

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION DOCUMENT (EID) GUIDANCE

The Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control 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.

1. The party or parties responsible for the project will consult with Federal and State agencies as appropriate for information required in preparing the EID.
2. 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 process."

The purpose of an 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 impact of the proposed project. It is not intended to be a complete environmental impact study. The degree of detail provided in the EID will vary with the size and location of the proposed project.

Attached is an Environmental Check List of important environmental considerations with brief explanations. Additional EID considerations are: financial impact to user, 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 and Design Development Report, 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
Water Protection Branch
Engineering & Technical Support
4220 International Parkway, Suite 101
Atlanta, Ga 30354

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECK LIST

GEORGIA AREA/CATEGORY	IS AREA AFFECTED?			IF AFFECTED, HOW SEVERE?			
	NO	YES	UNKNOWN	MINOR	MEDIAN	MAJOR	UNKNOWN
1. Wetlands							
2. Flood Plain/River Corridor							
3. Water Supply							
4. Water Resources							
5. Groundwater Recharge Area							
6. Storm Water							
7. Waste Water							
8. Air Quality							
9. Solid Wastes							
10. Soil Stability/Erodibility							
11. Protected Mountains							
12. Protected Species							
13. Critical Habitats							
14. Historical							
15. Archeological							
16. Parks/Recreation							
17. Energy Supplies							
18. Beaches							
19. Dunes							
20. Shoreline							
21. Estuary							
22. Forest Land							
23. Barrier Island							
24. Aquatic Life/Trout Streams							
25. Noise							
26. Farm Land							
27. Site Safety							
28. Energy Use							

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECK LIST
GEORGIA AREA/CATEGORY INFORMATION

1. WETLANDS - Will the action occur in a "wetlands" area? The definition of wetlands is included in the Federal Regulations, 33 CFR 32.93. The DNR Rules for Environmental Planning, Chapter 391-3-16-.03, incorporate 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.

2. FLOODPLAIN/RIVER CORRIDOR - Will the action occur in a floodplain or a river corridor? Floodplains are designated areas of land that become flooded with water during periods of rainfall that increase the primary stream flow. Many floodplain areas are shown on Federal Floodplain Maps which have been prepared in support of the National Flood Insurance Program. Additional maps and information on floodplains are available from the DNR's Environmental Protection Division (EPD). 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. Under H.B. 643, passed by the 1991 Session of the General Assembly, lands adjacent to major rivers are protected from certain types of development. DNR is charged with developing rules for the River Corridor protection program.

3. WATER SUPPLY - Does the proposed action have the potential for decreasing either the quality or quantity of water available for water supply? Water supply means 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. EPD can provide information to state agencies as to whether their proposed projects lie within water supply watersheds.

4. WATER RESOURCES - Will the proposed action result in large demand for water from the available water resources? Will the proposed action result in a degradation of the quality of waters of the state? The waters of the state include surface and groundwater that is not wholly confined to a single privately owned piece of property. Water resources management is one of the most important issues facing Georgia now and in the future. A growing population and the potential for water shortages focus on the importance of adequate amounts of good quality water. The DNR Rules for Surface Water Withdrawals, Chapter 391-3-6, provide the regulatory framework for withdrawal, diversion or impoundment of surface waters of the State. DNR Rules for Groundwater Use, Chapter 391-3-2, establish regulatory procedures for withdrawing, obtaining or utilization of groundwaters of the state.

5. 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 earth's 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.

6. STORMWATER - 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 of 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 stormwater through increased contact with contaminants.

7. WASTEWATER - Will the project produce wastewater that is discharged to a surface stream? Wastewater means contaminated water (sewage or other contaminants) that must be treated and disposed of either by direct discharge to a surface stream or indirect discharge to an existing municipal sewer system. Even if the wastewater from a state project is to be discharged to a municipal sewer system, the effect can be significant if that wastewater causes the municipality to expand its sewage treatment system.

8. 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.

9. 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 which exist in a 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 disturbing activity in the vicinity of an active or closed landfill.

10. 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 which have authorized management programs under the Act establish control procedures and permit 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.

11. PROTECTED MOUNTAINS - Will the project involve the alteration of lands with high elevations and steep slopes? Under House Bill 643, which was passed by the 1991 Session of the General Assembly, land which lies above 2,200 feet in elevation and has slopes of twenty-five (25%) or more, are identified as Protected Mountains. In accordance with the Act, DNR is charged with promulgating Rules for implementation of a "Mountain Protection" program. At the time of preparation of this GEPA guidance, those rules are currently under development.

12. PROTECTED SPECIES - Will the proposed action harm or reduce the population of protected species? Endangered species is used in both the generic sense for protected species and in a more narrow definition sense under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. With respect to the GEPA, the term protected species is more applicable. 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.

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 or Scenic Rivers.

14. HISTORICAL - Will the proposed action involve disturbance of any historic property? GEPA specifies 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 contains definitions and criteria of adverse effect for the protection of historic properties.

15. 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.

16. 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 park lands, preserves, and other public lands or areas of recognized scenic and/or recreational value.

17. ENERGY SUPPLIES - 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.

18. 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 which is 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 which 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.

19. 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 evolution, they are easily disturbed by action harming their vegetation or inhibiting their natural development. They are protected under the Georgia Shoreline Assistance Act of 1979.

20. 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 which 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 which also provides for the protection of coastal river corridors. DNR is authorized to promulgate Rules for the implementation of House Bill 643 and they are currently being developed.

21. COASTAL MARSHLANDS - Will the proposed action alter the Georgia coastal marshlands 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.

22. FOREST LAND - Will the proposed action involve changes in forested areas? GEPA specifically provides that a proposed government action includes the harvesting of five acres or more of trees over two inches in diameter at breast height. 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 statewide task force, appointed by the Governor, with input from all aspects of forestry in Georgia.

23. BARRIER ISLAND - Will the proposed action involve activity 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.

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

25. 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.

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

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

28. ENERGY USE - Is the proposed action the most energy efficient option? Energy efficient equipment, as well as low energy treatment systems, must be considered.

SAMPLE

PUBLIC MEETING

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 Anytown Main Street.

The purposes of the public meeting are to:

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

The public meeting will attempt to identify public preferences for alternative methods of improving the City's wastewater facilities. These alternatives will be evaluated and included in the City's Facilities Plan and Environmental Information Document, the major planning document covering the wastewater system.

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.

SAMPLE