

GEORGIA Adopt-A-Stream

Volume 27, Number 4 October-December 2020
Adopt-A-Stream Staff, Editors



Paddling through the Pandemic

This fall, Adopt-A-Stream staff participated in three different paddling events organized by Georgia River Network (GRN). While the events were conducted a little differently than previous years, AAS staff were grateful for the opportunity to get out on the river and collect sampling data to add to our long-term paddle datasets.



The first 2020 paddle took place on the Satilla River in southeast Georgia over Labor Day weekend. Typically held in the spring, the event was postponed from its original date in April to ensure that GRN staff had time to properly plan for a social- yet socially distanced- paddling event. Typically amassing over 100 avid paddlers, the event had just around 50 participants. It took place entirely outdoors, with masks required in communal spaces like the put-in and take-out, as well as in the food serving lines. Despite these necessary changes, the event was a great success! Paddlers enjoyed the unique beauty of the Satilla River, with its tannic waters, deeply rooted tupelo trees, and salty tidal influences.

Just one month later, AAS staff were able to paddle and sample another Georgia river- the Flint in southwest Georgia. The popular “Fall Float” was divided into two smaller events to limit the amount of close contact that participants had with one another. AAS staff participated in both events, sampling a number of sites with the help of some willing AAS volunteers. During the evening programs, AAS staff also spread the word about how to become a volunteer water quality monitor. Staff and participants enjoyed the iconic and magnificent Blue Holes, took in the beautiful fall colors, and even partook in a Halloween costume contest!

Overall, Adopt-A-Stream staff and volunteers sampled approximately 45 sites in total, 13 from the Satilla and 32 from the Flint. Please reach out to us at AAS@dnr.ga.gov if you would like the full results from our paddling trips this year.

As 2021 approaches, GRN is planning to make even more changes to their annual paddling schedule. Instead of their standard week-long Paddle Georgia event, which attracts over 300 participants each summer, GRN is taking on 14 river basins in 12 months via small, socially distanced paddling events. The trips will span from the Tennessee basin in North Georgia to the St. Marys basin along the Georgia-Florida line, allowing paddlers to fully experience the ecological diversity and rich history of the state. Seven of these trips will be bike-paddle adventures, where bicycles will be used to run shuttles to avoid placing participants together in vehicles. Go to garivers.org to view the trip schedule and descriptions.



During this difficult and often isolating time, it can be incredibly beneficial to spend time outside, and with others, in a safe manner. Even if you are not a paddler, there are a number of options to safely socialize while enjoying nature, such as going on a hike with a friend, monitoring your Adopt-A-Stream site, or simply taking your dog to the park. Whatever you do, stay safe, healthy, and connected- and get outside!

Community Partnership Highlight: Upper Oconee Watershed Network

Bruno Giri and Reilly Farrell, UOWN Board Members

The growth of Athens and the University of Georgia over the years has subsequently led to increased development of the surrounding landscape. As local water resources were rapidly becoming degraded, the need for an organization to monitor and protect these waterways arose. Hence, the [Upper Oconee Watershed Network](#) (UOWN) was formed in 2000, with the goal of protecting local freshwater resources in Athens and surrounding areas through advocacy, science and monitoring, education, and recreational activities.



One of our organization's primary goals is to better inform residents about their water resources and promote a sense of responsibility for the health of the natural environment. We do this by tabling at local outreach events, hosting quarterly monitoring sessions with groups of citizen volunteers, and teaching children about the connection between local stream health and local community health. We also serve as an advocacy voice for the watershed when the need arises.

Recently we initiated a new campaign to help people take ownership of their local watersheds called [Where's My Creek](#) (WMC). WMC is a resource that allows people living within the Upper Oconee watershed to find out which stream their home address drains into. Users enter their home address into the website to view their home on an interactive map that identifies and displays which sub-watershed of the Upper Oconee they live in. After identifying their local watershed, citizens can examine how their drainage stream has changed over the years, using data collected by UOWN. They can also view an information sheet for each watershed, which includes graphs of these changes, a list of issues affecting that stream, and specific actions residents can take to improve the health of their stream. When showing off [this application](#) at tabling events, we also hand out colorful watershed-specific magnets for residents to affix these info sheets to their refrigerators (photo below). Providing these insights into our community's place within the local environment encourages a deeper connection and sense of stewardship among participants.



The goal of WMC is to emphasize and strengthen UOWN's broader mission of improving stream health. By increasing citizens' understanding of the ecosystems in their own backyards, we hope that they begin to live their lives with a greater awareness of how their behavior impacts the streams around them. In turn, we hope that they see the connection between stream health and community health: polluted landscapes lead to degraded streams and degraded streams lead to less pure drinking water. We have recently expanded WMC to include Oconee County in addition to Athens-Clarke, and believe it could be expanded even further so that people all across the state could use it as well. Everyone could benefit from an increased understanding as to how their treatment of water resources can affect their health in the long run.

For more information about WMC and our other volunteers activities, please email UOWN at info@uown.org. We believe strongly in collaboration and are huge advocates for Georgia Adopt-A-Stream both within our community and beyond.



SEND IN YOUR AAS AWARD NOMINATIONS!

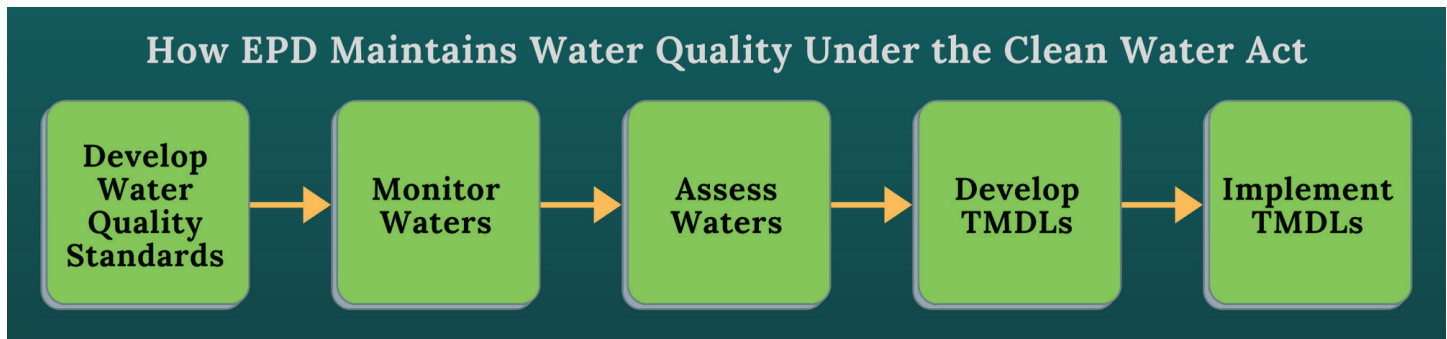
Do you know a current AAS volunteer, trainer, or watershed organization whose work deserves to be recognized and celebrated? Nominate them for an AAS award!

**Go to the AAS website to view award descriptions and submit your nominations.
Deadline to submit is January 22, 2021!**

A Citizen's Guide to Listed Waters: Sections 303(d), 305(b), and the Clean Water Act

Anna Truszczyński, PhD, GA EPD Assistant Branch Chief

Have you ever heard of a stream being “listed” or “delisted”, but were unsure as to what that meant? Here’s your answer! Essentially, every two years, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) assesses water quality data from streams and rivers across the state and compiles a list of impaired waters. The list in question, called the 303(d)/305(b) list, is a requirement under the Clean Water Act and is an important component of EPD’s efforts to protect and restore water quality in Georgia. Here’s how this list is developed:



- 1. Develop Water Quality Standards** – Georgia develops water quality standards for all the waters in the state. These water quality standards contain three pieces: a designated use, such as fishing or drinking water supply; criteria (which can be numeric limits or narrative conditions) to protect the designated use; and antidegradation requirements to ensure the continued protection of water quality. Taken together, water quality standards describe a waterbody’s condition and provide the legal basis for controlling pollution into that water.
- 2. Monitor Waters** – EPD and partners with approved Sampling Quality Assurance Plans (SQAP) monitor waterbodies to determine whether they meet their water quality standards. Many volunteers and watershed groups, such as Adopt-A-Stream, monitor waterbodies without a SQAP. The data from this monitoring is still a valuable resource: EPD uses this data as a screening tool to identify which waterbodies to monitor next. Remember to always enter your AAS data in a timely manner to ensure it is included in the screening process!
- 3. Assess Waters** – EPD uses monitoring data to determine whether a waterbody is meeting water quality standards (“supporting”) or not (“impaired”). This is the step where the 303(d)/305(b) list is developed. The list is submitted to EPA every two years for approval, along with an integrated report that serves as the basis for the list. The 303(d)/305(b) list for 2020 was approved in August 2020.
- 4. Develop TMDLs** – Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) are planning documents that provide a roadmap for restoring impaired waters. The TMDL calculates a “Wasteload Allocation”, or how much of a pollutant, such as nutrients, is allowed to be discharged from a point source, like a water treatment plant. The TMDL also calculates a “Load Allocation”, or how much of that pollutant is allowed to come from nonpoint sources, such as agricultural fields, through stormwater runoff. EPD develops TMDLs for all impaired waters.
- 5. Implement TMDLs** – TMDLs are a plan, and plans must be implemented to be effective. The point source requirements are implemented through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The nonpoint source reductions are implemented through installation of best management practices (BMPs). These BMPs are generally voluntary and are often completed through the efforts of EPD’s partners, such as local governments and watershed organizations, and can be funded by 319(h) grants.

Through these five steps, EPD implements the water quality based approach of the Clean Water Act. For more information about how EPD protects and manages Georgia’s water resources, please check out our interactive “[Water Quality in Georgia Story Map](#)”.

Community Partnership Highlight: Science for Georgia



As those who have attended an Adopt-A-Stream workshop already know, P is for Partnerships! Partnerships increase organizational impact and reach, as well as facilitate knowledge sharing. From local governments to nonprofits, AAS volunteers are encouraged to form partnerships within their communities. On the state level, partnerships are integral to the backbone of AAS. Long-

lasting, involved partnerships set Georgia Adopt-A-Stream apart from other volunteer water quality monitoring programs, and make AAS accessible to Georgians all over the state.

That being said, Adopt-A-Stream is happy to announce a new partnership with [Science for Georgia](#)! Science for Georgia is an Atlanta-based nonprofit that works to improve communication between scientists and the public, increase public engagement with science, and advocate for the responsible use of science in public policy. To achieve this mission, Science for Georgia creates and disseminates science-based resources, hosts communication trainings for scientists, and provides venues for scientists to engage with the public, including the monthly Science Tales & Trails and Atlanta Science Tavern.



Georgia Adopt-A-Stream is excited to partner with Science for Georgia to broaden both organization's reach and impact. Science for Georgia has already hosted Adopt-A-Stream State Coordinators Jenna Dodson and Bailey Crapps as [Science](#)



[Tales & Trails speakers](#) this past August (photo above). The online event was a huge success, and several participants subsequently attended their first AAS workshop. Adopt-A-Stream looks forward to expanding Science for Georgia's platform as well, by engaging AAS volunteers in Science for Georgia events such as the upcoming statewide Scavenger Hunt to the Sea (more details to come). Science for Georgia is also interested in connecting Adopt-A-Stream with social change data analysts and utilizing Adopt-A-Stream's long-term volunteer data sets for evidence-based decision-making.

Both Science for Georgia and Adopt-A-Stream look forward to further developing this partnership, the outcomes of which will increase organizational impact and facilitate knowledge sharing for the benefit of both Georgians and Georgia's waterways.

GEORGIA ADOPT-A-STREAM VIRTUAL CONFLUENCE 2021

WATER SCIENCE RESEARCH SESSION

Share your water science research or volunteer monitoring project with the water quality monitoring community!

**ABSTRACTS DUE
JANUARY 22, 2021**

Presentation Guidelines and
Abstract Submission Form at
AdoptAStream.Georgia.Gov

AAS Newsletter to be Exclusively Electronic starting in 2021

Dear Adopt-A-Stream volunteers, trainers, and supporters,

The AAS team has made the decision to stop offering paper versions of our quarterly newsletters and instead focus on producing quality e-newsletters. We hope this will make our newsletter more accessible to a wider audience, decrease our carbon footprint, and streamline the distribution process. We will produce solely e-newsletters beginning with the January-March 2021 edition.

If you are receiving the paper newsletter and would like to continue receiving updates from Adopt-A-Stream, please subscribe to our e-newsletter. The e-newsletter contains all of the same articles, updates, and announcements as the traditional printed newsletter and is delivered right to your email inbox. If you are interested in receiving the e-newsletter, please email us at AAS@dnr.ga.gov. You can also view all past newsletters, including the e-newsletters, on the Adopt-A-Stream website.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Additionally, if you wish to unsubscribe from the newsletter altogether, we'd be happy to help you with that as well. Please direct all feedback to AAS@dnr.ga.gov.

We would like to thank you for all of your support throughout the years. We hope you will consider sticking with us through this transition, and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

The Adopt-A-Stream Team

The preparation of the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream quarterly newsletter is financed in part through a grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency under provisions of Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act of 1987, as amended. For more information about the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program or to contribute to the newsletter, contact:

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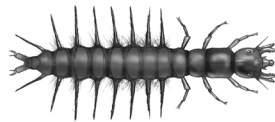
GO BLUE!
Sign up for our e-newsletter
by emailing us at
AAS@dnr.ga.gov



Dragonfly



Riffle Beetle



Dobsonfly



Stonefly



Net Spinning Caddisfly

SAVE THE DATE

Confluence 2021: March 15-21st

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream's Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Conference

➡ **Free Virtual Experience** ⬅

For more information, visit the Confluence page at
AdoptAStream.Georgia.gov

Session registration opens February 2021

Stay Connected!

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram to stay up-to-date on the latest Adopt-A-Stream news! Use #gaadoptastream or tag us when you post photos of yourself monitoring. We love to see all the good work you do!



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