



GEORGIA ADOPT-A-STREAM

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Georgia
Adopt-A-Stream
Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring



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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream encourages individuals and communities to promote the health of their local streams, wetlands, lakes, and estuaries by conducting water and habitat quality monitoring and increasing public awareness of the impacts humans have on Georgia's waterways.



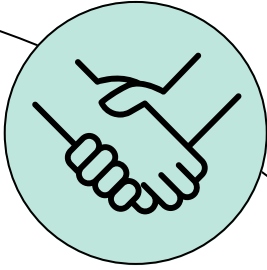
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

For the past 30 years, the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream community has played a pivotal role in protecting and preserving our water resources through public education, community outreach, and diligent collection of chemical, bacterial, macroinvertebrate, and physical data. In 2022, Adopt-A-Stream volunteers conducted more than 5,600 monitoring events. Your dedication to water stewardship does not go unnoticed. Thank you for your continued efforts to make Georgia better for everyone.

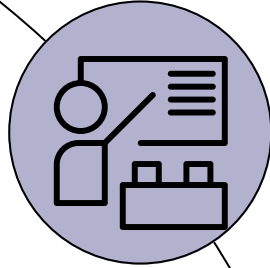
Richard Dunn
Director
Environmental Protection Division
March 9, 2023



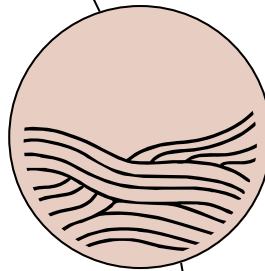
2022 BY THE NUMBERS



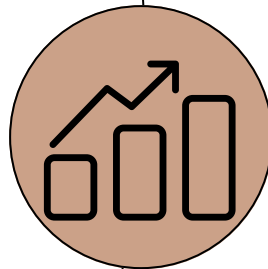
1,097
ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS



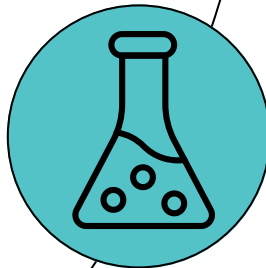
57
ACTIVE TRAINERS



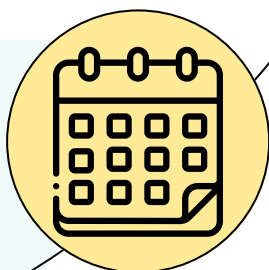
743
ACTIVE SITES



22,738
DATA POINTS



5,657
MONITORING EVENTS



355
WORKSHOPS
CONDUCTED

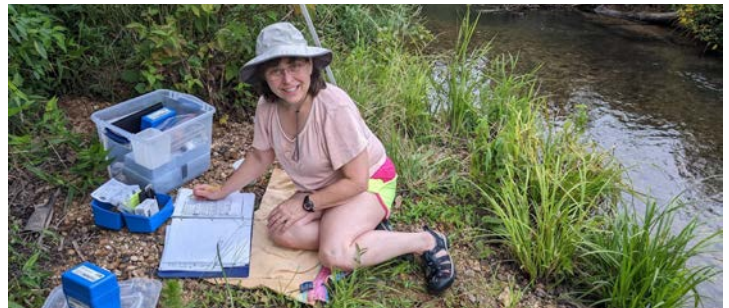
WELCOME, NEWCOMERS!

1,026
NEW VOLUNTEERS
CERTIFIED



10
NEW TRAINERS
CERTIFIED

264
NEW SITES
MONITORED



240
NEW STREAMS
MONITORED

44
NEW MONITORING
GROUPS



AAS volunteers conducted
25,200 hours
of service in 2022, worth over
\$754,000
in volunteer dollars!

2022 AAS AWARD WINNERS

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is sincerely grateful for all the volunteers, trainers and partners who give their time and energy to protect and improve Georgia's waterways. We are pleased to recognize the following individuals and groups for their achievements.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Diane Sprague

Diane has monitored 474 events since first getting certified in 2013. She not only monitors waterways for chemical, bacterial, and macroinvertebrate samples, but also began including habitat evaluations and flow determinations several years ago. Diane has adopted 12 sites with the Middle Savannah River Sentinels and actively collects data on 6 sites. Diane's dedication is exemplary and is reflected in her desire to grow her knowledge about water quality.

"It has been a pleasure being a part of GA AAS. From following the trends of each of our creeks to finding a water penny to interacting with local officials when a problem is discovered to falling down the occasional rabbit hole. Best of all meeting and hanging out with some of the coolest people I know." -Diane Sprague

RED FLAG AWARD

Tim Phillips and Stacey Haire

In December 2022, Tim and Stacey were conducting their monthly monitoring when they observed abnormal algae growth in their stream. When their bacterial plates were already showing high counts of *E. coli* colonies after only 10 hours of incubation, they headed back to their site. After a 3-hour search, they found a severed sewer main 1.2 miles upstream from their site. The municipality was notified, and the line was fixed that day. By being observant and proactive, they prevented at least 27,000 more gallons of sewage from spilling into the creek.

"We monitor water quality because the health of the streams in our community is important to us. The Adopt-a-Stream program does a great job providing us with the training, tools, and support we need to conduct our monitoring." -Tim Phillips and Stacey Haire

EXTRAORDINARY WATERSHED MONITORING EFFORT

Middle Savannah River Sentinels

The Middle Savannah River Sentinels were established in 2012 and monitor 9 sites monthly throughout the Augusta area, conducting a total of 93 monitoring events in 2022. They monitor chemical, bacterial, macroinvertebrate, and visual parameters, and have investigated citizens' concerns about suspicious water issues. Additionally, some members have judged at local STEM events and Science Fairs, met with home owners associations, presented at lunch 'n learn programs, and consulted with the City officials in creating and installing a rain garden at a city park.

"We are a team mostly of retirees generating useful water quality data while having fun. This model has grown our team for about 18 years now, and we still get excited about finding the source of any problem we find." - Frank Carl



VOLUNTEER AWARDS

OUTSTANDING OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIP *MOST (Madison-Oglethorpe Stream Team)*

MOST collaborated with Madison County Clean Power Coalition (MCCPC) to work toward stopping the burning of creosote railway ties from Madison Georgia Renewable Power (GRP) plant operations. They formed partnerships with environmental groups, local governments, and state legislators to pass legislation that banned burning creosote treated wood for power generation statewide. In 2022, they performed 45 monitoring events (bacterial, chemical, macroinvertebrates) at 5 sites. In addition to core chemical parameters, they also monitor chlorine and phosphates.

"AAS gave us tools and training to watch over the stream health of the S. Fork Broad River. We are especially committed to this cause so we can give Watson Mill and the Broad River to our great grandchildren." -Ruth Ann Tesanovich



INNOVATION IN ADOPT-A-STREAM

Apryl Milam

Apryl created a student-led, community science project exploring impacts of pollution called "Changes on the Chattahoochee". This project coordinated students and volunteers across the state to sample the entire length of the Chattahoochee on the same day, at the same time. Students recorded observations, chemical data, and sampled for microplastics. Apryl combined all the student data, and the students are now in the process of creating their own posters for science fairs, poster sessions, and other student led presentations.

"This is a message that I share with all of my students. It doesn't matter where you live, what school you go to or the beliefs that you and your family hold dear to your hearts. Water connects each and every one of those things. Water is Life." -Apryl Milam



EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Piedmont University Natural Science Department

Piedmont University has incorporated AAS field monitoring events to enhance their students' educational experiences across numerous courses. Julia Schmitz, Piedmont professor and AAS trainer, certified 15 students in AAS bacterial monitoring this past year, and their AAS monitors have in turn produced their own training videos for use by novice volunteer water samplers. Offering AAS certification to their students has also helped them enhance their resumes and professional prospects.

"AAS has provided opportunities to our faculty and students to develop professionally, and we have developed partnerships within our institution, with local schools, and boy scouts troops." - Debra Dooley



VOLUNTEER AWARDS

NYMPH AWARD

Al Welk

Al has been the main driving force of the Lake Sovereign monitoring group. Since his first certification in 2020, he has performed chemical and bacterial monitoring in the Etowah River Watershed with consistency and attention to detail, conducting 14 events in 2022. When the Lake Sovereign's monitoring group first started, Al voiced that some of the monitoring directions needed more clarity. From this need, he reworded some of the testing directions to make the procedures easier to understand. He also included pictures along with the revised directions to aid with comprehension, continuing to go above and beyond the call of duty.

"We strive to ensure the cleanest and safest water for our residents and the aquatic life in Lake Sovereign." -Al Welk

EXCELLENCE IN DATA COLLECTION (INDIV.)

Jerry Vandergriff

Jerry Vandergriff is certified in chemical and bacteria protocols and consistently samples sites within the Satilla River, Altamaha and St. Marys watersheds. As his sampling became more laborious, he added the Oakton Environmental Express Multimeter to his toolbox. With this device, he measures dissolved oxygen, pH, and conductivity and has reduced his sampling time to less than 10 minutes. He is now training others within his organization in the AAS protocols to expand the network of sampling within a several watersheds.

"The company I work for supports and encourages giving back to the community. As an Analytical Chemist with 40+ years of experience, AAS gives me an outlet to teach others as well as support clean water in our communities." -Jerry Vandergriff

EXCELLENCE IN DATA COLLECTION (GROUP)

Bent Tree StreamKeepers

The Bent Tree Streamkeepers consistently monitor chemical and bacterial parameters at 6 active sites, conducting 111 events in 2022. They also perform stream habitat surveys, visual, & macroinvertebrate monitoring, as well as additional nitrate, alkalinity, settleable solids, and turbidity tests. The group shares their work through community meetings and social media, hosts community days to promote public education, and partners with the Upper Etowah River Alliance to share information and materials.

"Water quality can only be achieved by understanding, measuring, and comparing data on an ongoing basis. Adopt A Stream (AAS) allows us to have that consistent measured water quality data, and history. The AAS program provides accuracy and confidence in any watershed actions and decisions we may need to make." -Brian Vassar

TRAINER AWARDS

TRAINER OF THE YEAR (PAID)

Trish DuBose (Satilla Riverkeeper)

Trish DuBose has been an AAS volunteer since 1997, and officially became a trainer in 2019. In 2022, she certified 39 volunteers while also coordinating all the Satilla Riverkeeper's AAS volunteers and monitoring their submitted data. Trish also reaches out to the volunteers if there is a question about the results and often responds in-person if a site needs additional testing. Her excellent work in establishing and maintaining relationships with testers has led to high retention of AAS volunteers, as well as an over 100% increase in monitoring events by SRK volunteers in 2022 compared to the previous year.

"It is imperative we continue protecting this natural treasure for future generations to ensure the ability to make a living, make memories, and keep a culture." -Trish DuBose

TRAINER OF THE YEAR (UNPAID)

Ruth Eilers (Georgia College and State University)

Ruth has been a dedicated AAS trainer for 17 years, and provides community members with the enthusiasm as well as the tools and trainings they need to raise awareness of water quality issues throughout the state. In 2022, Ruth hosted 10 workshops and provided 118 certificates, and increased public awareness of the AAS program by hosting Water Education Day, reaching 60 community members and involving a number of university students in the planning and facilitation process.

"AAS give volunteers the opportunity to participate in and grow a story. Volunteers (and trainers!) make a difference in a place that is special to them, learn ways to protect and maintain waterways, and see the story of their stream grow over time and we get to share the story we build with others." -Ruth Eilers

NEW TRAINER OF THE YEAR

Maggie Van Cantfort (Altamaha Riverkeeper)

Since her first trainer certification in 2021, Maggie has hit the ground running to increase sampling in the Altamaha watershed. In 2022, Maggie conducted 9 workshops and certified 71 AAS volunteers. To ensure success of newly trained volunteers, she offered 1-on-1 review sessions and monitoring field days, as well as created a monthly schedule for boat patrol water quality monitoring to provide volunteers an opportunity to participate as a group. She works closely with neighboring Riverkeeper organizations to discuss how to improve our community water quality monitoring program.

"The more people we have paying attention to and reporting what is happening on our waterways, large and small, the more successful we can be as watershed protectors." -Maggie Van Cantfort

WATERSHED AWARDS



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

The CRK's Neighborhood Water Watch (NWW) program is a community driven effort between neighborhood groups, schools and individual community members. In 2022, they collected 5008 samples from 208 sites, and found a total of 19 sewer spills. Their program has exceeded in implementing the goals of AAS by collecting critical water quality data, detecting pollution problems, and empowering communities.

"It's an honor to be recognized and to be a part of such an important statewide program. With so many volunteers contributing data, CRK is able to track down and stop sources of pollution across the Chattahoochee Watershed." -Mike Meyer

GOVERNMENT PROGRAM (PHASE I)

Cobb County Watershed Stewardship Program

In 2022, Cobb County supported 59 active GA AAS groups, and collectively, their volunteers submitted 2,956 data points to the GA AAS database. Cobb added 13 new groups in the state, facilitated 45 AAS workshops, and certified 269 people. In addition to chemical, bacterial and macroinvertebrate monitoring, Cobb also facilitated 6 Stream Habitat/Visual Monitoring workshops.

"I enjoy getting to know our volunteers who are dedicated to protect the waterways in our patch of Georgia. Through all the volunteers, I become acquainted with the different streams and learn how we can better educate our community and be better stewards." -Mike Kahle

GOVERNMENT PROGRAM (PHASE II)

Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority

The CCWSA program creates awareness of non-point source pollution through social media, community, and school programs. In addition to chemical monitoring, they encourage volunteers to perform advanced tests such as alkalinity and nutrients. During 2022, they facilitated 15 programs that had an direct GA AAS focus, partnering with other local and state organizations to reach 671 individuals.

"GA AAS has been a foundational piece of Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority's environmental education program from its creation in 2001. This incredible tool has allowed us to reach out to the schools, community groups and individual citizens doing something meaningful and memorable." -Lori Forrester

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

Keep Forsyth County Beautiful

In 2022, KFCB trainers certified 19 students and 39 adults in chemical and bacterial monitoring workshops. KFCB supports their AAS volunteers by providing complete monitoring kits for all active volunteer monitors. Additionally, 667 students participated in their AAS Jr. program where they collected water samples and tested chemical parameters. Lastly, KFCB and the City of Cumming hosted two clean-ups for Lake Lanier Association and Rivers Alive. In 2022, KFCB hosted 528 volunteers who collected 12.1 tons of trash from the shores of Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River.

"Water is Life. Water connects everyone and everything and we continually strive to embody this message in all of our educational programs." -Apryl Milam



ACTIVE AAS TRAINERS



THANK YOU ACTIVE TRAINERS!

Trainers who led at least one QA/QC workshop in 2022

COASTAL GEORGIA

Damon Mullis, Ogeechee Riverkeeper
Jessica Warren, Camden County Extension
Maggie Van Cantfort, Altamaha Riverkeeper
Patricia DuBose, Satilla Riverkeeper

METRO ATLANTA

Alexa Robinson, City of Griffin Public Works
Amy Warnock, Fulton Co. Public Works
Annie Couch, Chattahoochee River NRA
Ben Martin, Fayette Co. Water System
Bob Schmitt, Upper Chattahoochee Trout Unlimited
Brain McKnight, Southern Conservation Trust
Charlee Martin, Southern Conservation Trust
Chris Kodani, Clayton State University
Eric Eberly, Paulding Co. Water System
Hannah Penn, Fulton Co. Public Works
John Butler, Gwinnett Co. Dept. Water Resources
Jordan Girard, Gwinnett Co. Dept. Water Resources
Kelli Edwards, Fulton Co. Public Works
Michael O'Shield, DeKalb Co. Watershed Management
Mike Kahle, Cobb Co. Water System
Nikki Belmonte, City of Roswell
Ralph Cromer, Keep Forsyth Co. Beautiful
Shaundon Moore, West Atlanta Watershed Alliance
Shelley Lange, Fulton Co. Public Works
Stephanie Marquardt, Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful
Terry Porter, City of Alpharetta
William Lott, Upper Chattahoochee Trout Unlimited

BEYOND BORDERS

Callie Moore, MountainTrue
Shelly Krueger, Florida Sea Grant

NORTH GEORGIA

Brenda Jackson, Murray County Extension Office
Jesse Demonbreun-Chapman, Coosa River Basin Initiative
Lori Forrester, Cherokee Co. Water & Sewerage Authority
Tyler Sims, City of Gainesville
Will England, Cherokee Co. Water & Sewerage Authority

EAST GEORGIA

Julie Shutters, Golden Triangle RC&D Council
Kate Mowbray, Sandy Creek Nature
Megan Parker, Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Melanie Sparrow, Ogeechee Riverkeeper
Ruth Eilers, GA College and State University
Ruth Mead, Phinizy Center for Water Sciences
Truck Carlson, Savannah Riverkeeper

SOUTHWEST GEORGIA

Gretchen Quarterman, WWALS Watershed Coalition
Laura Schneider, River Valley Regional Commission
Michele Smith, GA Southwestern State University

LEGACY TRAINERS



Lori Forrester
20 years



Jessica Warren
10 years

WELCOME NEW ACTIVE TRAINERS!

Apryl Milam, Keep Forsyth Co. Beautiful
Brooklyne Wassel, UGA Extension Pike County
Chrissy Rubel, Gwinnett Co. Dept. Water Resources
James Talkin, City of Gainesville

Jerry Vandergriff, Chemours
Mary Hernandez, Henry Co. Stormwater Dept.
Philip Moore, Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition
Ron Loines, Friends of Peachtree Hills Park

ADOPT-A-STREAM STAFF



Harold Harbert
Program Manager



Cecilia Nachtmann
AAS State Coordinator



Lacey Davis
Program Assistant



Greta Donato
Program Assistant



Bailey Sauls
Former AAS State Coordinator

ADOPT-A-STREAM BOARD

Katherine Atteberry, Atlanta Regional Commission

David Bell, Jacobs

Steve Blackburn, EPA Region 4

Bob Bourne, Cobb County Water Quality Laboratory

Jean Brown, Georgia Power Company

Amanda Buice, Georgia Youth Science & Technology Centers

Lynn Cobb

Checo Colon-Gaud, Georgia Southern University

Dr. Stephen Golladay, Jones Ecological Research Center

Shelly Krueger, Florida Sea Grant

Erin Lincoln, Tetra Tech

Ruth Mead, Phinizy Center for Water Sciences

Callie Moore, MountainTrue

James Moore, Georgia Association of Water Professionals

Tara Muenz, Stroud Water Research Center

Katie Owens, The Nature Conservancy

Luke Roberson, Georgia Southern University

Jessica Sterling, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper

Jessica Warren, Camden County Cooperative Extension

Tony Wasilewski, GTRI / EOSL



THANK YOU

To all of our AAS volunteers, trainers, partners, and supporters, we thank you for all your hard work and dedication throughout 2022!



CONTACT US

If you are interested in learning more about AAS or wish to adopt and monitor a site, contact the State office or your local coordinator. You can also visit our online calendar for monitoring workshops and AAS events.



Georgia Adopt-A-Stream



AAS@dnr.ga.gov



@georgiaadoptastream

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream

Environmental Protection Division

2 MLK Jr. Dr. SE, Suite 1452 East

Atlanta, GA 30334



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