

GEORGIA

Adopt-A-Stream

Volume 7, Number 3, May / June 2000
Michele Droszcz and Harold Harbert, Editors



Getting Started With Georgia Adopt-A-Stream, Lake and Wetland

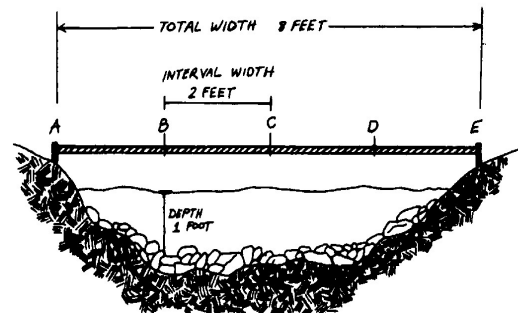
This four-hour workshop introduces citizens to the Adopt-A-Stream, Lake and Wetland programs, using the new Level I manual, "Getting To Know Your Watershed." You learn how to obtain maps, delineate your watershed and determine land use and impervious surface. The second half of the workshop takes place at a stream, using the new "Visual Stream Survey" Manual. You will learn how to visually assess your stream, choose a representative monitoring site, calculate flow and do a stream profile. This workshop is being held in Conyers on May 6 and in Cumming on June 17. To reserve a space, contact the numbers listed on the Calendar of Events table in this newsletter.

Visual Stream Survey Now Includes Stream Profile

In the new "Visual Stream Survey" Manual, an optional activity will be measuring a cross section of your stream to get a stream profile. This is an objective way to monitor the changing shape of your stream channel and banks. Equipment includes a measuring tape, measuring stick, twine, a line level and a rebar.



Shan Cammack takes a measurement



Measurements are taken every 2 feet and at bankful, edge of water and other significant features.

PW³ – The Voice of Woodall Creek

By **Jacqueline Echols, Ph.D.** (jackieechols@mindspring.com)

Woodall Creek meanders through the Chattahoochee Industrial Corridor in northwest Atlanta as it makes its way to Peachtree Creek. Like all of our urban streams, Woodall Creek at an earlier point in its life was clear and pristine. Now it is one of the most polluted creeks in the Atlanta area.

Until late last year there was a very good chance that this creek would have forever remained ignored, neglected, and abused. What has changed? Woodall Creek now has a voice and the Peachtree Woodall-Whetstone Watershed Alliance or PW³ is the source of that voice.

Late last fall PW³ arrived at the point in the development of its watershed protection plan that called for gathering first hand information about the character and health of the creeks, streams, and tributaries in our watershed. The goal of our creek walk on this particular Saturday was to find the water source that feeds Woodall Creek. We put into the creek just off Ellsworth Industrial Boulevard in the heart of the Chattahoochee Industrial Corridor.

The milky-gray murkiness and the opaque white substance coating the creek bed was even more pronounced this day than it has been several weeks earlier. We had not ventured very far upstream before locating the source of the discoloration – a small tributary emptying into the creek. Several large pools of milky-gray water had formed around the mouth of the tributary, and here too, the creek bed was coated with the same dense white material. Realizing that the tributary was on a direct line with a paint manufacturing company that had ceased doing business about five years earlier, we concluded that the white substance might possibly be paint that was somehow leaching from empty storage tanks. In any event, I volunteered to take the lead to identify the source.

My quest began with a phone call to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD). Even as the phone was ringing, I knew this would be only one of many phone calls I would have to make. After an initial “help” inquiry, I was transferred to the Hazardous Waste Management Branch of EPD. Here I encountered the complaint officer who was responsible for fielding calls like mine on this particular day.

I told my story to the complaint officer and also shared with him who I thought the culprit might be and why. He told me that all paint, if in fact it was paint that I had seen, was not hazardous since the vast majority of companies no longer produce lead based paint. As for who I thought the culprit might be, he made it clear that I could not say who was at fault since there is a lot of pollution from a lot of different sources in Woodall Creek. The complaint officer informed me that his office could only take action if there was proof that hazardous waste was present. He suggested that I contact the Regional Office of EPD for assistance since their involvement was more general in nature, e.g., they did not have to have proof that the substance was hazardous before getting involved.

Several minutes later, I told my story to an Environmental Specialist at the Regional Office of EPD. He too was familiar with the paint manufacturing company and the myriad of problems associated with the Chattahoochee industrial area. The Environmental Specialist agreed to do some checking to determine if there were any outstanding problems with the paint company in question. After several conversations, it was clear that he did not feel his involvement was warranted. He did tell me that since the paint company was an industrial pretreatment facility – meaning that charges were assessed based on the amount of treatment its hazardous waste water needed before it could be discharged into the environment – there was an inactive case file on file with EPD, which could be reviewed during regular business hours. He suggested I contact the city of Atlanta and Georgia Adopt-A-Stream for help.

My decision to make a personal visit to EPD was driven by my desire to review the file on the paint company in question, but more importantly it would give me the opportunity to make a compelling case for filing a formal complaint. The file did not shed any light on the problem at hand, though it did reveal much about an ongoing problem with serious ground water pollution along the creek. I was able to share what I had seen in Woodall Creek with yet another EPD employee who decided to take my complaint. A formal complaint is the mechanism that compels the Hazardous Waste Management Branch of EPD to

act. The circumstances underlying the complaint must be investigated within 10 days, with a resolution being affected within 6 months.

Within a few days, I received a call from the compliance officer to whom the complaint had been assigned. He stated that he had gone out to the creek but was not able to find any signs of the paint-like substance I had described. He suggested that maybe what I had seen was residue resulting from painting contractors cleaning their equipment and illegally flushing the residue down a storm drain, an activity that was almost impossible to verify and control. The remoteness of the area in question and the magnitude of the pollution made this theory highly unlikely. The next day, I went back to the site to again inspect the creek. Obviously, the compliance officer had looked in the wrong place. A quick email message the next morning provided him more precise directions.

Several days later I got a telephone message from the compliance officer stating that he thought he had identified the source of the paint-like substance. He had been able to locate where the storm drain emerged from the paint manufacturing facility and emptied into the tributary. Here he found copious amounts of plastic sandblasting pellets around the mouth of the outfall and thought that maybe dust being washed off of the pellets was causing the dense sediment in the creek bed. At this point, he placed a call to the pretreatment coordinator for the City of Atlanta. The pretreatment coordinator immediately knew the source of the plastic pellets since there was only one business in the area that used them – CSX Railroad. CSX off-loads the pellets into trucks for transport and is permitted to wash residual pellets into the sanitary sewer. An inspection of the rail yard had not revealed any problems. All grates and screens designed to keep the pellets from being washed into the storm drain were in place. Satisfied that CSX was not the source of the problem, he decided to check the creek for himself.

According to the pretreatment coordinator, the pigment in the creek was not paint but probably chemical residue from a nearby aluminum refinishing business. The stream water discoloration was most likely caused by a combination of sewage and industrial wastewater pollution. This is the site of the former Fairmont-Glidden combined sewer

overflow or CSO. Several years ago the City implemented a “fix” – consisting primarily of inserting a piece of PVC pipe inside the sewer line – that was suppose to separate untreated sewage from storm water overflow during periods of heavy rain. He went on to say that evidently there was a problem with the sanitary sewer that was causing it to overflow into the storm water drain. He had already notified the sanitation department and had received confirmation back that the crew had found a clog in the sanitary sewer at Fairmont Street that was overflowing into the storm drain. The pretreatment coordinator stated that he would keep check on the creek for the next couple of weeks. So would I.

After a period during which we had had enough rainfall to wash the sewerage out of Woodall Creek (unfortunately into Peachtree Creek), I decided it was time for a follow-up inspection. The creek appeared worse than ever. Early the next morning I called the pretreatment coordinator. He had also checked the creek and was aware of the problem. He stated he had already notified the Sanitation Department and he would call me as soon as they reported back to him. This time the sanitation crew found a second clog in the sewer line a short distance upgrade from the first clog at Huber Street. The pretreatment coordinator again assured me that he would keep check on the creek for two or three weeks to be certain that the problem was fixed. I now knew that PW³ could not place a time limit on its vigilance.

The tributary is running clear now. There is no way to tell how long the clogged sewer had been spewing raw sewage into the storm drain that ended up in Woodall Creek and ultimately Peachtree Creek. There is no way to tell how long the problem would have persisted if it had not been discovered during one of PW³'s creek walks. But since we do know that the City of Atlanta does not have a sewer inspection nor maintenance plan in place, the answer to both queries is, a long time and probably never, respectively. Through no fault of its own, Woodall Creek is plagued with pollution problems. PW³ may not solve all of them, but we have weighed in for the fight. Woodall Creek no longer has to suffer in silence. It now has a voice.

*EPD is taking enforcement action under the Zero Tolerance Policy

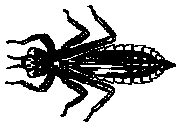
Aquascape Environmental Adopts Sope Creek

By Bill Vesely

When you spend 75% of your waking hours working in, on and around water, it has a tendency to find a soft spot in your heart. On that very notion our company decided to participate in the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Program. After attending workshops to become a chemical and biological QA/QC volunteer, we selected of a 3/4 mile stretch of Sope Creek, downstream from Paper Mill Road. We have successfully completed our first two quarters of monitoring and find the creek to be in good condition- water quality is good and various aquatic macroinvertebrates are always to be found. The most difficult task has been getting a road sign up to make people aware of our activities. Without an official Adopt-A-Stream program in Cobb County, there are no direct contacts to assist us and no road sign can be placed within the right-of-way without the proper contacts. Unfortunately we have yet to succeed, but will inform Georgia Adopt-A-Stream when we do so the information can be passed on to others. We are succeeding in having a lot of fun and are collecting valuable information that will help keep our streams healthy.

For More Information, Visit Our Website!

You now have a way to access the most up-to-date Adopt-A-Stream information. Visit our new website at www.riversalive.org/aas.htm. This site offers current information on workshops and special events and links you to other useful websites.



The Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Newsletter is published six times per year. For More information about the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program or to contribute to the newsletter, call or write to:

Georgia Adopt-A-Stream
Environmental Protection Division
4220 International Parkway, Suite 101
Atlanta, GA 30354
(404) 675-1639
www.riversalive.org/aas.htm

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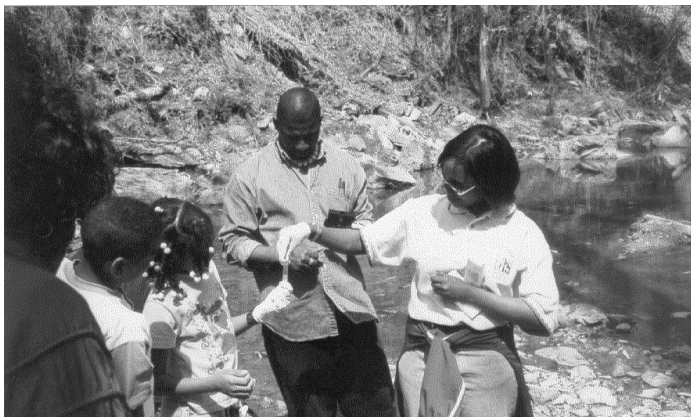
Adopt-A-Stream Calendar of Events

The following are workshops, taught by certified AAS trainers, which provide training in visual, biological and chemical monitoring of streams and wetlands. Please call to register.

What	Who	When	Where	To Register
Visual/Chemical	Peavine Watershed Alliance	May 6	Peavine Watershed	404-508-7603
Visual/Chemical	Fulton AAS	May 6	N. Fulton	404-730-8006
Getting Started w/AAS	Rockdale Water Resources	May 6	Salem High School	770-918-6799
Biological	Chatooga AAS	May 13	Polk/Floyd Co.	706-802-5322
Biological	Roswell Environmental	May 13	Roswell City Hall	770-641-3715
Biological	Peavine Watershed Alliance	May 13	Peavine Watershed	404-508-7603
Monitoring Wetlands	GA AAS	May 13	Clayton County	404-675-1636
Visual/Chemical	City of Atlanta	May 13	TBA	404-330-6980
Biological	City of Atlanta	May 27	TBA	404-330-6980
Advanced Biological	GA AAS	June 3	Dahlonega	404-675-1636
Chemical	Fulton Co. AAS	June 3	S. Fulton	404-730-8006
Chemical	City of Gainesville	June 9	Wilshire Trail Park	770-532-7462
Visual/Chemical	City of Atlanta	June 10	TBA	404-330-6980
Getting Started w/AAS	Forsyth Co. AAS	June 17	Cumming	770-781-2165
Biological	Fulton Co. AAS	June 17	Grove Park	404-730-8006
Biological	City of Atlanta	June 24	TBA	404-330-6980
Chemical	Fulton Co. AAS	July 1	N. Fulton	404-730-8006
Visual/Chemical	City of Atlanta	July 8	TBA	404-330-6980
Biological	Fulton Co. AAS	July 15	N. Fulton	404-730-8006

There's more! AAS workshops are conducted throughout the State. Call one of these numbers to learn about upcoming workshops in your region of the State.

Where	Who	To Register	E-mail
Coastal GA	Dr. Joe Richardson	912-356-2809	richards@tigerpaw.ssu.peachnet.edu
West GA	Dr. Becky Champion	706-687-4090	champion_becky@colstate.edu
Central GA	Sylbie Yon	706-485-9243	sayon@peachnet.campuswix.net
South GA	Dr. David Hedgepeth	912-333-5611	dhedgepe@valdosta.edu



City of Atlanta and National Wildlife Federation Conduct Chemical Workshop on Proctor Creek

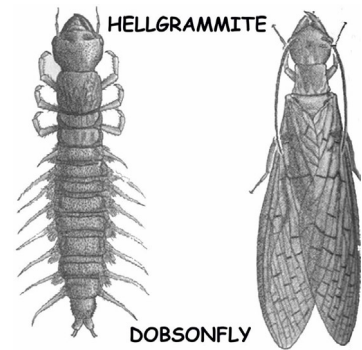
Alligator Fleas!

Order: Megaloptera
Family: Corydalidae

The larvae are commonly called hellgrammites, fishflies, or Dobsonflies, and are often used as fish bait. They are distinguishable by their large mandibles and eight pairs of lateral filaments, which are used for breathing. The abdomen terminates into a pair of anal prolegs, which consist of paired claws and a dorsal filament on each. Male hellgrammites have mandibles three times as long as their head!

The larvae are predaceous, feeding on other aquatic insects. However, adults are not known to feed at all.

The adults have black, brown or gray bodies with large wings, which are held roof-like over the body. Although they exhibit large wings, they are generally considered to be poor fliers.



Life Cycle:

Hellgrammites go through complete metamorphosis (eggs, larvae, pupae and adults) similar to the butterfly and the whirligig beetle, as mentioned in the November/December 1999 newsletter. The adult female deposits her eggs on rocks and branches above the water and the active larvae crawl into the water to live. The larvae can be found pupating in earthen chambers under rocks and debris near their larval habitat.

Places you can find them:

Larvae can be found in spring seeps, streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, swamps and even dry streambeds. Adults are most easily collected at night using lights, however, during the day specimens may be collected near water along vegetative banks.

What they mean about water quality:

Hellgrammites are considered somewhat tolerant and can be found in good to fair water quality.

Fun Facts:

The active larvae can burrow into the streambed when drought conditions occur; this has been known to last up to three or four years. Sometimes they are called, "alligator fleas!"

Dade Water Watch Is Watching Their Streams

Dade Water Watch is a new non-profit based in Dade County, Georgia. Composed of concerned citizens, their first goal is to monitor their watershed and then educate the public. They plan to enlist the help of Dade County citizens to locate potential pollution sources and implement pollution solutions. For further information or to volunteer, contact Dade Water Watch, P.O. Box 323, Rising Fawn, GA 30738 or e-mail Sherrin Wattenbarger at swatt00@mail.fc.peachnet.edu. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Dade Elementary School Cafeteria.