

SGRC Environmental Recommendations

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Regional Water Quality Assessment Project

- Awarded to SGRC in January 2020, estimated completion in December 2022.

Background Information

Of the region's 1,500 miles of waterways, 1,178 do not support their designated use (Georgia Environmental Protection Division, 2018). Problems with nonpoint source pollution have been ongoing and are addressed in the Georgia Water Plan, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) Nonpoint Source Pollution Plan, the Suwannee Satilla Regional Water Plan, the SGRC Regional Plan, and the Comprehensive Plans for all 18 counties within the region. Furthermore, as identified in their Comprehensive Plans, many counties in the region are seeking to utilize waterways for recreation and economic growth. To this end, water quality and health are important to all stakeholders.

Regional organizations seeking to address the nonpoint source FC pollution within impaired waterbodies will benefit from understanding what and where the significant contributing sources are. Specific data will be useful when considering BMP types, locations, and interested parties when requesting funding such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the EPD's 319(h) grants.

Project Goals

- The long-term goal of this project is to improve regional water quality, funding efficiency and best management practice (BMP) efficacy.
- This project involves a comprehensive review of the region's fecal coliform (FC) impaired waterbodies using data analysis, water quality sampling, Steering Committee input and oversight Citizen Scientist involvement and public education and engagement.
- Regional outreach and education will include Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) training events for both chemical and bacterial protocols. Nonpoint source pollution workshops will be held in communities near FC impaired waterbodies to help inform residents of the changes they can make to improve water quality.
- The resulting product will be a list of significant nonpoint sources of FC pollution in each impaired water body. The project will provide prioritized areas for BMP implementation, recommended BMP types, and homeowners/landowners/business owners interested in future BMP funding opportunities. The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) will develop a publicly available, user-friendly Geographic Information Systems (GIS) web-map showing the 303(d) listed waters from 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 reports.

Supporting Maps and Charts Regional Watershed Map