



The Georgia Environmental Protection Division proposes to issue a General NPDES permit that will authorize discharges to Waters of the State of Georgia during rainfall event and stormwater event from holding ponds in the Ogeechee River Basin that are associated with reclaimed water supplied by the City of Pooler. The draft permit places conditions on the discharge of pollutants from the holding ponds to waters of the State.

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Draft permit:

- First issuance
- Reissuance with no or minor modifications from previous permit
- Reissuance with substantial modifications from previous permit
- Modification of existing permit
- Requires EPA review

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

NPDES Permit No.: GAG600000

Background:

The State of Georgia has faced rapid development in the past and may see this development again in the coming years. The potential shortage of potable water is one of the impacts of this development. One way to minimize these shortages is to use reclaimed water for irrigation of landscaped areas. Reclaimed water is highly treated wastewater, which replaces potable (drinking water) and other water used for irrigation purposes. This permit facilitates the use of reclaimed water in the City of Pooler thereby reducing the demand on potable water and diminishing the impact of water shortages in the future.

Reclaimed water used for irrigation purposes is not discharged to the waters of the State thereby reducing the discharge of pollutants. In accordance with EPD *Guidelines for Water Reclamation and Urban Reuse*, 2022 reclaimed water can be discharged to reuse holding ponds, many of which are also part of stormwater management systems and are built with overflows. Reuse holding ponds designed and maintained to store a specific volume of reclaimed water and stormwater may discharge intermittently into waters of the State in response to storm events. The bulk of the discharge will be stormwater. The holding ponds will be designed to meet a target rain event or storm event. This rain event or storm event is based on available data for a 24-hour rainfall with a recurrence of 1 year. It is anticipated that this rain event or storm event should occur only a few times per year and the holding pond should not have an overflow except during storm events of this intensity or greater.

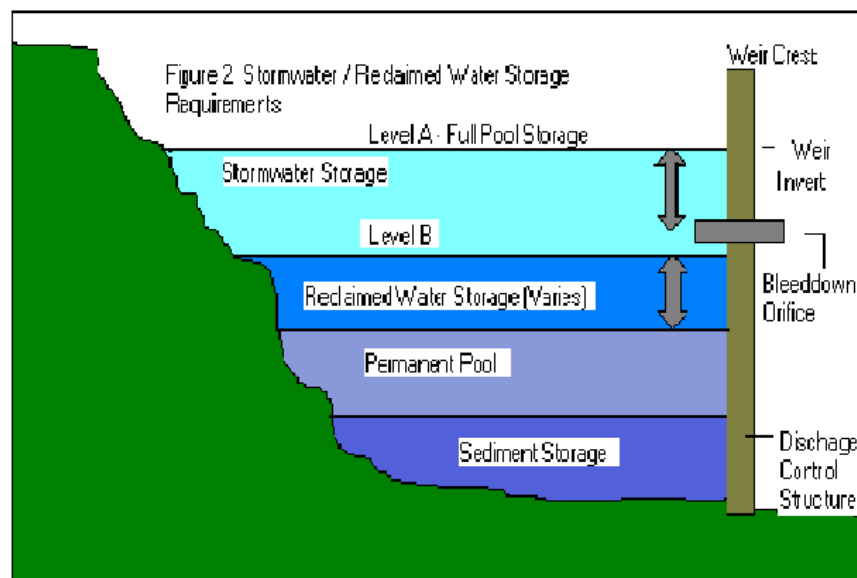
Intermittent discharges from reuse holding ponds into waters of the State are subject to comprehensive NPDES requirements. General Permit No. GAG600000 will authorize rainfall event and stormwater event discharges to Waters of the State of Georgia from reuse holding ponds in the Ogeechee River Basin that are associated with reclaimed water supplied by the City of Pooler.

Coverage under this permit will be initiated by submitting a Notice of Intent (NOI), for the specific wastewater treatment facility (City of Pooler) providing reuse and its designated users with intermittently discharging reuse ponds. The NOI will include basic information about the facility and the specific waters of Georgia where the discharges will occur during or immediately after rainfall events. Specific forms will be available from EPD and must be used for the NOI.

Permit coverage:

This General NPDES permit will provide coverage for the discharges of reclaimed water from the City of Pooler - Bloomingdale Regional Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) to reuse holding ponds in the Ogeechee River Basin at designated sites, where the reclaimed water may be used for irrigation or for cooling condensers. This general permit also allows the discharge from holding ponds in the Ogeechee River Basin, which receive reclaimed water from the Bloomingdale Regional WPCP, during rain and storm events, and for a period of time immediately after the event.

As shown on Figure below, reuse holding ponds will be designed to store reclaimed water and stormwater. When the water level in the reuse holding pond exceeds the designed stormwater storage level (Level A), stormwater will overflow over the weir. The flow will continue to bleed down until the pond reaches the reclaimed water storage level (Level B). The reclaimed water storage level (Level B) is the maximum fill level of the holding pond that allows for storage of the reclaimed water.



Type of Wastewater Discharge

- Process wastewater
- Stormwater
- Domestic wastewater
- Combined: Reuse water (treated domestic wastewater) and stormwater
- Other (Describe)

2.0 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

2.1 State Regulations

Chapter 391-3-6 of the Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control

2.2 Federal Regulations

Source	Activity	Applicable Regulation
Municipal/Domestic/POTW	Municipal/Domestic Effluent Discharge	40 CFR 122
		40 CFR 125
		40 CFR 127
		40 CFR 133
		40 CFR 136
	Non-Process Water Discharges	40 CFR 122
		40 CFR 125
		40 CFR 127
		40 CFR 136
		40 CFR 122
Municipal/Domestic Sludge Use and Disposal	40 CFR 127	
	40 CFR 136	
	40 CFR 257	
	40 CFR 501 & 503	

3.0 WATER QUALITY STANDARDS & RECEIVING WATERBODY INFORMATION

Section 301(b)(1)(C) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) requires the development of limitations in permits necessary to meet water quality standards. Federal Regulations 40 CFR 122.4(d) require that conditions in NPDES permits ensure compliance with the water quality standards which are composed of designated use classifications, numeric and or narrative water quality criteria and an antidegradation policy. The designated use classification system identifies the designated uses that each waterbody is expected to achieve, such as drinking water, fishing, or recreation. The numeric and narrative water quality criteria are deemed necessary to support the designated use for each water body. The antidegradation policy represents an approach to maintain and to protect various levels of water quality and uses. Section 391-3-6-.3(5) of the GA Water Quality Control Act provide General Criteria for All Waters, commonly referred to as the narrative water quality standards, and Specific Criteria for Specific Designated Uses. In addition to the General Criteria the Specific Criteria in Section 3.1 below are deemed necessary for this waterbody and shall be required for the specific designated uses.

3.1 Specific Designated Use(s) [391-3-6-.03(6)]:

Fishing: Propagation of Fish, Shellfish, Game and Other Aquatic Life; primary contact recreation in and on the water for the months of May – October, secondary contact recreation in and on the water for the months of November – April; or for any other use requiring water of a lower quality.

- (i) Dissolved Oxygen: A daily average of 6.0 mg/L and no less than 5.0 mg/L at all times for water designated as trout streams by the Wildlife Resources Division. A daily average of 5.0 mg/L and no less than 4.0 mg/L at all times for waters supporting warm water species of fish.
- (ii) pH: Within the range of 6.0 - 8.5.
- (iii) Bacteria:

1. Estuarine waters:

For the months of May through October, when primary water contact recreation activities are expected to occur, culturable enterococci not to exceed a geometric mean of 35 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an enterococci statistical threshold value (STV) of 130 counts per 100 mL the same 30-day interval.

For the months of November through April, culturable enterococci not to exceed a geometric mean of 74 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an enterococci statistical threshold value (STV) of 273 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.

2. All other fishing waters:

For the months of May through October, when primary water contact recreation activities are expected to occur, culturable E. coli not to exceed a geometric mean of 126 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an E. coli statistical threshold value (STV) of 410 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.

For the months of November through April, culturable E. coli not to exceed a geometric mean of 265 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an E. coli statistical threshold value (STV) of 861 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.

3. The State does not encourage swimming in these surface waters since a number of factors which are beyond the control of any State regulatory agency contribute to elevated levels of bacteria.
 4. For waters designated as shellfish growing areas by the Georgia DNR Coastal Resources Division, the requirements will be consistent with those established by the State and Federal agencies responsible for the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. The requirements are found in National Shellfish Sanitation Program Guide for the Control of Molluscan Shellfish, 2007 Revision (or most recent version), Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference, U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- (iv) Temperature: Not to exceed 90°F. At no time is the temperature of the receiving waters to be increased more than 5°F above intake temperature except that in estuarine waters the increase will not be more than 1.5°F. In streams designated as primary trout or smallmouth bass waters by the Wildlife Resources Division, there shall be no elevation of natural stream temperatures. In streams designated as secondary trout waters, there shall be no elevation exceeding 2°F natural stream temperatures.

Drinking Water Supplies: Those waters approved as a source for public drinking water systems permitted or to be permitted by the Environmental Protection Division. Waters classified for drinking water supplies will also support the fishing use and any other use requiring water of a lower quality.

- (i) Bacteria:
1. For the months of May through October, when primary water contact recreation activities are expected to occur, culturable E. coli not to exceed a geometric mean of 126 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30- day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an E. coli statistical threshold value (STV) of 410 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.
 2. For the months of November through April, culturable E. coli not to exceed a geometric mean of 265 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an E. coli statistical threshold value (STV) of 861 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.
 3. The State does not encourage swimming in these surface waters since a number of factors which are beyond the control of any State regulatory agency contribute to elevated levels of bacteria.
- (ii) Dissolved oxygen: A daily average of 6.0 mg/L and no less than 5.0 mg/L at all times for waters designated as trout streams by the Wildlife Resources Division. A daily average of 5.0 mg/L and no less than 4.0 mg/L at all times for water supporting warm water species of fish.

- (iii) pH: Within the range of 6.0 - 8.5.
- (iv) No material or substance in such concentration that, after treatment by the public water treatment system, exceeds the maximum contaminant level established for that substance by the Environmental Protection Division pursuant to the Georgia Rules for Safe Drinking Water.
- (v) Temperature: Not to exceed 90°F. At no time is the temperature of the receiving waters to be increased more than 5°F above intake temperature except that in estuarine waters the increase will not be more than 1.5°F. In streams designated as primary trout or smallmouth bass waters by the Wildlife Resources Division, there shall be no elevation of natural stream temperatures. In streams designated as secondary trout waters, there shall be no elevation exceeding 2°F of natural stream temperatures.

Recreation: Primary contact recreational activities that occur year round such as swimming, diving, whitewater boating (class III and above), water skiing, and surfing, or for any other use requiring water of a lower quality, such as recreational fishing. These criteria are not to be interpreted as encouraging water contact sports in proximity to sewage or industrial waste discharges regardless of treatment requirement. Secondary contact recreation is incidental contact with the water not involving a significant risk of water ingestion such as canoeing, fishing, kayaking, motor boating, rowing, tubing, splashing, wading, and occasional swimming.

- (i) Bacteria:
 - 1. Coastal and estuarine waters: Culturable enterococci not to exceed a geometric mean of 35 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an enterococci statistical threshold value (STV) of 130 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.
 - 2. All other recreational waters: Culturable E. coli not to exceed a geometric mean of 126 counts per 100 mL based on at least four samples collected from a given sampling site over a 30-day period at intervals not less than 24 hours. There shall be no greater than a ten percent excursion frequency of an E. coli statistical threshold value (STV) of 410 counts per 100 mL in the same 30-day interval.
- (ii) Dissolved Oxygen: A daily average of 6.0 mg/L and no less than 5.0 mg/L at all times for waters designated as trout streams by the Wildlife Resources Division. A daily average of 5.0 mg/L and no less than 4.0 mg/L at all times for waters supporting warm water species of fish.
- (iii) pH: Within the range of 6.0 - 8.5.
- (iv) Temperature: Not to exceed 90°F. At no time is the temperature of the receiving waters to be increased more than 5°F above intake temperature except that in

estuarine waters the increase will not be more than 1.5°F. In streams designated as primary trout or smallmouth bass waters by the Wildlife Resources Division, there shall be no elevation of natural stream temperatures. In streams designated as secondary trout waters, there shall be no elevation exceeding 2°F natural stream temperatures.

Wild River: For all waters designated in 391-3-6-.03(14) as "Wild River," there shall be no alteration of natural water quality from any source.

Scenic River: For all waters designated in 391-3-6-.03(14) as "Scenic River," there shall be no alteration of natural water quality from any source.

Coastal Fishing: For waters designated in 391-3-6-.03(14) as "Coastal Fishing," site specific criteria for dissolved oxygen will be assigned. All other criteria and uses for the fishing designated use will apply for coastal fishing.

- (i) Dissolved Oxygen: A daily average of 5.0 mg/L and no less than 4.0 mg/L at all times. If it is determined that the "natural condition" in the water body is less than the values stated above, then the criteria will revert to the "natural condition" and the water quality standard will allow for a 0.1 mg/L deficit from the "natural" dissolved oxygen value. Up to a 10% deficit will be allowed if it is demonstrated that resident aquatic species shall not be adversely affected.

3.2 Georgia 305(b)/303(d) List Documents:

Coverage under this permit will not be granted for facilities discharging into 303(d) listed waters for parameters of concern for this category of discharges. If the facility's receiving waters become listed on the 303(d) list during the current General Permit cycle, the EPD will reach out to the facility on a case by case basis.

3.0 PERMIT CONDITIONS AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

Provider (City of Pooler):

Effluent from the Bloomingdale Regional Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) will meet treatment requirements from EPD’s *Guidelines for Water Reclamation and Urban Reuse* and will be monitored under the City of Pooler’s NPDES permit GA0047066 prior to distribution to the Designated Users.

The following monitoring requirements have been included in the draft general NPDES permit for the Provider:

Parameters	Discharge Limitation Monthly Average, mg/l unless otherwise specified	Monitoring Requirements ⁽¹⁾		
		Measurement Frequency	Sample Type	Sample Location
Volume (MG) ⁽¹⁾	Report	Seven Days/Week	Continuous	Effluent

⁽¹⁾ The Provider must report the monthly volume provided to each Designated User covered under the General NPDES permit in the Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMR). Daily volumes will be reported in the Operation Monitoring Report (OMR).

FACT SHEET

Designated Users:

Effluent monitoring has been included in the draft general NPDES permit to characterize the combined stormwater/reuse water discharges from the holding ponds. The discharge to waters of the state from the Designated User's holding pond(s) shall be monitored as follows:

Parameters	Discharge Limitation Monthly Average, unless otherwise specified	Monitoring Requirements		
		Measurement Frequency	Sample Type	Sample Location
Volume (gallons) ⁽¹⁾		Each Discharge Event	Calculated	Effluent
Dry weather	0			
During or immediately after a rain or a storm event	Report total volume of each discharge			
Duration (hr) ⁽¹⁾	Report total duration of each discharge	Each Discharge Event		
Rainfall (in) ⁽²⁾	Report	Daily	Measured	--
Five-day Biochemical Oxygen Demand (mg/L) ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
Total Suspended Solids (mg/L) ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
pH (standard units) ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
<i>E. coli</i> (count/100mL) ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
Total Phosphorus, as P ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
Ammonia, as N ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
Nitrite-nitrate, as N ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen, as N ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Grab	Effluent
Total Nitrogen, as N ⁽³⁾	Report	Two Discharge Events/Year	Calculated	Effluent

⁽¹⁾ The Designated User shall record date, volume, and duration of each discharge event. Information shall be reported on the Operation Monitoring Report (OMR). The maximum volume and duration for each month shall be reported on the Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR).

⁽²⁾ The Designated User shall record daily rainfall within 0.5 miles of the holding pond(s). Information shall be reported on Operation Monitoring Report (OMR). The total monthly rainfall shall be reported on the Discharge Monitoring Report (DMR).

⁽³⁾ The Designated User shall collect one effluent sample during summer period (May 1 – October 31) and one sample during winter period (January 1 – April 30 or November 1 – December 31) each year. The designated user will use appropriate No Data Indicator (NODI) code if no discharge event occurs during the sampling period(s).

4.0 OTHER PERMIT REQUIREMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Compliance Schedules

Effluent limitations are applicable immediately upon the effective date of the permit.

4.2 Anti-Backsliding

The limits in this permit are in compliance with the 40 C.F.R. 122.44(l), which requires a reissued permit to be as stringent as the previous permit.

5.0 REPORTING

5.1 Compliance Office

The Bloomingdale Regional WPCP and the designated user's holding ponds have been assigned to the following EPD office for reporting, compliance and enforcement.

Georgia Environmental Protection Division
Coastal District – Brunswick Office
1050 Canal Road
Brunswick, GA 31525

5.2 E-Reporting

The Provider and Designate Users are required to electronically submit documents in accordance with 40 CFR Part 127.

6.0 REQUESTED VARIANCES OR ALTERNATIVES TO REQUIRED STANDARDS

Not applicable.

7.0 PERMIT EXPIRATION

The permit will expire five years from the effective date.

8.0 PROCEDURES FOR THE FORMULATION OF FINAL DETERMINATIONS

8.1 Comment Period

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) proposes to issue a permit to this applicant subject to the effluent limitations and special conditions outlined above. These determinations are tentative.

The permit application, draft permit, and other information are available for review at 2 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Suite 1462 East, Atlanta, Georgia 30334, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and on EPD's website accessible through the publicly available Georgia EPD Online System (GEOS) at: <https://geos.epd.georgia.gov/GA/GEOS/Public/GovEnt/Shared/Pages/Main/Login.aspx> For additional information, you can contact 404-463-1511.

8.2 Public Comments

Persons wishing to comment upon or object to the proposed determinations are invited to submit same in writing to the EPD address above, or via e-mail at EPDcomments@dnr.ga.gov within 30 days of the initiation of the public comment period. All comments received prior to that date will be considered in the formulation of final determinations regarding the application. The permit number should be placed on the top of the first page of comments to ensure that your comments will be forwarded to the appropriate staff.

8.3 Public Hearing

Any applicant, affected state or interstate agency, the Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or any other interested agency, person or group of persons may request a public hearing with respect to an NPDES permit application if such request is filed within thirty (30) days following the date of the public notice for such application. Such request must indicate the interest of the party filing the request, the reasons why a hearing is requested, and those specific portions of the application or other NPDES form or information to be considered at the public hearing.

The Director shall hold a hearing if he determines that there is sufficient public interest in holding such a hearing. If a public hearing is held, notice of same shall be provided at least thirty (30) days in advance of the hearing date.

In the event that a public hearing is held, both oral and written comments will be accepted; however, for the accuracy of the record, written comments are encouraged. The Director or a designee reserves the right to fix reasonable limits on the time allowed for oral statements and such other procedural requirements, as deemed appropriate.

Following a public hearing, the Director, unless it is decided to deny the permit, may make such modifications in the terms and conditions of the proposed permit as may be appropriate and shall issue the permit.

If no public hearing is held, and, after review of the written comments received, the Director determines that a permit should be issued and that the determinations as set forth in the proposed permit are substantially unchanged, the permit will be issued and will become final in the absence of a request for a contested hearing. Notice of issuance or denial will be made available to all interested persons and those persons that submitted written comments to the Director on the proposed permit.

If no public hearing is held, but the Director determines, after a review of the written comments received, that a permit should be issued but that substantial changes in the proposed permit are warranted, public notice of the revised determinations will be given and written comments accepted in the same manner as the initial notice of application was given and written comments accepted pursuant to EPD Rules, Water Quality Control, subparagraph 391-3-6-.06(7)(b). The Director shall provide an opportunity for public hearing on the revised determinations. Such opportunity for public hearing and the issuance or denial of a permit thereafter shall be in accordance with the procedures as are set forth above.

8.4 Final Determination

At the time that any final permit decision is made, the Director shall issue a response to comments. The issued permit and responses to comments can be found at the following address:

<http://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch-permit-and-public-comments-clearinghouse-0>

8.5 Contested Hearings

Any person who is aggrieved or adversely affected by the issuance or denial of a permit by the Director of EPD may petition the Director for a hearing if such petition is filed in the office of the Director within thirty (30) days from the date of notice of such permit issuance or denial. Such hearing shall be held in accordance with the EPD Rules, Water Quality Control, subparagraph 391-3-6-.01.

Petitions for a contested hearing must include the following:

1. The name and address of the petitioner;
2. The grounds under which petitioner alleges to be aggrieved or adversely affected by the issuance or denial of a permit;
3. The reason or reasons why petitioner takes issue with the action of the Director;
4. All other matters asserted by petitioner which are relevant to the action in question.