

# **Environmental Information Document Guidance**

Revised 7/5/2010

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control Rules Chapter 391-3-6-.02, Section (3)(g) states the following; “All projects for the construction, upgrading or expansion of publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities within the State shall be required to prepare an Environmental Information Document (EID). The Division will perform a review of the EID in accordance with procedures developed by the Director.” EPD therefore requires an EID for all newly constructed water pollution control plants (WPCP), WPCP expansions and WPCP upgrades that address new or higher quality treatment limits.

The Rules go on to say, “Party or parties responsible for the project will consult with Federal and State agencies as appropriate for information required in preparing the EID.” And,

“For municipal facilities, the party or parties responsible for the project will conduct at least one public meeting during the planning process. The public will be allowed to submit written comments at any point during the facilities planning processes.”

The purpose of the EID is to document the awareness of the owner, designer and public to all potential environmental impacts resulting from the construction of any new, upgraded or expanded wastewater treatment facilities. The EID is a concise document that adequately discusses the environmental impacts of the proposed project. The degree of detail provided in the EID will vary with size and location of the proposed project.

This guidance document contains information on what the EID should address and includes an Environmental Check List of important environmental considerations that should be addressed in the document, along with brief explanations of each section. Additional EID considerations are: financial impacts to users, alternatives to the project (including no action), and mitigation measures proposed to avoid or minimize the adverse impact of the project. Note that the proposed project may have no impact on many of these considerations and the EID should so state.

Prior to submitting the EID, the local government must conduct a minimum of one public meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to present to the public the proposed project; its purpose, its design and its environmental impacts. The meeting date and time must be advertised at least 30 days in advance in local newspapers with circulation covering all areas impacted by the project. A sample advertisement is attached. Provisions to receive written comments should also be made. Minutes (or a summary) of the public meeting, proof of advertisement and opinions derived from the meeting must be submitted to EPD at the address below:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
Environmental Protection Division  
Watershed Protection Branch  
Engineering & Technical Support Program  
4220 International Parkway, Suite 101  
Atlanta, Georgia 30354

## **Environmental Information Document (EID) Guidance**

1. **GENERAL MAP** - Provide a State of Georgia map indicating the county in which the project is located. Superimpose on the State map an enlarged outline of the county indicating the location of major cities, highways, lakes, streams and the location of the facility.
2. **INDEX PAGE** – Provide a detailed index page.
3. **PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER** - Provide a signed PE stamp on the cover page.
4. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** – Provide a narrative section indicating the current physical and operating condition of an existing facility and the proposed improvements, or describing the new facility.
5. **WETLANDS** - Will the action occur in a “wetlands” area? The definition of wetlands is included in the Code Federal Regulations (CFR), 33 CFR 32.93. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Rules for Environmental Planning, Chapter 391-3-16-.03, incorporates the federal definition as well as both acceptable and unacceptable uses of wetlands. Under current federal law and state policy, alterations or degradations of wetlands should be avoided unless it can be demonstrated that there will be no long-term impacts or net loss of wetlands. A federal permit is required for most wetland activities.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate who concluded whether or not wetlands are located on the project site and what qualifies them to make this conclusion. Provide a qualifications sheet for the evaluator. Provide a United States Geological Survey (USGS) map of the project site indicating the hydrologic features and surrounding area. Access the USGS National Wetlands Inventory website to determine whether jurisdictional wetlands are present on the site. If applicable, obtain a jurisdictional determination from the Army Corps of Engineers in writing, or discuss the need to obtain a determination.

6. **FLOODPLAIN/RIVER CORRIDOR** - Will the action occur in a floodplain or a river corridor? Floodplains are designated areas of land that are flooded with water during periods of rainfall that increase the primary stream flow. Many floodplain areas are shown on Federal Floodplain Maps prepared in support of the National Flood Insurance Program. Additional maps and information on floodplains are available from EPD-Floodplain Management Unit. Most proposed government actions that occur directly in a floodplain area or which may alter the size or character of the floodplain area are considered significant. OCGA 12-2-1 indicates that lands adjacent to major rivers are protected from certain types of development.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a copy of a Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA/FIRM) map showing the project site and area. Indicate the 100-year flood elevation of any adjacent streams and the high pool elevation of any lake or reservoir on or adjacent to the project area. Indicate the location of the project on the map. Will the project fall under the statues of the River Protection Program Act?

7. **WATER RESOURCES/WATER SUPPLY/WATER QUALITY** – Will the proposed action have the potential for decreasing either the quality or quantity of water available for water supply? A water supply is a source of water that is used for drinking water in addition to other consumptive purposes. The DNR Rules, Chapter 391-3-16, contain criteria for water supply watersheds. These criteria establish a basis to allow development in a water supply watershed without contaminating the water source to a point where it cannot be treated to meet drinking water standards.

The waters of the state include surface and groundwater that is not wholly confined to a single privately owned property. Water resources management is one of the most important issues facing Georgia now and in the future. The Georgia EPD's Rules for Surface Water Withdrawals, Chapter 391-3-6, provide the regulatory framework for withdrawal, diversion or impoundment of surface waters of the State. The EPD's Rules for Groundwater Use, Chapter 391-3-2, establishes the regulatory procedures for withdrawing, obtaining or utilization of ground waters of the State.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate the approximate location of all water supply intakes on water bodies adjacent to the project. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in conjunction with the States has developed a method of tracking the environmental benefit of Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) projects. To maintain this information, the name of the impacted water body, its 14-digit waterbody National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) reach code or 10-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC), and designated use are needed. Also needed is a description of the current state of the water body. Is the water body listed or proposed to be listed on Georgia's 305(b)/303(d) lists, does it have an existing or is it proposed to have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or has an evaluation been completed documenting whether the proposed project improves or maintains water quality or allows the stream to be de-listed?

If within 5 miles of the site; provide a map showing the location of the closest Wild and Scenic River in relation to the project. Provide a copy of the section of Georgia's Integrated 305(b)/303(d) Report that addresses the water bodies adjacent to the project. Determine whether the receiving stream is supporting or non-supporting its stream classification.

8. **WATER CONSERVATION** - Is the proposed action the most acceptable option that will enhance water conservation efforts? Senate Bill 370 (Water Stewardship Act of 2010) in conjunction with the Statewide Water Management Plan and DNR rules require that nonagricultural water users prepare and implement water conservation plans.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Describe how the project will utilize water conservation devices and fixtures within bathrooms (sink faucets and toilets), laboratory sink faucets, and utilize reclaimed or recycled wastewater within the facility grounds.

9. **GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREA** - Will the action result in the disturbance or altering of a groundwater recharge area? Groundwater recharge areas are those portions of the ground surface where water infiltrates into the ground to replenish an aquifer. The Significant Recharge Areas of the state are those areas mapped by the DNR in Hydrologic Atlas 18 (1989 Edition). The DNR Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, Chapter 391-3-16, contain specific criteria for protection of groundwater recharge areas.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a copy of the Ground Water Pollution Susceptibility Map showing the location of the proposed facility on the map.

10. **STORM WATER** - Will the project result in increasing the amount of storm water runoff for downstream property owners? The primary concern related to storm water is the creation of impervious surfaces that contribute to an increase in the amount of storm water runoff to the point where there is damage or a threat to downstream property owners. Another very important issue is the potential contamination of surface water by stormwater that has come in contact with contaminants.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide documentation indicating whether a Watershed Assessment and Watershed Protection Plan encompassing the project area has been approved by EPD.

11. **WASTEWATER** - Will the proposed action have a significant impact on the treatment capability of the existing wastewater treatment facilities? Does the existing wastewater treatment facility have the excess capacity to accommodate the potential increase in load as a result of this project?

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Briefly discuss the type of wastewater treatment system used by the City/County and list the different type of treatment units and their purpose. Identify any new treatment units or piping modifications to the facility. Indicate the type of wastewater that will be treated at the facility (percentage municipal, industrial and commercial). Attach a copy of the permit parameter page from the County/City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Land Application Systems (LAS) or Reuse permit. Indicate the average monthly discharge monitoring report parameter concentrations in mg/l. Provide a map showing the location of the wastewater treatment facility discharge. Indicate whether or not the facility is currently in compliance with its NPDES permit and whether or not the facility has been issued a Notice of Violation and or a Consent Order regarding compliance. Acquire Discharge Monitoring Data (DMR) data for the existing facility and determine the amount of reserve wastewater treatment capacity available at the facility.

12. **PROTECTED SPECIES** - Will the proposed action harm or reduce the population of any protected species? With respect to the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA), the term "protected species" includes those plant and animal species protected by the State in accordance with the Georgia Wildflower Preservation Act of 1973 and the Georgia Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973. DNR Rules, Chapter 391-4-10, provide more detailed criteria for the state's protected species. Georgia protected species include those listed federally as endangered and threatened.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a narrative discussion of this topic. Submit a copy of the EID to the DNR-Non-Game Species office and request them to determine whether any protected species are present on the site or in the receiving stream reach downstream of the discharge. If DNR determines that protected species are present, then a formal study of the site and project impact will need to be conducted by a qualified person. Indicate who conducted the protected species survey and what qualifies them to conduct this study.

13. **CRITICAL HABITATS** - Is the proposed action expected to involve any critical habitats? Critical habitats are those sites on which the State's protected species are dependent for their survival. They also include U.S. Forest lands, U.S. Wildlife Refuges, Wilderness Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a narrative discussion of this topic. Submit a copy of the EID to the DNR-Non-Game Species office and request them to determine whether critical habitat is present on the site. If DNR determines that critical habitat is present on the site, then a formal study of the site will need to be conducted by a qualified person. Indicate who conducted the critical habitat survey and what qualifies them to conduct this study.

14. **AQUATIC LIFE/TROUT STREAMS** - Will the proposed action significantly impact freshwater aquatic life, trout populations and/or trout habitat? Georgia has an abundance of freshwater lakes, streams, and bodies of water that support trout. The freshwater fisheries are important for the total food chain. Primary and secondary trout streams should be protected.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate that you reviewed the "Trout Streams of Georgia" map produced by DNR and determined whether the project-related streams are classified as trout streams. Provide a narrative that discusses the stream classification of any adjacent streams as indicated in Georgia's Integrated 305(b)/303(d) Report and whether the proposed project will impact trout populations and/or habitat.

15. **AIR QUALITY** - Will the action result in a release or discharge of contaminants into the ambient air? Any action that results in the release or discharge of contaminants into the air such that existing ambient air quality may be diminished is a significant action. All discharges or releases may be subject to regulation under the Georgia Air Quality Control Act and/or the U.S. Clean Air Act.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate the buffer distances that will be maintained around the facility. Indicate the distance from treatment units to property lines and to habitable structures. Provide a map of the facility indicating the existing and proposed treatment units and the associated buffers adjacent to them. Add a statement that aerosols may be generated from the wastewater treatment facility components and that there will be adequate buffer zones around the facility to control the transmission of aerosols. Indicate that dust control will be implemented during construction.

16. **SOLID WASTES** - Will the project result in the generation of solid wastes for disposal, or will the proposed actions occur near or in an active or closed landfill? Solid waste is defined in the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act. It includes different categories of wastes that exist in solid form (household garbage, demolition material, land clearing debris, commercial non-hazardous waste material, etc). Whereas the amount of solid waste generated that requires disposal is of concern, another primary issue relates to a land disturbance in the vicinity of an active or closed landfill.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate how screenings from the pump station and wastewater treatment facility will be removed and properly disposed. Indicate the name and location of the landfill that will receive the screenings and sludge from the facility

17. **SOIL STABILITY/ERODIBILITY** - Will the action displace soils that will be carried off site and pose a threat to surface waters or property? Under the Georgia Soil, Erosion and Sedimentation Act, local governments that have authorized management programs under the Act establish control procedures and issue a permit for the project. If the action takes place in a county or municipality that does not have such authorization, EPD is the regulating agency. In either case, a technical guidance book is available from either the local government or EPD.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a narrative indicating that all construction will comply with the State of Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act of 1975 and the Manual for Erosion and Sedimentation Control in Georgia, latest editions.

18. **PROTECTED MOUNTAINS** - Will the project involve the alteration of lands with high elevations and steep slopes? The Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A.) Section 12-2-8 (as amended) identifies land as Protected Mountains which lie above 2,200 feet in elevation and have slopes of twenty-five (25%) or more, In accordance with the O.C.G.A., the Department of Natural Resources is charged with promulgating Rules for implementation of a "Mountain Protection" program.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate the elevation of the project. Provide a copy of a USGS quad map showing the ground contours.

19. **HISTORICAL** - Will the proposed action involve disturbance of any historic property? Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) requires consideration of any structure on or eligible for the Georgia Register of Historic Places. In addition, the regulations of the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800) which implements Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 contains definitions and criteria of adverse effect for the protection of historic properties. Below is a list of documentation required for the review of projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a narrative discussion of this topic. Submit a copy of the EID to the DNR-Historic Preservation Division and request them to determine whether any historic sites will be impacted by this project. If the DNR-Historic Preservation Division indicates that a historic site exists on the site, then a formal study of the site will need to be conducted by a qualified person.

Contact the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) for the actual requirements of a submittal on the specific project. However, they may require the following information:

- a. A letter describing the proposed undertaking, the federal agency involved (i.e. CWSRF, Economic Development Administration (EDA), etc.) and language requesting Historical Preservation Division's review of the undertaking.
- b. A USGS topographic map indicating the location and Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the proposed undertaking. Please indicate the "footprint" of the proposed project (i.e. the ground disturbing area).
- c. Original 35mm or high quality digital color photographs of all buildings that appear to be fifty years old or older, which are located on, immediately adjacent to and/or within view of the project area, as well as photographs of the surrounding area to document the "setting" of the proposed undertaking. All photographs must be keyed to a floor plan indicating the location and direction of view. (For projects involving rehabilitation, alteration, or demolition of buildings, please provide interior and exterior photographs whenever possible, including all facades and significant details).
- d. For projects involving alteration or rehabilitation, include a detailed work write up, existing floor plans and proposed floor plans.
- e. For projects involving the demolition of buildings that appear to be fifty years old or older, include alternatives to demolition that were considered and a discussion of why such alternatives were determined not to be feasible.
- f. For projects involving archaeological resources, include any cultural resources surveys or reports conducted on the site.

20. **ARCHEOLOGICAL** - Will the proposed action involve disturbance of any archeological property? Archeological properties are the physical remains of the past that can be studied by archaeologists and other scholars to answer questions about prehistory and history. In addition, the regulations of the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36 CFR 800), which implement Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, contain definitions and criteria of adverse effect for the protection of archeological properties.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a narrative discussion of this topic. Submit a copy of the EID to the DNR-Historic Preservation Division and request them to determine whether any archaeological sites will be impacted by this project. We recommend that the DNR-Historic Preservation Division be given an opportunity to review the EID and provide comments. If the DNR-Historic Preservation Division indicates that an archeological site exists, then a formal study of the site will need to be conducted by a qualified person.

## 21. **BEACHES, DUNES, SHORELINES and COASTAL AREAS**

All of the following topics must be addressed in the EID:

**BEACHES** - Will the proposed action involve the disturbance of any ocean beach area? The Georgia General Assembly has found that ocean beaches provide an unparalleled recreation resource vitally linked to the economy of Georgia's Coastal Zone and to that of the entire state. They are also part of the sand-sharing system that provides habitats and acts as a protective buffer for other areas. This natural resource system is costly, if not impossible to reconstruct or rehabilitate once adversely affected by man-related activities. Therefore, any action in these areas should be considered highly significant.

**DUNES** - Will the proposed activity alter coastal sand dunes? Coastal sand dunes, beaches, sandbars, and shoals, comprise a vital natural resource system, known as the sand-sharing system, which acts as a buffer to protect real and personal property and natural resources from the damaging effects of floods, winds, tides, and erosion. The coastal sand dunes are the most inland portion of the sand-sharing system and because they are a fragile product of shoreline evaluation. They are easily disturbed by action harming their vegetation or inhibiting their natural development, and are protected under the Georgia Shoreline Assistance Act of 1979.

**SHORELINE** - Will the project involve activities in the Georgia Coastal Shoreline area or in areas covered under the river corridor protection requirements of Georgia House Bill 643? In accordance with DNR Rules, Chapter 391-2-2, protective measures and procedures are provided for the implementation of the Georgia Shoreline Assistance Act. Construction, erection, or engaging in any shoreline engineering activity or land alteration that alters the natural topography or vegetation of any area is highly regulated under the Act. In addition, the 1991 General Assembly passed House Bill 643 that also provides for the protection of coastal river corridors. DNR is authorized to promulgate Rules for the implementation of House Bill 643.



**COASTAL MARSHLANDS (ESTUARY)** - Will the proposed action alter the Georgia coastal marshland environment? Georgia's coast contains the saltwater marshes. These marshes have been identified as one of the most extensive and productive marshlands systems in the United States. Georgia's marshes, sands, and near-shore ocean water produce more food and energy than any other estuarine zone on the eastern seaboard. They are also an essential life support system for Georgia's multi-million dollar seafood industry. Any activities that affect this area are closely regulated under the Georgia Coastal Marshlands Protection Act.

**COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AREA** - If the proposed project is located in the Coastal Zone Management Area, will it comply with the EPD established strategy for managing salt-water intrusion in the Upper Floridan Aquifer of Coastal Georgia? The Upper Floridan Aquifer of Coastal Georgia is susceptible to salt-water intrusion. The aquifer is a primary source of drinking water and industrial process water throughout twenty-four counties of the region. In order to protect the Upper Floridan Aquifer from salt-water intrusion, EPD developed a strategy to address this problem. Projects in the coastal area must conform to this established ground water management strategy.

**BARRIER ISLAND** - Will the proposed action involve activities on or near a barrier island? Along the Georgia Coast an extensive system of salt marshes, tidal estuaries, and sounds separate a chain of eight major and several smaller barrier islands from the mainland. Two-thirds of Georgia Barrier Islands are parks, refuges, or preserves. Sand beaches and dunes protect the islands from erosion and flooding. The islands shelter the marshes from the force of storms. Any proposed action that involves the barrier islands should be considered highly significant.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** If the project is located within the 11-county coastal zone that comprises the jurisdiction of the DNR Coastal Resources Division (CRD), submit a copy of the EID to the CRD for review. Indicate the distance from the project to the Atlantic Ocean.

22. **FOREST LAND** - Will the proposed action involve changes in forested areas? GEPA specifically provides that a proposed government action be evaluated if a project involves the harvesting of five acres or more of trees, in which the tree diameter is over two inches in diameter. The secondary effects of tree removal as well as other land disturbing activities that may impact a forested area are of concern. Depending on the type of harvesting methods, tract locations and other variable criteria, there may exist a potential for erosion and sedimentation, habitat alteration, and other changes for concern. Manuals on Best Management Practices (common sense forestry associated practices which minimize the impact on the environment) are available from the Georgia Forestry Commission. These practices were developed by a statewide task force, appointed by the Governor, with input from all aspects of forestry in Georgia.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a map showing the location of adjacent national and state forest areas in relation to the project area.

23. **PARKS/RECREATION** - Will the proposed action involve disturbance or otherwise have a significant impact on the State's cultural resources? GEPA includes cultural resources within the consideration focus of a proposed government action. In addition to the archeological or historic value, cultural resources may also include parklands, preserves, and other public lands or areas of recognized scenic and/or recreational value.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a map showing the location of adjacent national, state and local parks in relation to the project area.

24. **FARM LAND** - Will the proposed action have a significant impact on land used for farm operation or will it be constructed on farmland?

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Provide a site map showing the location of farmland in the vicinity of the project. Identify the project in relation to farmland.

25. **SITE SAFETY** - Will the characteristics of the proposed site have any effect on the safety of the work force or the surrounding residents?

**Supporting Documentation:** Provide a narrative description of potential manmade hazards (thermal/explosive/chemical, etc.) at any pump station or wastewater treatment facility. Provide a reference that all construction will comply with OCGA Chapter 9, Title 25 and the US Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 29 CFR Part 1926, Subpart P, latest edition. Indicate that a perimeter fence will be installed around the entire facility, that all gates will be provided with locks and that no trespassing signs will be placed around the facility perimeter fence every 50.

26. **NOISE** - Will the proposed action have significant impact on the existing noise levels in the area? The potential effect of the noise associated with the machinery involved with the project such as pumps, aerators, blowers, etc., must be considered.

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Indicate that all equipment associated with the wastewater treatment facility will have noise levels below 90 decibels at a distance of 3 feet. Indicate the buffer distance between the wastewater treatment facility and adjacent residences.

27. **ENERGY USE/ENERGY SUPPLIES** – Is the proposed action the most energy efficient option? What will be done to optimize the energy efficiency of the equipment to be utilized? Energy efficient equipment, as well as low energy systems, must be considered. Consideration should also be given to the use of waste products to generate power such as biogas-to-electrical power conversion. Will the proposed action have significant impact on the reduction in the available energy supplies? This primarily refers to the source of energy (electrical, gas/oil, solar, etc.) that will be consumed by the project in relation to the total available in the area. Is the energy that will be consumed by these facilities a significant portion of the available energy in the vicinity of the site?

**Additional Supporting Documentation:** Peak power shaving should be discussed with local power utilities if applicable.

## 28. IMPACTS -

*Direct and Indirect Impacts* – Direct impacts are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect impacts are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.

*Primary and Secondary Impacts* – The primary impact is the main impact of the action. Secondary impacts occur from the action but are less in importance and/or magnitude than the primary impact.

*Cumulative Impacts* – A cumulative impact is the effect on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

## **Sample Public Meeting Advertisement**

The City of Anytown hereby gives notice that the City of Anytown will hold a public meeting on DATE at TIME in the Anytown City Hall at 101 Anytime Main Street, Anytown, Georgia ZIPCODE.

The purposes of the public meeting are to:

1. Inform the public of the need for improvements to the City's wastewater treatment system.
2. To comply with Section 391-3-6-.02 of Georgia's Water Quality Control Rules and Regulations (and amendments thereto).
3. To encourage public involvement in the development of a plan to improve the wastewater treatment system.

The public meeting will attempt to identify public preferences for alternative methods of improving the City's wastewater treatment facilities. These alternatives will be evaluated and included in the City's Environmental Information Document.

Public participation is considered essential to the selection and development of the final plan to be adopted prior to its approval by the State of Georgia, Department of Natural Resources.