

**Highlights of the Draft 2026 305(b)/303(d)
List of Waters**

Table of Contents

Development of a Glossary for Terms used in the 305(b)/303(d) Assessment Process.....	3
Introduction of the term “AU” to replace “Reach”.....	3
Changing Listings from “Bacteria” to “E coli” or “Enterococci” or Delisting Based on New Data.....	3
Addition of New Subcategory 3S	4
Summary of Waters	4
Pollutants Removed.....	5
Pollutants Added.....	5
Parameters Added to Category 3 or 3N (more data/information needed to make an assessment)	5
Parameters Moved From Category 3 or 3N to Category 1	5
Changes to Assessment of Lakes for Chlorophyll <i>a</i> and Nutrients	5
Changes Made to the Assessment of Recreational Waters for Bacteria.....	6
Edits made to Dates by Which We Plan to Draft TMDLs	7
Changes Made to Waterbody Segment Names/Locations, Sizes, Counties, Basins and GIS in 2026.....	7
Stream/Lake Segments Split into Two or More Pieces.....	7
Corrections Made to Counties	8
Corrections Made to the River Basins.....	8
Corrections Made to GIS coverages and Sizes	8

Development of a Glossary for Terms used in the 305(b)/303(d) Assessment Process

The 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters and Supporting documents uses a number of words that are specific to the 305(b)/303(d) assessment process. EPD developed a [glossary of terms](#) used in the 305(b)/303(d) assessment process to assist those reading the documents. The glossary can be found on the [Water Quality in Georgia](#) website.

Introduction of the term “AU” to replace “Reach”

In the past, EPD has referred to the portion of a waterbody that has been assessed as a “Reach”. For example, the portion of the Chattahoochee River from (Utoy Creek to Pea Creek) was called a “Reach” and it has a “Reach ID” of GAR031300020323. U.S. EPA uses the term “AU” rather than “Reach”. "AU" stands for "Assessment Unit". The terms “Reach” and “AU” are synonymous. In 2026, EPD is transitioning to using the term "AU" instead of "Reach" to be consistent with terminology used by U.S. EPA. The terms “Reach”, “Reach ID”, “Reach Name” and “Reach Location” have been replaced by “AU”, “AU ID”, “AU Name” and “AU Location”.

Changing Listings from “Bacteria” to “E coli” or “Enterococci” or Delisting Based on New Data

As part of the 2019 Triennial Review, Georgia adopted *E. coli* and enterococci criteria for waters designated as Fishing, Coastal Fishing, and Drinking Water. These new criteria replaced the previous Fecal Coliform (FC) criteria. The new bacteria criteria were approved by U.S. EPA on August 31, 2022. EPD developed a [Bacteria Strategy](#) that describes how EPD is implementing the new criteria including how the adoption of the new criteria impacts the 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters.

Starting with the 2024 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters, FC data was no longer used to assess waters except in the case of assessing waters designated as shellfish growing areas on the coast. This is because FC is still used as the bacteria criteria under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program administered by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The 2026 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters has 3 waters listed as impaired for FC based on requirements for waters in a Shellfish Growing Area.

Waters that were assessed as impaired for FC on the 2022 305(b)/303(d) list were assessed as being impaired for “Bacteria” on the 2024 305(b)/303(d) list if EPD did not have *E. coli* or enterococci data available to assess. EPD is making an effort to revisit these waters to collect *E. coli* or enterococci data. This data will be used to either change the “Bacteria” listing to “E coli”

or “Enterococci” or to delist “Bacteria” if the criteria are being met. There were 580 waters assessed as impaired for “Bacteria” on the 2024 305(b)/303(d) list. EPD was able to collect *E. coli* or enterococci data for 118 of these waters. “Bacteria” was removed from 28 waters based on this new data. “Bacteria” was changed to “E coli” for 89 waters. There was one water that was split in 2026 where “Bacteria” was removed from one portion of the split and “Bacteria” was changed to “E coli” for the second portion of the split.

Addition of New Subcategory 3S

EPD created a new State Category, 3S, which is a subcategory of EPA’s Category 3 waters. The “S” in 3S stands for “Supporting”. It is used for intermittent streams where it is very unlikely that we would ever be able to collect enough data to meet our preferred minimum data set due to the stream being dry much of the year. The sub-category 3S would be used where the preferred minimum data set was not met, but where all the data collected are meeting criteria. There are 7 waters in Category 3S on the 2026 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters.

Summary of Waters

3,165 waters are included in the 2026 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters

- 1,231 Supporting
 - 5,808 miles streams and coastal streams
 - 138,188 acres lakes
 - 22.2 miles coastal beaches
 - 2.1 miles of freshwater beaches
 - 65 square miles sounds/harbors
- 1,652 Not Supporting (aka Impaired)
 - 10,836 miles streams and coastal streams
 - 241,532 acres lakes
 - 15.3 miles of coastal beaches
 - 0.2 miles of freshwater beaches
 - 24 square miles sounds/harbors
- 282 Assessment Pending
 - 1,357 miles streams and coastal streams
 - 1,270 acres lakes

Data were received and assessed for 686 waters. Of these, 631 waters were reassessed based on new data.

55 new waters were added to the 2026 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters

- 13 Supporting

- 25 Not Supporting
- 17 Assessment Pending

Pollutants Removed

- Algae was removed from 1 water
- Ammonia Toxicity was removed from 1 water
- Bacteria (E coli, Enterococci, Bacteria) was removed from 39 waters
- Bio F was removed from 1 water
- Chlorophyll *a* was removed from 1 water
- DO was removed from 13 waters
- Metals were removed from 7 waters (Cd and Pb removed from 1; Se removed from 3, As removed from 2)
- pH was removed from 5 waters

Pollutants Added

- Ammonia Toxicity was added to 5 waters
- Bacteria (E coli, Enterococci) was added to 45 waters
- Bio F was added to 6 waters
- Chlorophyll *a* was added to 3 waters
- DO was added to 6 waters
- Metals (or Metalloids) were added to 9 waters (copper added to 6 and lead to 3)
- pH was added to 4 waters

Parameters Added to Category 3 or 3N (more data/information needed to make an assessment)

- DO was added to Category 3N for 17 waters
- pH was added to Category 3 for 29 waters
- pH was added to Category 3N for 6 waters

Parameters Moved From Category 3 or 3N to Category 1

- DO was removed from Category 3N for 7 waters
- pH was removed from Category 3 for 11 waters
- Enterococci was removed from Category 3 for 1 water

Changes to Assessment of Lakes for Chlorophyll *a* and Nutrients

Site-specific chlorophyll *a* criteria have been established for eight (8) major lakes in Georgia including 1) West Point Lake, 2) Lake Walter F. George, 3) Lake Jackson, 4) Lake Allatoona, 5) Lake Sidney Lanier 6) Carters Lake, 7) Lake Oconee and 8) Lake Sinclair. The criteria for these lakes can be found at [Georgia's Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control – Chapter 391-](#)

[3-6-.03\(17\)](#). While EPD has proposed site-specific chlorophyll *a* criteria for Lakes Rabun, Burton, and Tugalo and they have been adopted by Georgia’s Board of Natural Resources, they were not approved by U.S. EPA before December 2025, so these criteria were not assessed for the 2026 305(b)/303(d) list. EPD is unable to use water quality criteria for Clean Water Act purposes until they are approved by U.S. EPA.

For each of the eight (8) major lakes mentioned, the Chlorophyll *a* growing season average (average of chlorophyll *a* data from April – October) for each lake trend monitoring location was calculated each year from 2021-2025. If the growing season average for any monitoring location exceeded the site-specific growing season criteria two (2) or more times in the last five (5) years, the area of the lake represented by that monitoring location is assessed as Not Supporting its designated uses (assigned to Category 4a or 5). If the growing season average exceeds the site-specific growing season criteria for one (1) out of the last five (5) years, the waterbody is assigned to Category 3 (Assessment Pending). If the growing season average meets the site-specific growing season criteria all five (5) years, the waterbody is assessed as Supporting its designated uses (assigned to Category 1).

- West Point Lake – the Lake was split into 2 sections in 2026
 - Chlorophyll *a* - the Chattahoochee River Arm was moved from Category 3 to Category 5.
 - Chlorophyll *a* - the Dam Pool is remaining in Category 3.
 - Total Phosphorus (TP) - Dam Pool is being removed from Category 5 because the existing TP impairment is based on phosphorus loads from tributaries to the lake exceeding their criteria and all of the tributaries with TP loading criteria flow into the Chattahoochee River Arm of West Point Lake.
 - TP - Chattahoochee River Arm is remaining in Category 5.
- Lake Sinclair –
 - Chlorophyll *a* - 2 sections of the lake (Oconee River Arm and Dam Pool) were moved from Category 3 to Category 5.
- Lake Lanier -
 - Chlorophyll *a* – Dam Pool was moved from Category 4a to Category 1.

Changes Made to the Assessment of Recreational Waters for Bacteria

- Enterococci was added to:
 - Jekyll Island – North Beach
- Enterococci was moved from Category 3 to Category 1
 - Ossabaw Sound
- Enterococci was removed from
 - Little Ogeechee River (aka Green Island Sound)
- E coli was added to:

- Kolomoki Mounds State Historic Park Beach
- F.D. Roosevelt State Park: Small Group Camp Beach
- E. coli was removed from:
 - Withloacochee River (Tiger Creek to Okapilco Creek)
 - Georgia Veterans State Park Beach

Edits made to Dates by Which We Plan to Draft TMDLs

The year by which we plan to draft a TMDL for a given pollutant for a given water is provided in the “Priority” column on the 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters. Due to staffing issues, EPD has had to delay the development of TMDLs the last couple of years. While EPD remains dedicated to completing our commitments under the Clean Water Act, we have had to update dates we planned to develop TMDLs. Five years were added to some of the original dates because TMDLs are drafted based on a rotating river basin strategy where TMDL development is focused in a given river basin grouping once every five years. In the Savannah and Ogeechee River Basins dates were changed from 2024 to 2029. In the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, and Oconee River Basins dates were changed from 2025 to 2030. In the Satilla, Suwannee, St. Marys, and Ochlockonee River Basins many dates were changed from 2026 to 2031. Dates for drafting a few TMDLs in the Chattahoochee and Flint River Basins. were changed from 2027 to 2032 and some were changed from 2032 to 2027.

Changes Made to Waterbody Segment Names/Locations, Sizes, Counties, Basins and GIS in 2026

EPD made a number of changes to waters that were on the 2024 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters. In some cases, waters that were on the 2024 list were split into two or more pieces for the 2026 List. In other cases, the GIS coverage for the water was fixed and this often resulted in changes to the size of the water. The data in the “County” field was corrected for numerous waters. More details about each of these types of changes can be found below. In addition, tables of waters that were impacted by these changes can be found on an Excel file named “ChangesToWaterNamesLocationsGIS_2026305b303d” that can be found on the [Water Quality in Georgia webpage](#) in the section with the 2026 305(b)/303(d) documents.

Stream/Lake Segments Split into Two or More Pieces

Seventeen stream/lake segments were split into two or more pieces on the 2026 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters. Stream/Lake segments are typically split when there is more than one monitoring location within the waterbody and data from the different monitoring locations lead to different assessment results. For instance, if a stream segment has two monitoring locations and the upstream monitoring location indicates the stream is impaired for copper, but the downstream

monitoring location shows the copper criteria are being met, then the stream segment will be split so the upstream portion of the stream is listed as impaired for copper while the downstream segment is assessed as meeting copper criteria.

In addition to splitting a water body based on differences in water quality, EPD also split stream segments based on changes in Designated Uses or Trout Stream designation. Each water on the 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters has one or more designated uses assigned to it (e.g. Fishing, Recreation, Drinking Water, etc.). These designated uses are assigned to waters in [Chapter 3913-6-.03 of the Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control](#). Some waters are also designated as Primary or Secondary Trout Streams. These waters have different temperature and dissolved oxygen criteria than waters with no trout designation. In 2026, EPD split 3 streams where only a portion of the stream was designated as a Trout Stream. The splits were made where the Trout Stream designated use ends.

Corrections Made to Counties

EPD made an effort to verify that the “County” field on the 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters was populated correctly. As a result of this effort, the “County” field was corrected for 58 waters.

Corrections Made to the River Basins

The River Basins for GAR031300110101 (North Mosquito Creek) and GAR031300110102 (Tributary to North Mosquito Creek) were corrected from being in the Flint to being in the Chattahoochee River Basin.

Corrections Made to GIS coverages and Sizes

EPD fixed the GIS coverage and sizes of 10 waters that were on the 2024 305(b)/303(d) List of Waters. Most of the revisions were made to lakes (Lake Oconee, Jackson). We also split West Point Lake into two reaches and split the western portion of Lake Seminole into two pieces. The GIS was updated when these lakes were split.