NONPOINT SOURCE PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT FFY 2025

GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

Table of Contents

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Cover Photo: May 2025 Watershed Protection Branch Clean-Up (Proctor Creek)

Dear Stakeholders:

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) is proud to offer this annual report on the activities of Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program during the October 2024 through September 2025 reporting period of federal fiscal year 2025 (FFY2025). Financial support from the Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant through Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act allowed GAEPD to work collaboratively with many state agency partners, including the Georgia Forestry Commission, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and the Coastal Resources Division to address nonpoint source pollution across the state.

Figure 1: Brian Kent - Little Tallapoosa River site visit

Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan – Revised 2019 (*Plan*) serves as a tool for controlling and preventing pollution from nonpoint sources. It continues to implement a watershed approach and is designed to be an informative planning document for all partners and stakeholders involved in the prevention, control, and abatement of nonpoint sources of pollution in Georgia. Through the implementation of education campaigns, best management practices (BMPs), and restoration activities, GAEPD and our state and local partners are committed to reaching our statewide goals outlined in the *Plan*.

Working cooperatively maximizes financial and human resources to protect our streams, rivers, lakes, and shorelines. This report highlights some of the ways collaborative projects resulted in greater public knowledge of water resources issues, refined designs for structural BMPs, and improved water quality. We look forward to working with both experienced and new partners as our *Plan* implementation continues in the future.

Sincerely,

Brian Kent
Nonpoint Source Program Manager
Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program

Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program is guided by *Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan - Revised 2019*. Many partners work collaboratively to implement the *Plan*, and in FFY2025, the following organizations led efforts in their respective areas of expertise to reduce nonpoint source pollution and protect our rivers, lakes, and streams.

Silviculture

Georgia Forestry Commission

The Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) encourages and monitors the voluntary implementation of forestry BMPs statewide to prevent or reduce water pollution during forestry operations. GFC compiles a Silvicultural BMP Implementation and Compliance Survey every other year as part of Silviculture Long Term Goal 6 of the *Plan* to achieve a minimum of 90% compliance for all recommended silviculture BMPs through 2030. Previously, GFC completed and presented the 2023 BMP Survey showing an overall implementation score of 96.81%. This strong score represented a 4.23% improvement from the 2021 BMP Survey.

During FFY2025, GFC completed a total of **229** BMP Inspections. In addition, GFC conducted statewide BMP Assurance Monitoring of active or recently active forestry operations in response to complaints and requests. GFC also completed and documented the results of a total of **77** BMP Assurance Exams and advised and mediated any necessary corrections. GFC also provided in-person education, training, technical advice, and consultation on forestry BMPs, and continued to work with partners to plan and update virtual training programs.

Training Highlights	Technical Assistance
21 in-person events with **393** BMP brochures distributed	**18** unique complaints requiring a total of **23** complaint site visits/inspections
2 in-person Master Timber Harvester (MTH) workshops with **18** people in attendance	**3** BMP Demonstrations for **65** participants
17 in-person and/or live-online Continuing Logger Education (CLE) trainings with **643** attendees	**98** primary specific forestry BMP Advice Visits, with **228** people attending
38 talks/trainings on BMPs reaching over	**4** GFC Firebreak BMP Inspections
2,010 attendees including loggers, timber buyers, foresters, forestry contractors, landowners, government entities, NGOs, etc.	**55** One to One Logger Conferences in the field with **174** participants
265 loggers, timber buyers, foresters, forestry contractors, and landowners attended **virtually**, CLE and MTH training in partnership with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee	**229** BMP Compliance Survey Checks

Agriculture

Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC) and GAEPD continue to partner in the effort to achieve the goals set forth in the agricultural section of the *Plan*. The GSWCC is committed to providing education and financial incentives that reduce nonpoint agricultural contributions of nutrients, sediment, and pathogens into Georgia's waterways. Although no new funding was received for FFY2025, GSWCC and the local soil and water conservation districts continue to promote agricultural nonpoint source awareness and reduction. The 40 districts meet and work to conserve, improve and protect Georgia's natural resources including surface waters.

GSWCC District staff continued to partner with various Lead Organizations on the following Section 319(h) Grant funded projects in FFY2025 (*designates CLOSED during the reporting period):

- FY2022 - Bioretention Repair and Retrofit at Lakeside Park in Columbia County
- FY2022 - Implementation of Chattanooga Creek Watershed Management Plan for Nonpoint Water Quality Improvements*
- FY2022 - Coahulla Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation - Phase 2
- FY2022 - Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project-Phase 3
- FY2021 - South Chickamauga Headwaters Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project - Phase 3
- FY2021 - Southwest Georgia Water Resources Education Program
- FY2020 - Better Back Roads to Improve Water Quality & Aquatic Habitat in Sumter and Webster County Watersheds*
- FY2020 - Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project - Phase 2*

Figure 2: Before Exclusion Fencing installation (Franklin County) – implementing FY2020 Agricultural Section of the Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan

Figure 3: After Exclusion Fencing installation (Franklin County) – implementing FY2020 Agricultural Section of the Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

GAEPD participated virtually in the NRCS Georgia State Technical Committee meeting held in April 2025. Communication and updates from NRCS related to easements and water resources programs remain the most relevant connection to Georgia's Nonpoint Source Management Plan.

NRCS's National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) provides a way to accelerate voluntary, on-farm conservation investments and focused water quality monitoring and assessment resources where they can deliver the greatest benefits for clean water. During FFY2025, GAEPD's Ambient Monitoring Units **monitored 13 sites** in Georgia's NWQI implementation watersheds (red areas on map) located in north Georgia. One of these sites is a trend site and will continue to be monitored in the future as resources allow.

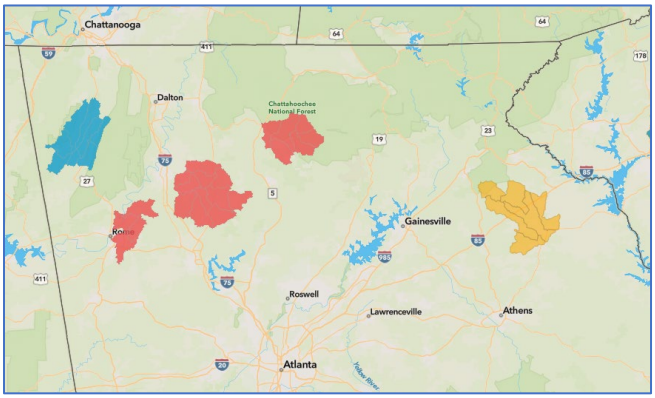


Figure 4: Georgia NWQI Planning and Implementation Watersheds

Urban – Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems

Georgia Department of Public Health

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), through County Boards of Health (CBH), oversees decentralized systems treating less than 10,000 gpd and discharging into an absorption field. The CBH promote maintenance among private septic system owners in accordance with the *Manual for On-Site Sewage Management Systems*. The DPH works to minimize health problems related to untreated human sewage; regulates and inspects new on-site sewage management systems (septic tanks/field lines); investigates and evaluates repairs made to improperly functioning on-site sewage management systems; and educates, trains, and certifies individuals involved in installing, maintaining, and repairing on-site sewage management systems.

During FFY2025, CBH and Section 319(h) grant recipients partnered on septic system remediation projects in **five** watersheds. These projects aimed to reduce bacterial impacts on waterways through septic repair and replacement programs; operations and maintenance education; and conversion of septic systems to lateral connections to the public sewer.

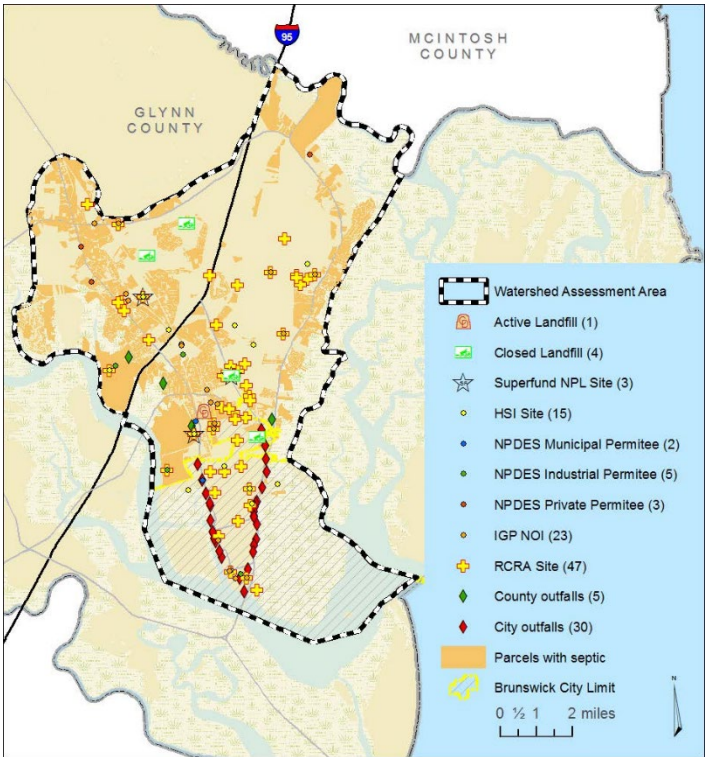


Figure 5: Potential Pollutant Sources (Academy Creek WPCP Watershed Protection Plan) – FY2024 Arco Community Septic Conversion Project

Ongoing Projects Addressing Impacts from Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems

- FY2024 - Arco Community Septic Conversion Project
- FY2022 - District-Wide Stormwater Management Infrastructure Mapping Strategy Project
- FY2022 – City of Homeland – Implementation of the Nine Element EPA Watershed Management Plan for Spanish Creek in Charlton County
- FY2022 – Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project-Phase 3
- FY2021 - South Chickamauga Headwaters WPM Implementation Project – Phase 3

Completed Projects Addressing Impacts from Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems

Septic system projects in **four watersheds** closed during FFY2025 with the following results:

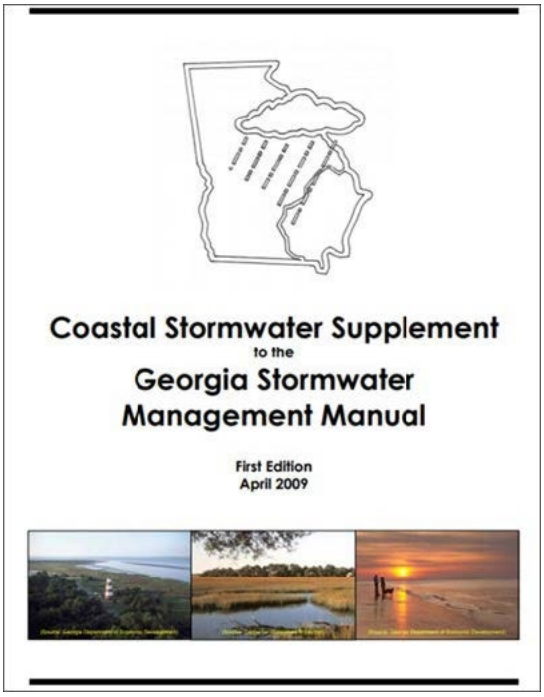
- FY2022 – Coahulla Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation – Phase 2: Completed repairs on 23 failed septic systems (three more than targeted) in compliance with Whitfield County Environmental Health Department septic repair regulations after conducting a total of 26 home visits prior to exhausting repair funds. Educational materials, including proper inspection frequency and maintenance procedures, were provided to all repair program participants including those that were not funded. An online training video was posted to Limestonevalley.org and is available for viewing along with a supporting septic quiz.
- FY2022 – Implementation of Chattanooga Creek Watershed Management Plan for Nonpoint Water Quality Improvements: Contracted 22 septic repairs out of 53 consultations.
- FY2020- Warwoman Creek WMP Implementation Project: Disbursed 10 septic pump out vouchers ($100 each) at septic system maintenance seminar hosted by Rabun County Family Connections at Northeast GA Food Bank. Project was submitted as a Type 5 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) FFY2024 Success Story pending approval.
- FY2020- Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project-Phase 2: Completed repairs or replacements of 37 failed septic systems. Met with project partners and local municipal officials to share results of septic repair program, discuss potential follow-up strategies to be included in a preliminary action plan, and present example Septic System Ordinances for adoption.

Coastal

DNR – Coastal Resources Division

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Coastal Resources Division (GADNR CRD) continued supporting Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program during FFY2025 by serving as the lead agency for the Georgia Coastal Nonpoint Source Program (CNPSP).

GAEPD in partnership with GADNR CRD continued to develop and implement regional stormwater education campaigns with assistance from the Coastal Advisory Council, Coastal Hazards & Resiliency partners, the Georgia Healthy Beaches Program, and Green Growth Initiatives. In addition, GAEPD maintained ongoing protection of the 25-foot coastal marshlands buffer backed by GADNR CRD's authority to issue permits through the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act. GAEPD and GADNR CRD also prioritized and tracked channelization and eroding streambanks / shorelines; maintained a hydromodification database; and coordinated with the Living Shorelines Working Group for stabilization / restoration projects and other Living Shorelines activities.



During FFY2025, GAEPD and GADNR CRD twice amended the FY2022 Section 319(h) Grant Agreement to update the 2009 Coastal Stormwater Supplement (CSS) to the 2016 Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (GSMM). The project term has been extended 27 months, and program funds have been increased along with match to cover additional tasks for training workshops to educate partners on the updated CSS. As of this report, GADNR CRD has developed and implemented a CSS Update Needs Assessment Survey; coordinated preliminary review of CSS updates; and implemented BMP Design Advisory, Municipal Advisory, and Policy Advisory teams. Partners are on track to complete all graphics (photos, tables, and charts) and digital designs. CSS update outreach was conducted through local meetings and will continue to grow with new training sessions. The CSS update working draft is currently hosted on a shared drive for final review and the final updated CSS will be made available as an online document in early 2026. Updated sections of the CSS will align Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development (GI/LID) stormwater control designs and practices with current research, new standards, ongoing GSMM goals, and future coastal conditions.

Coastal Section 319(h) Grant Funded Projects

Ongoing Section 319(h) Grant funded projects in coastal areas during FFY2025 include:

- FY2024 – Element 08: Arco Community Septic Conversion Project
- FY2022 - Element 09: Stream Restoration & GI/LID Retrofits in Little Lotts Creek Watershed
- FY2022 - Element 14: Implementation of the Nine Element Watershed Management Plan for Spanish Creek in Charlton County
- FY21-Element 16: GI/LID Retrofits in Brunswick – "Rethinking Runoff" Plan Phase II

During FFY2025, GAEPD staff closed the FY2020 - 07 Section 319(h) Grant Agreement with the City of Brunswick for the project titled *GI/LID Retrofits in Brunswick – From Planning to Implementation*. This project funded the design, construction, and monitoring of GI/LID retrofits installed at 2 city parks and a city-owned fire station as part of the city's larger "Rethinking Runoff" initiative. Installations included 3 bioretention cells totaling approximately 3,500 square feet and permeable pavement at 4 locations totaling approximately 18,125 square feet. The combined GI/LID practices treat approximately 3.2 acres of runoff, infiltrate an estimated 2.39 MG/yr, and reduce loadings of sediment by 1,497.1 lbs, nitrogen by 29.27 lbs, and phosphorus by 4.40 lbs. The grant also funded 3 workshops, 2 in-person field tours, imagery and drone flights, 2 construction demonstrations, educational signage, an ArcGIS Storymap, and 6 invited presentations and directly connected with 712 participants in outreach efforts.

Figure 6: Liberty Ship Park Bioretention Cell (South) – FY2020 GI/LID Retrofits in Brunswick – From Planning to Implementation

Georgia Regional Water Planning Projects

State funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly finance Regional Water Plan (RWP) Seed Grants to support and incentivize local governments and other water users as they undertake their Regional Water Plan implementation responsibilities to address water resource management issues in Regional Water Planning Council (RWPC) areas. Staff from Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program Grants Unit helped with SFY2025 (July 2024-June 2025) RWP Seed Grant pre-application meetings and scoring, and administered the following awarded projects:

- SFY2025-01: *Lake Beatrice Improvements Ownership and Operations Models Research* - University of Georgia Research Foundation, Inc. (Suwannee-Satilla RWPC)
- SFY2025-02: *Update to Lake Varner Lakeshore Management Plan* - Newton County (Middle Ocmulgee RWPC)
- SFY2025-03: *Water Resources Development and Planning for a Test Well Site in Jackson County, Georgia* - Jackson County Water & Sewerage Authority (Upper Oconee RWPC)

- SFY2025-04: *Water Monitoring and Education of Environmental PFAS Exposure in Urban/Agricultural Interfaces in the Upper Flint River Watershed* - University of Georgia School of Environmental, Civil, Agricultural, and Mechanical Engineering (Upper Flint RWPC)
- SFY2025-05: *Protecting Water Quality through Septic and Well System Education in the Suwanee-Satilla and Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council Areas* - University of Georgia Crop and Soil Sciences Department and College of Environment and Design (Suwanee-Satilla RWPC & Altamaha RWPC)
- SFY2025-06: *Charting Synergistic Pathways for Increased Water Efficiency in Coastal Georgia* – Georgia Southern University Research and Service Foundation Inc. (Coastal Georgia RWPC)

Figure 7: GAEPD Watershed Protection Branch Regional Water Planning Unit manager and staff

During FFY2025 the state reinvested in the Regional Water Plan Seed Grant program by staffing a newly formed Regional Water Planning Unit in GAEPD's Watershed Protection Branch to specifically support Statewide Water Planning *Long-Term Goal 2: Encourage Seed Grant applications and see an increase in the number of applications for seed grants from qualifying organizations within each Regional Water Planning Council.* **Activity 1: Promote Seed Grant opportunities through multiple channels, including the GAEPD website, Regional Water Planning Council Meetings, and other meetings.** The RWP Unit will promote the Seed Grant to all 11 Regional Water Planning Councils as well as review, score, and administer SFY2026 (July 2025-June 2026) and future RWP Seed Grant applications.

Land Acquisition and Green Space

GEFA: Georgia Land Conservation Program

GAEPD reviews applications to the Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP) administered by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) to help identify high-value conservation lands - particularly those lands that, if put into conservation, would have the greatest impact on mitigating nonpoint source pollution and protecting source waters. GEFA did not fund any land conservation projects in FFY2025.

GADNR Outdoor Stewardship Program

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) oversees the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) and funds projects consistent with the state's conservation goals through the Conserve Georgia Grant. Funds come from a dedicated 40% of an existing state sales tax on outdoor sporting goods and are distributed as grants or loans awarded to proposals approved by GADNR for the acquisition or stewardship of conservation lands.

The 2024-2025 cycle awarded in March 2025 will commit **$24.6 million** in funding to support local parks and trails systems and state-owned lands. These grantees have also committed an estimated **$36.5 million** to match grant dollars. Of the 12 selected projects, five are by local governments and non-profit organizations for the acquisition, development, or stewardship of local parks or trail systems. Four awarded proposals focus on the acquisition of conservation land by DNR, and three involve stewardship projects on state lands.

Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program expects the following elements of awarded projects to specifically provide stormwater and other nonpoint source pollution management benefits and to contribute to *Long-Term Goal 2: Support the creation of a network of linked landscape-scale green spaces throughout Georgia focused on ecosystem connectivity around waterbodies.*

Macon-Bibb County | Ocmulgee Trail - Rose Hill Cemetery Connection: *conservation and restoration of ecologically damaged stream and pond areas within the Ocmulgee River Corridor, enhancement of the wetlands, and creation of a river overflow area to restore a freshwater pond*

City of Thomasville | Restoration in the Red Hills Paradise Park: restoration of old-growth longleaf pine forest through prescribed burns, native planting, and stormwater mitigation efforts

Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division | Phinizy Swamp WMA - Thompson Farm: protection of 4.9 miles of riparian buffers on the Savannah River

North Georgia Mountains Authority | Amicalola Falls Day-Use Area Renovation: protection of the stream buffer along Little Amicalola Creek tributary by removing invasive species, and planting native vegetation to stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and control sediment loss

Stream Restoration (11/2024) | Pervious Pavement (05/2025) | Pedestrian Trail (05/2025)

Figure 8: Stream restoration, GSI BMP, and recreation area installation funded by a combination of FY2023 Section 319(h) Grant and FY2024 GOSP Conserve Georgia Grant funds – FY2023 Butler Bridge Park Recreation Area Improvement, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, and Stream Restoration

Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant

Since 1990, Congress has annually appropriated grant funds to states under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act to implement their approved Nonpoint Source Management Program. GAEPD uses these grant funds to administer Georgia's Nonpoint Source Program (NPSP), implement goals of *Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan - Revised 2019*, and make awards available to public agencies in Georgia. Local governments, project partners, and citizens have annually contributed a minimum of 40 percent of total project costs in matching funds or in-kind services to these efforts. In FFY2025 GAEPD closed out the **FFY2020** grant totaling **$3,855,500 in federal fund expenditures** and **$3,362,527.50 in nonfederal match**.

FFY2025 Program Funds

GAEPD applies no more than fifty percent of its Section 319(h) grant funds towards program funds to support eligible nonpoint source activities at the state level or through Section 319 subawards.

Grants Unit: Administering Section 319(h) Grants

The Grants Unit is responsible for the management of Section 319(h) Grants and other administrative functions. Unit activities for this fiscal year included:

- Partnering with other state agencies that manage agricultural, forestry, coastal, and urban programs addressing nonpoint source pollution
- Developing work plans, grant agreements, and inter-agency memorandums of understanding
- Providing assistance to applicants developing competitive grant application work plans
- Reviewing and ranking final application work plans for competitive grant funds
- Advising selected sub-grantees on incorporating staff comments into work plans
- Tracking and accounting for expenditures and match contributions of grant awards
- Assisting financial personnel with reconciliation of any cost discrepancies that may occur during the invoicing process
- Submitting reports (work plans, progress, annual, and final), project budgets, invoices, and watershed information through the USEPA Grants Reporting Tracking System (GRTS) database

Subawards Funded by Program Funds in FFY2025

GAEPD awarded grants using money from previous fiscal years to **three (3)** projects that qualified as Program Funds:

1. **FY24-08 Arco Community Septic Conversion Project** – The Brunswick-Glynn Joint Water & Sewer Commission will focus on reducing septic effluent pollutant loads into Academy Creek and Turtle River through the following objectives:
   - Convert private parcels from septic systems to the Brunswick-Glynn Joint Water and Sewer Commission (JWSC) public sewer system.
   - Host three (3) public education and outreach sessions (before, during and after Project work) on the benefits of septic system conversion and how to best maintain new lateral connections to the public sewer.

- Conduct upstream and downstream wet weather sampling at stormwater outfalls before, during, and after converting septic systems

2. **FY23-14 2017 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan Data and Assessment Update and Roadmap Re-Write** - Habersham County (HC), the Soque River Watershed Association (SRWA), and partners will update the 2017 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan with the following new proposals:
   - Planning for green space/public area land use
   - Guidelines for converting and rezoning current agriculture farmland for residential and commercial development
   - Program offering permeable technology options
   - Riverbank and Buffer Work Projects
   - Storm Drain and Culvert Inspection/Repair Program
   - SRWA Educational Outreach Program
   - Stronger collaborations and data sharing between regional stakeholders
   - Updated "real time" water testing and monitoring data

3. **FY2022-19 District-Wide Stormwater Management Infrastructure Mapping Strategy Project** - The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (District) will research, identify and analyze resources and strategies to determine the feasibility of developing a pilot District-Wide Stormwater (SW) Management Infrastructure Map that will support the following objectives:
   - Implement GI/LID practices incorporated into a drainage network that integrates conventional stormwater management as well as GI/LID elements.
   - Provide new information to help stormwater managers better understand the relationship between how water moves through soils.
   - Educate citizens about the link between land use, stormwater management systems that do not treat runoff, and the challenges to local water quality.

Figure 9: Project Advisory Committee meeting (September 2025) - FY2022 District-Wide Stormwater Management Infrastructure Mapping Strategy Project

Grants Unit: Outreach Efforts

GAEPD is committed to sharing funding opportunities, technical knowledge, and lessons learned with partners and sub-grantees. Staff collaborated at meetings and on committees, and attended conferences and trainings conducted throughout the State of Georgia and for national audiences in FFY2025.

Figure 10: GAEPD Grants Unit staff & project partners at Ribbon Cutting Ceremony – FY2024 Dunwoody Nature Center Stream and Wetland Improvements

- National Water Quality Monitoring Conference
- National Training Workshop on Water Quality Data, Assessment, and Plans
- Georgia Water Resources Conference
- Georgia Association of Water Professionals Annual Conference
- Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Confluence Conference
- Georgia Funders' Forum Quarterly Meetings and One-Day Workshop
- FFY2025 Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant Application Workshop
- Georgia Association of Water Professionals Stormwater Committee
- University of Georgia Marine Extension/Georgia Sea Grant
- Quarterly meetings with GADNR Coastal Resources Division and Wildlife Resources Division
- Savannah River Restoration Board
- Georgia Aquatic Connectivity Team
- Natural Resources Conservation Service State Technical Committee
- Section 319(h) Grant Project Site Visits

Outreach Unit: Educating Georgians on Nonpoint Source Pollution

GAEPD uses program funds to support education and outreach efforts for audiences of all ages on the causes and impacts of nonpoint source pollution. Through a range of programs and media including classroom curricula, waterway cleanups, and online learning resources, GAEPD reaches communities statewide. Each program engages its specific audiences, while collectively working to support informed stewardship and protect Georgia's water resources.

Georgia Project WET (Water Education Today) provides interdisciplinary, standards-aligned water education resources designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and stewardship of Georgia's water resources. Using Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant funding, the program delivers a comprehensive suite of services, including educator training workshops, classroom-ready curriculum materials, and community outreach events. These activities support educators in integrating water science concepts into existing academic programming across grade levels and subject areas. Project WET curriculum materials emphasize hands-on learning, critical thinking, and real-world environmental connections. Educators who participate in Project WET workshops gain access to a statewide network of trained facilitators and a broader national network of educators and water resource professionals focused on advancing water literacy.

During FFY25, Project WET conducted **64** certification training workshops resulting in **832** educators certified in water education and managed **1,151** River of Words student entries resulting in **two** national grand prize winners, **50** national finalists, and **38** state winners. The Georgia program welcomed **200** students, family members, and teachers to two Georgia River of Words Awards Ceremonies, celebrating the students' creativity and environmental awareness.

In addition, Georgia Project WET coordinates the **River of Words** program, an international poetry and art competition for PreK–12th grade students centered on the theme of watersheds. Each year, Georgia's winning entries are published in a full-color Art and Poetry Journal, featured on the Georgia Project WET website, and may be displayed in public venues such as schools, libraries, museums, conferences, non-profit organizations, and state buildings. The River of Words program strengthens student engagement by connecting environmental learning with creative expression.

Figure 11: Save the Turtles, Snow Adams, PreK, Acrylic/Crayon/Paper Collage, Bainbridge, 2025 State Winner & National Finalist

Rivers Alive is an annual volunteer-based waterway cleanup initiative coordinated through GAEPD, with partners that include an advisory board, community organizations, corporate sponsors, and a fiscal partner that manages contributions in support of program activities. During the reporting period, this partnership facilitated **132 cleanup events** across the state, engaging **2,717 volunteers** who removed approximately **868,632 pounds of trash** from Georgia's rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and coast. These events support watershed stewardship, increase community awareness of nonpoint source pollution, and foster long-term engagement in local water protection.

Figure 12: Rivers Alive Clean-Up - FY2022 Phase 2 - Coahulla Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) is a statewide, community science–based water quality monitoring and stream protection program. The program encourages local governments, watershed organizations, universities, and community groups to establish and support AAS monitoring networks. These entities serve as local coordinators and trainers and follow the program's Quality Assurance Program Plan to ensure the collection of scientifically credible water quality data. AAS volunteers participate in environmental stewardship by monitoring physical, chemical, and biological water quality parameters, reporting data to a statewide database, and implementing local stream protection and education initiatives designed to reduce nonpoint source pollution impacts. Achievements during the FFY2025 reporting period included:

- **175** Adopt-A-Stream Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) monitoring trainings
- **1,056** Water quality monitoring volunteers certified (new volunteers)
- **12,603** Water quality tests (Chemical + Bacterial + Macro)
- **805** Habitat assessments
- **180** Monitoring groups
- **440** Active monitoring sites

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring

These activities increased public awareness of water quality issues and the causes and impacts of nonpoint source pollution, encouraged collaboration between community members and local governments to protect water resources, and supported the collection of reliable baseline water quality data across the state. The AAS Program also supports large-scale paddling-based monitoring events, during which teams of trained volunteers sample multiple sites over the course of one day up

to a week. Collectively, GAEPD Outreach programs increase public understanding of nonpoint source pollution issues, support the development of environmentally informed citizens, and contribute to long-term water resource protection efforts across the state.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Unit: Developing Prioritized Section 305(b)/303(d) Listed Watersheds for TMDLs and TMDL Implementation

The TMDL Unit's primary objectives are to develop TMDLs that will be used by state and local entities to restore impaired waters and lead to their "Supporting" the state's designated use. The TMDLs developed help set funding priorities for use of Section 319(h) grant funds.

In September 2022, USEPA developed and released guidance for a new Vision Period (2022 – 2032). States were asked to submit a list of TMDLs, TMDL alternatives, or Protection Plans during the "Bridge Period" - the time between the end of the first Vision Period (September 30, 2022) and when states completed a new TMDL Prioritization Framework in 2024. During the "Bridge Period," GAEPD completed 164 Bacteria TMDLs for all waterbodies in Category 5 for fecal coliform on the 2022 303(d) list of waters. This allowed the 2024 303(d) list to be developed with no need to establish fecal coliform TMDLs. In addition, GAEPD used the loading curve approach, consistent with how GAEPD develops all Bacteria TMDLs, to revise existing fecal coliform TMDLs developed with the BASINS watershed model. Completed TMDL documents can be found on the **Final TMDLs web page** under individual river basins.

Prioritization Framework for Georgia 303(d) Waters

GAEPD developed a Prioritization Framework that provides a holistic strategy to be considered in the implementation of the 2022 TMDL Vision. GAEPD will use this framework to systematically prioritize waters or watersheds for TMDL, Restoration, and Protection Plan development. GAEPD plans to engage the public and stakeholders by conducting outreach events where information will be exchanged and the public will be provided with the opportunity to make recommendations on TMDLs that should be prioritized. GAEPD will submit updates for the FFY2026 NPSP Annual Report.

Georgia 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report

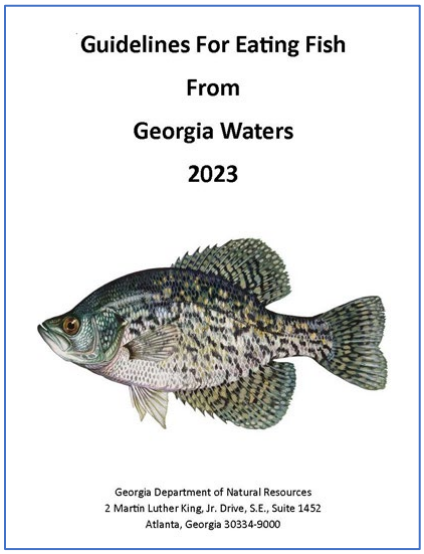
Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act requires states to assess their water quality every two years. GAEPD uses the state's Listing Assessment Methodology to compare water quality data collected across Georgia against official state Water Quality Standards, and places each assessed waterbody into one of three broad assessment categories; 1) Supporting Designated Use; 2) Not Supporting Designated Use; or 3) Assessment Pending. In addition, Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires states to submit a list of all waters that are Not Supporting Designated Use and need to have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) developed. Based on assessments, GAEPD publishes an integrated report titled "Water Quality in Georgia" with the Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters found in Appendix A of the report. This List of Waters is organized by waterbody type (e.g. Rivers/Streams, Lakes/Reservoirs, etc.) and provides each waterbody name, location, and assessment category. If the designated use is not being supported, causes of impairment are listed along with potential sources of pollutants. Georgia's 2024 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters was approved by USEPA on September 3, 2024.

During FFY2025, GAEPD has been working on developing the 2026 "Water Quality in Georgia" integrated report. On January 30, 2025, a notice soliciting water quality data for use in the development of the 2026 Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters was e-mailed to people that had signed up to be notified regarding announcements on the topics of water quality standards, Total Maximum Daily Loads, 305(b)/303(d) issues, and grant opportunities. In addition, the announcement was placed on the Georgia Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) website. GAEPD has been assessing the data submitted by third parties as well as the data collected by the Watershed Protection Branch and other State agencies. GAEPD submitted the current Listing Assessment Methodology for the 2026 "Water Quality in Georgia" integrated report on September 30, 2025.

Water Quality Standards from 2022 Triennial Review

The Clean Water Act section 303(c) and Federal Regulation 40 §CFR 131.20 requires Georgia to review and revise its water quality standards from time to time, but at least once every three years. This process, which revises water quality standards every three years, is known as the Triennial Review.

GAEPD began the 2022 Triennial Review with an initial public hearing held on March 22, 2022, to solicit items to be considered for the Triennial Review. GAEPD then engaged various stakeholders through a series of public and stakeholder meetings on human health criteria, the selenium criteria, and lake criteria; through two presentations at Georgia Association of Water Professional conferences in 2024; and through a public meeting on October 7, 2024. These meetings were held to present concepts being considered, to solicit input regarding these concepts, and to solicit additional recommendations from the public and stakeholders. Public comments were received after the initial public hearing and after each public or stakeholder meeting, and this input has informed the proposed amendments. During the December 2024 Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) meeting, GAEPD presented the proposed Rules for Water Quality Control, and a public hearing was held on January 28, 2025. After that, GAEPD received comments from USEPA which have led to modifications of the proposed Rules. The proposed modified Rules were presented at a public meeting held on April 21, 2025, and to the GADNR Board at their August 2025 meeting.



The following are the approved amendments to the Rules 391-3-6-.03, "Water Use Classifications and Water Quality Standards":

- Adopt USEPA's recommended aquatic life criteria for selenium and allow for the recommendation of site-specific selenium criteria in sturgeon-absent waterbodies;
- Adopt USEPA's recommended aquatic life criteria for diazinon and nonylphenol;
- Adopt human health criteria derived using a probabilistic methodology;
- Add language addressing natural conditions to the dissolved oxygen criteria;
- Add language to allow for the development of site-specific bacteria criteria;
- Revise and correct specific designated uses for various waterbodies;
- Adopt lake specific criteria for Lakes Burton, Rabun, and Tugalo.

Nutrients

GAEPD developed a Roadmap for Developing and Updating Nutrient Reduction Strategies that addresses existing laws, guidance documents, and permitting strategies. The Roadmap outlines GAEPD's proposed actions and timelines for revising or developing various related strategies and plans. Focused on a comprehensive nutrient permitting strategy for point sources, a .pdf file of the Roadmap is available online at https://epd.georgia.gov/document/document/roadmap-developing-and-updating-nutrient-reduction-strategiesfinal/download

Figure 13: Floating wetlands - FY2022 Shakerag Park Floating Treatment Wetlands Pilot Project (Johns Creek)

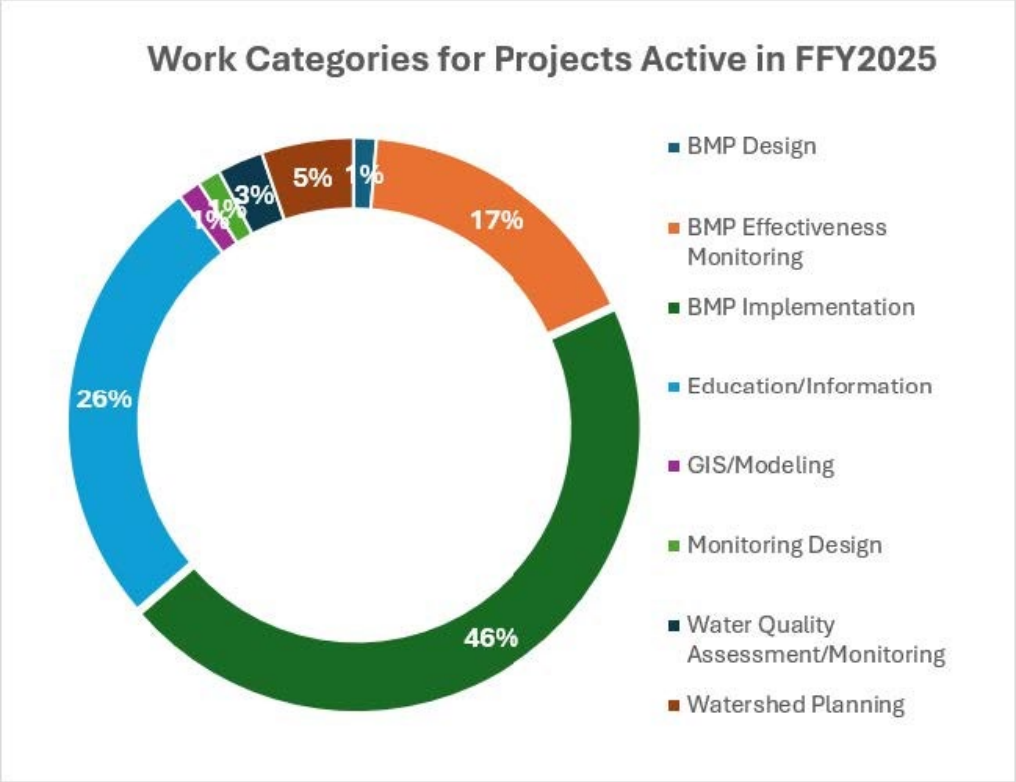
Since 2005, Georgia has been implementing an NPDES Permitting Strategy for addressing phosphorus loadings in state waters. GAEPD has updated and is in the process of finalizing this strategy. The 2013 Nutrient Criteria Development Plan includes milestones through 2024 and GAEPD needs to update the schedule in this document as well as develop an NPDES Permitting Strategy to address total nitrogen. GAEPD continues to conduct nutrient monitoring at all state lake, estuary, stream, and river monitoring sites. Nutrient monitoring is a requirement of all publicly owned treatment works (POTW) and many non-POTW National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits in Georgia.

FFY2025 Project Funds

Each year Georgia competitively awards at least fifty percent of Section 319(h) grant funds to local projects implementing watershed-based plans or summaries of nine elements of watershed planning. Guidelines for these competitive awards are updated annually and are designed to ensure funding is directed to watersheds that are impaired due to nonpoint source pollution, have the greatest possibility of being restored to "Supporting" status on Georgia's Integrated 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters, and meet Georgia's overall goals of reducing nonpoint source pollution in priority watersheds.

Section 319(h) Grant Priorities for Competitive Projects

- Small watersheds (HUC 10 and smaller)
- Restoration of impaired waters
- Protection of healthy waters
- Implementation of TMDLs, Watershed Improvement Plans, Watershed-Based Plans, and Watershed Management Plans
- Leveraging other community resources to address nonpoint source pollution



FFY2025 Projects

During FFY2025, GAEPD administered **64** Section 319(h) grant-funded projects, totaling nearly **$17.5** million in federal funds and over **$13** million in matching funds or in-kind services. With FFY2025 Section 319(h) Grant funds on hold, GAEPD awarded grants using money from previous fiscal years to **three (3)** projects that qualified for Project Funds:

1. **FY23-15 Implementation of Better Back Roads in Tired Creek** – The Golden Triangle Resource Conservation and Development Council will assist Grady County, Georgia with implementing the Tired Creek Watershed Management Plan (2018) by installing Better Back Roads BMPs on Cranford Road directly upstream of Tired Creek. The project will follow technical and design specifications in the Better Back Road Manual 2020 Draft Edition version 2.0 to address the 6.4-mile impaired segment of Tired Creek from Turkey Creek to Ochlockonee River in the Ochlockonee River Basin with the following objectives:
   - Address the 2001 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) established by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD) for the Biota Impacted (Macroinvertebrate Community) impairment due to nonpoint sources (NP).
   - Improve water quality by reducing sediment load by an estimated 1,322 tons/yr.

2. **FY23-10 Abernathy Greenway South Improvements** - The City of Sandy Springs will implement the Impaired Waters Phase II Plan City of Sandy Springs Nine Element Plan. (2019) to address the pollutants of concern in a tributary to Marsh Creek. Marsh Creek is one of four City of Sandy Springs water bodies classified as impaired for not meeting state water quality standards for Biota-F (fish) impairment due to sediment and E. coli bacteria. The city will integrate nature-based solutions into structural water quality improvements at Abernathy Road before releasing stormwater runoff to the tributary as follows:

- Stabilize the streambanks subject to erosion
- Install at least five green infrastructure BMPs that will treat and infiltrate the runoff from
- Educate the public about nonpoint source pollution, stormwater, water quality, and green infrastructure
- Protect and enhance public green space

3. **FY2021-16 GI/LID Retrofits in Brunswick – Rethinking Runoff Plan Phase II -** The City of Brunswick will implement Phase II of priority Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development (GI/LID) practices at two locations identified in the City's 2022 Rethinking Runoff Plan. The USEPA previously approved this Plan in Phase I as meeting the criteria for a 9-Element Watershed-Based Plan. The critical target areas for implementation of these GI/LID stormwater practices include stormwater retrofits at the following locations:
   - **Palmetto Square Park:** 2718 Reynolds Street; City of Brunswick Park @ 1,500 square feet Bioretention and @ 2,100 square feet Permeable Pavement
   - Orange Square Park: 2216 Reynolds Street; City of Brunswick Park @ 3,800 square feet Bioretention and @ 4,600 square feet Permeable Pavement

Advancing Green Infrastructure

States, federal agencies, and local jurisdictions throughout the country are shifting to a new paradigm for managing urban stormwater runoff by using Green Infrastructure (GI) and Low Impact Development (LID) to protect or mimic natural hydrology. *Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan - Revised 2019* encourages implementation of GI/LID practices through the following goals:

- Track research on the performance, effectiveness, costs, and maintenance of GI/LID practices and collect performance data from Georgia projects in a range of locations and applications to ensure the highest levels of effectiveness
- Ensure that potential implementers of GI/LID practices, including the construction industry and municipalities, are aware of and have access to the necessary information to successfully install, maintain, and monitor their projects. Continue to support the implementation of GI and LID projects in priority and impaired watersheds, with an emphasis on operations and maintenance and post-construction monitoring
- Document and disseminate the costs and benefits of GI and LID practices and promote resources, including financial means, that are available for their implementation

The majority of Georgia's competitively awarded Section 319(h) grant projects now include elements of green infrastructure or low impact development. Implementing GI/LID BMPs is the primary activity of some projects, while others focus on education and building understanding of how GI/LID can benefit communities and waterways.

Green Infrastructure Projects Active in FFY2025

- FY2024 - Cobbs Creek Channel Improvements and Citizen Education
- FY2024 - Proctor Creek Restoration at North Avenue
- FY2023 - Phase 2: Town Center Stream Restoration and Pond Improvements
- FY2023 - 2017 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan Data and Assessment Update and Roadmap Re-Write
- FY2023 - Community Garden Streambank Restoration in Northwoods Creek Watershed
- FY2023 - Sandy Springs Abernathy Greenway

- FY2022 - Butler Bridge Park Recreation Area Improvement, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, and Stream Restoration
- FY2022 - Updates to the Coastal Stormwater Supplement
- FY2022 - Atlanta's Moores Mill Road NW Green Infrastructure Improvements
- FT2022 - District-Wide Stormwater Management Infrastructure Mapping Strategy Project
- FY2022 - Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project - Phase 3
- FY2022 - Stream Restoration & GI/LID Retrofits in Little Lotts Creek Watershed
- FY2022 – Bioretention Repair and Retrofit at Lakeside Park in Columbia County
- FY2022 – Water Quality Improvements at Roswell City Hall
- FY2021 - Phase 1: Town Center Stream Restoration and Pond Improvements
- FY2021 - Huron Street & Champlain Street Bioretention Basin Improvement Project
- FY2021 - Green Stormwater Infrastructure Demonstration Site at UGA Griffin Research and Education Gardens
- FY2021 – Phase 2 - Biota Improvement in an Urban Stream through Aquatic Habitat Restoration
- FY2021 - Pittman Park Green Infrastructure Improvements
- FY2021 - GI/LID Retrofits in Brunswick – Rethinking Runoff Plan Phase II

Green Infrastructure Projects Closed in FFY2025

- FY2023 - Phase 1 – Implementation of the Watershed Management Plan for Tributaries in Rome, Georgia at the Etowah and Oostanaula River Confluence – PART 2
- FY2022 - Implementation of Chattanooga Creek Watershed Management Plan for Nonpoint Water Quality Improvements
- FY2022 - Coahulla Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project - Phase 2
- FY2021 - South Chickamauga Headwaters Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project - Phase 3
- FY2021 - Cobbs Creek Green Infrastructure and Citizen Stormwater Education
- FY2021 - Elaine & Ellsworth Green Infrastructure
- FY2020 - GI/LID Retrofits in Brunswick from Planning to Implementation
- FY2020 – Green Infrastructure in Utoy Creek t - Phase 2
- FY2020 - Implementing Green Infrastructure BMPs in the Nancy Creek Watershed
- FY2020 - Nancy Creek at Windsor Meadows Park Stream and Water Quality Improvements
- FY2020 - Lookout Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project-Phase 2
- FY2020 - Implementation of Pataula Creek WMP Phase 2
- FY2020 - Phase 1 – Implementation of the Watershed Management Plan for Tributaries in Rome, Georgia at the Etowah and Oostanaula River Confluence – PART 1

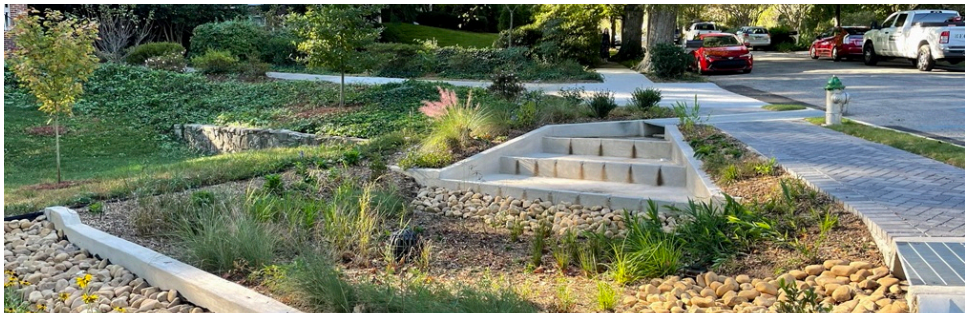


Figure 14: Bioretention system - FY2021 Huron & Champlain Streets Bioretention Basin Improvement Project

Success Story

During FFY2025, GAEPD submitted a Type 5 Success Story entitled ***New Partnerships Making Water Quality Progress in Warwoman Creek Watershed*** which is pending approval based on new USEPA priorities and policies. The following abstract outlines efforts by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and partners to address impairments in the Warwoman Creek HUC-12 watershed:

> *In 2000, two segments of Warwoman Creek were added to Georgia's Clean Water Act (CWA) section 303(d) list of impaired waters for sediment and fecal coliform bacteria violations. Located in northeast Rabun County, the 24,956-acre watershed is mostly forests that dominate 93% of the land. Despite protected headwaters, erosion from dirt roads and camping caused excessive sediment, while agricultural operations contributed to bacteria pollution. In 2001, a sediment TMDL requiring a 64% reduction was developed, followed by a fecal coliform TMDL in 2005 requiring a 69% reduction. The FY2020 Warwoman Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project addressed these issues through collaboration with the USDA Forest Service, rehabilitating 17 campsites, blocking illegal ORV trails, installing educational kiosk signage, and implementing agricultural BMPs. Post-BMP monitoring in 2024/2025 showed results meeting the bacteria standards, though additional monitoring is needed to confirm long-term improvements.*

Type 5 Success Stories are intended as an option available for state NPS programs to show "program accomplishments and interim measures of success and to feature a NPS program's progress toward restoring/improving water quality and hydrology that has not yet resulted in a measurable or observed water quality improvement. Interim metrics/measures stories are intended to feature significant program milestones and can include a wide range of indicators of success including but not limited to the following addressed by GAEPD's FFY2025 submittal:

- Outcomes from engagement with landowners and other stakeholders in a watershed, including implementation of targeted water quality BMPs (i.e., reported behavior change, BMP implementation, etc.).
- Reported changes in community behavior relating to an NPS water quality issue.
- Key NPS program milestones accomplished (featured in the NPSP Annual Report).

Figure 15: Campsite rehabilitation BMP showing revegetation and reduced footprint outside of riparian zone - FY2020-08 Warwoman Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project

Nonpoint Source Program Management Goals

Tracking Milestones

GAEPD uses three primary mechanisms for tracking the progress of *Georgia's Statewide Nonpoint Source Management Plan - Revised 2019:*

1. USEPA Grant Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS) to document Section 319(h) grant project outcomes (water quality improvements, reductions in NPS pollutant loadings).
2. GAEPD NPSP Annual Reports to USEPA to summarize progress in meeting milestones and goals associated with TMDLs, watershed planning, outreach and education, wetlands certification, grant administration, success stories, partners, and other strategies.
3. GAEPD Water Quality Integrated Report to evaluate the water quality of surface water and groundwater and the nature, extent, and causes of documented water quality problems in Georgia. This Report complies with requirements of the Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 314, and 319, and summarizes ongoing water planning efforts; wetland, estuary, and coastal public health/aquatic life issues; and water protection, groundwater, and drinking water programs.

Statewide Milestones & Load Reductions

Statewide Milestones for Water Quality Improvement	**2025 Milestone Progress**
WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS FROM NONPOINT SOURCE CONTROLS	
Number of stream segments supporting designated use on Georgia's 305(b)/303(d) list of waters: Identify the number of stream segments supporting designated use by meeting all water quality standards (List of waters published every two years).	**1108**
Cumulative number of stream segments on Georgia's 305(b)/ 303(d) list of waters where one or more impairments have been restored to meet water quality standards: Identify the number of stream segments where one or more impairments have been restored to meet water quality standards (List of waters published every two years).	**42**
INTERIM PROGRESS TOWARD RESTORED WATER QUALITY AND HYDROLOGY	
Report on water bodies identified on Georgia's 305(b)/303(d) list of impaired waters as being primarily NPS impaired that are partially or fully restored or show water quality improvement: Submit NPS success story to USEPA.	**One** Type 5 Success Story pending USEPA approval entitled *New Partnerships Making Water Quality Progress in Warwoman Creek Watershed* (FY2020-08 Warwoman Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Project)

Statewide Milestones for Water Quality Improvement	2025 Milestone Progress
Tracking ambient water quality vs. stream water quality standards for Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Fecal Coliform, Dissolved Oxygen, and Biota: Number of streams where water quality data was collected by Adopt-a-Stream or GAEPD for use in addressing water quality issues.	Monthly sampling of **178** rivers/streams, **23** lakes & **11** estuaries for routine parameters (nutrients, BODS, TSS, DO, pH, temperature, conductivity) at **289** sites; for ortho-phosphate at **85** sites; for bacteria at **247** sites; for metals at **56** sites; for chlorophyll a at **74** sites; for diatoms at **2** sites; and for macroinvertebrates at **2** sites.
Tracking target trophic status in lakes and estuaries: Produce waterbody reports documenting trophic status in Georgia lakes and estuaries.	Monthly ambient water quality sampling during the growing season: **23** lakes and embayments at **60** sites includes **8** lakes with and **15** lakes without criteria and **11** estuaries at **14** sites
Green infrastructure within watersheds: Target number of 319 funded projects that are implementing green infrastructure BMPs.	**20**
PROTECTION OF HIGH QUALITY WATERS	
Attain specific load reduction or maintenance goals in protection oriented plans covering healthy watersheds: Attaining specific load reduction goals (Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sediment, Fecal Coliform) for grant projects implementing Healthy Watershed Initiative WMPs that meet USEPA's nine elements.	FY2024-05 *Dunwoody Nature Center Stream and Wetland Improvements* City of Dunwoody
NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTANT LOAD REDUCTION	
Estimated annual reductions in pounds of nitrogen to water bodies (from Section 319 funded projects): Annually review information from NPS staff and project stakeholders for NPS load reductions of nitrogen; and include information in NPS annual report and GRTS.	**8,519 lbs.**
Estimated annual reductions in pounds of phosphorus from NPS to water bodies (from Section 319 funded projects): Annually review information from NPS staff and project partners for NPS load reductions of phosphorus; and include information in NPS annual report and GRTS.	**2,373 lbs.**
Estimated annual reductions in tons of sediment to water bodies (from Section 319 funded projects): Annually review information from NPS staff and project partners for NPS load reductions of sediment; and include information in NPS annual report and GRTS.	**1,499 tons**

Statewide Milestones for Water Quality Improvement	2025 Milestone Progress
IMPLEMENTATION OF NONPOINT SOURCE CONTROLS	
Number of TMDLs or alternatives developed for impaired watersheds: Develop TMDLs or alternatives for impaired waters.	**One (1)** revised Dissolved Oxygen TMDL In the Coosa River Basin approved by USEPA on March 28, 2025
Statistically based survey of implementation rates: Conduct the Biennial Silviculture implementation Survey.	Results from the 2025 statewide biennial Silvicultural BMP Implementation and Compliance Survey will be provided in FFY2026 NPSP Annual report
PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS, AND ACTION	
Participation rates in citizen monitoring activities: Maintain a database of number of active Georgia Adopt-A-Stream monitoring sites annually.	**12,603** water quality tests (Chemical+Bacterial+Macro); **805** habitat assessments; **440** active monitoring sites
Participation rates in public awareness and education efforts: Maintain a database of Rivers Alive volunteers to determine number of active participants annually.	**132** Rivers Alive cleanup events; **2,717** volunteers; **868,632** pounds of trash
Participation rates and activity of local watershed groups: Maintain a database of Georgia Adopt-A-Stream participating volunteers to track productivity and diversity of local watershed groups. Track the number of active watershed groups annually.	**175** Adopt-A-Stream QA/QC trainings; **1,056** certified water quality monitoring volunteers; **180** active watershed groups
PROGRAM MEASURES OF SUCCESS	
Track number of partners in watershed project implementation: Use Grants Reporting and Tracking System to annually track the number of partners participating in watershed project implementation.	For grant years with active projects during FFY2025: **46 different partners** **4** State Government Agencies **13** City Governments **3** County Governments **2** Water Authorities or Commissions **2** RC&D Councils **2** Regional Commissions **1** City Development Authority **1** Community Improvement District **1** Consolidated City-County **1** Soil & Water Conservation District **1** State University

Statewide Milestones for Water Quality Improvement	2025 Milestone Progress
Number of nine element watershed-based plans created or updated: Nine element watershed-based plans developed or updated.	FY2023-14 *2017 Soque River Watershed Protection Plan Data and Assessment Update and Roadmap Re-Write* Habersham County
Progress in reducing unliquidated obligations (ULO): Percentage of ULO funds anticipated yearly GAEPD (total remaining funds/total awarded = percentage ULO).	FY2021 – 26% FY2022 - 69% FY2023 – 78% FY2024 – 84% (GRTS: December 9, 2025)

Figure 16: Water quality teaching event with Adopt-A-Stream volunteers Georgia Rivers 2025 Paddle Georgia in Tennessee River Basin (82 miles, 400+ participants, 1,000+ pounds of trash removed, $1 million raised for river protection)

Ongoing and Future Efforts to Address Nonpoint Source Pollution

Though federal funding levels for FFY2026 are unknown at the time of this report, Georgia's broad network of nonpoint source partners remain committed to protecting and improving the state's watersheds. Ongoing efforts to address nonpoint sources of pollution include:

- Nonpoint Source Program staff will continue to cross train environmental compliance staff working from GAEPD District offices on nonpoint source topics and Adopt-A-Stream protocols to increase expertise throughout the agency.
- GAEPD and GEFA will explore creative ways to harness the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Hurricane Helene Resilience Fund to help communities address stormwater, stream restoration, land conservation, and septic system repair needs.
- The Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center and the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts will initiate the Lake Lanier Water Quality Initiative – a $2.5 million multi-year project secured by Congressman Rich McCormick to implement BMPs, provide technical and financial assistance to landowners, enhance stormwater controls, and expand watershed monitoring to establish a long-term baseline for lake health.
- GAEPD will continue to promote nonpoint source solutions and BMPs through the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) Grant and will work with GADNR to revise and update the GOSP watershed technical appendix used to award projects.