Most Common Mistakes when Submitting WPP Annual Report Data

In your Annual Report, please include a discussion of observable trends in the water quality data at your monitoring sites and a comparison of the data against Georgia's latest approved water quality standards, which can be found at https://epd.georgia.gov/georgia-water-quality-standards

1. GA EPD has revised water quality standards for bacteria to E. coli (for freshwater) or enterococci (for coastal or estuarine waters) for all waterbodies. There is no longer a need to sample fecal coliform under your approved WPP. Please monitor either E. coli or enterococci, as appropriate, at the frequency defined in your approved WPP.

2. When preparing to submit your water quality data, please utilize the most recent GAEPD water quality data reporting template that can be downloaded from the GAEPD website at https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-assessment-and-protection-plan-guidance-documents. The template is periodically updated by GAEPD to include new functionality, incorporate new monitoring locations, and fix programming bugs. Please review the instructions tab for help suggestions on data entry.

3. Please ensure that your water quality results are entered in the GAEPD data reporting template using the required units. Required units are displayed on row 6 of the template below each parameter name. In addition, the parameters Turbidity, Enterococcus, and E. coli you must select from the available units in the drop-down list by clicking each of these parameter names.

4. To compare stream water quality data for metals with approved WQS, lab results must be sufficiently sensitive (i.e. have a low enough method detection/reporting limit). Metals (Cadmium, Copper, Lead, Zinc, etc.) should be analyzed using EPA Method 200.8 or 200.9. Units for all metal parameters must be entered in the data template in **micrograms per liter (µg/L)**. If your lab reports metal results in milligrams per liter (mg/L), please convert the results to µg/L by multiplying result values in mg/L by 1000.

5. If your lab report results as non-detect (ND), below detection limit (BDL), below reporting limit (BRL), or another similar code, please enter less than the method detection limit value, less than the reporting limit value, or less than the practical quantitation limit value. For example, if Dissolved Zinc is reported as ND and the method detection limit value in the lab report is 5 ug/L, enter **<5** in the appropriate cell for that sampling date. Please select from the drop-down menu in cell Q1 which quantitation type you are reporting, either method detection limit (MDL), reporting limit (RL), or practical quantitation limit (PQL).

6. Along with the electronic submission (either email, CD, or USB flash drive) of your data template, please include **electronic copies of your water quality laboratory analysis data sheets** in PDF format. Paper copies of laboratory data sheets do not need to be submitted. This supporting information will allow for timely review of the water quality data.

7. On years when biological field sampling occurs, please include a discussion of biological observations, trends, and biological scores. Ensure all data collected during biological sampling events are included in electronic format (Excel for tables and PDF for field sheets).

8. In early 2020, the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division (GAWRD) released an update of their fish community assessment scoring criteria. Please note that the fish sampling procedures have not changed. Communities who perform fish community assessments should ensure that all sampling events are analyzed with the 2020 GAWRD scoring criteria, which can be found at https://epd.georgia.gov/fish-biomonitoring-sop.