watersheds upstream from the not supporting stream segments covered in the TMDL document.

Table 10 provides the current permitted flow and TSS concentrations for the NPDES permittees located within the watershed of stream segments not supporting their designated uses due to

impaired fish communities. Where available, the average levels (whether daily or monthly) and the maximum levels (whether daily or weekly) discharged over the last three years (2018-2020) are also given. These data were obtained from available Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) or Operation Monitoring Reports (OMRs).

Table 10. Current NPDES Permit limits for Facilities that discharge within the watershed of Fish Community Not Supporting Streams

Facility	NPDES Permit No.	Facility Type	Receiving Water / Not Supporting Stream Segment	Data Source	FLOW (MGD)		TSS (mg/L)	
					Monthly Average	Weekly Average	Monthly Average	Weekly Average
Barnesville, City of (James A. King WWTF)	GA0021041	Municipal	Tobesofkee Creek	Permit Limit	2.4	3.0	14	21
				Actual Data	1.54	0.83	3.38	5.62
Davis Oil Company (Shell Food Mart WPCP)	GA0022594	Municipal	Big Creek	Permit Limit	0.0075	0.0094 (1)	90	120 (1)
				Actual Data	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Eastman, City of (Sugar Creek WPCP)	GA0046485	Municipal	Sugar Creek	Permit Limit	1.8	2.25	20	30
				Actual Data	0.72	0.96	1.19	1.44
McRae-Helena, City of (McRae-Helena WPCP)	GA0048674	Municipal	Little Ocmulgee River	Permit Limit	0.8 (3)	1.0 (3)	90.00	120
				Actual Data	0.60	0.75	13.54	18.17

Notes:

- (1) Facility is a private and institutional development (PID) where a daily maximum is provided instead of a weekly average.
- (2) Review of available DMR data shows no reported discharge during the period of 2018 through 2020
- (3) Allowable discharge is dependent on stream flow. The values listed are the maximums.

It is unknown if any of the point sources have contributed to the biota impairments in the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds by discharging TSS or other pollutants. Heavy metals, ammonia, chlorine, elevated temperatures, low dissolved oxygen levels, and extreme pH levels are possible sources of toxicity, and high levels of these parameters can adversely affect the aquatic communities. These parameters are regulated through NPDES permits.

3.1.2 Regulated Storm Water Discharges

Certain sources of storm water runoff are covered under the NPDES Permit Program and are considered a diffuse source of pollution. Unlike other NPDES permits that establish end-of-pipe pollutant limits, storm water NPDES permits establish controls intended to reduce the quantity of pollutants storm water picks up and carries into storm sewer systems during rainfall events. Currently, regulated storm water discharges include those associated with industrial activities, construction sites one acre or greater, large and medium municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), and small MS4s serving urbanized areas.

3.1.2.1 Industrial General Storm Water NPDES Permits

Storm water discharges associated with industrial activities are currently covered under the 2017 NPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Industrial Activity

(GAR050000) also called the Industrial General Permit (IGP). This permit requires visual monitoring of storm water discharges, site inspections, implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), and annual reporting. The IGP requires that stormwater discharging into an impaired stream segment or within one linear mile upstream of, and within the same watershed as, any portion of an impaired stream segment identified as “not supporting” its designated use(s), must satisfy the requirements of Appendix C of the 2017 IGP if the pollutant(s) of concern for which the impaired stream segment has been listed may be exposed to stormwater as a result of industrial activity at the site. If a facility is covered under Appendix C of the IGP, then benchmark monitoring for the pollutant(s) of concern is required. Delineations of both supporting and not supporting waterbodies are provided on the GA EPD [website](#), and are available in ESRI ArcGIS shapefile format or in KMZ format for use in Google Earth. Interested parties may evaluate their proximity to not supporting waterbodies by utilizing these geospatial files.

Table 11 provides a list of those facilities in the Ocmulgee River Basin that have submitted a Notice of Intent to be covered under Georgia’s Industrial General Storm Water NPDES Permit, that also discharge into streams with impaired fish communities. At this time, it is unknown whether these facilities are contributing sediment to the watershed.

Table 11. Facilities Covered Under Georgia’s General Industrial Storm Water NPDES Permit within watersheds with Impaired Fish Communities

Stream Segment	Site ID	Facility Name/Owner	Permit #
Gaithers Branch	WRD 1231	Reames Concrete Company	4251
Little Ocmulgee River	WRD 383	Rayonier Performance Fibers LLC - Eastman Fiber Facility	2383
		Dynamic Paint Solutions, Inc.	13246
		Eastman Concrete Plant	4170
		Arconic Architectural Products, LLC	4511
		Sweetwater Wood Holdings, LLC	13445
		Reeves Construction Company – McRae Sand Pit	13852
		Husqvarna Outdoor Products	4365
Sugar Creek	WRD 337	Mondi Bags USA, LLC	3708
Tobesofkee Creek	WRD 48	Piedmont Green Power, LLC	12453

Source: Nonpoint Source Program, GA EPD, 2021

3.1.2.2 NPDES MS4 Permits

The collection, conveyance, and discharge of diffuse storm water to local water bodies by a public entity is regulated in Georgia by the NPDES MS4 permits. These MS4 permits have been issued

under two phases. Phase I MS4 permits cover medium and large cities, and counties with populations over 100,000. Each individual Phase I MS4 permit requires the prohibition of non-storm water discharges (i.e., illicit discharges) into the storm sewer systems and controls to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, including the use of management practices, control techniques and systems, as well as design and engineering methods (Federal Register, 1990). A site-specific Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) outlining appropriate controls is required by and referenced in the permit. A program to monitor and control pollutants in storm water discharges from industrial facilities, construction sites, and highly visible pollutant sources that exist within the MS4 area must be implemented under the permit. Additionally, monitoring of not supporting streams, public education and involvement, post-construction storm water controls, low impact development, and annual reporting requirements must all be addressed by the permittee on an ongoing basis.

Small MS4s serving urbanized areas are required to obtain a storm water permit under the Phase II storm water regulations. An urbanized area is defined as an area with a residential population of at least 50,000 people and an overall population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile. As of 2021, Seventy-three (73) municipalities, thirty-five (36) counties, five (6) Department of Defense facilities, and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) are permitted under the Phase II storm water regulations in Georgia. All municipal Phase II permittees are authorized to discharge under Storm Water General Permit GAG610000. Department of Defense facilities are authorized to discharge under Storm Water General Permit GAG480000. GDOT owned or operated facilities are authorized to discharge under Storm Water General Permit GAR041000. Under these general permits, each permittee must design and implement a SWMP that incorporates BMPs that focus on public education and involvement, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site runoff control, post-construction storm water management, and pollution prevention in municipal operations. Table 12 lists the permitted MS4s that discharge into stream segments not supporting their designated use for biota.

Table 12. Permitted MS4s in the Savannah River Basin Discharging to Not Supporting Streams

MS4 Permittee	Permit Number	Permit Phase	Not Supporting Stream(s)
Houston County	GAG610055	2	Big Creek
Newton County	GAG610073	2	East Bear Creek, Gaithers Branch
Walton County	GAG610102	2	Cornish Creek
Walnut Grove	GAG610100	2	Cornish Creek

Source: Nonpoint Source Program, GA EPD, 2019

The total area of each not supporting watershed and the percentage of urbanized area in the permitted MS4 area contained within each watershed are provided in Table 13. The land use types considered urbanized include 1) developed open space, 2) developed low intensity, 3) developed medium intensity, 4) developed high intensity, 5) utility swaths, and 6) golf courses.

Table 13. Percentage of Watersheds Located in urbanized MS4 Areas

Stream Segment	Site ID	Watershed Area (Acres)	Percentage Urbanized MS4	MS4 Permittee
Fish Community Not Supporting Segments				
Big Creek	WRD 281	30243.9	0.0%	Houston County
Cornish Creek	WRD 1267	1351.5	5.3%	Walton County, Walnut Grove City
East Bear Creek	WRD 1251	4398.3	0.0%	Newton County
Gaithers Branch	WRD 1231	3141.3	0.0%	Newton County
Little Ocmulgee River	WRD 383	201217.1	0.0%	
Prairie Creek	WRD 188	1851.7	0.0%	
Sugar Creek	WRD 337	115489.0	0.0%	
Tobesofkee Creek	WRD 48	17676.8	0.0%	
Turnpike Creek	WRD 1298	31545.6	0.0%	

Source: Nonpoint Source Program, GA EPD, 2019

3.1.2.3 Construction General Stormwater NPDES Permits

Soil erosion from construction sites has historically been a major source of sediment in Georgia's streams. Georgia requires construction sites over one acre to have a General Storm Water NPDES permit. General permits have been created to cover construction projects that fall into three distinct categories; stand-alone construction projects (May 2018 General Permit No. GAR100001), infrastructure construction projects (May 2018 General Permit No. GAR100002), and construction that occurs under a common plan of development where the primary permittee chooses to use secondary permittees for land disturbance activities (May 2018 General Permit No. GAR100003). Since construction sites are regulated by NPDES permits, they are considered point sources. It is unknown if there are any construction sites in the not supporting watersheds of the Ocmulgee River Basin.

3.2 Nonpoint Source Assessment

Eroded soils from forests, cropland, mining sites, and other land can be transported to Georgia streams through runoff. Excessive sediment that reaches the water bodies can cause a variety of changes to the stream. It can make the streams shallower and wider, affecting the stream's temperature, dissolved oxygen, flow rate, and velocity. It can cause increased flooding. It can affect the ability of the stream to assimilate pollutants. Excessive sediment can change the diversity of fish populations and other biological communities. In addition, harmful pollutants can attach to the sediment and be transported to rivers and streams.

3.2.1 Silviculture

Georgia has 23.6 million acres of commercial forests. This represents approximately 64 percent of all of Georgia's land use. Approximately 68 percent of the commercial forests are privately owned, 25 percent are owned by industry, and 7 percent are publicly held (GA EPD, 1999).

The majority of soil erosion from forested land occurs during timber harvesting and the period immediately following, and during reforestation. Once the forest is re-established, very little soil erosion occurs. Timber harvesting includes the layout of access roads, log decks, and skid trails; the construction and stabilization of these areas; and the cutting of trees. Both hardwoods and pines are harvested throughout Georgia. A minimum harvest is usually ten acres and the percent of forest that is harvested each year varies from county to county. The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) was consulted for information and parameters regarding silviculture activities. Table 14 lists the percent timberland and percent harvested per year for counties that contain modeled watersheds.

Table 14. Timberland, Growing Stock and Annual Removal

County	Forest Area (acres)	Timberland (acres)	Net Growing Stock Volume (ft ³) ^a	Annual Average Harvest Removal (ft ³)	Impaired Watershed(s)
Ben Hill	90,347	90,347	162,379,633	7,208,973	
Bibb	76,531	70,695	93,499,776	-	
Bleckley	80,222	80,222	148,073,373	1,091,238	Little Ocmulgee River
Butts	77,348	77,348	167,848,057	-	
Clayton	20,576	20,576	37,974,660	-	
Coffee	206,914	206,914	357,597,041	14,075,103	
Crawford	173,474	173,474	222,202,101	4,311,121	
DeKalb	46,846	46,846	101,127,973	-	
Dodge	241,866	241,866	274,486,005	29,069,238	Little Ocmulgee River, Sugar Creek
Dooly	89,505	89,505	103,847,588	4,505,157	Big Creek
Fulton	116,091	116,091	411,139,790	981,663	
Gwinnett	68,696	68,696	178,813,147	9,342,256	
Henry	85,707	85,707	214,808,836	4,297,353	
Houston	125,452	125,452	265,299,866	11,146,347	Big Creek
Irwin	111,061	111,061	95,417,915	8,981,901	
Jasper	184,994	173,083	378,040,748	5,236,535	Gaithers Branch
Jeff Davis	137,235	137,235	240,853,265	11,653,166	
Jones	204,883	181,539	313,434,744	7,538,516	
Lamar	95,649	95,649	149,542,117	1,332,632	Prairie Creek, Tobesofkee Creek
Laurens	369,090	369,090	492,217,931	35,912,010	Little Ocmulgee River
Macon	146,968	146,968	215,765,470	4,712,443	

County	Forest Area (acres)	Timberland (acres)	Net Growing Stock Volume (ft ³) ^a	Annual Average Harvest Removal (ft ³)	Impaired Watershed(s)
Monroe	181,430	181,430	362,182,282	3,230,070	Tobesofkee Creek
Newton	73,827	73,827	167,269,583	4,339,095	East Bear Creek, Gaithers Branch
Peach	40,856	40,856	41,445,253	1,018,111	
Pulaski	82,918	82,918	113,064,289	1,474,594	
Rockdale	16,893	16,893	36,111,329	893,549	
Spalding	82,658	82,658	148,664,364	3,989,366	
Telfair	237,826	237,826	362,545,469	11,348,518	Little Ocmulgee River, Sugar Creek
Twiggs	201,123	196,746	231,625,223	11,288,408	Little Ocmulgee River
Upson	153,347	153,347	246,686,548	10,284,272	
Walton	126,040	126,040	284,734,994	3,520,785	Cornish Creek
Wheeler	156,363	156,363	219,722,933	11,335,930	Little Ocmulgee River
Wilcox	184,368	184,368	286,900,329	7,813,203	

^a - Estimate - does not include trees less than 5" diameter at breast height (DBH).

Source: Forest Inventory EVALIDator web-application, USDA-FS, Northern Research Station, 2021

3.2.2 Agriculture

Agriculture can be a significant contributor of nonpoint pollutants to rivers and streams including sediment and nutrients. Cropland is one of the major sources of soil loss due to sheet and rill erosion. The NRCS was consulted for information and parameters regarding agricultural activities. Over the last century there has been a significant decrease in the amount of land farmed in Georgia. In 1950, there were approximately 198,000 farms encompassing 25.7 million acres in Georgia (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1954). In 1982, there were approximately 12.3 million acres of farmland in Georgia, with the number of farms estimated to be 50,000 and the average farm size being approximately 248 acres. This represents a 52 percent reduction in farmland acreage. The number and acreage of farms has continued to decrease as time has gone on. In 2012, it was reported that approximately 42,000 farms covering 9.6 million acres existed in Georgia, which represents a 63 percent reduction from 1950 (USDA-NASS, 2012). In 2017, there were approximately 42,400 farms covering 10.0 million acres existed in Georgia, which represents a 61 percent reduction from 1950 (USDA-NASS, 2018).

With the reduction in farmland, there has also been a decrease in the amount of soil erosion from agricultural lands. The National Resources Inventory found the total wind and water erosion on cropland and Conservation Reserve Program land in Georgia declined 38 percent, from 3.1 billion tons per year in 1982 to 1.9 billion tons per year in 1997 (USDA-NRCS, 1997). This suggests that the source of sediment in many of the not supporting streams in the Ocmulgee River Basin may be the result of past land use practices. Thus, it is believed that if sediment loads are maintained at acceptable levels, streams will repair themselves over time.

3.2.3 Grazing Areas

Farm animals grazing on pastureland can leave areas of ground with little or no vegetative cover. During a rainfall runoff event, soil in the pastures is eroded and transported to nearby streams, typically by gully erosion. The amount of soil loss from gully erosion is generally less than that caused by sheet and rill erosion. Work in small grazed catchments in New Mexico found that gully erosion contributed only 1.4 percent of the total sediment load as compared to sheet and rill erosion. Other research has found that gully erosion typically contributes less than 30 percent of the total sediment load; however, contributions can range from 0 to 89 percent (USEPA, 2001b).

Beef cattle spend most of their time grazing in pastures, while dairy cattle and hogs are confined periodically. Hog farms confine the animals or allow them to graze in small pastures or pens. On dairy farms, the cows are confined for a limited period each day, during which time they are fed and milked. In addition, cattle and other unconfined animals often have direct access to streams that flow through pastures. As these animals walk down to the stream, they often damage stream banks. Stream bank vegetation is destroyed, and the banks often collapse, resulting in increased sedimentation to the waterway.

3.2.4 Mining Sites

Minerals, rocks, and ores are found in natural deposits on or in the earth. Kaolin, clays, granite, marble, sand, gravel, and other mineral products are the materials primarily mined in Georgia. Surface mining involves the activities and processes used to remove minerals, ores, or other solid material. Tunnels, shafts, and dimension stone quarries are not considered to be surface mines. Surface mining encompasses a variety of activities ranging from sand dredging to open pit clay mining to hard rock aggregate quarrying.

Removal of vegetation, displacement of soils, and other significant land disturbing activities are typically associated with surface mining. These operations can result in accelerated erosion and sedimentation of surface waters.

3.2.5 Roads

Erosion from unpaved roadways can be a significant source of sediment to rivers and streams. Road erosion occurs when soil particles are loosened and carried away from the roadway, ditch or road bank by water, wind or traffic. The actual road construction (including erosive road-fill soil types, shape and size of coarse surface aggregate, poor subsurface or surface drainage, poor roadbed construction, roadway shape, and inadequate runoff discharge outlets or “turn-outs” from the roadway) may aggravate roadway erosion. In addition, external factors such as roadway shading and light exposure, traffic patterns, and road maintenance may also affect roadway erosion.

Exposed soils, high runoff velocities and volumes, and poor road compaction all increase the potential for erosion. Loose soil particles are often carried from the roadbed into roadway drainage ditches. Some of these particles settle out satisfactorily, but usually they settle out poorly, causing diminished ditch carrying capacity resulting in roadway flooding and, subsequently, more roadway erosion (Choctawhatchee, et. al, 2000).

3.2.6 Urban Development

Soil erosion from land disturbing activities is a major source of sediment in Georgia's streams. Land-disturbing activities are defined as any activity that may result in soil erosion and the movement of sediments into state waters or on lands of the state. Examples of land disturbing activities include clearing, grading, excavating, or filling of land. The following activities are unconditionally exempt from the provisions of the Erosion and Sedimentation Act: surface mining, granite quarrying, minor land-disturbing activities such as home gardens and landscaping, agricultural and silvicultural operations, and any project carried out under the technical supervision of the NRCS.

Conversion of forest to urban land use is often associated with water quality degradation. It is unknown whether the amount of forest land within the Ocmulgee River Basin has significantly decreased. It should be noted that forest undergoing conversion to another land use is not considered silviculture, but rather a land disturbing activity.

Storm water runoff from newly developed and existing urban areas also has an impact on the transport of sediment to and within streams. As urbanization increases imperviousness across a watershed, the resulting hydrological response is almost always seen as an increase in the runoff volume and erosive force delivered to streams and other waterbodies over a shorter amount of time. As these compressed duration, high volume, high velocity stormwater discharges enter streams from the built environment they tend to cause stream bank erosion and stream bottom down cutting, further compounding sedimentation issues downstream.

Table 15 provides the amount and overall percentage of impervious cover within the watershed of each not supporting stream segment covered in this TMDL document. These data were extracted from the 2015 Georgia Land Use Trends (GLUT). This raster impervious cover trend product was developed by the University of Georgia – Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Laboratory (NARSAL) and follows land use trends for years 1991, 2001, 2005, and 2008, and 2015. The raster data sets were developed from 1-meter aerial photography, and Landsat Thematic Mapper (TM) and Enhanced Thematic Mapper Plus (ETM+) datasets, with a resolution of 30 meters.

Table 15. Amount and Percentage of Impervious Area in Not Supporting Watersheds

Stream Segment	Station ID	Total Area (Acres)	Impervious Area (Acres)	% Impervious Area
Not Supporting Segments - Fish Community Assessment				
Big Creek	WRD 281	30231.0	286.2	0.9%
Cornish Creek	WRD 1267	1350.9	44.1	3.3%
East Bear Creek	WRD 1251	4396.4	56.9	1.3%
Gaithers Branch	WRD 1231	3140.0	24.6	0.8%
Little Ocmulgee River	WRD 383	201131.3	2253.5	1.1%
Prairie Creek	WRD 188	1850.9	35.1	1.9%
Sugar Creek	WRD 337	115439.7	1625.7	1.4%
Tobesofkee Creek	WRD 48	17669.3	409.4	2.3%
Turnpike Creek	WRD 1298	31532.1	164.6	0.5%

4) MODELING APPROACH

Establishing the relationship between the in-stream water quality and the source loadings is an important component of TMDL development. It provides for the identification of sources and their relative contribution, as well as the examination of potential water quality changes resulting from varying management options used to meet the water quality standards. This relationship can be developed using a variety of techniques ranging from simple methods based on scientific principles to more complex numerical computer modeling techniques.

In this section, the numerical modeling techniques developed to simulate sediment fate and transport in the watershed are discussed. The limited amount of sediment loading data and in-stream sediment information available prevents GA EPD from using a dynamic watershed runoff model to determine the daily sediment loads since these models require a great deal of data for model development and calibration. Instead, GA EPD has determined the annual sediment loads delivered to a stream from the watersheds. This TMDL document does not address in-stream sedimentation processes, such as bank erosion and stream bottom downcutting, since computer models that simulate these processes are not available at this time.

4.1 Model Selection

The Agricultural Research Station (ARS) developed the Universal Soil Loss Equation (USLE) over 40 years ago. It is the most widely accepted and used soil loss equation. It was designed as a method to predict average annual soil loss caused by sheet and rill erosion. The USLE can estimate long-term soil loss, and can assist in choosing proper cropping, management, and conservation practices. However, it cannot be used to determine erosion for a specific year or specific storm. Because of its wide acceptance by the forestry, agricultural, and academic communities, the USLE was selected as the tool for estimating long-term annual soil erosion, assessing the impacts of various land uses, and evaluating the benefits of various BMPs.

4.2 Universal Soil Loss Equation

For each of the watersheds monitored in the Ocmulgee River Basin, the existing annual sediment load was estimated using the USLE. The USLE predicts the average annual soil loss caused by sheet and rill erosion. Soil loss from sheet and rill erosion is mainly due to detachment of soil particles during rainfall events. It is the major source of soil loss from crop production and animal grazing areas, logging areas, mine sites, unpaved roads, and construction sites. The equation used for estimating average annual soil erosion is:

$$A = RKLSCP$$

Where:

- A = average annual soil loss, in tons / acre
- R = rainfall erosivity index
- K = soil erodibility factor
- L = slope length factor
- S = slope steepness factor
- C = cover management factor
- P = conservation practice factor

4.2.1 Rainfall Erosivity Index

The R factor, or rainfall erosivity index, is a measure of the cumulative erosive force of individual precipitation events. When other factors are constant, soil losses from storm rainfall are directly proportional to the product of the total kinetic energy of the storm (E) times its maximum 30-minute intensity (I_{30}); this is termed the single-storm erosion index (EI_{30}). The mean annual R-factor represents the sum of EI_{30} values for all storms in a year, averaged over all years of record (Daly and Taylor, 2002). Daily rain-gauge data for the period 1971-2000 were used to compute R-factor values for the conterminous United States. The R-factor values are specified by a raster dataset with a spatial resolution of 2.5 minutes (about 4 km cell size), which was produced by the Spatial Climate Analysis Service at Oregon State University. R factor varies geographically and ranges from 268 to 359 within the Ocmulgee River Basin. Table 16 provides the rainfall statistics from six meteorological stations located throughout Georgia and shows the variability of rainfall frequency and amount.

Table 16. Georgia Meteorological Rainfall Statistics

Station	Normal Monthly Precipitation (in.) / Avg. Days of Precipitation (0.1 in. or more)											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Athens, GA	4.6/11	4.4/9	5.5/11	4.0/8	4.4/9	3.9/9	4.9/11	3.7/9	3.4/8	3.3/7	3.7/8	4.1/10
Atlanta, GA	4.8/11	4.8/10	5.8/11	4.3/9	4.3/9	3.6/10	5.0/12	3.7/10	3.4/8	3.1/6	3.9/8	4.3/10
Augusta, GA	4.1/10	4.3/9	4.7/10	3.3/8	3.8/9	4.1/9	4.2/11	4.5/10	3.0/7	2.8/6	2.5/7	3.4/9
Columbus, GA	4.6/10	4.9/10	5.8/10	4.3/8	4.2/8	4.1/9	5.5/13	3.7/10	3.2/8	2.2/5	3.6/8	5.0/10
Macon, GA	4.6/11	4.7/10	4.8/10	3.5/7	3.6/9	3.6/10	4.3/13	3.6/11	2.8/8	2.2/6	2.7/7	4.3/9
Savannah, GA	3.6/9	3.2/9	3.8/9	3.0/7	4.1/9	5.7/10	6.4/14	7.5/13	4.5/10	2.4/6	2.2/6	3.0/8

4.2.2 Soil Erodibility Factor

The K-factor, or soil erodibility factor, represents the susceptibility of soil to be eroded. This factor quantifies the cohesive or bonding character of the soil and ability of the soil to resist detachment and transport during a rainfall event. The factor reflects the fact that different soils erode at different rates when the other factors that affect erosion (e.g., infiltration rate, permeability, total water capacity, dispersion, rain splash, and abrasion) are the same. Texture is the principal factor affecting erodibility, but structure, organic matter, and permeability also contribute (Goldman et al. 1986).

The soil erodibility factor is a raster dataset generated for each modeled watershed from the SSURGO database. The erodibility of the soil horizons and components of each soil map unit are proportioned and summed to compute the overall K-factor for each soil map unit. Soil map units are the basic geographic unit utilized in the SSURGO database. Table 6 provides a summary of hydrologic soil groups in each supporting and not supporting watershed that was modeled and the corresponding range of K-factors.

4.2.3 Slope Length and Steepness Factors

L is the slope length factor, representing the effect of slope length on erosion. It is the ratio of soil loss from the field slope length to that from a unit plot length on the same soil type and gradient. In practice, slope length is the distance from the origin of overland flow along its flow path to the location of either concentrated flow or deposition. Longer slopes generally accumulate more runoff from larger areas and also result in higher overflow velocities. The slope length factor is computed with the equation:

$$L = (x_i^{m+1} - x_{i-1}^{m+1}) / [\lambda_u^m (x_i - x_{i-1})]$$

Where: x_i = distance to the lower end of the segment

x_{i-1} = distance to the upper end of the segment

λ_u = length of the unit plot (72.6 ft)

$m = \frac{\beta}{1+\beta}$ = slope length exponent

$$\beta = \left[\frac{k_r}{k_i} \right] * \left[\frac{c_r}{c_i} \right] * \left[\frac{\exp(-0.05 G_c)}{\exp(-0.025 G_c)} \right] * \left[\frac{\left(\frac{\sin \theta}{0.0896} \right)}{\left[3 \left(\frac{\sin \theta}{0.896} \right)^{0.8} + 0.56 \right]} \right]$$

$\left[\frac{k_r}{k_i} \right]$ = the ratio of rill erodibility to interrill erodibility, assumed to be 1

$\left[\frac{c_r}{c_i} \right]$ = the ratio for below ground effects for rill and interrill erosion, assumed to be 1

$\left[\frac{\exp(-0.05 G_c)}{\exp(-0.025 G_c)} \right]$ = ratio of the ground cover effect on rill and interrill erosion, assumed to be 1

θ = slope angle of the segment

S is the slope steepness factor, representing the effect of slope steepness on erosion. Steeper slopes generally produce higher overland flow velocities. Soil loss increases more rapidly with slope steepness than it does with slope length. The slope steepness factor is computed by the equation:

$$S = 10.8 \sin \theta + 0.03 \quad \text{for slopes} < 9\%$$

$$S = 16.8 \sin \theta - 0.50 \quad \text{for slopes} \geq 9\%$$

Both the L and S factor equations depend on the slope angle (θ) of the given watershed. Slope angle is calculated using digital elevation model (DEM) data obtained from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) National Elevation Dataset (NED).

4.2.4 Cropping Factor

The C-factor, or cover management factor, is a dimensionless number, ranging between 0 and 1, that represents the degree of protection from erosion provided by crops, vegetation, and other soil cover. For this application of USLE, the C-factor has been utilized to convey the inherent erosion potential of the different land covers in each modeled watershed.

For agricultural lands, the C-factor incorporates the effects of tillage, crop type, cropping history, and crop yield on both soil erosivity and erodibility. ARS has continually refined C-factor values for specific crop and pasture types throughout the years. These values are easily obtained and well distributed. A review of available literature yielded generalized C-factor values for all land cover types and is given in Table 17.

Table 17. C-Factor for Land Cover types in Georgia

Land Cover Type	C-factor
Open Water/Beaches/Dunes/Mud	0
Utilities Swaths / Golf Courses	0.011
Developed	0.003
Clearcut/Sparse	0.2
Quarries/Strip Mines	0.2
Rock Outcrops	0
Forested	0.001
Pasture	0.011
Row Crops	0.2
Wetland	0.011

Source: Soil & Water Assessment Tool Documentation, 2012

4.2.5 Conservation Practice Factor

The P factor or conservation practice factor represents the effects of conservation practices on erosion. The conservation practices include BMPs such as contour farming, strip cropping and terraces. In all cases, it was assumed that no BMPs were used and the P factor for all land uses was 1.0.

4.3 WCS Sediment Tool

USEPA and Tetra Tech developed the ArcView-based Watershed Characterization System (WCS) to provide tools for characterizing various watersheds. WCS was used to display and analyze geographic information system (GIS) data, including land use, soil type, ground slope, road networks, point source discharges, and watershed characteristics. The Sediment Tool extension, which utilized the USLE, was used to estimate the potential sediment delivery to a defined water body of concern. This original version of WCS was used for modeling of sediment TMDLs issued by GA EPD through 2012.

GA EPD has updated and modernized the code and originally developed by USEPA and Tetra Tech. The original WCS program and code was evaluated to determine what functionality and features should be incorporated into the updated system.

The utilization of a GIS-based platform was considered a high priority so large amounts of high-resolution geospatial data could be efficiently analyzed for water quality limited streams. The Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Lab (NARSAL), within the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, at the University of Georgia was contracted to update the GIS-based platform that would allow for similar analyses of the original WCS and its Sediment Tool.

The GIS software platform chosen was ArcGIS. The GA EPD Watershed Characterization System (GAWCS) was developed to run in ArcMap 10.x and utilize widely available and regularly updated state-wide geospatial datasets. Within the ArcGIS toolbox, two source code scripts, written in the open-source Python coding language, generate required datasets based on DEM data, and evaluate a selected watershed utilizing a sediment budget model based on the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation, Version 2 (RUSLE2). The sediment budget model provides the estimated annual average soil loss due to sheet and rill erosion. A tabular summary of land cover, soil, stream, and demographic attributes of the selected watershed is provided to fully characterize a watershed, aid in water quality evaluation, and identify potential sources of impairment.

The DEM Process script utilizes the highest resolution DEM dataset available to generate three raster datasets that are subsequently used in the sediment budget calculation process. First, a state-wide slope angle raster data file is generated by calculating the slope angle from the raw DEM raster data. Following the generation of the slope angle raster, the DEM raster is hydrologically corrected such that modeled streamflow always flows along accurate stream paths to the edge of the DEM dataset. In this process, the streams from the USGS National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) NHD Flowline Feature Class are rasterized, snapped, and “burned” into the DEM. The “burn” process is essentially subtracting the stream pixels from the DEM, thus making an artificial gully and forcing the subsequently calculated flow accumulation and flow direction to follow the NHD streams. The DEM raster is then filled to remove any sinks. Finally, a state-wide flow direction raster and flow accumulation raster are generated, based on the edited DEM raster file. As higher resolution DEM datasets become available, the DEM processing script can be used to generate state-wide slope angle, flow direction, and flow accumulation raster datasets with a higher degree of accuracy.

The Watershed Characterization script evaluates a user-defined watershed that can either be based on a manual watershed delineation provided by the user or the script can delineate a watershed based on a user-selected pour point. Once the watershed is delineated, a variety of statistics describing land cover, population, and soil makeup are calculated and exported in tabular form.

Following the tabulation of watershed statistics, the Watershed Characterization script initiates the sediment erosion calculation process. A 30-meter by 30-meter grid is superimposed over the watershed to form the basic framework from which the sediment erosion estimate is calculated. This grid size represents the spatial resolution of the most land cover datasets, including the National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD) produced by USGS, and the Georgia Land Use Trends (GLUT) dataset produced by NARSAL. For each grid cell within the watershed, the Watershed Characterization script extracts or calculates the individual USLE factors based on the geospatial data provided through the ArcMap interface. Based on the specific cell characteristics and individual factors, the potential erosion for each grid cell is calculated using the USLE.

After the annual soil loss is computed for each grid cell in the watershed, areas of deposition and erosion are identified. Only areas of erosion are assumed to contribute to the total sediment yield of the watershed. Curvature of the watershed is computed along with a 3x3 focal mean slope. Areas of deposition are defined where slope is concave and less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the mean slope. All other areas are defined as eroding. To compute the total sediment yield (tons/acre/year), a weighted flow accumulation is computed excluding the areas of deposition. The calculated sediment yields (tons/acre/year) are recalculated based on the actual watershed size to get an absolute sediment yield (tons/year).

5) TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD

A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is the amount of a pollutant that can be assimilated by the receiving water body without exceeding the applicable water quality criteria; in this case, the narrative water quality criteria for aquatic life. This TMDL determines the range of sediment loads that can enter the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds not supporting their designated use without causing additional impairment to the stream. This range is based on the hypothesis that if a not supporting watershed has an annual average sediment loading rate similar to a watershed supporting its biology, then the receiving stream will remain stable and not be biologically impaired due to sediment. In the Ocmulgee River Basin, the average sediment yield in the watersheds supporting fish communities in the Piedmont ecoregion is 0.72 tons/acre/yr and the average sediment yield in the watersheds supporting fish communities in the Southeastern Plains ecoregion is 1.49 tons/acre/yr. This TMDL establishes allowable pollutant loadings, and thereby provides the basis to establish water quality-based controls. For some pollutants, TMDLs are expressed on a mass loading basis.

A TMDL is the sum of the individual waste load allocations (WLA) for point sources and load allocations (LA) for nonpoint sources and natural background (40 CFR 130.2). The sum of these components may not result in an exceedance of water quality criteria for a water body. To protect against exceedances, the TMDL must also include a margin of safety (MOS), either implicitly or explicitly, that accounts for the uncertainty in the relationship between pollutant loads and the water quality response of the receiving water body. Conceptually, a TMDL can be expressed as follows:

$$\text{TMDL} = \Sigma \text{WLAs} + \Sigma \text{LAs} + \text{MOS}$$

The following sections describe the various TMDL components.

5.1 Waste Load Allocations

The waste load allocation (WLA) is the portion of the receiving water's loading capacity that is allocated to existing or future point sources including industrial facilities, municipal treatment plants, and private and institutional development (PID) facilities. WLAs are provided to the point sources from municipal and industrial wastewater treatment systems with NPDES effluent limits. The maximum allocated sediment load for these facilities is dependent on the discharge flow. The WLA given is a concentration or a range of daily average and daily maximum TSS limits for these facilities; however, a load can be calculated based on the permitted (where available) or design flows, and the permitted TSS concentrations.

The WLA, as a load, can be represented by the following equation:

$$\text{WLA} = C_{\text{permitted}} * Q$$

Where:

WLA = Wasteload Allocation sediment load

$C_{\text{permitted}}$ = permitted concentration, in TSS (mg / L)

Q = permitted flow (where available) or design discharge flow

There are four (4) permitted NPDES facilities in the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds that discharge into a stream segment or upstream of a stream segment not supporting its designated use for biota. Table 18 provides the permitted WLAs for these facilities.

Table 18. Permitted Waste Load Allocations for Facilities discharging to or upstream of not supporting segments

Facility	NPDES Permit No.	Facility Type	Receiving Water / Not Supporting Stream Segment	WLA (tons/yr)	FLOW (MGD)		TSS (mg/L)	
					Monthly Average	Weekly Average	Monthly Average	Weekly Average
Barnesville, City of (James A. King WWTF)	GA0021041	Municipal	Tobesofkee Creek	51.1	2.4	3	14	21
Davis Oil Company (Shell Food Mart WPCP)	GA0022594	Municipal	Big Creek	1.0	0.0075	0.0094 ⁽¹⁾	20	30 ⁽¹⁾
Eastman, City of (Sugar Creek WPCP)	GA0046485	Municipal	Sugar Creek	54.8	1.8	2.25	20	30
McRae-Helena, City of (McRae-Helena WPCP)	GA0048674	Municipal	Little Ocmulgee River	109.6	0.8 ⁽²⁾	1.0 ⁽²⁾	20	30

Note: Existing permitted facilities that discharge to the not supporting segments covered in this TMDL and that may have been erroneously omitted from this WLA table shall be given TSS limits that correspond to those similar to the omitted facility's type during permit reissuance.

(1) Facility is a PID where a daily maximum is provided instead of a weekly average.

(2) Allowable discharge is dependent on stream flow. The values listed are the maximums.

It is recognized that effluent from biological treatment systems that have TSS limits of 20 mg/L or less are not expected to contribute to stream sedimentation. If there is available assimilative capacity, a new facility may be allowed, or for an existing facility may be able to expand. Any discharge into a stream without any assimilative capacity will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and increases will be allowed, dependent on engineering and biological integrity study results.

State and federal rules define storm water discharges covered by NPDES permits as point sources. However, storm water discharges are from diffuse sources and there are multiple storm water outfalls. Storm water sources (point and nonpoint) are different than traditional NPDES permitted sources in four respects: 1) they do not produce a continuous (pollutant loading) discharge; 2) their pollutant loading depends on the intensity, duration, and frequency of rainfall events, over which the permittee has no control; 3) the activities contributing to the pollutant loading may include various allowable activities of others, and control of these activities is not solely within the discretion of the permittee; and 4) they do not have wastewater treatment plants that control specific pollutants to meet numerical limits.

The intent of storm water NPDES permits is not to treat the water after collection, but to reduce the exposure of storm water to pollutants by implementing various controls. It would be infeasible and prohibitively expensive to control pollutant discharges from each storm water outfall. Therefore, storm water NPDES permits require the establishment of controls or BMPs to reduce the pollutants entering the environment.

For stormwater permits, compliance with the terms and conditions of the permit is effective implementation of the WLA to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) and demonstrates consistency with the assumptions and requirements of the TMDL. EPD acknowledges that progress with the assumptions and requirements of the TMDL by stormwater permittees may take one or more permit iterations. Achieving the TMDL reductions may constitute compliance with a storm water management plan (SWMP) or a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), provided the MEP definition is met, even where the numeric percent reduction may not be achieved so long as reasonable progress is made toward attainment of water quality standards using an iterative BMP process.

The waste load allocations from storm water discharges associated with MS4s (WLA_{sw}) are estimated based on the percentage of urban area in each watershed covered by the MS4 storm water permit. At this time, the portion of each watershed that goes directly to a permitted storm sewer and that which goes through non-permitted point sources, or is sheet flow or agricultural runoff, has not been clearly defined. Thus, it is assumed that approximately 70 percent of storm water runoff from the regulated urban area is collected by the municipal separate storm sewer systems.

The storm water discharges associated with industrial facilities that are not covered under individual NPDES permits are regulated by a Georgia NPDES General Permit No. GAR050000 for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities. The general permit requires that storm water discharges into an stream segment not supporting its designated use or within one linear mile upstream of and within the same watershed as any portion of an impaired stream segment identified as “not supporting” its designated use(s), must satisfy the requirements given in Appendix C of the permit if the impaired stream segment has been listed for criteria violated, “Bio F” (Impaired Fish Community). Tables 10 and 11 list the industrial facilities that are covered under Georgia NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Industrial Activity in the Ocmulgee River Basin, that are contained within watersheds of not supporting streams segments.

Georgia requires all construction sites over one acre to have a NPDES General Storm Water permit for construction activities. These General Permits authorizes the discharge of storm water associated with construction activity to the waters of the state in accordance with the limitations, monitoring requirements, and other conditions set forth in Parts III through V of each permit. The conditions set forth in each of these permits were established to assure that the storm water runoff from these sites does not cause or contribute sediment to the stream. Each Georgia NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Associated with Construction Activities can be considered a water quality-based permit in that the numeric limits in the permit, if met, will not cause a water quality problem. The sediment load allocation from future construction sites within the watershed have to meet requirements outlined in the Georgia NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Associated with Construction Activities.

5.2 Load Allocations

The USLE was applied to those watersheds that have streams that are biologically impaired and to watersheds and corresponding streams considered least impacted to determine the current sediment loading rates to the streams. The annual sediment load in tons/year for fish community assessment not supporting and least impacted watersheds is reported in Table 19.

The watersheds are grouped by those biologically impaired (not supporting designated uses), and those least impacted (supporting designated uses). For comparison purposes, the annual

average sediment load per acre, or sediment yield, was calculated for each watershed and is also given in Table 19. For streams sampled for fish community integrity, the average sediment yield of the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds located in the Piedmont ecoregion not supporting their designated uses is 0.71 tons/acre/yr, while the average sediment yield of the supporting watersheds located within the Piedmont ecoregion is 0.72 tons/acre/yr. For streams sampled for fish community integrity, the average sediment yield of the Ocmulgee River Basin watersheds located in the Southeastern Plains ecoregion not supporting their designated uses is 1.35 tons/acre/yr, while the average sediment yield of the supporting watersheds located within the Southeastern Plains ecoregion is 1.49 tons/acre/yr.

Fish community assessment scores are based on a specific set of metrics for each ecoregion. A target sediment yield was established in each ecoregion by averaging the sediment yield of all watersheds where the associated stream integrity class was either “Good” or “Excellent”. The sediment yield per acre for each watershed was then compared with the average target sediment yield for the corresponding ecoregion. In cases where the not supporting yields exceeded the average target yield, the Total Allowable Sediment Load was calculated as a tons/year load based on the average target yield multiplied by the total acres for the not supporting watershed. Where the yields were less than the target yield, the Total Allowable Sediment Load was given as the current annual sediment load in tons/year.

Table 19. Annual Sediment Yield for Fish Community Assessment Segments

Stream Segment Assessment Unit ID	Station ID	Watershed Area (acres)	Total Sediment (tons/yr)	Road Sediment (tons/yr)	Total Sediment Yield (tons/acre/yr)
Piedmont Ecoregion (45) - Not Supporting - Fish Community Assessment					
Cornish Creek GAR030701030717	WRD 1267	1351.5	484.4	24.6	0.36
East Bear Creek GAR030701030807	WRD 1251	4398.3	3047.3	66.5	0.69
Gaithers Branch GAR030701030806	WRD 1231	3141.3	1494.6	54.3	0.48
Prairie Creek GAR030701031206	WRD 188	1851.7	1955.2	53.2	1.06
Tobesofkee Creek GAR030701031415	WRD 48	17676.8	16739.5	633.2	0.95
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion (65) - Not Supporting - Fish Community Assessment					
Big Creek GAR030701040409	WRD 281	30243.9	59930.6	4679.4	1.98
Little Ocmulgee River GAR030701050405	WRD 383	201217.1	208685.0	7678.6	1.04
Sugar Creek GAR030701050304	WRD 337	115489.0	124491.0	4842.8	1.08
Turnpike Creek GAR030701050303	WRD 1298	31545.6	40559.7	1362.2	1.29
Piedmont Ecoregion (45) - Supporting - Fish Community Assessment					
Cole Creek	WRD 187	928.9	372.1	12.3	0.40
Falling Creek	WRD 58	46460.7	17144.7	539.9	0.37
Freeman Creek	WRD 640	2221.3	1822.3	102.6	0.82

Stream Segment Assessment Unit ID	Station ID	Watershed Area (acres)	Total Sediment (tons/yr)	Road Sediment (tons/yr)	Total Sediment Yield (tons/acre/yr)
Lee Creek	WRD 118	2051.8	1049.8	54.4	0.51
Little Buck Creek	WRD 18	3004.6	2406.8	112.2	0.80
Little Deer Creek trib	WRD 237	746.4	1065.7	0.8	1.43
Little Haynes Creek	WRD 1284	16338.2	16536.0	747.3	1.01
Long Branch	WRD 142	1645.3	1375.3	11.9	0.84
Long Branch	WRD 151	896.5	514.5	41.5	0.57
Panther Creek	WRD 147	1094.6	597.5	20.9	0.55
Sand Branch	WRD 236	749.9	341.2	25.1	0.45
Swan Creek	WRD 67	1183.1	904.4	17.7	0.76
Tobesofkee Creek	WRD 47	35160.0	30003.1	1104.9	0.85
Town Branch	WRD 177	1432.4	988.1	89.7	0.69
Wildcat Creek	WRD 1192	641.6	520.0	18.1	0.81
Southeastern Plains Ecoregion (65) - Supporting - Fish Community Assessment					
Big Creek	WRD 282	5595.0	11035.3	870.9	1.97
Big Creek	WRD 1390	89058.5	186619.0	9886.4	2.10
Little Shellstone Creek	WRD 394	791.5	582.0	7.0	0.74
Richland Creek	WRD 380	12315.8	6104.9	361.2	0.50
South Prong Creek	WRD 381	15982.6	34401.0	1406.6	2.15

Once the Total Allowable Sediment Load for each not supporting watershed is calculated, the nonpoint source loads (LA) for each watershed is calculated by subtracting the WLA and WLA_{sw} from the Total Allowable Sediment Load. It is recognized that there may be additional assimilative capacity in the cases where there is no required reduction in the sediment load and future dischargers (WLA) may be allowed. In the watersheds that have exceeded the total allowable sediment load, new dischargers (WLA) may be allowed if there is sufficient reduction in the nonpoint source loads (LA).

5.3 Seasonal Variation

Sediment is expected to fluctuate according to the amount and distribution of rainfall. Since rainfall is greatest in the spring and winter seasons, it is expected that sediment loadings would be highest during these seasons. However, these seasonal fluctuations and other short-term variability in loadings due to episodic events are usually evened out by the response of the biological community to habitat alteration, which is a long-term process. Therefore, the annual sediment load was determined to be appropriate for the TMDL.

5.4 Margin of Safety

The MOS is a required component of TMDL development. There are two basic methods for incorporating the MOS: 1) implicitly incorporate the MOS using conservative model assumptions to develop allocations; or 2) explicitly specify a portion of the TMDL as the MOS and use the

remainder for allocations. For this TMDL, the MOS was implicitly incorporated in the use of conservative modeling assumptions, including the selection of average USLE factors, the use of the average sediment loading rates for the numeric targets, and the assumption that no BMPs were used.

5.5 Total Sediment Load

The total allowable sediment load was determined by adding the WLA ($WLA + WLA_{sw}$) and the LA. The MOS, as described above, was implicitly included in the TMDL analysis and does not factor directly into the TMDL equation.

The USLE method used calculates a total annual sediment load, as opposed to a daily load. The total allowable annual sediment load expressed in terms of tons per year is intended to prevent the cumulative impacts of excessive run-off related sediment in the watershed. The maximum daily allowable sediment load is a subcomponent of the allowable annual load. It is based upon the critical flow event that represents the maximum sediment load capacity for the stream. Research conducted by the ARS National Sedimentation Laboratory and USEPA Region 4 has determined that the bankfull flow is the critical flow that has the maximum daily sediment carrying capacity, and therefore has the maximum daily sediment loading capacity. Bankfull flow can be estimated using the one-day flow event that occurs once every one and a half years, 1Q1.5, determined by the Log Pearson recurrence interval statistical analysis.

The National Sedimentation Laboratory has correlated, by ecoregion, a relationship between the annual average sediment yield and the bankfull flow sediment yield for stable or unimpaired streams. Table 20 provides the mean bankfull flow (Q1.5) sediment yield expressed as tons per day per square kilometer for each ecoregion in the Ocmulgee River basin, compared to the mean annual average sediment yield discharged into a stable, unimpaired stream. The coefficient is the ratio of the maximum daily yield to the total annual yield. These relationships were used to transform total allowable sediment loads to daily maximum sediment loads (USDA-ARS, 2006).

Table 20. Suspended-Sediment Transport Rates Comparing Bankfull Flow Yield to Mean Annual Yield

Ecoregion	Sediment Yield at Q1.5 (Tons/d/km ²)	Mean Annual Sediment Yield (Tons/yr/km ²)	Annual to Daily Max Coefficient
Piedmont – 45	2.54	19.6	0.1296
Southeastern Plains – 65	0.228	8.64	0.0264

The total allowable sediment loads and daily maximum sediment loads for the not supporting watersheds are summarized in Table 21, along with any required sediment load reductions. The WLAs ($WLA + WLA_{sw}$) provided in Table 21 are for accounting purposes. A Summary Memorandum for each watershed is provided in Appendix A

Table 21. Total Allowable Sediment Loads and the Required Sediment Load Reductions

Stream Segment Assessment Unit ID	Station ID	Current Load				TMDL		
		WLA (tons/yr)	WLA _{sw} (tons/yr)	LA (tons/yr)	Total Load (tons/yr)	Total Allowable Sediment Load (tons/yr)	Maximum Allowable Daily Load (tons/day)	Percent Reduction Required
Not Supporting Segments - Fish Community								
Big Creek GAR030701040409	WRD 281	1.0		45070.0	59931.6	45071.0	1189.9	24.8%
Cornish Creek GAR030701030717	WRD 1267		18.0	466.4	484.4	484.4	62.8	0.0%
East Bear Creek GAR030701030807	WRD 1251			3047.3	3047.3	3047.3	394.9	0.0%
Gaithers Branch GAR030701030806	WRD 1231			1494.6	1494.6	1494.6	193.7	0.0%
Little Ocmulgee River GAR030701050405	WRD 383	109.6		208575.4	208794.6	208685.0	5509.3	0.1%
Prairie Creek GAR030701031206	WRD 188			1342.0	1955.2	1342.0	173.9	31.4%
Sugar Creek GAR030701050304	WRD 337	54.8		124436.2	124545.8	124491.0	3286.6	0.0%
Tobesofkee Creek GAR030701031415	WRD 48	51.1		12760.1	16790.6	12811.2	1660.3	23.7%
Turnpike Creek GAR030701050303	WRD 1298			40559.7	40559.7	40559.7	1070.8	0.0%

Definitions:

Total Load - Sum of modeled sediment load and approved waste load allocations (WLA)

WLA - waste load allocation for discrete point sources

WLA_{sw} - waste load allocation associated with storm water discharges from a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4)

LA - portion of the total allowable sediment load attributed to nonpoint sources and natural background sources of sediment

Total Allowable Sediment Load - allowable sediment load calculated using the target sediment yield and the stream's watershed area

Maximum Allowable Daily Load - total allowable sediment load (annual) converted to a daily figure based on the bankfull sediment transport relationship

Percent Reduction Required - percent reduction applied to current total load in order to meet total allowable sediment load

6) RECOMMENDATIONS

The TMDL process consists of an evaluation of the sub-watersheds for each 303(d) listed stream segment to identify, as best as possible, the sources of sediment causing the stream to be impaired for the narrative criteria for aquatic life. The TMDL analysis was performed using the best available data to specify WLAs and LAs that will meet the narrative aquatic life criteria so as to support the use classification specified for the listed segment.

This TMDL represents part of a long-term process to reduce loading of sediment to meet water quality standards in the Ocmulgee River Basin. Implementation strategies will be reviewed and the TMDLs will be refined as necessary. The phased approach will support progress toward water quality standards attainment in the future. In accordance with USEPA TMDL guidance, these TMDLs may be revised based on the results of future monitoring and source characterization data efforts. The following recommendations emphasize further source identification and involve the collection of data to support the current allocations and subsequent source reductions.

6.1 Monitoring

Water quality monitoring is conducted at a number of locations across the State each year. Based on monitoring conducted by GA WRD and GA EPD in the Ocmulgee River Basin, these segments are listed as not supporting their designated use due to biological impairments. Additional monitoring sites are added as necessary.

In the case where a watershed-based plan has been developed for a listed stream segment, an appropriate water quality monitoring program will be outlined. The monitoring program will be developed to help identify the various sediment sources. The monitoring program may be used to verify the 303(d) stream segment listings. This will be especially valuable for those segments where limited data resulted in the listing.

6.2 Sediment Management Practices

The following management practices are recommended to reduce, or at a minimum, maintain the total allowable sediment loads at current levels.

- Compliance with NPDES (wastewater, construction, industrial stormwater, and/or MS4) permit limits and requirements;
- Implementation of recommended Water Quality management practices in the *Upper Oconee Regional Water Plan* (GA EPD, 2017), *Middle Ocmulgee Regional Water Plan* (GA EPD, 2017), *Altamaha Regional Water Plan* (GA EPD, 2017);
- Implementation of *Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry* (GFC, 2019);
- Implementation of *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture* (GSWCC, 2013) and Adoption of National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Practices for agriculture;
- Adherence to the Surface Mining Land Use Plan prepared as part of the Surface Mining Permit Application;
- Implementation of the *Georgia Better Back Roads Field Manual* (GA RCDC, 2009) and adoption of additional practices for proper unpaved road maintenance;

- Implementation of individual Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plans for land disturbing activities; and application of the *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia* (GSWCC, 2016)
- Implementation of the *Georgia Stormwater Management Manual* (ARC, 2016) to facilitate prevention and mitigation of stream bank erosion due to increased stream flow and velocities caused by urban runoff through structural storm water BMP installation.
- Where applicable, implementation of the *Coastal Stormwater Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual* (CCSMPC, 2009).

6.3 Reasonable Assurance

The GA EPD is responsible for administering and enforcing laws to protect the waters of the State. Reasonable assurance ensures that a TMDL's wasteload and load allocations are properly distributed to meet the applicable water quality standards. Without such distribution, a TMDL's ability to serve as an effective guidepost for water quality improvement is significantly diminished. Federal regulations implementing the CWA require that effluent limits in permits be consistent with "the assumptions and requirements of any available [WLA]" in an approved TMDL [40 CFR 122.44(d)(1)(vii)(B)]. NPDES point source permits will be given effluent limits in the permit consistent with the individual WLAs specified in the TMDL.

The GA EPD is the lead agency for implementing the State's Nonpoint Source Management Program. Regulatory responsibilities that have a bearing on nonpoint source pollution include establishing water quality standards and use classifications, assessing and reporting water quality conditions, and regulating land use activities that may affect water quality. Georgia works with local governments, agricultural and forestry agencies, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and the Georgia Forestry Commission, to foster the implementation of best management practices to address nonpoint sources. In addition, public education efforts will be targeted to individual stakeholders to provide information regarding the use of best management practices to protect water quality.

6.4 Public Participation

A thirty-day public notice will be provided for this TMDL. During that time, the TMDL will be available on the GA EPD website, a copy of the TMDL will be provided upon request, and the public will be invited to provide comments on the TMDL.

7) INITIAL TMDL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This plan identifies applicable state-wide programs and activities that may be employed to manage point and nonpoint sources of sediment loads for nine (9) segments in the Ocmulgee River Basin. Local watershed planning and management initiatives will be fostered, supported or developed through a variety of mechanisms. Implementation may be addressed by Watershed-Based Plans or other assessments funded by Section 319 (h) grants, the local development of watershed protection plans, or “Targeted Outreach” initiated by GA EPD. These initiatives will supplement or possibly replace this initial implementation plan. Implementation actions should also be guided by the recommended management practices and actions contained within each applicable Regional Water Plan developed as part of Georgia’s Comprehensive State-wide Water Management Plan implementation (Georgia Water Council, 2008).

7.1 Not Supporting Segments

This initial plan is applicable to the following water bodies that were added to Georgia’s 2020 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) list of not supporting waters in *Water Quality in Georgia 2018-2019* (GA EPD, 2020) available on the GA EPD [website](#). Table 22 summarizes the descriptive information provided in the 303(d) list.

Table 22. Stream Segments on the 2020 303(d) List as Biota Impacted - Fish Community

Stream Segment	Location	Reach ID	Segment Length (mi)	Ecoregion	Designated Use
Big Creek	Elko Creek to Burnham Creek	GAR030701040409	7	Southeastern Plains	Fishing
Cornish Creek	Headwaters to Upper Williams Lake	GAR030701030717	7	Piedmont	Fishing
East Bear Creek	Pond 0.7 miles upstream Marks Road to West Bear Creek	GAR030701030807	7	Piedmont	Fishing
Gaithers Branch	Headwaters to Bear Creek	GAR030701030806	3	Piedmont	Fishing
Little Ocmulgee River	Wilcox Creek to Alligator Creek	GAR030701050405	12	Southeastern Plains	Fishing
Prairie Creek	Headwaters to Turner Creek	GAR030701031206	5	Piedmont	Fishing
Sugar Creek	Turnpike Creek to Little Ocmulgee River	GAR030701050304	5	Southeastern Plains	Fishing
Tobesofkee Creek	Cole Creek to Todd Creek	GAR030701031415	8	Piedmont	Fishing
Turnpike Creek	Hwy 280 to Sugar Creek	GAR030701050303	24	Southeastern Plains	Fishing

The GA EPD developed TMDLs in 2021 for sediment in the Ocmulgee River Basin due to a “Bio F” criteria violation on Georgia’s 2020 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List. These streams have shown a degradation of the biological community, which is generally caused by habitat loss due to stream sedimentation. The purpose of the general criteria is to prevent objectionable conditions that interfere with legitimate water uses, as stated in [Georgia’s Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control](#), Chapter 391-3-6-.03(5)(c):

“All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.”

7.2 Potential Sources

A healthy aquatic ecosystem requires a healthy habitat. The major disturbance to stream habitats is erosion and sedimentation. As sediment is carried into the stream, it settles to the stream bottom and smothers sensitive organisms. Turbidity associated with sediment loads may also impair recreational and drinking water uses (GA EPD, 1998).

A source assessment characterizes the known and suspected sediment sources in the watershed. The general sediment sources are point and nonpoint. NPDES permittees discharging treated wastewater are the primary point sources of sediment as TSS. It is recognized that effluent from biological treatment systems that have TSS limits of 20 mg/L or less are not expected to contribute to stream sedimentation. Nonpoint sources of sediment are diffuse sources that cannot be identified as entering the water body at a single location. These sources generally involve land use activities that contribute sediment to streams during a rainfall runoff event.

Prior to the implementation of this plan, a detailed assessment of the potential sources should be carried out. This will better determine what best management practices are needed and where they should be installed. A watershed assessment will also help when requesting funding assistance for the implementation of this plan. GA EPD is available to provide assistance in completing a watershed survey of the potential sources of impairment.

Through water quality modeling, it has been determined that the sediment loading found in three (3) of the nine (9) segments needs to be reduced. This sediment may be due to land disturbing activities including, but not limited to land development, agriculture, impervious surfaces, commercial forestry, and others. It is believed that, if sediment loads are not reduced, these streams will continue to degrade over time. Remedies exist for addressing excess sediment, from both point and non-point sources, in streams. They will be discussed in this plan.

Based on modeling, some segments have been found to need 0% reductions in sediments loads. This occurs if the estimated sediment yield (tons/acre/year) for these not supporting segments is below the average sediment yield for the least impacted stream segments within the Ocmulgee River Basin. It is likely that the impairment in these segments is due to past land use practices and is referred to as “legacy” sediment. It is believed that these streams will repair themselves over time if sediment loads are maintained at current levels.

7.3 Sediment Controls

It has been determined that most of the sediment found in the Ocmulgee River Basin streams is due to past land use practices and is referred to as “legacy” sediment. Therefore, it is recommended that there be no net increase in sediment delivered to the not supporting stream segments, so that these streams will recover over time.

The measurement of sediment delivered to a stream is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. Setting a numeric TMDL may be ineffective given the difficulty in measuring it. In addition, habitat and aquatic communities can be slow to respond to changes in sediment loading. Thus, this TMDL recommends compliance with NPDES permits and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to control sediment produced from non-point sources such as the erosion of stream banks, paved surfaces, roofs, and other sources, which are not regulated or subjected to most enforcement actions. BMPs may be used to help reduce average annual sediment loads and achieve water quality criteria and improve the over aquatic health of the system. The anticipated effects of compliance with NPDES permits and implementation of BMPs will be the improvement of stream habitats and water quality, and thus be an indirect measurement of the TMDL.

Table 23 lists examples of BMPs that address excess sediment. This is not a complete list and additional management measures may be proposed that will be considered as implementing non-point source controls consistent with this plan.

Table 23. Examples of BMPs for Use in Controlling Sediment from Non-Point Sources

Name of BMP	Type (Ag., Forestry, Urban, Other.)
Vegetated Filter Strips	Agriculture
Reduced / No Tillage Systems	Agriculture
Livestock Exclusion	Agriculture
Minimize Stream Crossings / Construct Open Bottom Culvert or Timber Bridges where crossings are required	Forestry
Establish Stream Management Zones / Minimize Soil Compaction	Forestry
Erosion Control / Revegetation	Forestry
Sediment Basin	Urban
Porous Pavement	Urban
Bioretention/Biofiltration systems	Urban
Bioswales/Infiltration Basins	Urban
Streambank Protection and Restoration	Ag, Forestry, Urban, Other
Vegetated Stream Buffers	Ag, Forestry, Urban, Other
Additional Ordinances	Ag, Forestry, Urban, Other

The GA EPD Non-Point Source Program should be consulted when selecting appropriate management practices for addressing the TMDL, particularly when determining the best practices for specific watersheds.

7.3.1 Point Source Approaches

Point sources are defined as discharges of treated wastewater or storm water into rivers and streams at discrete locations. Treated wastewater tends to be discharged at relatively stable rates; whereas, storm water is discharged at irregular, intermittent rates, depending on precipitation and runoff. The NPDES permit program provides a basis for developing municipal, industrial, and storm water permits; monitoring and compliance with limitations; and appropriate enforcement actions for violations. In accordance with GA EPD rules and regulations, all NPDES dischargers in the watershed are required to meet their current NPDES permit limits at all times.

It is recommended that there be no authorized increase in the concentration of TSS above that identified in the TMDL. However, if there is available assimilative capacity, new discharges may be allowed based on engineering evaluations and current stream biological integrity studies.

The removal of mined material involves water pumped from the mine pit, and mineral processing involves the disposal of process waters. These waters are treated through sedimentation ponds or detention basins prior to being discharged to the stream and are regulated by NPDES permits. It is recommended that the peak flow from mining sites be maintained at pre-development levels in order to control bank erosion and instabilities in the receiving stream. In addition, monitoring frequencies should be such that the total annual sediment loads coming from mining facilities can be characterized.

GA EPD has developed a Georgia NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Associated with Construction Activities. Coverage under a General Permit is required for all construction sites disturbing one or more acres. General permits have been created to cover construction projects that fall into three distinct categories; stand-alone construction projects (General Permit No. GAR100001), infrastructure construction projects (General Permit No. GAR100002), and construction that occurs under a common plan of development where the primary permittee chooses to use secondary permittees for land disturbance activities (General Permit No. GAR100003). Regardless of the type of construction project, all sites required to have a coverage permit are authorized to discharge storm water associated with construction activity to the waters of the state in accordance with the limitations, monitoring requirements, and other conditions set forth in Parts III through V of each NPDES General Permit for Storm Water Associated with Construction Activities. The permit requires all sites to have an Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan; to implement, inspect and maintain BMPs; and to monitor storm water for turbidity. Georgia's General Storm Water Permit can be considered a water quality-based permit, in that the numeric limits in the permit, if met and enforced, will not cause a water quality problem.

The NPDES General Storm Water Permits for Construction Activity also require that storm water discharges into a stream segment not supporting its designated use or a stream segment within one linear mile upstream of and within the same watershed as, any portion of a stream segment not supporting its designated use, must address any site-specific condition or requirement in a TMDL implementation plan and must include at least four additional BMPs from a list provided in Part III. C. of the Permit. This condition only applies to streams with impairments for "Bio F" (fish

community) and with the listed potential cause of either “NP” (nonpoint source) or “UR” (urban runoff).

For stormwater permits, compliance with the terms and conditions of the permit is effective implementation of the WLA to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) and demonstrates consistency with the assumptions and requirements of the TMDL. GA EPD acknowledges that progress with the assumptions and requirements of the TMDL by stormwater permittees may take one or more permit iterations. Achieving the TMDL reductions may constitute compliance with a storm water management plan (SWMP) or a storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP), provided the MEP definition is met, even where the numeric percent reduction may not be achieved so long as reasonable progress is made toward attainment of water quality standards using an iterative BMP process.

7.3.2 Nonpoint Source Land Use Approaches

GA EPD is the lead agency for implementing the state’s [Nonpoint Source Management Program](#), as described in Georgia’s *Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan* (GA EPD, 2019). The *Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan* combines regulatory and non-regulatory approaches, in cooperation with other state and Federal agencies, local and regional governments, state colleges and universities, businesses and industries, nonprofit organizations, and individual citizens. The 2019 document represents a revision of the *Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan* last updated in 2014. This revision provides an update to reflect new priorities and practices of nonpoint source pollution control in Georgia. It represents Georgia’s plan for making progress toward meeting the ultimate goal of the Clean Water Act of achievement of water quality standards for fishable and swimmable waters. Regulatory responsibilities include establishing water quality criteria and use classifications, assessing and reporting water quality conditions, issuing point source permits, issuing water withdrawal and ground water permits, and regulating land-disturbing activities. Georgia is working with local governments, agricultural, and forestry agencies such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and the Georgia Forestry Commission to foster the implementation of BMPs that address nonpoint source pollution. In addition, public education efforts are being targeted to individual stakeholders to provide information regarding the use of BMPs to protect water quality. The following sections describe in more detail the specific measures to reduce nonpoint sources of sediment by land use type.

7.3.2.1 Forested Land

In 1978, GA EPD designated the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) to be the lead agency in managing and implementing the silvicultural portion of Georgia’s Nonpoint Source Management Program. The GFC is responsible for coordinating water quality issues with regard to forested land in Georgia. The GFC is basically responsible for:

- Developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the forestry industry,
- Educating the forestry community on BMPs, and
- Conducting site inspections for compliance with the established BMPs.

The GFC formed a Forestry Nonpoint Source Pollution Technical Task Force (FNSPTTF) to assess the extent of water pollution caused by forestry practices, and to develop recommendations for reducing or eliminating erosion and sedimentation. After a three-year field study, the task force developed a set of BMPs that address all aspects of silviculture, including

forest road construction, timber harvesting, site preparation, and forest regeneration. The task force recommended the BMPs be implemented through a voluntary program, exempt from permitting under the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, emphasizing educational and training programs instead. In 1997, the original BMP document was revised to incorporate the 1989 Wetland BMP manual developed by the Georgia Forestry Association. This comprehensive BMP manual, *Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry* was released in January 1999. Additional guidance has been developed by the FNSPTTF since 1999. The current version of Georgia's forestry BMP manual, *Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry*, was released in January 2019 (GFC, 2019).

It is the responsibility of the GFC to educate and inform the forest community (landowners, procurement and land management foresters, consulting foresters, loggers, site prep and tree planting contractors) on the importance of BMPs. The GFC statewide program coordinator and the four regional specialists conduct educational programs across the state. The regional specialists receive specialized training in erosion and sediment control, forest road layout and construction, stream habitat assessment, wetland delineation, and fluvial geomorphology. The GFC has developed training videos, slide programs, tabletop exhibits, and BMP billboards that are displayed at wood yards across the state. For the benefit of private landowners selling timber, the GFC has developed a Sample Forest Products Sale Agreement, which includes fill in the blank spaces for specific BMP incorporation. Since December 1995, the GFC has been cooperating with the University of Georgia's School of Forest Resources, the Georgia Forestry Association, and American Forest and Paper Association (AFPA) member companies in the ongoing education of loggers and timber buyers through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Master Timber Harvester program. This includes an intensive training session on the BMPs conducted by the GFC. Since publication of the first BMP manual in 1981, the GFC has given 2,672 BMP talks to over 86,500 persons and participated in 492 field demonstrations of BMPs (through June 2013). The education process is ongoing, with workshops routinely provided for foresters, timber buyers and loggers through the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) Program in Georgia.

To determine if educational efforts have been successful and if the BMPs are effective at minimizing erosion and sedimentation, the GFC conducted BMP Implementation and Compliance Surveys in 1991, 1992, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019. In 1997, the Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) Task Force completed a newly developed and more rigorous survey protocol document titled *Silviculture Best Management Practices Implementation Monitoring – A Framework for State Forestry Agencies*. In 2002, this document was revised and re-published. Starting with the 1998 BMP implementation survey and every one thereafter, surveys were conducted using this protocol recommended by the SGSF Task Force. The GFC sampled about 10 percent of the forestry operations that occur annually. The number of samples taken in each county was based on the volume of wood harvested as reported in the state's latest Product Drain Report. Sites were randomly selected to reflect various forest types (non-industrial private forest, forest industry, and publicly owned lands). The statewide average BMP implementation has ranged from 65 percent in 1991 to the current rate of 90 percent. In 1991, approximately 86 percent of the acres evaluated were in compliance. This total acreage percentage increased to 92 percent compliance in 1992, 98 percent compliance in 1998, and over 99 percent compliance in 2013.

The GFC also investigates and mediates complaints or concerns involving forestry operations on behalf of the GA EPD and the Army Corps of Engineers (COE) when stream water quality and wetlands are involved, respectively. Complaints from citizens are common, particularly in counties

growing in population where landowners are living close to commercial forestry operations. After notifying the forest owner, the GFC District Coordinator conducts a field inspection to determine if BMPs were followed, if the potential for water quality problems exists, and who is the responsible party. If the complaint is valid, GFC will work with the responsible party until the problem is corrected. However, the GFC has no regulatory authority. In situations where the GFC cannot get satisfactory compliance, the case is turned over to GA EPD or COE for enforcement actions under the Georgia Water Quality Control Act or Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act.

It is recommended that the GFC continue to encourage BMP implementation, educational training programs, and site compliance surveys. The numbers of individuals trained, and site compliance inspections should be recorded each year. In addition, the number of complaints received, the actions taken, and enforcement actions written should be recorded.

7.3.2.2 Agricultural Land

There are a number of agricultural organizations that work to support Georgia's more than 40,000 farms. The following three organizations have primary responsibility for working with farmers to promote soil and water conservation:

- The University of Georgia - Cooperative Extension Service
- Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

The University of Georgia (UGA) has faculty, County Cooperative Extension Agents, and technical specialists who provide services in several key areas relating to agricultural impacts on water quality. These include classroom instruction, basic and applied research, consulting assistance, and information on nonpoint source water quality impacts.

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) was created in 1937 by a Georgia Legislative Act. In 1977, GA EPD designated the GSWCC as the lead agency for agricultural Nonpoint Source Management in the state. The GSWCC develops nonpoint source management programs and conducts educational activities to promote conservation and protection of land and water devoted to agricultural uses. In September 1994, the GSWCC developed a BMP manual, *Agricultural Best Management Practices for Protecting Water Quality in Georgia*, for the agricultural community (GSWCC, 1994). To incorporate advances in BMP technology and include estimates of BMP effectiveness and cost, the GSWCC compiled and published a new BMP document in 2007 titled, *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture*. In 2013, GSWCC published the 2nd edition of *Best Management Practices for Georgia Agriculture* (GSWCC, 2013), which included an expanded section on nutrient management planning.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cooperates with federal, state, and local governments to provide financial and technical assistance to farmers. NRCS develops standards and specifications for BMPs that are to be used to improve, protect, or maintain our state's natural resources. Practice standards establish the minimum level of acceptable quality for planning, designing, installing, operating, and maintaining BMPs. Practice specifications describe the technical details and workmanship required to install a BMP and the quality and extent of materials to be used in a BMP.

The NRCS provides Conservation Practice Standards, found in the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG); on their website (<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/>). Some of these BMPs may be used for farming operations to reduce soil erosion. It is recommended that the agricultural communities with cropland close to not supporting streams, and pastureland where grazing animals have access to the stream, investigate the various BMPs available to them in order to reduce soil erosion and bank collapse.

The 1996 Farm Bill and PL83-566 Small Watershed Program provided new financial assistance programs to address high priority environmental protection goals. Some programs that specifically address erosion and sedimentation are:

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Conservation Reserve Program
- Small Watershed Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a USDA cost-share program available to farmers to address natural resource problems. EQIP offers financial, educational and technical assistance funding for installing BMPs that reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, or enhance wildlife habitats.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was originally designed to provide incentive and offer assistance to farmers to convert highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive land normally devoted to crop production, to land with other long-term resource-conserving cover. CRP has been expanded to place eligible acreage into filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, or contour grass strips. Each of these practices helps to reduce erosion and sedimentation and improve water quality.

The Small Watershed Program provides financial and technical assistance funding for the installation of BMPs in watersheds less than 250,000 acres. This program is used to augment ongoing conservation programs where serious natural resource degradation has or is occurring. Agricultural water management, which includes projects that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation and improve water quality, is one of the eligible purposes of this program. NRCS is authorized by Public Law 83-566 to conduct river basin surveys and investigations. The NRCS River Basin Planning Program is designed to collect data on natural resource conditions within river basins of focus. NRCS is providing technical assistance to the GSWCC and the GA EPD with the Georgia River Basin Planning Program. Planning activities associated with this program will describe conditions of the agricultural natural resource base once every five years.

Every five years, the NRCS conducts the National Resources Inventory (NRI). The NRI is a statistically based sample of land use and natural resource conditions and trends, and it covers non-federal land in the United States. The NRI found that the total wind and water erosion on cropland and Conservation Reserve Program land in Georgia declined from 3.1 billion tons per year in 1982 to 1.9 billion tons per year in 1997, a reduction of 38 percent (USDA-NRCS, 1997).

NRCS also provides a web-based database application (Performance Results System, PRS) so conservation partners and the public can gain fast and easy access to the accomplishments and the progress made toward strategies and performance goals. The web site is <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/econ/>

It is recommended that the GSWCC and the NRCS continue to encourage BMP implementation, education efforts, and river basin surveys with regard to River Basin Planning. The five-year National Resources Inventory should be continued, and GA EPD supports the PRS website.

7.3.2.3 Mine Sites

Surface mining and mineral processing present two threats to surface waters. The first threat is the wastewater produced from mining and mineral processing operations. These discharges are considered point sources and are therefore regulated by NPDES permits. The second threat involves mine reclamation activities. Reclamation occurs throughout the mining operation. From the first cut to the last, overburden is moved twice. With each movement of the soil and rock debris, the overburden must be managed to prevent soil and mineral erosion. Until the mine is re-vegetated, and hence reclaimed, BMPs must be implemented to prevent nonpoint source pollution.

The Georgia Surface Mining Act of 1968 provides for the issuance of mining permits at the discretion of the Director of GA EPD. These permits are administered by the Land Protection Branch of GA EPD. The surface mining permit application must include a Surface Mining Land Use Plan, reclamation strategies, and surety bond requirements to guarantee proper management and reclamation of surface mined areas. The Surface Mining Land Use Plan specifies activities prior to, during, and following mining to dispose of refuse and control erosion and sedimentation. The reclamation strategy includes the use of operational BMPs and procedures. The BMPs used are drawn from the *Manual for Erosion and Sedimentation Control in Georgia*, *Georgia's Best Management Practices for Forestry*, and from other states. Thus, the issuance of a surface mining permit in effect addresses BMPs to control nonpoint source pollutants. The regional GA EPD offices monitor and inspect surface mining sites to assess permit compliance.

It is recommended that special attention be given to those facilities located in not supporting watersheds. The implementation and maintenance of BMPs used to control erosion should be reviewed during the site inspections.

The Georgia Mining Association (GMA) is an informal trade association of the mining industry. It serves more than 200 members, 47 mining companies and over 150 associate companies. The association monitors legislative developments and coordinates industry response. It educates miners about laws and regulations that affect them and provides a forum for the exchange of ideas. Through its newsletters, seminars, workshops, and annual conventions, the GMA serves as a source for mining industry information. It has several committees, including the Environmental Committee, that meet three to four times a year. The mining industry is conducting informal discussions on the potential of developing industry-wide standards for BMPs to prevent and reduce nonpoint source pollution. If these standards are adopted, the mining industry would likely conduct demonstration projects to gauge the effectiveness of the BMPs.

7.3.2.4 Roads

Unpaved roads can be a major contributor of sediment to our waterways if not properly managed. Under the Georgia Better Back Roads Program, the Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council (GARC&D) led a partnership of natural resource agencies and County Administrators that developed the *Georgia Better Back Roads Field Manual* in 2009 (GA RCDC, 2009). In addition to publishing Georgia's first unpaved road improvement field manual with the

goal of improving water quality through the identification of cost-effective techniques/materials for stabilizing road surfaces and ditches, the Georgia Better Back Roads Program has worked to establish statewide demonstration sites and provides statewide training opportunities for public works officials responsible for maintaining unpaved roads. USEPA has also distributed *Recommended Practices Manual, A Guideline for Maintenance and Service of Unpaved Roads* (Choctawhatchee, et. al, 2000) as guidance for the maintenance and service of unpaved roadways, drainage ditches, and culverts to be used to minimize roadway erosion.

Disturbances to unpaved roadway surfaces and ditches, and poor road surface drainage, result in deterioration of the road surface. This leads to increased roadway erosion and, thus, stream sedimentation. Unpaved roads are typically maintained by blading and/or scraping of the roads to remove loose material. Proper, timely, and selective surface maintenance can prevent and minimize erosion of unpaved roadways. This in turn lengthens the life of the road and reduces maintenance costs. Roadway blading that occurs during periods when there is enough moisture content allows for immediate re-compaction. In addition, roadwork performed near streams or stream-crossings during “dry” months of the year can reduce the amount of sediment that enters a stream.

Roadside ditches convey storm water runoff to an outlet. A good drainage ditch is shaped and lined with appropriate vegetative or structural material. A well-vegetated ditch slows, controls, and filters the storm water runoff, providing an opportunity for sediments to be removed from the runoff before it enters surface waters. Energy dissipating structures to reduce velocity, dissipate turbulence or flatten flow grades in ditches are often necessary. Efficient disposal of runoff from the road helps preserve the roadbed and banks. Properly installed “turn-outs” or intermittent discharge points help to maintain a stable velocity and proper flow capacity within the ditch by timely outleting water from them. This in turns alleviates roadway flooding, erosion, and maintenance problems. Properly placed “turn-outs” distribute roadway runoff and sediments over a larger vegetative filtering area, helping to reduce roadside ditch maintenance to remove accumulated sediment.

Culverts are conduits used to convey water from one side of a road to another. Installation, modification, and/or improvements of culverts when stream flows and expected rainfall is low can reduce the amount of sediment that enters a stream. If the entire installation process, from beginning to end, can be completed before the next rainfall event, stream sedimentation can be minimized. Diverting all existing or potential stream flows while the culvert is being installed can also help reduce or avoid sedimentation below the installation. The culvert design can have a significant impact on the biological community if the size and species of fish passing through it are not considered. Changes in water velocities and the creation of vertical barriers affect the biological communities.

7.3.2.5 Urban Development

The Erosion and Sedimentation Act, established in 1975, provides the mechanism for controlling erosion and sedimentation from land-disturbing activities. This Act establishes a permitting process for land-disturbing activities. Many local governments and counties have adopted erosion and sedimentation ordinances and have been given authority to issue and enforce permits for land-disturbing activities. Approximately 100 counties and 220 municipalities in Georgia have been certified as a local issuing authority (GSWCC, 2021). In areas where local governments have not been certified as an issuing authority, the GA EPD is responsible for permitting, inspecting, and enforcing the Erosion and Sedimentation Act.

To receive a land-disturbing permit, an applicant must submit an erosion and sedimentation control plan that incorporates specific conservation and engineering BMPs. The *Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia*, developed by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, may be used as a guide to develop erosion and sedimentation control plans (GSWCC, 2016)

Local governments, with oversight by the GA EPD, and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, are primarily responsible for implementing the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act, O.C.G.A. §12-7-1 (amended in 2003). Reports of suspected violations are made to the agency that issued the permit. In cases with local issuing authority, if the violation continues, the complaint is referred to the appropriate Soil and Water Conservation District. If the situation remains unresolved, the complaint is then referred to GA EPD for enforcement action. Enforcement may include administrative orders, injunctions, and civil penalties. It is recommended that the local and state governments continue to work to implement the provisions of the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act across Georgia.

Storm water runoff from developed urban areas (post-construction) can also have an impact on the transport of sediment to and within streams. Urbanization increases imperviousness, resulting in an increase in the volume of runoff that enters the streams. In addition, the stream flow rates may increase significantly from pre-construction rates. These changes in the stream flow can result in stream bank erosion and stream bottom down cutting.

It is recommended that local governments review and consider implementation of practices presented in following planning and management documents. Up-to-date versions of these documents may be found online.

- *Georgia Stormwater Management Manual* (the "Blue Book") (ARC, 2016), the development of the Blue Book was facilitated by the Atlanta Regional Commission in 2001 for use as a multi-volume document designed to provide guidance on stormwater management policy, technical design standards and pollution prevention. The Blue Book was thoroughly revised in 2016.
- *Coastal Stormwater Supplement to the Georgia Stormwater Management Manual* (CCSMPC, 2009), the development of the CSS was facilitated by the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission for use in the 24-county coastal region of Georgia. It provides comprehensive guidance on an integrated, green infrastructure-based approach to natural resource protection, stormwater management and site design that can be used by Georgia's coastal communities.
- Georgia's Coastal Management Program developed *Green Growth Guidelines, Edition II* (GA CMP, 2014), which outlines the environmental, social, and economic benefits from use of low impact development (LID) strategies when compared to today's conventional development approach.
- *Land Development Provisions to Protect Georgia Water Quality* (GA EPD, 1997).

Compliance with NPDES permits, the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act, and local ordinances related to land disturbing activities will contribute to controlling sediment delivery from regulated activities and may help to achieve the reductions necessary to meet the TMDL. Using federal, state, and local laws, enforcement actions are available as a remedy for excess sediment coming from regulated sources. These may include land clearing for non-agricultural use, construction, wastewater discharges, and excessive sediment run-off from other land disturbing

activities. The local issuing authority typically enforces these laws. However, the enforcement may be deferred to GA EPD if the local city or county government is not the issuing authority or further action is needed.

7.4 Public Education

Public education efforts target individual stakeholders to provide information regarding the use of BMPs to protect water quality. GA EPD will continue efforts to increase awareness and educate the public about the impact of human activities on water quality.

The GAEPD's Non-Point Source Program (NPSP) provides assistance with non-point source pollution management grants, TMDL and watershed planning resources, and environmental education, outreach, and resources. Grant information can be found here: <http://epd.georgia.gov/section-319h-georgias-nonpoint-source-implementation-grant>. Outreach programs such as Rivers Alive, Adopt-A-Stream, Project WET, and River of Words can be found here: <https://epd.georgia.gov/outreach/outreach-educational-programs>.

7.5 Monitoring

Monitoring of sediment through the measurement of total settleable solids or TSS may be carried out through GA EPD's Adopt-A-Stream program. If it is determined through stakeholder involvement that this type of monitoring should take place, GA EPD will work with the entity that assumes responsibility for monitoring activities by providing the necessary training and taking the needed steps to establish a well-organized monitoring program.

7.6 Future Action

This Initial TMDL Implementation Plan includes a general approach to pollutant source identification as well as management practices to address pollutants. In the future, GA EPD will continue to determine and assess the appropriate point and non-point source management measures needed to achieve the TMDLs and also to protect and restore water quality in not supporting water bodies.

For point sources, any wasteload allocations for wastewater treatment plant facilities will be implemented in the form of water-quality based effluent limitations in NPDES permits. Any wasteload allocations for regulated storm water will be implemented in the form of best management practices in the NPDES permits. Contributions of sediment from regulated communities may also be managed using permit requirements such as watershed assessments, watershed protection plans, and long-term monitoring. These measures will be directed through current point source management programs.

GA EPD will work to support watershed restoration, improvement and protection projects that address non-point source pollution. This is a process whereby GA EPD and/or Regional Commissions or other agencies or local governments, under a contract with GA EPD, will develop a watershed management plan intended to address water quality at the small watershed level (HUC 10 or smaller). These plans will be developed as resources and willing partners become available. The development of these plans may be funded via several grant sources including but not limited to Clean Water Act Section 319(h), Section 604(b), and/or Section 106 grant funds. These plans are intended for implementation upon completion.

Any watershed management plan that specifically address water bodies contained within this TMDL will supersede the Initial TMDL Implementation Plan for that water body, once GA EPD accepts and/or approves the plan. Watershed management plans intended to address this TMDL and other water quality concerns, written by GA EPD and for which GA EPD and/or the GA EPD Contractor are responsible, will contain at a minimum the USEPA's 9-Key Elements of Watershed Planning:

- 1) An identification of the sources or groups of similar sources contributing to nonpoint source pollution to be controlled to implement load allocations or achieve water quality criteria. Sources should be identified at the subcategory level (with estimates of the extent to which they are present in the watershed (e.g., X numbers of cattle feedlots needing upgrading, Y acres of row crops needing improved sediment control, or Z linear miles of eroded streambank needing remediation);
- 2) An estimate of the load reductions expected for the management measures;
- 3) A description of the NPS management measures that will need to be implemented to achieve the load reductions established in the TMDL or to achieve water quality criteria;
- 4) An estimate of the sources of funding needed, and/or authorities that will be relied upon, to implement the plan;
- 5) An information/education component that will be used to enhance public understanding of and participation in implementing the plan;
- 6) A schedule for implementing the management measures that is reasonably expeditious;
- 7) A description of interim, measurable milestones (e.g., amount of load reductions, improvement in biological or habitat parameters) for determining whether management measures or other control actions are being implemented;
- 8) A set of criteria that can be used to determine whether substantial progress is being made towards attaining water quality criteria and, if not, the criteria for determining whether the plan needs to be revised; and;
- 9) A monitoring component to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation efforts, measured against the criteria established under item (8).

The public will be provided an opportunity to participate in the development of watershed management plans that address water bodies not supporting their designated uses that are listed in this TMDL and to comment on them before they are finalized.

GA EPD will continue to offer technical and financial assistance (when and where available) to complete watershed management plans that address the water bodies not supporting their designated uses listed in this and other TMDL documents. Assistance may include but will not be limited to:

- Assessments of pollutant sources within watersheds;
- Determinations of appropriate management practices to address impairments;

- Identification of potential stakeholders and other partners;
- Developing a plan for outreach to the general public and other groups;
- Assessing the resources needed to implement the plan upon completion; and
- Other needs determined by the lead organization responsible for plan development.

GA EPD will also make this same assistance available, if needed, to proactively address water quality concerns. This assistance may be in the way of financial, technical, or other aid and may be requested and provided outside of the TMDL process or schedule.

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APPENDIX A

Total Allowable Sediment Load Summary Memorandum

**SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Big Creek**

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Houston, Dooly
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070104
Waterbody Name:	Big Creek
Location:	Elko Creek to Burnham Creek
Stream Length:	7 miles
Watershed Area:	47.3 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701040409
Ecoregion:	Southeastern Plains
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	1 ton/yr
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit
Load Allocation (LA):	45070.0 tons/yr
Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
Total Allowable Sediment Load:	45071.0 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	1189.9 tons/day
% Reduction:	24.8%

SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Cornish Creek

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Walton
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070103
Waterbody Name:	Cornish Creek
Location:	Headwaters to Upper Williams Lake
Stream Length:	7 miles
Watershed Area:	2.1 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701030717
Ecoregion:	Piedmont
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing, Drinking Water (not supporting Fishing
designated use)	

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	N/A
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit

Load Allocation (LA):	466.4 tons/yr
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Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
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Total Allowable Sediment Load:	484.4 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	62.8 tons/day
% Reduction:	0.0%

**SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
East Bear Creek**

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Newton
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070103
Waterbody Name:	East Bear Creek
Location:	Pond 0.7 miles upstream Marks Road to West Bear Creek
Stream Length:	7 miles
Watershed Area:	6.9 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701030807
Ecoregion:	Piedmont
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	N/A
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit

Load Allocation (LA):	3047.3 tons/yr
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Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
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Total Allowable Sediment Load:	3047.3 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	394.9 tons/day
% Reduction:	0.0%

SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Gaithers Branch

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Newton, Jasper
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070103
Waterbody Name:	Gaithers Branch
Location:	Headwaters to Bear Creek
Stream Length:	3 miles
Watershed Area:	4.9 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701030806
Ecoregion:	Piedmont
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	N/A
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit

Load Allocation (LA):	1494.6 tons/yr
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Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
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Total Allowable Sediment Load:	1494.6 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	193.7 tons/day
% Reduction:	0%

SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Little Ocmulgee River

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Bleckley, Dodge, Laurens, Telfair, Twiggs, Wheeler
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070105
Waterbody Name:	Little Ocmulgee River
Location:	Wilcox Creek to Alligator Creek
Stream Length:	12 miles
Watershed Area:	314.4 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701050405
Ecoregion:	Southeastern Plains
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	109.6 tons/yr
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit
Load Allocation (LA):	208575.4 tons/yr
Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
Total Allowable Sediment Load:	208685.0 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	5509.3 tons/day
% Reduction:	0.1%

**SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Prairie Creek**

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Lamar
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070103
Waterbody Name:	Prairie Creek
Location:	Headwaters to Turner Creek
Stream Length:	5 miles
Watershed Area:	2.9 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701031206
Ecoregion:	Piedmont
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	N/A
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit

Load Allocation (LA):	1342.0 tons/yr
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Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
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Total Allowable Sediment Load:	1342.0 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	173.9 tons/day
% Reduction:	31.4%

SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Sugar Creek

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Dodge, Telfair
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070105
Waterbody Name:	Sugar Creek
Location:	Turnpike Creek to Little Ocmulgee River
Stream Length:	5 miles
Watershed Area:	180.5 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701050304
Ecoregion:	Southeastern Plains
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	54.8 tons/yr
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit

Load Allocation (LA):	124436.2 tons/yr
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Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
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Total Allowable Sediment Load:	124491.0 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	3286.6 tons/day
% Reduction:	0.0%

**SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Tobesofkee Creek**

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Lamar, Monroe
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070103
Waterbody Name:	Tobesofkee Creek
Location:	Cole Creek to Todd Creek
Stream Length:	8 miles
Watershed Area:	27.6 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701031415
Ecoregion:	Piedmont
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing, Drinking Water
Fishing designated use)	(not supporting

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	51.1 tons/yr
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit
Load Allocation (LA):	12760.1 tons/yr
Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
Total Allowable Sediment Load:	12811.2 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	1660.3 tons/day
% Reduction:	23.7%

**SUMMARY MEMORANDUM
Total Allowable Sediment Load
Turnpike Creek**

1. 303(d) Listed Waterbody Information

State:	Georgia
County:	Dodge, Telfair
Major River Basin:	Ocmulgee
8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code(s):	03070105
Waterbody Name:	Turnpike Creek
Location:	Hwy 280 to Sugar Creek
Stream Length:	24 miles
Watershed Area:	49.3 square miles
Reach ID:	GAR030701050303
Ecoregion:	Southern Plains
Violation:	Bio F
Constituent(s) of Concern:	Sediment
Designated Use:	Fishing (not supporting designated use)

Applicable Water Quality Criteria:

All waters shall be free from material related to municipal, industrial or other discharges which produce turbidity, color, odor or other objectionable conditions which interfere with legitimate water uses.

2. TMDL Development

Analysis/Modeling:	Universal Soil Loss Equation was used to determine the average annual sediment load
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3. Allocation Watershed/Stream Reach

Wasteload Allocations (WLA):	N/A
Industrial Sites:	Meet requirements of NPDES General Industrial Storm Water Permit, Utilize BCT/BAT Controls
Future Construction Sites	Meet requirements of NPDES General Storm Water Permit
Load Allocation (LA):	40559.7 tons/yr
Margin of Safety (MOS):	implicit
Total Allowable Sediment Load:	40559.7 tons/yr
Maximum Allowable Daily Load:	1070.8 tons/day
% Reduction:	0.0%